

Question on Notice from Mr Andrew Wallace MP, due to the social media inquiry on 23 October

**Question:** *Do you, or does your organisation, have any financial or other form of commercial relationship with any social media platform, technology platform, gaming platform or any similar such entity? If so, please advise with whom and describe the nature of that relationship – e.g. direct funding, discounts, in-kind support, advisory support, consulting, research partnership, information exchange? Please also outline the value of any such financial or other form of commercial relationship over the past 5 years.*

**Answer:** Beyond Blue is a mental health not-for-profit organisation whose vision is that all Australians achieve their best possible mental health. For nearly 24 years, Beyond Blue has been supporting the mental health of all people in Australia where they live, work, play and connect.

We have been advocating strongly for social media companies to take more responsibility for the quality and safety of their products.

#### Social media platforms

We take “social media platforms” to mean platforms that use a commercial business model to facilitate social interaction online, e.g. those operated by social media company Meta.

Beyond Blue does not have any financial or other form of commercial relationship with any social media platform.

Google is not a social media platform but a search platform. An overwhelming volume of traffic to the Beyond Blue website, which offers free, 24/7 mental health advice, information and support options to people around the country, comes from Google searches. Like many in the mental health sector and more broadly in the non-for-profit sectors, we participate in Google Ad Grants, which offers some free advertising to eligible non-profits.

Like our colleagues in the sector, we believe that search platforms and social media platforms should be doing more to boost the visibility of verified, evidence-based mental health content and support. Independent research demonstrates that people, especially young people, seek mental health-related information on search and social media platforms. Search and social media platforms are therefore essential channels for delivering mental health advice and support.

Beyond Blue remains open to any opportunity to work with large online search and/or social platforms to enhance users’ access to evidence-based mental health information, advice and support. We believe search and social media platforms should contribute to the costs of producing verified mental health content.

#### Technology platforms

We take “technology platforms” to mean digital technology platforms that enable our operations to deliver on our mission and vision.

Beyond Blue participates in commercial relationships with a broad range of technology platforms. Beyond Blue offers free mental health support by phone, online and in person. These include services that are delivered using or facilitated by digital platforms, as well as self-help digital supports. In addition, and like all contemporary businesses, we use digital technology in our daily back-of-house operations.

Our operations, whether administrative or consumer-facing, therefore require us to enter into commercial arrangements with technology companies (e.g. Microsoft) and we engage in these relationships with integrity and community benefit front-of-mind. Any pro bono arrangements with the technology platforms and suppliers that help us deliver mental health support are pursued to drive positive outcomes, minimise costs, and maximise the contributions of our supporters, funders, and donors so we can do more for the communities we serve.

We are proud of our working relationships with various technology companies, including our world-first not-for-profit adoption of advanced Sitecore technology that make it easier for people to find online the mental health information and supports that are best suited to them. This relationship, and others, are already on the public record.

We participate in these arrangements with transparency and integrity. We have no conflicts to declare.

### Gaming platforms

We take “gaming platforms” to mean platforms that offer interactive, online or digital gaming activities.

Beyond Blue does not have any financial or other form of commercial relationship with gaming platforms.

We recently ran a campaign on the popular fundraising platform Tiltify, which specialises in promoting fundraising opportunities among gaming communities. This exercise promoted mental health messages to the gamers and raised funds for the Beyond Blue Support Service, which is funded entirely by donations, and provides free, immediate, 24/7 mental health counselling, advice and referral to anyone in Australia.