



30 November 2023

Hon Winston Peters
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade
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Dear Hon Mr Winston Peters

Netsafe briefing to incoming Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade - online safety in New Zealand and abroad

Congratulations on your election and appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. You're likely to be scanning briefings from officials to inform your thinking on priorities. As you do, please consider our briefing on online safety in New Zealand and abroad, alongside briefings from your department and officials.

Netsafe is the recipient of MFAT funding through the Pacific Development Group ending February 2025.

Netsafe participates in international work for these key reasons:

- The Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015 requires that Netsafe develop working relationships with both domestic and foreign online content platform hosts.
- The Ministry of Justice Contract Netsafe holds to deliver services related to the Harmful Digital Communications Act requires that Netsafe do international work
- To sustain the multi-stakeholder model (NGO, Government, private sector, end user) input into online safety policy and product development, which requires people to be present and participating in networks for the multi stakeholder model to remain functional and effective.

We very much look forward to working with you to ensure a safer internet for all users at the same time as exploring the benefits of new technology.

The attached briefing to incoming ministers tells you about Netsafe, the work we do with government and community, and rising levels of online harm in New Zealand.

In this letter we highlight our work in international fora and the Pacific.

International Online safety work

The international online safety work that Netsafe does in partnership with Government ensures New Zealand advances its interest in safe, open and secure online spaces and places and that we can participate in international discussions about online safety at both the Government and Non-Governmental constituencies in international internet and online forums.

Closer to home Netsafe is strengthening our Trans-Tasman relationship with the Australian e-safety Commissioner and revitalising and supporting the Pacific with their online safety concerns.

In global fora we are involved in the:

- *Global Online Safety Regulators Network* - launched in November 2022, the forum shares information, best practice, expertise and experience, to support harmonised or coordinated approaches to online safety issues. Australia, Ireland, South Africa, Korea, UK, Fiji are members and Canada, Germany, and New Zealand are observers.
- *Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse* - In May 2022, New Zealand joined the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and abuse. Netsafe is part of the multistakeholder network that supports the global partnership.
- *Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism* - brings together the technology industry, government, civil society organisations, and academia. Its aim is to foster collaboration and information-sharing, to counter terrorist and violent extremist activity online. Netsafe participates in the Forum's working groups, alongside the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- *Global Coalition for Digital Safety at the World Economic Forum* - The Global Coalition for Digital Safety aims to accelerate public-private cooperation to tackle harmful content online and serves to exchange best practices for new online safety regulations, take coordinated action to reduce the risk of online harm, and drive forward collaboration on programs to enhance digital media literacy. Netsafe contributes to the World Economics' global standards and report Global Coalition for Digital Safety (weforum.org).
- *INHOPE* - is a global network combating online child sexual abuse material. The network consists of fifty hotlines in 46 countries that provide the public with a way to anonymously report illegal content online, with a focus on child sexual abuse material. Netsafe is the New Zealand INHOPE member. The mission of INHOPE is to support cooperation and information-sharing between hotlines, to maximise their global effectiveness. Netsafe is the Vice Chair of Inhope until the middle of 2024.
- *WeProtect Global Alliance* - We Protect Global Alliance is a global multi-stakeholder response to combating online child sexual abuse. It brings together governments, the private sector, civil society organisations, and international organisations to develop policies and solutions to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse online. Netsafe is a member.
- The *Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers* (ICANN) is the organisation where the Internet community goes about coordinating global Domain Name System policies, IP address allocation policies and various protocol parameters and end user representation. In this forum the world is coordinating to stop domain name abuse and other law enforcement issues that are cross border.
- *Global Anti Scam Alliance* - in country representative joined up globally to fight fraud and scams and consumer protection.
- *Oversight of the major platforms* - we are one of only 11 organisations globally appointed to Meta's Safety Advisory Council and the Netsafe CEO is the Chair of the Oversight Committee for the Aotearora New Zealand Code of Practice for Online Safety and Harms signed by Meta, Amazon (Twitch), You Tube, X (formerly Twitter) and Tik Tok.
- *Social Media Council Georgia* – international Advisory Board member.

In the Pacific:

- The upgrade of the fibre optic cable has expanded internet access and usage in Samoa, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue and brings new risks of online harm. Netsafe is strengthening bi-lateral relationships with these communities and governments to deliver improved online safety outcomes.
- Save the Children Australia, ChildFund Australia and Netsafe New Zealand are also collaborating on children and youth online safety in Papua New Guinea, which is being established in December 2023 with seed funding from Meta (Facebook).

- The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology is partnering with CERT NZ with support from Cyber Safety Pasifika, NetSafe, Ministry of Police and Prisons, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture and Office of the Regulator for a 'Cyber SMART Samoa Roadshow' funded by CERT NZ and the New Zealand Government. The first roadshow was conducted in August 2023 with another for 2024 a possibility.
- Within the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent a sustained and transformational gender equality agenda within the technology and connectivity thematic area, considerations involve integrating gender perspectives and addressing gender disparities in access to, use of, and benefits from technology and connectivity.

In Australia

- We have close connections with Australia on cyber and online safety. Prime Ministers have committed to online safety cooperation in their Annual Joint Statements including supporting the Trans-Tasman Online Safety Conference jointly co-hosted by Netsafe and the Office of the E-Safety Commissioner.

We will identify opportunities for you to participate in international online safety events, and support you to engage on cyber safety issues during your international travel and meetings with foreign counterparts.

There are the following opportunities in 2024:

- to support a Roundtable in the Pacific related to online safety in 2024 and the suggestion is to hold this on the sidelines of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) beginning on 21 October 2024 on the theme "One Resilient Common Future: Transforming our Common Wealth". As noted on the Commonwealth website it will be important given the focus on the vital importance of fintech, entrepreneurship, and ICT education policy, that the Samoa CHOGM underscores the necessity for these domains to ensure safety and security for all users and
- The UK Home Secretary will host the first global fraud summit in the UK some time in March 2024 which is an opportunity for New Zealand to show leadership in the fraud and anti-scam space.

Our core message to you is that online safety across borders is critical to ensuring New Zealand can participate in global trade and realise the benefits of connectivity and digital innovation.

We look forward to engaging with and supporting you with any international engagement concerning online safety.

Yours sincerely



Brent Carey
Chief Executive Officer