

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Trans-Tasman partnership for online safety and wellbeing of children – AI a key focus

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New Zealand's Netsafe and Australia's ARC Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child have announced a new partnership today during the Digital Childhoods Summit in Canberra.



Netsafe's Deputy CEO, Andrea Leak with Distinguished Professor Susan Danby, Director, Digital Child.

The partnership combines Netsafe's world-leading expertise in online safety education and harm reduction with the Centre's world-class research into children's engagement with digital technologies.

"This partnership represents a significant step forward in ensuring children across New Zealand and Australia can safely enjoy and learn in the digital world," Netsafe Deputy CEO Andrea Leak said.

"By combining our proven expertise in digital safety education and harm reduction with the Centre's leading research capabilities, we can develop evidence-based approaches that truly meet the evolving needs of young people online."

Distinguished Professor Susan Danby, Director of the Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, echoed the importance of the collaboration.

“This partnership allows us to extend the impact of our research by working with an organisation that’s deeply embedded in digital safety policy and practice. Together, we can respond to the complex challenges and opportunities children face in their digital lives,” Distinguished Professor Danby said.

“In this new collaboration, we will work to shape a future where every child can thrive in the digital age.”

This partnership reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that children across Australasia can thrive in a digital world that is inclusive, safe, and empowering.

As part of this commitment, the Digital Child’s [newly released report](#) on Generative AI (GenAI) and young children outlines nine of the most urgent challenges and issues related to everyday use of GenAI tools by young children.

According to Leask, the top three challenges identified by Netsafe are as follows:

1. Privacy – young people are vulnerable to giving away private information without awareness of consequences
2. Bias – potential for young people to learn from Generative AI models which inherently contain bias, thereby perpetuating the cycle of bias
3. Ubiquitous – Gen AI has become a part of young peoples’ everyday lives often without knowledge or systems to mitigate risks

This research also corroborates the [AI research Netsafe recently released](#) in partnership with the AI Asia Pacific Institute. Both pieces of research warn of the risks of bias and ‘hallucinations’ which are factually incorrect outputs. They also both identify the risk of anthropomorphism (the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour), human-AI entanglement (where AI becomes embedded in our cognitive processes, decision-making, and even our sense of self), the disproportionate effect on certain communities and the idea that that Generative AI risks originate from human behaviour.

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