TikTok Australia
180 George Street
Sydney
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25 November 2025

Dr Sean Turner
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: ec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Dr Turner,

Inquiry into the Internet Search Engine Services Online Safety Code – Further responses to Questions on Notice by TikTok

On 6 November 2025, we received further written questions on notice from Senator David Pocock relating to the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee's inquiry into the Internet Search Engine Services Online Safety Code. Our responses to these questions are set out below.

Kind regards,

Ella Woods-Joyce

Public Policy Lead, Content and Safety

TikTok Australia

Responses to Further Questions on Notice from Senator David Pocock

1. **Sponsored passes**
   - Does anyone within your organisation currently hold a sponsored pass to Parliament House?
   - If so, who, and which Member of Parliament sponsors that pass?

Answer

One employee, Tom Fardoulys, currently holds a sponsored pass. The pass is sponsored by Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash.

2. **Tax**
   - How does your company define "Australian-sourced revenue"? Do you allocate revenue by user location, advertiser billing address, or contracting entity?
   - What percentage of your Australian ad spend is invoiced by an Australian entity (e.g., Meta Australia Pty Ltd) versus offshore (e.g., Ireland, Singapore)?
   - Do you provide Australian advertisers with invoices from an Australian entity? If not, why not?
   - How much corporate income tax did your Australian entities pay in FY2023-24 and FY2024-25?
   - What was your effective tax rate on Australian-sourced profits?
   - How much of that tax was paid to the ATO versus withheld or credited overseas?

Answer

In this context, we have defined Australian-sourced revenue to be the revenue recognised in the financial statements of the Australian entities within the wider group. These statements contain the information used to calculate effective tax rate.

All "Australian ad spend" (i.e. ad spend contracted with TikTok Australia Pty Ltd) is invoiced by our Australian entity. Australian advertisers who are contracted with TikTok Australia Pty Ltd are provided invoices from the Australian entity.

In the year ended 31 December 2023, our Australian entities paid approximately A$9.6m of corporate income tax in Australia. In the year ended 31 December 2024, our Australian entities paid approximately A$18m of corporate income tax in Australia. This income tax was all paid to the ATO.

3. **Safety & algorithms**
   - How many under-16 accounts do you estimate are active on your platforms in Australia today? How is this figure verified?
   - How many child-safety incidents have you reported to eSafety or law enforcement in the past 12 months?
   - What is the headcount and FTE of your Australian-based safety team?
   - What is the headcount and FTE of your Australian-based child safety team?
   - How are "for you" or equivalent feeds or stories curated for accounts identified as under 18?
   - Do you measure time-spent, mood impact, or mental-health indicators among teen users? Please provide your latest report on this data.
   - Will you allow independent researchers or regulators to audit your recommendation systems for exposure to harmful or addictive content?
   - What proportion of harmful content that reaches under 18s from your algorithmic recommendations rather than user searches or follows?
   - Do you have internal metrics linking engagement-optimisation to teen well-being outcomes — and if so, are those reviewed by external ethics bodies? Please provide any relevant reports.
   - Why are there no Australians on your APAC Safety Advisory Council that you say ensures Australians are safe?
   - What were the requirements for qualifications on the Safety Advisory Council?
   - As part of an effort to strengthen children's privacy, TikTok has turned off targeted advertising using children's personal data in Europe and America. Why not Australia?

TikTok

<u>Answer</u>

With regard to the estimated number of under-16 accounts on TikTok, as stated in evidence to the Committee, "we've publicly disclosed that around 200,000 Australian teens are in the 13- to 15-year age bracket". This refers to teens active on a monthly basis.

Regarding headcount and referrals to law enforcement, please see our responses to questions provided to the committee on 13 November for further information.

