**CORRECTION ESSAY CB 1A LVB:** Australia is the world's first country to ban social media for under-16-year-olds. Is this a good move according to you?

Proposition de corrigé

A growing number of people are concerned about children's safety online, with cyberbullying, screen addiction, exposure to inappropriate content, and misinformation among the main risks. At a time when young people should be developing social skills and attention spans, they are increasingly engaging with the world through platforms that, according to experts and politicians like Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, lack adequate safeguards. But is banning social media for under-16s too extreme? Does it deprive them of an essential social tool and push them toward even less regulated online spaces?

Enforcing such a ban on millions of children seems challenging, but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try. Other industries — food, toys, cars — are regulated to protect children. Why should social media be an exception? Some kids may find ways around the ban, just as they do with age restrictions on alcohol or tobacco, but unrestricted access to these platforms poses serious risks that should be addressed. There is a growing consensus around this idea (77% of Australians welcomed the ban), which has garnered bipartisan support in many countries.

Moreover, responsibility should not fall entirely on parents. The core issues lie in how social media platforms are designed — engineered for addiction rather than safety. Tech companies use vast amounts of personal data to keep young users engaged, often exposing them to extreme content with little regard for their well-being. In 2024 alone, Big Tech spent over $51 million to fight KOSA (the Kids Online Safety Act), an American bill requiring platforms to protect children. Their opposition reveals where their priorities truly lie. This is why Australia’s law, which holds platforms accountable with fines of up to £25 million for failing to prevent underage users, is a crucial step forward.

Mark Zuckerberg’s recent relaxation of moderation and fact-checking policies only strengthens the case for stricter regulations. The principle of free speech should not be manipulated for profit while children are left vulnerable. Today’s youth already spend nearly nine hours a day on screens — at the cost of their mental health. Australia’s bold move may not be perfect, but it is a necessary step in protecting the next generation. (356 words)

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