

The Courier Mail



EXCLUSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA AGE-LIMIT TRIAL A SUCCESS

NO MORE EXCUSES

Lachlan Leeming

Tech giants resisting Australia's world-first laws to ban under-16s

from social media now have no excuse after an age-verification trial determined it would be "private, robust and effective".

The preliminary findings of the Age Assurance Technology Trial will be unveiled this afternoon. The world-first legislation to

raise the minimum age of social media use to 16 came after The Courier-Mail's "Let Them Be Kids" campaign. **Report P9**

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Whoopi do for netball

Adrienne Tam

She's played just about every character in Hollywood.

But, as far as Netball Australia is concerned, Whoopi Goldberg's greatest role is about to begin.

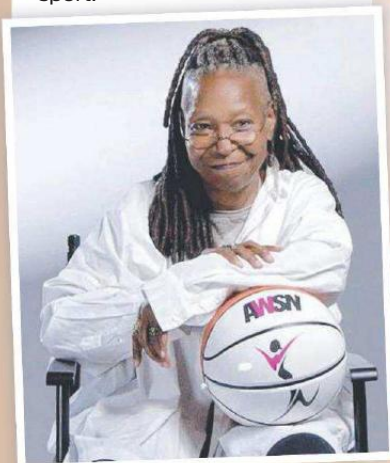
In the ultimate Sister Act, the actress, comedian, and TV star has struck a broadcast partnership deal with the code, that will see the Suncorp Super Netball (SSN) beamed across the globe. Goldberg, 69, a sport's nut, will use her newly launched All Women's Sports Network (AWSN) to take Australia's finest talent to more than 65 new countries and 900 million households over the coming three years.

"I see that your fans are really loving you, so we want to make sure that we put you everywhere in the world so that everybody knows about you," Goldberg said.

Netball Australia Chair and former Diamonds captain Liz Ellis was heartened by the move.

"It's great to see someone like Whoopi Goldberg investing in women's sport," she said.

Goldberg's network offers live and archived coverage of women's sports – from soccer, basketball, tennis, and cricket. Netball Australia chief executive Stacey West said the deal "cements our place at the forefront of women's sport."



Hulita Veve (left) the Firebirds co-captain/centre with goal shooter Mary Chohlok at Nissan Arena. Picture: Steve Pohlner



Ready for age checker

Big tech to see the options

EXCLUSIVE
Lachlan Leeming

LET THEM BE KIDS

Tech giants resisting world-first laws to restrict children under 16 from social media sites now have no excuse after a trial found age-verification technology was effective.

The preliminary findings of the Age Assurance Technology Trial (AATT) – which will provide the bedrock for the social media age limit announced by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in November – will be unveiled on Friday.

It analysed methods of age checking technology used and suggested by 53 different organisations across the world to protect children from harm, to test how accurately it could judge a user's age.

AATT project director Tony Allen said the study's initial results showed age verification is ready to be rolled out in Australia.

"The preliminary findings indicate that there are no significant technological barriers preventing the deployment of effective age assurance systems in Australia," he said.

"These solutions are technically feasible, can be integrated flexibly into existing services and can support the safety and rights of children online."

The world-first legislation to raise the minimum age of social media use to 16 came after News Corp's Let Them Be Kids campaign uncovered soaring rates of anxiety, depression, eating disorders and other harm among children.

The move means companies such as Meta – the owner of Facebook and Instagram –

TikTok, and Snapchat would face fines of up to \$49.5m if they fail to take "reasonable steps" to stop underage users.

The trial of what technologies could be used has been led by the Age Check Certification Scheme (ACCS) and supported by software analytics firm KJR, whose deputy project director Andrew Hammond said 1085 students across Australia had been consulted in the tests.

Mr Hammond told The Courier-Mail technology analysed included participants filming themselves with their phone cameras, which then used Artificial Intelligence to make a judgment on their age.

Other methods including sending a request to the participants' bank to verify their age.

"Overwhelmingly, the feedback was quite positive ... I'm quite confident while it's not perfect, there's plenty of options that can be (used)," Mr Hammond said.

A detailed report is expected to be delivered to Communications Minister Anika Wells by the end of July, with age limits to come in by December.

The initial feedback from the trial shows there is "a plethora of approaches that fit different use cases in different ways", but there wasn't "a single ubiquitous solution that would suit all use cases" – meaning social media platforms required to adopt age-verification technology could be pushed into using a variety of different models.

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