

Core Funding Proposal

Responsible Technology Australia

To: Mannifera

From: Responsible Technology Australia

Responsible Technology Australia (RTA) is an independent non-partisan organisation with a vision for an Australian society that fully embraces the ethical progression of technology that strengthens our communities and democracy.

The absence of digital rights in Australia has enabled the proliferation of digital platforms powered by a business model that uses near-total surveillance of Australians to amass our personal data to sell off to advertisers, with little to no oversight. These models have produced significant harms and ongoing threats to the integrity of our democracy (by undermining truth, media and our democratic institutions), the safety of children online (through harmful content and foregoing their privacy) and the mental health of all of us (by creating addictive services and algorithms that harvest our attention and manipulate our behaviour).

There are a myriad of solutions required to mitigate these issues - but central to Australia's digital future that strengthens our society and democracy, is the need for digital rights that enshrines our privacy and protects our personal data.

We are seeking core support to strengthen our capacity and turbocharge our impact to drive the movement for digital rights in Australia.

With significant convening power including access to Government and Opposition leadership, strong policy backing through our international network, as well as powerful public mobilisation methodology from our core campaigning partnership with Purpose -- RTA is well positioned to accelerate systemic impact on digital rights in Australia. As the first Australian funders, you will be instrumental in progressing this movement.

A Snapshot of RTA

Mission: To bring together diverse perspectives to build sensible and nuanced approaches to tackling the social harms caused by technology

Our work is underpinned by three core principles -

Public Oversight: The right for public oversight of the social impact and harms caused by technology

Data Rights: Australians having clarity and control over how their personal data is collected, used, monetised and shared

Transparency: The right to know how content is being served and influencing our worldview

Approach: Since launching in October 2019, our three core workstreams have entailed:

- 1) **Advocacy** with key influencers, policy/decision makers in Parliament
- 2) Driving **public awareness** and action through campaigns and education
- 3) **Thought leadership** and building out an evidence base on how Australians perceive and navigate these issues

Key Achievements

Since launching in November 2019, we have achieved significant success including:

- Broad news coverage, including on Sunrise, The Australian and the Sydney Morning Herald, as well as trade outlets engaging the tech sector
- Ongoing engagement with the Prime Minister's Office, Office of the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Attorney-General's Office and Treasury - along with various backbencher MPs and Senators from both sides of politics
- Invited as the only civil sector participant to a public round table inquiry for the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters with the ACCC and ACMA
- Invited to participate in a private round-table consultation for the proposed Online Safety Act
- Commissioned a landmark study on Australian perceptions of the digital platforms, the harms they cause and the solutions to addressing them
- Are currently running various campaigns, message testing and experiments to illustrate how social harms have manifested on Facebook

Key Activities over the next 12 months

- Significantly increase presence and influence in Canberra, including through partnering with the Parliamentary Friends of the Digitally Enabled Economy Group
- Undertake a series of interventions to build out public constituencies around digital rights including campaigns, public facing events and education initiatives

- Become a leading voice in the media and in Canberra on informing the direction and conversations around new policies to safeguard our digital rights
- Through partnership with leading local and international institutions, undertake novel academic research to guide the digital rights sector

Our Opportunity

We are seeking the support of the Mannifera collective to join the movement to ensure digital rights to all Australians and the safeguarding of our democracy and political institutions.

Our core funder - the Luminate Group - have indicated that they are **willing to match funding pledged to RTA** by Mannifera members. This is an unprecedented opportunity to truly accelerate the necessary systemic change needed to drive progress on this issue.

For more information please contact:

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