



Media Statement

21 August 2009

Double Take skit abhorrent and must be condemned

The TV show Double Take presented a skit last night about bullying which presents entirely inappropriate attitudes towards the serious issue of bullying and its consequences.

This sort of irresponsible skit shows little understanding or concern for people who have dealt with the often devastating effect of bullying and cyberbullying.

Bullying is a form of aggression, involving the abuse of power in relationships. It is recognised globally as a complex and serious problem. It has many faces, including the use of emerging technologies, and varies by age, gender and culture.

The Kandersteg Declaration estimates that 200 million children and youth around the world are being abused by their peers and endure misery at their hands, sometimes for months at a time.

Bullying can have a devastating effect on the young people involved: both those who are victimised and those who take part in bullying others. The negative effects have been shown to persist in later life and these include adverse health outcomes and social adjustment problems. In some cases, young people have committed suicide as a result of bullying.

Schools have an important role in combating bullying, but it is not only up to them. Parents, community members and certainly the media have a responsibility to counteract bullying at every opportunity.

Children's rights have been protected in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which has been ratified by every country on earth with the exception of the United States and Somalia.

Principle 9 of CRC requires Governments to take all appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation of children.

A television skit like this trivialises the serious nature of bullying– and given the recent events it is abhorrent and should be condemned.

We need to commit to creating a society where respect, caring about others and responsibility are fundamental attributes. The media are in a position of power and can help reinforce the kinds of positive attitudes and behaviours we all want

to see within our community to reduce violence including bullying and cyberbullying.

In this case the media abrogated their responsibility as well as their fundamental duty of care to young people and their families within our communities.

'The future of any society is determined by how it nurtures, educates and protects its children.' The Hon Alastair Nicholson AO RFD QC, Former Justice of the Family Court

Dr Judith Slocombe, CEO, The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

The Hon Alastair Nicholson AO RFD QC, Former Justice of the Family Court of Australia, Founding Patron, Children's Rights International and Chair, National Centre Against Bullying.

Sandra Craig, Manager, National Centre Against Bullying, The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, Adolescent Psychologist and Chair, Cybersafety Committee, National Centre Against Bullying

Stephen Franzi-Ford, CEO, Associations of School Councils in Victoria and member of the National Centre Against Bullying

Professor Donna Cross, Professor, Child and Adolescent Health , Edith Cowan University and member of the National Centre Against Bullying

Maree Davidson, Manager, Davidson Consulting and member of the National Centre Against Bullying

Maree Stanley, General Manager, Prevention, The Alannah and Madeline Foundation and member of the National Centre Against Bullying

Professor Phillip Slee, Professor, Human Development, School of Education, Flinders University

Professor Helen McGrath, Senior Lecturer, Deakin University and member of the National Centre Against Bullying

Dr Evelyn Field, Psychologist, Author, Speaker and member of the National Centre Against Bullying

Coosje Griffiths, Area Manager Student Services, Department of Education and Training, Western Australia, Psychologist, member of the National Safe and Supportive School Communities Committee (Bullying. No Way!) and the National Centre Against Bullying

Irene Verins, Senior Program Advisor, Participation and Equity for Health, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and member of the National Centre Against Bullying

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