

Inquiry into law enforcement capabilities in relation to child exploitation

Public Hearing – 20 February 2023

Questions on notice

Meta

Question 1

Mr LLEW O'BRIEN: I don't want to seem like I'm labouring on it, but I'm in the Jason Wood camp. You'd need to explain these things to me in layman's terms. Is there any record of you stopping the livestreaming of child exploitation material while it's happening? Have you ever done that?

Ms Garlick: I'd be happy if we could maybe take off notice and share as a follow-up some real-life examples of where we have worked to rescue people or to prevent crimes from occurring. We certainly have—

Mr LLEW O'BRIEN: I'm talking about the actual stopping of a stream of livestreaming child exploitation material. I'm sure that we all want that not to happen in the first place, but when a little human being is being raped, if it's commercial we want that obviously to stop immediately so that incentive for it to continue isn't there. Can you give me any example or numbers on where you've stopped something like that happening?

Ms Garlick: I'm happy to take that on notice. I don't have numbers to hand right now, but I'm happy to follow up with more details.

Meta answer:

Meta's significant commitment to safety and security has directly led to the rescue of many children at imminent risk of abuse.

We do not receive systematic data on the percentage of our referrals to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children or law enforcement (in instances of imminent threat of real-world harm) that have resulted in the rescue of a child. As indicated at the hearing, we do however receive ad hoc anecdotes and feedback from law enforcement about the value of our efforts in supporting them to disrupt the risk of real-world harm, including in instances where online content is being created to document the live abuse of a child.

Law enforcement has provided us with many examples where our safety efforts and law enforcement support have led to the apprehension of offenders who were imminently about to abuse or in the process of abusing a child, including in Australia.

Question 2

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: I come back to why they were rejected. What was it that didn't meet the appropriate—

CHAIR: Thank you, Senator Shoebridge. Your last question.

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: What was it that didn't meet in the eyes of the eSafety Commissioner appropriate committee safety standards in the codes which Meta was in part developing?

Mr Machin: Could I suggest that perhaps we follow up with some material on notice for you? I'm very happy to answer the question, but—

CHAIR: That's a good idea. If you could take that on notice, because our time has expired. If you could take that on notice, we're very keen to get information. Also, as you can tell from the questioning, we're very concerned about end-to-end encryption and the fact that there do not seem to be the tools to help prevent these serious crimes. I do want to place on record our thanks to you for your submissions and, importantly, the fact that you came this morning and allowed us to ask questions of you. If you could follow up with the issues you've taken notice, we'd greatly appreciate it. Thank you, everyone. We will move on and call our next witnesses.

Mr Machin: Thank you very much.

Meta answer:

We understand that, subsequent to this public hearing, the industry associations who are drafting the industry codes have published both the draft codes provided to the eSafety Commissioner, and the Commissioner's feedback (received in February 2023). These are available at:

<https://onlinesafety.org.au/codes/>

We are contributing to the next steps by industry associations to consider the feedback.