



TikTok Australia
Level 10, 68 Pitt Street
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9 February 2022

Select Committee on Social Media and Online Safety
Department of the House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: smos.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Secretariat,

Thank you for providing us with a copy of the Hansard, following our appearance before the Select Committee on Social Media and Online Safety on 20 January 2022.

During that appearance, we committed to providing additional information on questions on notice put forward by Members of the Committee. This information is provided below.

Internal Governance

1. How big is your trust and safety team globally and in Australia? Do you proactively look for harmful content or only respond reactively?

2. Are the teams that do product policy (safety and security) firewalled from the government relations and growth teams?

Our mission at TikTok is to inspire creativity and bring joy. User safety goes hand in hand with TikTok's whole model and popularity and we invest significant resources into our Trust and Safety infrastructure, policies, and people.

We proactively remove content that breaches our Community Guidelines, and our moderation process is also supported by user reporting. Our latest Community Guidelines Enforcement Report can be found [here](#).

TikTok's publicly available [Community Guidelines](#) clearly describe what is and isn't allowed on our platform. We have robust enforcement of these guidelines through a combination of technology and thousands of human moderators based across the world to ensure we have 24/7 coverage of content.



Our moderators are supported by dedicated experts in policy and enforcement based in our regional Trust & Safety hubs and include Australian specialists who are familiar with our local culture and norms and work towards making the platform safer for Australians.

We also work with Australian NGOs and experts like the Butterfly Foundation and Alannah and Madeline Foundation, regulators including the eSafety Commission and Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce, and our APAC Safety Advisory Council to constantly review our policies and ability to respond to emerging safety issues.

Any new products or features are thoroughly reviewed and considered from a user safety and privacy perspective.

We continue to extend our invitation to the Committee to a tour of our APAC Transparency and Accountability Centre, where the Committee will be able to learn more about TikTok's Trust and Safety protections from our in-house experts.

AVM

3. The Department of Home Affairs submission asserts that “The Department’s activities to limit the spread of terrorist violent and extremist content (TVEC) online includes working with major platforms to encourage the proactive identification and removal of extremist content through operational assistance, policy development and legislative obligation, including through the Criminal Code Amendment (Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material) Act 2019 and the Online Safety Act 2021. The Department leads Australia’s representation and participation on international forums and industry groups relating to TVEC on the internet, including the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. Complementary to work done by the eSafety Commissioner, the Department identifies and refers TVEC to digital platforms for consideration against their terms of service for removal.” How frequently has the Department of Home Affairs shared TVEC content with TikTok this year?

4. What practical cooperation has the Department of Home Affairs provided to you on detecting and removing TVEC? Have they shared intelligence? Have they identified dangerous groups/individuals to you?

5. What more could the Department of Home Affairs be doing more in this space?

TikTok works with a range of Australian Government agencies, including the Department of Home Affairs to provide transparency about the safety protections on our platform and to cooperate on specific priorities such as the 2022 Australian Election. We have met with the Department of Home Affairs on multiple occasions, both directly and as a representative on the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce.



We also provide the Department of Home Affairs and other Australian Government agencies a dedicated escalation channel to report any concerning content on TikTok to our Trust and Safety teams for review. In 2021, we did not receive any escalations from Australian Government agencies that were directly related to terrorist violent and extremist content (TVEC).

We publish Transparency Reports every six months on Government Removal requests and Law Enforcement Information requests that can be found [here](#).

6. When asked at recent public hearings about whether certain statements would breach a platform's terms of service and allow for removal, a number of social media companies outlined that the answer depended on the context of the comments. Below are some examples of abusive and derogatory comments posted online. Can you outline to the committee the context in which these statements would not breach your policies and remain on your site? Would the context differ for a private individual and a public figure?

- Language suggesting a woman should put a bag over her head to suffocate herself
- "Take half a brick and hide behind a bush"
- "I bet she rages so hard a natural disaster occurs every time she has her period"
- "That woman is the reason nature designed the human hand to grasp a penis in a pleasing manner"
- "Cavorting whore"
- "Every homophobic whore deserves to have their c*nt sliced open with a chainsaw. Including the filthy sluts in Australian Parliament... I'm not advocating violence, but if any of those bigots was set on fire, I'd toast marshmallows in the flames."

TikTok's publicly available [Community Guidelines](#) clearly describe what is and isn't allowed on our platform. These Community Guidelines apply to all content on TikTok, including videos, hashtags, comments, and direct messages (DMs).

Online bullying, sexual harassment and hateful behaviour are not allowed under our Community Guidelines. For example, we remove all expressions of abuse, including threats or degrading statements intended to mock, humiliate, embarrass, intimidate, or hurt an individual. We take enforcement of our Community Guidelines very seriously, and any such content that is identified through our moderation process or user reporting will be reviewed for removal from our platform.



To enable expression about matters of public interest, critical comments of public figures may be allowed; however, serious abusive behaviour against public figures is prohibited.

We also publish quarterly Community Guideline Enforcement Reports to provide transparency about our content removal rates and how we enforce our Community Guidelines. The latest report can be found [here](#).

Other matters

During our appearance before the Committee, our witnesses stated that TikTok does not allow advertising of weight loss programs. We would like to clarify that our advertising policies do not allow advertising of weight loss/management fasting products or services and weight loss/management supplements.

Sincerely,



Brent Thomas

Director of Public Policy, Australia and New Zealand