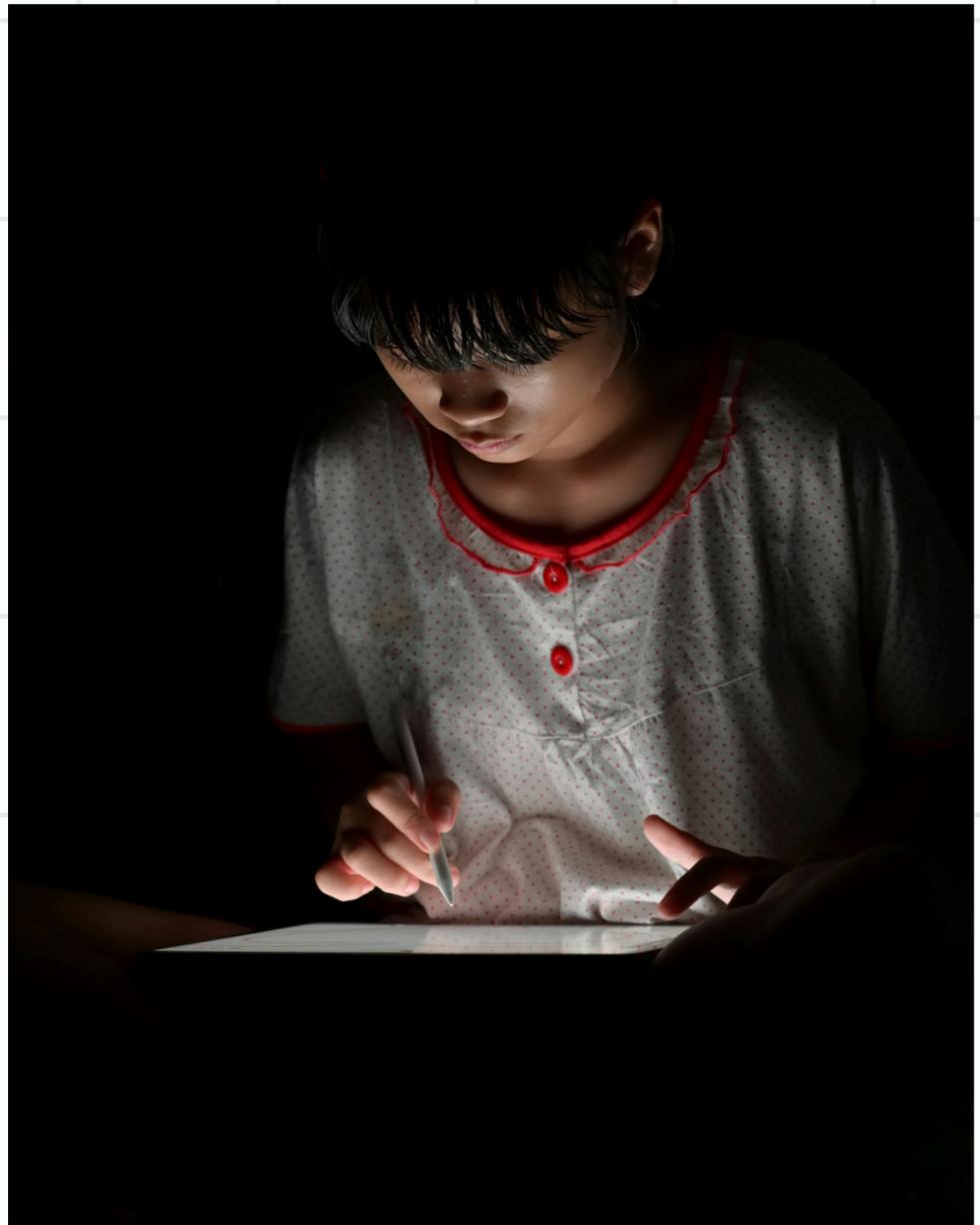


Can A Social Media Ban Really Work?



Harmful Content Exposure



In 2025, a study by the Australian government found that 96% of children aged 10-15 used social media, and 7 out of 10 had been exposed to harmful content. It included **misogynistic and violent material as well as content promoting eating disorders and suicide**.

One in seven also reported **grooming-type behaviour** from adults or older children, and more than half said they had been the victim of **cyberbullying**.



