




Speech By
Hon. Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Child Protection, Social Media

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Premier) (9.39 am): I have been outspoken in my belief that social media companies need to do better. They are failing on so many measures designed to protect our kids and parents need help in monitoring and restricting access to dangerous content. Today the Chief Health Officer has released findings that demonstrate a real link between unrestricted social media use and increased distress in children and teens.

In Australia the rate of young females aged 14 and under hospitalised for self-harm injury tripled between 2008-09 and 2020-21. The rate almost doubled in the same period for boys up to the age of 14. As a parent this worries me, as I am sure it does every person in this House. To combat this growing health concern an expert group convened by the Chief Health Officer has recommended that access to social media be limited for those under the age of 14 and that they be closely monitored and supported as they join social media and their time be restricted until healthy habits are established. I support these recommendations and call for stronger regulation around social media access.

I have spoken with South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas, who has recently appointed former chief justice of the High Court Robert French AC to conduct a legal examination into banning children under the age of 14 from having social media accounts. Their government will share the outcomes of that examination with ours to better understand how we could implement such a ban in Queensland.

We are fostering a generation of young people who have grown up on social media. It is all they can remember. With the opportunities for connectivity, there must be balance and we must act now to prevent irreversible damage to the mental health of young Queenslanders.