

COVIDSAFE APP

Will the tracing app have any implications for our women's safety in any way.

What is the COVIDSafe App?

The COVIDSafe App is part of a public health response to try and minimise the spread of COVID-19. The App traces every person who may have come into contact with someone who tests positive to the COVID-19 virus.

The COVIDSafe App works by sending out a signal via Bluetooth to detect other phones that have downloaded the app within a 1.5metre range and then stores the data in your phones database. The COVIDSafe App does not use GPS or location data, it only uses Bluetooth to connect with other phones.

If a phone user has tested positive to COVID-19, that information can be used and made available to health authorities to alert other people who have been within the range of the infected person.

The Government has advised that the App is most effective if it is running as you go about your daily business and routine and come into contact with people.

What personal data is collected?

- the name you choose to provide;
- your age range;
- your phone number;
- postcode; and
- information about testing positive for COVID-19.

The App will store data up to 21 days before deleting the data. The data collected includes:

- how many close contacts you have had;
- when you have contacted other people;
- how long you have been in contact with other people for; and
- the make and model of the phone of the other people you have been in contact with.

Who can access the data?

The data will be held by the Federal Government on an Amazon Web Services server in Australia. The Government has stated that health authorities will be able to access the data.

There is currently a Privacy Impact Assessment in place to mitigate and address privacy concerns for the COVIDSafe App. The Government has also drafted the Privacy Amendment (Public Health Contact Information) Bill 2020, to ensure that it is a criminal offence to collect, use or disclose COVIDSafe App data for a purpose that is not related to contact tracing. The maximum penalty would be up to 5 years imprisonment or a fine of \$63,000.

Should you download the App?

If you are in a domestic violence relationship or a survivor of domestic violence, you should do your own research and consider your own circumstances before downloading the App.

WESNET Safety Net Australia, a national women's peak body that works with women and children has considered the safety considerations of the COVIDSafe App. WESNET have explained that if your abuser has:

- physical access to your phone and knows your password;
- sophisticated technical abilities; or
- downloaded a surveillance App on your phone then it may not be safe for you to download the COVID-19 App.

To get information from the COVIDSafe App, the abuser will need to be able to access your phone, the COVIDSafe App and be able to interpret the data stored on your phone.

If you decide to download the App and want to keep certain meetings/arrangements secret from your abuser, you may decide to:

- leave your phone at a safe distance from those you are meeting with;
- leave your phone at home or in your car;
- turn off your Bluetooth if it is safe for you to do so; or
- turn off your phone, temporarily until it is safe for you.

These options will depend on your own situation and how safe and comfortable you feel using the COVIDSafe App.