



## MEDIA STATEMENT

20 March 2020

### SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES CALLED ON TO DO MORE FOLLOWING CHRISTCHURCH TERRORIST ATTACK

Three of the world's largest social media companies are being pressured to do more to prevent objectionable content spreading across their platforms in the wake of the 15 March 2019 terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Following the attack, more than one hundred global investors representing approximately USD7.5 trillion\* of assets-under-management joined a collaboration to encourage Facebook, Alphabet and Twitter to strengthen controls over objectionable content.

The killings were livestreamed and disseminated across various social media platforms, adding to the horrific nature of the attack. Today a group of the investors have signed an open letter to the respective companies expressing dissatisfaction with their response to date and calling on them to do more to protect the public from similar events in the future.

"Just over a year ago 51 people were killed while they worshiped inside two mosques. It was a horrific and tragic event," says NZ Super Fund CEO Matt Whineray.

"We have made our voice known to these companies since the attack in Christchurch. While some positive changes have been made, more needs to be done at the executive and board level to build accountability and ensure these platforms cannot be used to spread objectionable material.

The NZ Super Fund and several other public and private investors in New Zealand have led the initiative, but it is supported by some of the world's largest investors.

The open letter calls for:

- clear lines of governance and accountability for senior executives and Board members to ensure social media platforms cannot be used to promote objectionable content like the livestreaming and dissemination of the Christchurch shootings; and,
- sufficient resources being dedicated to combating the livestreaming and spread of objectionable material across the platforms.

The investors say legislation that governs these companies needs to be modernised to protect the public from exposure to similar content in the future.

"The failure to properly respond creates a significant business risk, beyond the harm caused to individuals and the community. As investors in these companies we remain open to continued engagement and our expectation is they will take responsibility and fully address this issue."

[Click here](#) for a more information on the social media investor initiative and for a full list of participants.

\*As at 31 December 2019

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### OPEN LETTER TO THE BOARD MEMBERS AND EXECUTIVES OF FACEBOOK, ALPHABET AND TWITTER

*More than one hundred investors representing approximately USD7.5 trillion of assets-under-management\* have joined a global collaboration to encourage Facebook, Alphabet and Twitter to strengthen controls to prevent the livestreaming and dissemination of objectionable content. The initiative will continue to accept new signatories until these companies take meaningful action.*

20 March 2020

**Dear Board members and executives of the social media companies:**

Almost exactly one year ago, 51 people were killed by a gunman in two mosques in Christchurch New Zealand while they worshipped. It was an act that was livestreamed and disseminated across your respective platforms. Our hearts remain with the victims, their families and loved

ones and all those affected by this horrific act.

This investor collaboration has made its voice known to you over the year since the atrocity in Christchurch. As owners of your companies, we welcome the changes you've made to your platforms and the industry collaboration that has occurred via the Christchurch Call. Mass shootings have, however, continued to be disseminated across your platforms, including via livestream (for example, the recent mass shootings in Thailand and Germany). They remain open to abuse.

It is time that your respective organisations acknowledge the influence you have within society and embrace the responsibility that comes with this.

Our request includes:

- clear lines of governance and accountability for senior executives and Board members to ensure your platforms cannot be used to promote objectionable content like the livestreaming and dissemination of the Christchurch shootings; and
- sufficient resources being dedicated to combating the livestreaming and spread of objectionable material across your platforms.

We encourage and expect modernisation of legislation to protect the public from exposure to similar content in the future. Policy must be built on robust evidence and for this we need you to be open about how your platforms are built and operated.

Perpetrators of crime cannot be permitted to weaponise their actions via your platforms.

To date, we have been dissatisfied with the response from your senior executives and Boards to us. The failure to respond to these actions creates a significant business risk, beyond the harm caused to the global community. You have a duty to address that. We remain open to continued engagement. Our expectation is that you will take responsibility for and fully address this issue.

Yours faithfully,

Signed:

ACSI, Adrian Dominican Sisters, AQR Capital Management, Australian Ethical Aviva Investors, Axa Investment Managers, BMO Global Asset Management, Bon Secours Mercy Health, Brunel Pension Partnership, Cadmos Peace Investment Fund, Christian Brothers Investment Services, Inc. (CBIS), Church of England Pensions Board, Church Commissioners for England, Congregation of St. Joseph, Daughters of Charity, Province of St. Louise, De Pury Pictet Turrentini & Cie, Dignity Health, Domini Impact Investments, ECO Advisors, Ethical Partners Funds Management, EOS at Federated Hermes, HESTA, HSBC Global Asset Management, Legal & General Investment Management, LGPS Central, LG Super, Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF), Mercy Investment Services, Inc., Mirova, NEI Investments Neuberger Berman, Newton Investment Management, Nomura Asset Management, Northern Trust Asset Management, Öhman, OPTrust, Pantheon Ventures, River and Mercantile, Robeco, Regroupement pour la responsabilité sociale des entreprises (RRSE), U Ethical, USS Investment Management, VFCM, VicSuper, West Midlands Pension Fund, New Zealand Super Fund, Accident Compensation Corporation, Government Superannuation Fund, National Provident Fund, Kiwi Wealth, ANZ New Zealand Investments, ASB, BNZ, Booster, Fisher Funds, Foundation North, Generate Investment Management, Harbour Asset Management, Investment Services Group (Devon Funds, JMI Wealth, Select Wealth and Clarity Funds), IWInvestor, JBWere NZ, MAS, Mercer (NZ and Global), Milford Asset Management, Mint Asset Management, MyFiduciary Limited, NZ Funds, Pathfinder / CareSaver KiwiSaver, PIE Funds/JUNO KiwiSaver Scheme, Rātā Foundation, Salt Funds Management, Trust Investments Management Limited, Wellington Free Ambulance Service, Westpac / BT Funds Management.

**ENDS**

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