With respect to metrics and measurements of indicators among teen users, we do not collate data in the way it has been described; however, our community's safety and wellbeing is a top priority. Wellbeing interventions are built into the app in a range of ways, including search interventions that redirect a user to support services (for example, Lifeline and the Butterfly Foundation). Where we identify a serious risk of imminent, serious harm to a user, our law enforcement outreach teams work proactively and quickly with local authorities to ensure the safety of our community.

More broadly, we are always investing in new ways to support our community's wellbeing through features like Screen Time Management and Sleep Hours to make it easier for people of all ages to create digital routines that work for them.

We also invest in features that help protect and empower TikTok creators to continue making content people love. This includes:

- Creator Care Mode helping creators better filter out offensive and unwanted comments.
- A new mute feature for TikTok LIVE, helping creators on LIVE to bulk mute words, phrases and emojis.
- Content Check Lite allowing creators to pre-check For You feed content eligibility before posting.
- Creator Inbox, a new professional experience helping creators more efficiently manage messages.
- Creator Chat Room allowing creators to connect and interact directly with eligible followers on TikTok.

More information about our in-app wellbeing features and resources is available on our Safety Centre at https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/.

TikTok supports independent research about our platform. Our global Transparency and Accountability Centres (TACs) in Dublin, Los Angeles, Singapore, and Washington, D.C. enable guests to see first-hand our work to protect the safety and security of the TikTok platform. At a TAC, visitors can learn about our source code and the workings of our platform's recommendation system. Through in-depth explorations of key components and processes, and code simulation, visitors can enhance their understanding of TikTok's operations, data flows, and the key processes behind the For You feed's recommendations.

Regarding our recommendation system, our platform uses these systems to offer users a personalised experience. These systems suggest content based on users' preferences as expressed through interactions on TikTok, such as following an account or liking a post. When users first sign up for TikTok, we may invite them to select categories of interest, like pets or travel, which help us form a user's For You and LIVE feeds. If users don't select any categories of interest, we start by offering a feed of recent posts that are popular with others on TikTok. When selecting an initial set of posts, the recommender system looks for popular content that is appropriate for a broad audience and influenced by a user's location and language settings. In addition to categories, we'll suggest popular creators for users to follow. If users don't select any followers or have any friends on TikTok, then they may not see content in their Friends Tab or Following feed. Once users start interacting on the app, interactions act as signals that help the recommender systems predict content that users are more likely to be interested in as well as the content they might be less interested in and may prefer to skip. A user's interactions across TikTok can impact how the system ranks and serves content. We recommend content based on several factors to predict how relevant and interesting content might be to a user. The three main factors are user interactions, content information, and user information.

Regarding the For You Feed of users under the age of 18, there are several categories of content that do not violate TikTok's Community Guidelines, but are still not eligible for recommendation to the For You Feed of users aged 13-17. To help maintain an age-appropriate experience, TikTok proactively detects content with more mature themes (e.g. content that is overtly sexually suggestive, is blatantly sensual, includes risky or dangerous activities, is violent or graphic, or includes tobacco or alcohol), and reduces discoverability and visibility of this content by labelling it not eligible for recommendation to users' For You feeds for any accounts, but tuned more conservatively for users under the age of 18.

In Q2 2025, more than 99% of the violative content we removed for violating our strict Community Guidelines was taken down before someone reported it to us, and more than 90% was removed before receiving any views. Since the beginning of 2023, we have removed 13.7 million videos in Australia for violating our strict Community Guidelines. Further details about our enforcement are published regularly in our transparency centre at: https://www.tiktok.com/transparency/en.

Australia is represented on our APAC Safety Advisory Council. The current serving member for Australia is Professor Crystal Abidin, Digital Anthropologist in Internet Studies at Curtin University and Founding Director of the Influencer Ethnography Research Lab. Candidates are recommended based on a range factors, including their areas of expertise (for example, youth safety).

Further information about the Council is available at: https://www.tiktok.com/transparency/en/advisory-councils.

Regarding user privacy, we seek to comply with the legal requirements of all markets in which we operate.