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Human Rights and Technology Project

Australian Human Rights Commission.

Level 3, 175 Pitt Street

Sydney NSW 200.

2 October 2018

Dear Mr Santow,

Re: Human Rights and Technology: Issues Paper (2018)

The Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI) welcomes the Human Rights and Technology Issue Paper and the Commission's engagement with this important work.

As charitable institution created at the nexus of human rights and technology we have been working since 2012 to improving the prevention, mitigation and response to online hate. We seek to reduce the harm that can occur to people as a result of internet based racism, homophobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia, disablism and other forms of hate targeting vulnerable segments of society as well as cyberbullying that may targets specific individuals. We carry out our mission through research, education, monitoring of online hate, collaboration with stakeholders and engagement both locally and internationally in public debate.

We were please to attend the excellent conference that launched the issue paper. Our CEO also attended the working group meeting for the IEEE SSIT and contributed to that submission, as well as participating in the creation of the submission from the La Trobe LawTech group. Detailed considerations, including on the issue of online hate specifically, can be found in those submissions. In this brief submission we wish to draw your attention to our support as a technology focused human rights based civil society organisation to these submissions.

We also wish to reiterate a point made in these submissions about the need to support both existing civil society organisations as they transition to a more digital world, and the need to support new civil society organisations that may be needed to address new problems impacting society as a result of technology.

We have been pleased to work in partnership with the Commission on a number of instances, most notably the 2012 Aboriginal Memes incidents and through the Cyber-Racism and Community Resilience project (CRaCR). We are also pleased to see our work used by the Commission, for example the reference to our report on anti-Muslim hate which is cited in the Commission's 30 October 2017 submission "Information concerning Australia's compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination". We believe the public interest is best served through such collaboration and use of civil society research and resources.

Due to the technical nature of both our work and the problems we tackle there are additional barriers that get in the way of raising the funds needed to support such work. These barriers affect public fund raising, the ability to gain support from major donors, and the ability to secure grants. We develop our own software, which has been cited as innovative by UNESCO,[1] and results of that software have been used by United Nation experts,[2] foreign governments,[3] presented at the UN and on UNTV,[4] and before other international bodies.[5] In some instances we find we are excluded form government based innovation funding specifically because we are a charity rather than a for-profit company. There will be other organisations and future organisations that are similarly affected. We urge the Commission to focus not just on human rights impacts from for-profit companies, but also on enhancing the capacity of human rights focused civil society to itself engage in technological development and innovation.

Thank you for our consideration of these brief comments as well as the more detailed commentary in the other submissions in which we have participated.

Regards,

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[1] Gagliardone, I., Gal, D., Alves, T. & Martinez, G. 2015, *Countering Online Hate Speech*, UNESCO Publishing, Paris 41.

[2] Mutuma Ruteere, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on his mission to Australia, Human Rights Council*, 35th sess, UN Doc A/HRC/35/41/Add.2 (9 June 2017) 15 [59]

[3] Andre Oboler, *Measuring the Hate: The State of Antisemitism in Social Media (Israeli Foreign Ministry, 2015)* <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/AntiSemitism/Documents/Measuring-the-Hate.pdf>

[4] http://ohpi.org.au/unaoc/

[5] http://ohpi.org.au/annual-report-2016-international-engagement/

Dr Andre Oboler

CEO, Online Hate Prevention Institute