



Age Assurance Technology Trial

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Stakeholder Advisory Board Minutes

12/12/2024

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Minutes of the First Stakeholder Advisory Board Meeting held Via Teams on Thursday, 12 December 2024, at 9 am AEDT

In Attendance:

Professor Jon Rouse APM	Chair
Iain Corby	AATT Engagement Lead
Tim Levy	Qoira Limited
Jenny Duxbury	INK & Digi
Conrad Townson	IFYS
Ajoy Ghosh	Cyber Alchemist
David Cooke	Aylo
Carol Ronkin	Bravehearts
Campbell Wilson	Monash University
Cheryl Seeto	Meta
Melinda Tankard Reist	Collective Shout
Pauline Ross (Observer)	e-Safety
George Billinge	Illuminate Tech
Peter Violaris	IDVerse
Ainsleigh H(Observer)	e-Safety
Andrew Hammond	AATT Deputy Project Director
Amber Hawkes	Blue Lantern Consulting
Susan McLean	Cybersafety Solutions

Apologies:

Waheeduddin Jayhoon	Australian Government
Deborah Young	RegTech
Kirra Pendergast	Safe on Social
Amanda Third	Western Sydney University
Ashley Gatt	Attorney-General
Colm Gannon	ICMEC
Ben Au	Snap
Ashley Katz	National Office for Child Safety
Amanda Third	Western Sydney University

1. Introductions

Professor Jon Rouse welcomed the participants and expressed his appreciation for their attendance, especially considering the late notice of the meeting. He thanked everyone for making the time to join and highlighted the importance of their participation in the Stakeholder Advisory Board for the Age Assurance Technology Trial.



Jon introduced himself as the Chair of the Advisory Board, confirming his role in leading the board's activities through to the announcement of the trial findings, which are expected in mid-2025. He emphasised that the focus of today's meeting would be on reviewing the draft terms of reference.

Introductions were made by all participants.

Iain Corby, Engagement Lead for the trial project team, reminded the board to provide bios of themselves to be uploaded to the website.

2. Project update

Iain provided an overview of the key objectives of the trial. He highlighted that the project aims to test and evaluate age verification technology in real-world settings, focusing on its effectiveness, user experience, and overall impact on compliance with age-related regulations. It was noted that the trial is not making decisions on behalf of authorities and that it is unlikely that a silver bullet solution for all use-cases exists. He emphasised that the project is designed to be collaborative, with input from a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that the trial's results are comprehensive and authoritative.

Iain explained the project team structure, highlighting that the project team consists of a diverse group of professionals, including technology developers, age assurance experts, and regulatory specialists.

ACTION: Iain to send out the link to the engagement event to all members of the board which contained detailed explanation on the work packages.

Iain gave a brief explanation on the project milestones, with a preliminary report due at the end of April and the final report at the end of June. He noted that the report will be independently published by ACCS.

Questions and comments about the approach of the trial

Tim Levy commented on the media coverage of the trial, noting some misconceptions. Iain responded that he was aware but that the trial was still in its early stages, the project team will address any misconceptions through transparent communication and ongoing stakeholder engagement. He highlighted that ACCS is an audit company and does not work on digital ID's nor any other age verification solution.

Tim asked how the project would address emerging or restricted technologies that aren't fully developed or available in the public domain yet, as opposed to just focusing on current, available solutions. Iain clarified that the project would initially focus on technologies that are ready for testing and deployment. He explained that a "pure" approach would prioritise technologies that have reached a high level of readiness, specifically those at Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 9, which indicates that a solution is fully operational, commercially viable, and scalable. Iain noted that this would be one of the key criteria for selecting technologies for evaluation. He explained that scalability would be crucial, as any proposed solution must be able to function effectively at a large scale. He noted that this won't mean technologies will be ignored.



Andrew Hammond explained that the project's market scan would focus on identifying existing, functional age verification technologies currently being used in Australia. While the primary focus is on mature solutions that are already delivering results, the trial will assess whether any emerging technologies are ready for deployment. If gaps or underdeveloped solutions are identified, they could be flagged for further analysis or testing in the future. He noted that no technology is off the table, but the short timeframe needs to be considered.

Tim raised concerns about the timeline for implementation, noting that while the government has 12 months to act, he asked if this was the case. Pauline Ross, an Observer from eSafety, responded that there was a change to the Social Media Bill during its consideration by Parliament so now implementation must be within the 12-month period. Iain noted that the trial is not linked to any particular legislation or use-case.

Tim asked if the evaluation of technologies will include advice on circumvention to the government. Andrew answered that circumvention considerations are part of the trial but likely to be within the bounds already established by the providers in their own design and testing.

Ajoy Ghosh asked two questions. He inquired if the trial would examine issues beyond functionality, specifically whether the technology is focused purely on age verification or if it also involves identity verification. He also raised a concern about the potential for surveillance misuse, citing the example of a police officer using the technology to impersonate a 13-year-old. Iain explained that the trial would follow the international standard 27566 for age assurance, which covers accuracy, privacy and data security. Andrew confirmed that the distinction between age verification and identity verification was a critical point of focus and said he would refer the law enforcement use case to the trial team.

Peter Violaris pointed out that age verification technology is already being used at scale by major services like Instagram and Uber, and questioned how much of the report will reference these real-world applications. He asked if these technologies still needed to be tested from scratch. Iain highlighted that live technologies such as these will usually have a TRL of 9 which will be reflected in the report. Andrew added that there are two key documents being produced, one will provide a market scan of existing age verification technologies in Australia.

Iain highlighted to the board the current, proactive expressions of interest from suppliers of technology who wish it to be included in the trial; not all will be tested and will go through a selection process.

The February meeting of the board will be more substantive, and papers on the topics for discussion will be distributed beforehand.

Terms of Reference

The board then discussed the terms of reference, which had been distributed in advance. Jenny Duxbury raised a question about whether the board should be described as providing oversight, given its advisory role, and how this affected the board's role credibility and independence of the project. Tim raised a similar concern on the same point.



ACTION: Jon and Iain will talk offline to capture these concerns and will recirculate terms of reference with this bullet amended to reflect the discussion.

Iain highlighted the importance of confidentiality within the advisory board, on a temporary basis only, but noted the value of people expressing their own opinions.

Jon asked about the role of members in encouraging further participation in the project. He mentioned that delegates, like Peter, could help identify technologies that the project team should explore.

Iain responded that the formal invitation for expressions of interest had not yet been issued but would be soon, once the website was ready. At this point, they would seek feedback and support from delegates to fill any gaps in the process, especially in identifying new or creative technologies.

Iain encouraged the group to provide feedback directly to him and copy Jon in. He confirmed that the terms of reference would be finalised following this meeting and any suggested adjustments would be circulated for further review.

Iain also mentioned that an FAQ document would be available soon, with the expectation that it would be published by the first week of January on the website. He encouraged board members to review the FAQ's once they are available. This would allow for more detailed and informed discussions at future meetings.

Jon said the next meeting will be early in February, and members were welcome to attend in person (in Sydney) or online (as he would due to overseas commitments).

ACTION: Iain will share all future meeting dates and locations for diaries shortly.

Ajoy asked if a list of members of the Board and their contact information could be shared. Iain confirmed that he would be happy to circulate the contact details, but asked if anyone had concerns about privacy or data protection to contact him directly.

ACTION: Inform Iain by 19 December if you do not wish your contact email to be shared with other members of the Board.

Meeting adjourned at 10:09am.