



## Media Release

8<sup>th</sup> April 2010

### **POSITIVE RESPONSE TO CYBERSAFETY PILOT**

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation is nearing completion of its National Pilot of a framework for increasing cybersafety and reducing the incidence of bullying, including cyberbullying, in schools across Australia.

The three-month pilot of a world-first cybersafety and wellbeing initiative was launched in February. It has been developed and conducted by The Alannah and Madeline Foundation and funded by the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

More than 150 government and non-government schools from urban, rural and remote regions across Australia have been participating in the project which will run until April 30.

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation Chief Executive Officer, Dr Judith Slocombe, said the early results were very encouraging in helping schools to effectively combat the issue of cyberbullying, as well as other risks that young people face online.

"The anecdotal feedback from schools has been almost universally positive," Dr Slocombe said.

"We are pleased with the outcome of the work done to date. We believe it will be an important initiative in the fight against cyberbullying and bullying in the school environment."

Under the pilot project the schools have been putting in place policies and practices to support the smart, safe and responsible use of technology. The initiative aims to:

- make cybersafety an integral part of student wellbeing practices in schools
- improve the curriculum in relation to cybersafety
- increase the skill and confidence of teachers to confront cybersafety issues
- help schools work with parents the community to keep children safe
- promote the smart and effective use of communications technology by students and teachers.

The initiative will form part of the Australian Government's review of the National Safe Schools Framework, which will be completed in June. It will be discussed this week at the National Centre against Bullying's biennial conference in Melbourne on April 9-10 at the Hilton on the Park.



# NATIONAL CENTRE AGAINST BULLYING CONFERENCE 2010

April 9-10, Melbourne

The Alannah  
and Madeline  
Foundation



Keeping children safe from violence

The NCAB conference: *Navigating the Maze*-cybersafety and wellbeing solutions for schools, will give those working with young people evidence-based information and strategies about cybersafety, how to use new technologies to enhance learning, and ways to improve student wellbeing. The conference will seek a national, uniform approach to cybersafety in schools and the wider community.

Research indicates in Australian schools 1 in 4 students are affected by bullying, with 1 in 10 students affected by cyberbullying. (Cross, D., Shaw, T., Hearn, L., Epstein, M., Monks, H., Lester, L., & Thomas, L. 2009. Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study, ACBPS, Child Health Promotion Research Centre, Edith Cowan University, Perth.)

It is not surprising, therefore, that a recent Newspoll survey revealed that 92% of Australians believe that bullying is a serious social issue in our community. Conducted in February this year with 1200 respondents aged 18 years and older, the Newspoll omnibus also found that almost 1 in 4 respondents have at some stage been bullied in the workplace.

"Bullying and cybersafety are clearly major social issues in our community today and our initiative plays an important role in addressing them." said Dr Slocombe.

**For further information please contact:**

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**For the full program of speakers, go to: [www.ncab.org.au/ConferenceInfo/](http://www.ncab.org.au/ConferenceInfo/)**



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