

AI Regulations

- Federal Government launches Australia's National AI Plan
- New Guidance for AI Adoption is published
- Mandatory AI guardrails are abandoned
- Focus on uplifting existing technology-neutral laws

AI + IP

- Federal Government rules out a 'text and data mining' exemption to the Copyright Act 1988 (Cth)
- National AI Plan committed to copyright law changes
- The Attorney-General and Copyright and AI Reference Group continue stakeholder consultations

Online Safety

- Additional industry codes introduced under the Online Safety Act across various service providers for class 1C and 2 content
- U16s social media ban introduced
- OAIC guidance on the privacy considerations of platforms complying with assurance measures

Cyber Security

- Cyber Security (Security Standards for Smart Devices) Rules 2025 introduced consumer grade requirements for smart devices
- Cyber Security (Ransomware Payment Reporting) Rules 2025 introduced
- ASD annual cyber report identified critical infrastructure as a key target for state sponsored threat actors and key actions for organisations

Privacy

- First civil penalties ordered against Australian Clinical Labs under the Privacy Act signaling increased enforcement
- ACL case emphasizes focus on privacy and cyber in M&A, post-acquisition security / IT uplift
- Ongoing scrutiny of use of facial recognition technology with Kmart, Bunnings decisions
- Statutory tort for serious invasions of privacy commenced
- OAIC guidance on use of data to train AI models following inquiries into I-MED

The Year Ahead: 2026

- Further reform of the Privacy Act – although it isn't clear what or when
- Introduction of the Children's Online Privacy Code
- Increasing enforcement from the OAIC to strengthen compliance with the Privacy Act
- Deployment of the National AI Plan
- AI Safety Institute: Australia's AI regulator?
- OAIC proceedings and class action against Medibank for 2022 data breach likely to run