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Subject: Note to ACMA on Inquiry so far [SEC=OFFICIAL]
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Attachments: [REDACTED]

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Cath

Hope all is well over in Belco.

Following on from our chat yesterday the team have pulled together the below to help you with your prep for tomorrow afternoon.

Public hearings to date

There have been three public hearings to date (21 & 22 December, 18 January). As far as we have seen (noting that the transcript is not available yet for yesterday's hearing) the issue of mis/disinformation has not come up in the public hearings.

Witnesses have mainly been advocates, NGOs, academics and people who have personal experiences of online harms (including harassment, abuse and victims of non-consensual sharing of intimate images).

The issues the hearings have covered so far include:

- Bullying and harassment on social media
- Child safety
- Children's access to inappropriate content online (including pornography and violent material)
- Mental health impacts of social media
- Age verification measures
- Importance of digital literacy education
- Need for greater transparency for digital platforms/services
- Need for increased prevention and support services to support Australians (especially children)
- Impact of algorithms
- Racist and hate speech online

Submissions

There are 58 submissions published on the Committee's Inquiry site. Submissions have been received from individuals, academics, advocates, NGOs, government and industry.

We are in the process of reviewing the submissions, and those we have read tend to focus on online safety issues. Some submissions do cover mis/disinformation, including the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Butterfly Foundation whose submissions notes that social media companies and governments need to provide support and education to users to help them discern between misinformation and factual information. We've also highlighted sections from DIGIs submission that are particularly relevant and may be raised by

the Committee:

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) will have oversight of the codes and report to Government on the adequacy of platforms' measures and the broader impacts of disinformation.

DIGI is yet to see the ACMA's report on the effectiveness of the ACPDM that it provided to the Government on June 30, 2021. Reviewing this report will assist DIGI in its efforts to continue to strengthen the code in line with expectations. DIGI intends to conduct a review of the ACPDM in 2022.

In the absence of seeing this report, and in advance of the review, over the course of September-November 2021, DIGI has made a recommendation to the Australian Government (via the ACMA, Minister's Office and the Department of Communications) for how the ACPDM can be strengthened, for which we are waiting an outcome.

DIGI has presented an identified gap in the governance arrangements outlined should disagreements arise between the complainants of the ACPDM and the Complaints Sub-Committee and has proposed that the ACMA provide this appeals role. We believe an appeals process operated by the ACMA will provide an important safety net for consumers in relation to the ACPDM.

One of the biggest challenges that DIGI encountered in developing the ACPDM was there is no consensus as to what constitutes misinformation and disinformation – this is an area where academics, regulators, MPs and media all disagree.

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Hope the above helps.

Holler if you need anything further.

Pauline

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