



**Australian
Sex Workers
Association**

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UPDATE ON THE ONLINE SAFETY BILL SUBMISSIONS TO SENATE INQUIRY DUE 2 MARCH

To our sex worker community and allies,

The Online Safety Bill had its first reading in the House of Representatives on the 24th of February, 2021 - just 10 days after public submissions closed. Scarlet Alliance and our membership and community have a number of concerns about the Bill, which we have discussed in our recent [submission](#).

The Bill introduced to Parliament by Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts Paul Fletcher did not address the issues we and many of our allies raised in our submission. In his speech, the Minister noted that 370 submissions had been received. At the time of writing, these submissions have not been made public.

In the narrow window we've had to review the current Bill, the only changes we've noted that relate to recommendations in our submission are a slight change to some gendered wording in the section on non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII), and the addition of a section at the end of the bill requiring an independent review of the operation of the Act 3 years from its adoption, which we believe is inadequate.

The Bill has now moved to a [Senate Committee](#) responsible for receiving further submissions and producing a report. These submissions opened on 25 February and close on the **2nd of March**. Scarlet Alliance will submit to the Committee and encourage our members, community and allies to do the same. Because the time window for submissions is short, you may want to add a brief preamble to the text you have already submitted, rather than writing something new. If you would like to add to your submission, or write another, we recommend taking your lead from the following documents:

[Scarlet Alliance Community Policy Kit: Online Safety Bill](#)

[Scarlet Alliance Submission: Online Safety Bill](#)

[Digital Rights Watch Submission: Online Safety Bill](#)

If you are writing a preamble to a submission you've already prepared, we suggest noting the following:

- The submissions to the draft exposure Bill must be made public for transparency and accountability.
- The time window between the close of submissions on the draft exposure Bill (14 February) and the Bill's introduction and first reading in Parliament (24 February), and the insubstantial difference between the draft exposure Bill and its current form does not demonstrate that it has taken that submissions process and the people and organisations who participated in it seriously, or intended to.
- The window for submissions to the Senate Committee is unreasonably short and must be

extended.

- If the Committee will be conducting public hearings, sex worker stakeholders, represented by Scarlet Alliance, must be invited to give evidence.
- Sex worker safety, online and in real life, has not been adequately considered in the drafting of the Online Safety Bill.

TO SUBMIT TO THE INQUIRY:

1. Make a [My Parliament](#) account.
2. Visit the Senate Committee page for the [Online Safety Bill](#).
3. On the right hand side of the page, click the blue button for 'Upload Submission'.
4. Enter your details (you will need to provide a name and email address, but these do not have to be linked to either your work or personal identities).
5. Upload the file containing your submission.

We are also requesting the option for individual sex workers to submit via an email address or through our organisation, and will update community via our [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) feeds with further information if that request is granted.

We appreciate that a great deal of community time and labour has already gone into this process, and that this is far from the last step. We will continue to update the sex worker community about next steps as the process evolves, and are currently researching lobbying opportunities. Thanks to everyone who has shared information about the Bill in peer networks and public spaces.

If you have any questions about the process or making a submission by 2 March, please contact National Programs Manager Gala on npm@scarletalliance.org.au

Regards,

Jules Kim, CEO
Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers Association