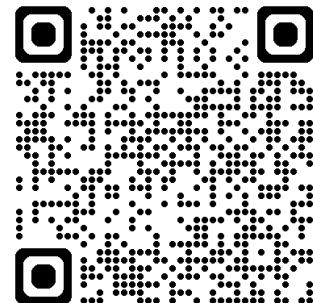


Australia's under-16 social media ban divides kids, parents



<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/videos/20250714204539042/>

A new law banning Australians under the age of 16 from using social media takes effect in December. The ban will likely include major platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Tik-Tok. NHK World's Jennifer Walpole interviewed Australian children and their parents to hear their views on the issue.

We will be asking children how they feel about this new law coming into effect at the end of this year.

Some kids favored the ban.

I feel like it's OK. It's a lot more beneficial and we're going to focus more in classes.

I kind of agree with it because people are kind of addicted now. Every time I see a kid, they're always staring at their phone. Especially when they're eating.

While others opposed it.

Why do you disagree?

Because I spend most of my time on social media.

In this day and age, it's coming to a point where you kind of have to have social media in order to engage with new people.

We spoke with 32 children in total. The result was 8 in favor of the ban and 24 against it. We learned children use social media in a variety of ways such as getting ideas for school assignments. Meanwhile an opinion poll taken last November shows 77 percent of Australians aged 18 and over support the new law. Parents have mixed feelings about the ban. Joanna Tassone in Sydney has 3 children aged 11 to 15.

Tassone believes social media use should be restricted but she also feels it has become indispensable for her children who had to take classes and communicate with friends during the COVID-19 lockdown.

My daughter is addicted to her phone because it's her way of connecting to her friends and especially her friends from the past and her new friends.

She especially worries about her 13 year old daughter Bella. On weekends, Bella uses her smartphone for up to 6 hours a day. Mostly on social media. Joanna believes that for her children to use social media safely, it's necessary to monitor them at home. She checks her children's phones every few weeks to make sure there's no bullying or contact from strangers.

Is there anything that you've been concerned about? Anyone that has messaged you or anything? No

She also had her daughter delete some of the apps but on the screen Tik-Tok was still there.

I need to know that you're safe because yes you're safe at home. I know you're home. But I don't know who you are talking to on the other side of your phone.

South Australia's Premier had commissioned the report that formed the basis of the new law. He acknowledges that social media has some positive aspects but questions its business model.

When social media business models depend upon childhood addiction, we know that there is a responsibility for the government to act. These social media companies have operated beyond their social license. They have not acted in the interest of children. They have acted in the interest of their own profits.

With social media now a mainstream means of communication, Australians are trying to find answers to protect vulnerable children.

Source: (NHK World News)

Now discuss the questions with a partner.

1. Do you agree or disagree with the ban? Should such a ban happen in Japan?
2. Why do you think social media companies target children?
3. What are some good and bad things about using social media when you are young?
4. How long do you think is too long to spend on social media? How long do you spend on social media in a day?
5. The article mentions "getting ideas for school projects." What is the main thing you check on social media?