

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Committee Inquiries Question on Notice

Environment and Communications

Inquiry into the Internet Search Engine Services Online Safety Code

IQ25-000180

Division/Agency: DIV - Digital Platforms Safety and Classification

Hansard Reference: Spoken, Page No. 82 (13 October 2025)

Topic: Better deployment of interoperability as a policy lever

Dean Smith asked:

Senator DEAN SMITH: This is a question on notice for officials from the department of communications. I'm curious to know—in some evidence we heard this afternoon, the importance, or the centrality, of interoperability as a policy lever was raised by one of the witnesses. I wonder if you could provide some information to the committee as to what extent interoperability was considered and what limitations you might be aware of in regard to better deployment of interoperability as a policy lever. Thank you very much for that.

Answer:

- The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts understands that the question on notice is regarding interoperability as a policy lever in the context of parental control systems (tools to restrict or guide a child's digital interactions), as raised by Mr Tim Levy, Founder, Managing Director, Qoria during the Inquiry.
- In this context, we understand 'interoperability' to refer to the ability for parental control systems (e.g. screen time limits, content filters, app restrictions) to function consistently across platforms, services and devices.
- The social media minimum age framework puts the onus on platforms – not parents – to put in place age assurance mechanisms to prevent under 16s holding accounts on social media platforms. The Trial found that age assurance technology (tools to check age online) is effective and, in many cases, already being used by a range of digital platforms.
- As part of the Australian Government funded Age Assurance Technology Trial, the Age Check Certification Scheme examined parental controls, including tools developed by Qoria.
- The Trial report indicates that while better interoperability can help improve the usability and effectiveness of parental control systems, there are additional considerations to the take up of these tools for protecting children online. This includes low awareness of available tools and the complexity of configuring them across multiple devices (e.g. mobile phone, tablet, laptop, gaming console and TV).