First-Of-A-Kind Ban



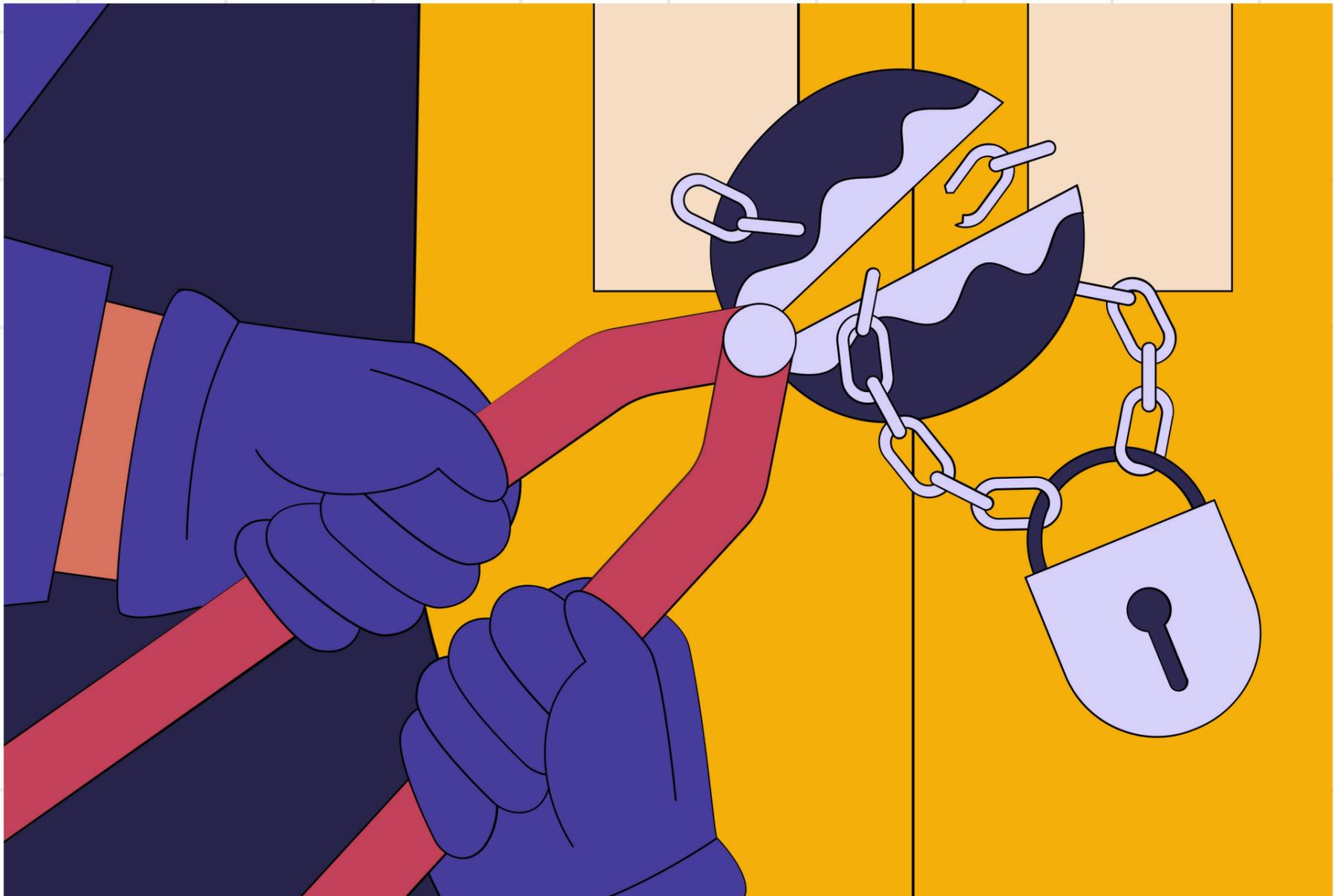
Keeping in view the dangers of social media, the Australian government decided that under-16s **cannot set up new accounts. Existing profiles are being deactivated.**

The ban extends to using social media services, such as Tiktok, X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat, among others.

Platforms found to be violating the rules will have to pay hefty fines.



Impact Of Bans



Restrictive frameworks and bans — be it on books or plastic or alcohol — have not always been successful. It usually **leads society to rebel, seek alternatives and leads to proliferation of black market availability of goods.** Let's consider some past precedents.



