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Submission to Digital Platforms: Government Consultation on ACCC's Regulatory Reform Recommendations

The Tech Policy Design Centre welcomes the opportunity to comment on the *Digital Platforms: Government Consultation on the ACCC's Regulatory Reform Recommendations Consultation Paper*.

About the Tech Policy Design Centre

The Tech Policy Design Centre (TPDC) is a nonpartisan, independent research organisation at the Australian National University. Our mission is to develop fit-for-purpose tech policy frameworks to shape technology for the long-term benefit of humanity. We work to mature the tech-governance ecosystem in collaboration with industry, government, civil society, and academia.

Response to the Consultation Paper

Questions 1-3: TPDC's research report *'Tending the Tech-Ecosystem'* considered if a new regulatory structure was needed to govern the tech ecosystem (defined in the report to include, but not be limited to, digital platforms). The report was informed by interviews with 32 heads and senior representatives of Australian regulators, the Australian Government, industry, and civil society, as well as a comprehensive study of international best practice.

To inform the research findings we asked interviewees: 1) if a new stand-alone super tech regulator was required? Or 2) if existing regulators should be upskilled? Or 3) a hybrid of both? Or 4) was there a new model that has not yet been considered? We also considered the skills and attributes needed to be an effective tech regulator. Overwhelming, our research found that upskilling existing regulators was the preferred base model, supported by increased funding and enhanced transparency and accountability. Further details can be found in the report.

Question 6 and 25-27: the need for consistent political leadership and improved coordination between and among tech regulators and policy agencies, and with industry and civil society in Australia was a key research finding in TPDC's report *Tending the Tech Ecosystem*. In that report TPDC proposed a provisional model for tech policy coordination, which we have subsequently tested with a wide range of stakeholders in Australia and abroad. A second report, *'Cultivating Coordination'* (available from 21 February 2023 on our website: techpolicydesign.au), recommends a revised Tech Policy Coordination model that would deliver greater coherence between government policies across the Australian tech-ecosystem, including but not limited to digital platforms. The Coordination Model recommend in *'Cultivating Coordination'*, also aims to improve coordination with likeminded jurisdictions, as appropriate. Further details can be found in the report.

We are at your disposal should you wish to discuss our research findings.

Warm regards

Professor Johanna Weaver
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Australian National University