

Joint Select Committee on Social Media and Australian Society – Responses to Questions on Notice – Batch A (Questions from Zoe McKenzie MP)

Batch	Question	TikTok Australia's Response
A	1. <i>How many end-users under 18 do you have in Australia?</i>	As a private company, we do not publicly disclose our demographics, particularly given their commercial sensitivity. However, we would encourage the Committee to consider the ACCC's sixth interim report for the Digital Platform Services Inquiry (available at https://www.accc.gov.au/about-us/publications/serial-publications/digital-platform-services-inquiry-2020-25-reports/digital-platform-services-inquiry-march-2023-interim-report). The Report considers competition and consumer issues in the provision of social media services to consumers and businesses in Australia by social media platforms, and Chapter 1 provides a helpful comparison of consumer engagement trends of platforms, including TikTok, broken down by age demographics, using the ACCC's data projections.
A	2. <i>How many end users under the age of 13 have been removed from the platform since 2017?</i>	TikTok discloses the number of suspected underage users it removes from the platform on a quarterly basis in its Community Guidelines Enforcement Reports. To the best of our knowledge, we are the only platform to be this transparent. Globally, between July 2020 and March 2024, TikTok removed approximately 227 million accounts belonging to suspected underage users.
A	3. How many 'problematic users' (i.e. users who have problematic patterns of overuse) do you have in Australia? a. <i>What is their age range in Australia?</i> b. <i>How many are under 18? (If you do not have a definition of overuse, how many users have used your platform for over 4 hours a day on average over the last 3 months)</i>	We do not define members of our community in the manner described in the question. TikTok offers its community of users a range of industry-leading tools to manage their screen time and set customisable screen time limits, as well as our Family Pairing features which allow parents and guardians to actively manage their teens' screen time by setting passcode-protected overall screen time limits, as well as limits for different times of day and days of the week. Users under the age of 18 have a screen time limit of 60 minutes by default. We also provide in-app prompts when users have been on the app for a particular period of time, encouraging them to 'take a break'. These tools and features are designed to empower users and families to make their own informed decisions and set appropriate boundaries around screen time.

A	<p>4. <i>What is your platform's definition of overuse?</i></p>	<p>For all users under the age of 18, we have a 60 minute default screen time limit. While there's no collectively-endorsed position on the 'right' amount of screen time or even the impact of screen time more broadly, we consulted the current academic research and experts from the Digital Wellness Lab at Boston Children's Hospital in choosing this limit. For all users, irrespective of age, we make it easy to set screen time limits, so our community can select for themselves a screen time limit that they are comfortable with. We also provide in-app prompts when users have been on the app for a particular period of time, encouraging them to 'take a break'.</p>
A	<p>5. <i>How many adult users were reported by Australian end-users aged under 18?</i></p> <p>a) What was the average response time?</p>	<p>All content that is reported by users on TikTok is assessed against our Community Guidelines, irrespective of the age of the user. In addition to reporting, we've built numerous controls into the app for users and families – such as the ability to make an account private, restrict who can engage with content, filter comments, disable messages, or block another user. Accounts of people aged under 18 are also set to private by default, which limits who can follow the account, view and interact with their videos and read their bio. The "Suggest Your Account to Others" function is turned off by default for teen accounts. If turned on, teen accounts are also not recommended to adults.</p> <p>Between January and March 2024 in Australia, 337,561 TikTok videos were removed for violating our Youth Safety and Wellbeing policies. The vast majority of these (335,157 videos, or 99.29%) were removed proactively (i.e. before any user reports). Of the remaining 2,404 videos that were removed reactively (i.e. following a user report), the vast majority (2,111 videos, or 87.81%) were removed less than 2 hours after receiving a user report.</p>

