



Media Release

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NATIONAL APPROACH TO CYBER BULLYING

Covert and cyber bullying in schools - together with cybersafety and student wellbeing - will be the focus of the 4th Biennial National Centre Against Bullying (NCAB) conference in Melbourne, Australia, from April 8-10.

With the theme *Navigating the Maze: cybersafety and wellbeing for schools*, the three-day conference will seek to highlight the need for a national, uniform approach to cybersafety in schools and student wellbeing across Australia. It will help to provide strategies for schools to put in place to respond to complex situations.

About one student in four¹ is affected by bullying in Australian schools and cyber bullying is increasingly become a danger to young people, affecting 1 in 10 students². The 1 in 4 rate of bullying between school students is amongst the highest in the world.

International and national cybersafety and wellbeing experts will attend the conference, along with education leaders, teachers and student wellbeing coordinators from the primary and secondary sectors, as well as educational psychologists and school counsellors.

An initiative of The Alannah and Madeline Foundation, NCAB is a peak body working to advise and inform the Australian community on the issue of childhood bullying and the creation of safe schools and communities - including cybersafety.

NCAB comprises a 20-member council chaired by The Hon. Alastair Nicholson, AO RFD QC, former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia.

Announcing the NCAB April conference, The Hon. Nicholson said the on-going digital education revolution and continual developments in communication technologies have provided young people with additional platforms from which they could "bully, harass and abuse other young people". "Cyber bullying has the potential to inflict more severe psychological, social and mental health problems on young people than overt bullying," said The Hon. Nicholson.

"We must have a national approach that guides and supports schools to respond to and prevent this form of abuse for the wellbeing of students."

Through workshops and a two-day program of speakers, the conference will focus on why cybersafety matters to students and families; approaches to address and manage cyber risks in the school community; where schools stand in relation to cybersafety and the law; and what strategies are working in schools, including the identification of ways to improve student wellbeing through technologies that will enhance the learning process.

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¹ Cross, D., Shaw, T., Hearn, I., Epstein, M., Monks, H., Lester, L. & Thomas, L. 2009. Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study (ACBPS). Child Health Promotion Research Centre, Edith Cowan University, Perth.
² Ibid, Schedule 2 p 41