

# media statement

10 September 2024

**To be attributed to headspace CEO Jason Trethowan:**

“It is always heartening when our leaders put the mental health and wellbeing of young people at the centre of policy making.

“Conversations today in Canberra, and around Australia, about the role of social media in young people’s lives are important ones to have. And it’s true that more needs to be done to keep young people safe online.

“It is also important that governments consult meaningfully with young people from across Australia about their experiences of social media, and that young people’s views shape whatever legislation is ultimately put forward.

“Just last month a landmark research paper in the Lancet, penned by 50 world-leading experts on youth mental health, made clear the need to put young people at the centre of decision-making about youth mental health.

“Social media is an integral part of daily life for young people, and their relationship with social media is complex.

“While the challenges and dangers associated with social media are clear, we also know there are important benefits to be found online.

“Social media provides young people with opportunities for connection and to have their voices heard, especially young people who belong to marginalised communities or who live in remote places.

“Social media is also one of the ways that young people learn about mental health and the supports available to them.

“Banning access to social media is a blunt instrument that may have unintended consequences if done before considering these benefits.

“It could encourage young people to use social media platforms away from the support of their families, when instead we should be encouraging open and honest conversations between young people and adults about the challenges they encounter online.

“Any ban would also require additional supports for young people and families to navigate such a significant change in the way they communicate.

“Social media companies must continue to do more to ensure their platforms are safe for young people.”

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For media enquiries please contact:

headspace Media & Communications: [media@headspace.org.au](mailto:media@headspace.org.au) or 0413 025 385

## About headspace

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds. Each year, headspace helps thousands of young people access vital support

through our headspace centres in 162 communities across Australia<sup>[1]</sup>, our online and phone counselling services, our vocational services, and our presence in schools. headspace can help young people with mental health, physical health (including sexual health) alcohol and other drug services, and work and study support. Centre details, as well as factsheets and resources for young people and their families and friends, can be located on the headspace website: [headspace.org.au](https://headspace.org.au)

<sup>[1]</sup> *As at August 2024 and inclusive of licensed headspace centres, satellites and outposts*