<p>A</p>	<p>6. <i>How many CSAM reports made by Australian end-users?</i></p> <p>a) <i>What was the average response time?</i></p>	<p>Child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA), including the sharing of child sexual abuse material (CSAM), grooming, paedophilia, sextortion, sexual solicitation, and sexual harassment of young people under the age of 18, is abhorrent and strictly prohibited on TikTok. When we become aware of suspected CSEA, whether through our own proactive detection methods, community reporting, or industry partnerships, we take immediate action to remove it, permanently ban accounts, and submit reports to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).</p> <p>NCMEC discloses the aggregate number of CyberTips received from service providers annually. Further information and data concerning our work to identify and report instances of CSEA can be found here: https://www.tiktok.com/transparency/en/child-exploitation/.</p> <p>Between January and March 2024 in Australia, 10,300 TikTok videos were removed for violating our Youth Exploitation and Abuse policy, which includes but is not limited to CSEA. The vast majority of these (9,969 videos, or 96.79%) were removed proactively (i.e. before any user reports). Of the remaining 331 videos that were removed reactively (i.e. following a user report), the vast majority (297 videos, or 89.73%) were removed less than 2 hours after receiving a user report.</p> <p>In the 2023 Basic Online Safety Expectations notice summary document, issued by the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner, TikTok's median response time to CSEA reports by users stood at 5.2 minutes, ahead of the nearest other platform at 8.22 minutes. This means we are also comparatively quick to take action on any user reports. More information is available here: https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-03/Basic-Online-Safety-Expectations-Non-Periodic-Notices-Issued-February-2023_0.pdf?v=1722309804677.</p> <p>Further detailed information on TikTok's work to address CSEA can be found in eSafety's October 2023 Basic Online Safety Expectations Key Findings Report: https://www.esafety.gov.au/industry/basic-online-safety-expectations/responses-to-transparency-notices/non-periodic-notices-issued-February-2023-key-findings</p>
----------	---	---

<p>A</p>	<p>7. <i>How many scam posts were reported on the platform by Australian end-users?</i></p> <p>a) <i>What was the post's [sic] average engagement rate?</i></p> <p>b) <i>What was your response, including average response time?</i></p>	<p>Between January and March 2024 in Australia, 73,112 TikTok videos were removed for violating our Frauds and Scams Policy. The vast majority of these (72,009 videos, or 98.49%) were removed proactively (i.e. before any user reports). Of the remaining 1,103 videos that were removed reactively (i.e. following a user report), the vast majority (1,021 videos, or 92.57%) were removed less than 2 hours after receiving a user report.</p>
<p>A</p>	<p>8. <i>What human resources do you have dedicated to content moderation in Australia?</i></p> <p>a. <i>What is the number of content moderators located within Australia?</i></p> <p>b. <i>Where are these resources based?</i></p> <p>c. <i>What is the number dedicated to Australian content or addressing reports from Australian end-users?</i></p> <p>d. <i>What are their qualifications and training requirements?</i></p> <p>e. <i>What support is available to them to ensure they can do their job?</i></p> <p>f. <i>What is their volume of work and KPIs (for example, how much content per hour are they required to review)</i></p> <p>g. <i>What languages do they review posts in?</i></p>	<p>This year TikTok will invest more than US\$2 billion in our Trust and Safety work globally. This supports the employment of more than 40,000 Trust & Safety experts, whose work includes keeping our platform safe from fraud and scams.</p> <p>Within our global Trust & Safety workforce, we employ specialist personnel with regional or country-specific expertise, who work alongside subject matter specialists who may have responsibilities spanning multiple markets, including Australia (e.g. expertise in minor safety, illegal activities and regulated goods, law enforcement liaison). Our global content moderation teams moderate content in more than 70 languages, and include approximately 200 moderators with dedicated responsibility for the Australian market.</p> <p>KPIs, required qualifications and training differ significantly depending on the nature and responsibilities of the particular role. We are committed to the wellbeing of all our employees and provide comprehensive and evidence-based programs, to promote and support physical and mental wellbeing throughout each employee's journey with us. We also provide our Trust and Safety employees with membership to the Trust and Safety Professional Association (TSPA). This membership allows them to access resources for career development, participate in workshops and events, and connect with a network of peers across the industry.</p> <p>Detailed information about our Trust and Safety teams' volume of work (e.g. number of videos removed) can be found in our quarterly Community Guidelines Enforcement Reports.</p>