The Prohibition Era

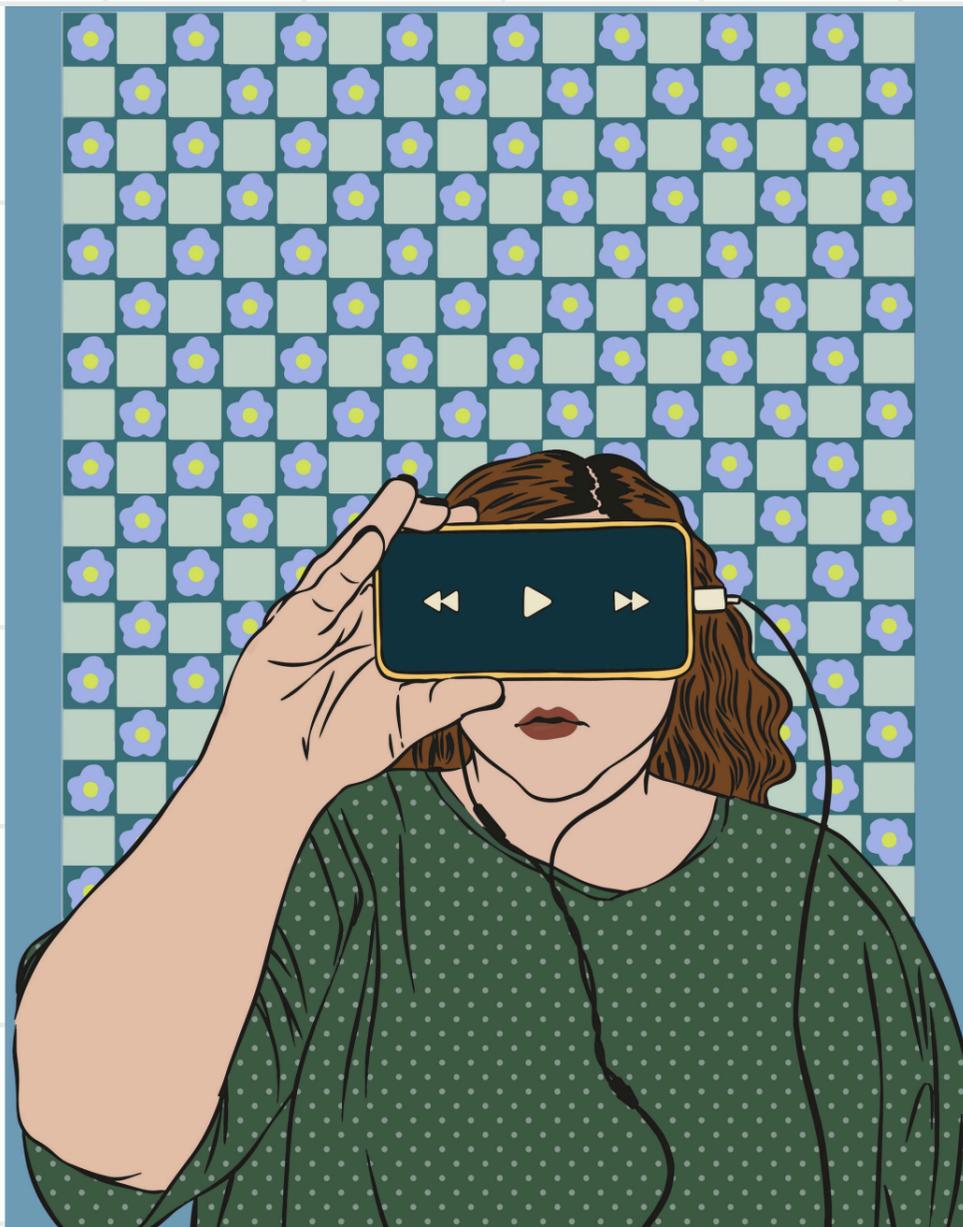


The Prohibition era in the US saw a ban on legal manufacture, sale, and transport of alcoholic beverages (1920-1933) under the 18th amendment and influence of the temperance movement.

It gave rise to **bootlegging** (illegal production/sale of liquor) and **speakeasies** (illegal drinking establishments). It's associated with the rise of **gangsterism**.



The Iron Law Of Prohibition



This principle says that **when something is made illegal, a stronger and dangerous version of that substance will take over the market.**

For example: During prohibition, it became more profitable for traffickers to sell hard liquor than beer.

Piracy bans spurred innovations like torrents and evading control via tech shifts rather than cessation.



Tariff Wars



The US raised import duties under the **Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act** (1930) to protect farmers and businesses from global competition.

Other countries responded by raising their own tariffs on American goods. It **set off a global trade war and worsened the effects of the Global Depression.**



Historical Censorship



Athenian lawmaker Draco's laws (621 BCE) mandated harsh punishments – including death even for minor thefts – to end the tradition of blood feuds. But the **brutality bred resentment and most were eventually repealed** by lawmaker Solon within decades.

The lapse of Britain's Licensing Act (1695) **ended ineffective press bans, which resulted in freer speech** and new ideas without leading to societal collapse.

