

MEDIA RELEASE

10 February 2010

Schools enthusiastic about ground-breaking cybersafety initiative

A total of 164 schools throughout Australia are participating in the Pilot of The Alannah and Madeline Foundation's Cybersafety and Wellbeing Initiative, thanks to funding from the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

Schools in the Pilot are enthusiastic about the Initiative because it will help schools tackle the issue of cybersafety and assist school communities to be smart, safe and responsible users of technology.

"Teachers at our school are really positive about this Initiative. Whatever we can do to allow young people to be better informed, more resilient and know how to navigate tricky situations, is a great thing. This Initiative will lead to people behaving in better ways, whether that's in real time or in the cyberworld." said Michael Phillips, Principal, Ringwood Secondary College.

The Pilot is being conducted nationally in government and non-government primary and secondary schools, in urban, rural and remote areas. A complete list of schools is available at www.safeschools.deewr.gov.au.

A world-first, the Initiative introduces a national framework guiding and supporting schools to implement relevant cybersafety policies and practices. It also provides a roadmap to the best available cybersafety resources and curriculum.

"Our Initiative will give guidance and reassurance to teachers and parents. It will equip our children and young people to be safe, and to be responsible towards others when using computers and mobile phones, so cyberbullying and other cyber-risks are reduced. We are very excited about this Initiative and the difference it will make to schools." said Dr Judith Slocombe, CEO, The Alannah and Madeline Foundation.

"We want our schools to embrace technology, because being a nation that is smart in its use of technology is important for our future. At the same time we want to create school communities that are protected from cyberspace risks."

The development of the Initiative has been informed by a number of Australian cybersafety experts including, the Australian Communications and Media Authority, Australian Federal Police, the Commonwealth Department of Broadband Communication and the Digital Economy, state education systems, industry, community organisations and The Alannah and Madeline Foundation's National Centre Against Bullying.

In addition to the funding from the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations to run the Pilot, the Initiative is also supported by the Victorian State Government, the National Australia Bank, Telstra Foundation, MySpace, Microsoft, Australia Post and VicUrban.

- end release -

Media enquiries: Kristina Garla, Communications Manager, The Alannah and Madeline Foundation. **Phone** 03 9697 0619 **Mobile** 0409 700 192 **Email** kristina.garla@amf.org.au

DEEWR Media: media@deewr.gov.au

About The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation is a national charity keeping children safe from violence. We care for children who are suffering the negative impact of violence and provide essential items to thousands of homeless children. We also prevent violence in the lives of young people by helping to create caring and friendly school communities, and reducing young people's exposure to cyberspace risks.