

Media Release



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TELSTRA FOUNDATION GIVES \$1.4M TO HELP KIDS BE CYBER SMART

With 93 per cent of Australian teenagers using the internet¹ and 59 per cent of children using a mobile phone², the Telstra Foundation has allocated more than \$1.4 million to help Australia's families become cyber smart.

The funding will facilitate cyber safety support programs and research to help kids to be safe when online and using mobile phones while also making the most of what technology has to offer, said Georgia Symmons, the Telstra Foundation's National Manager.

"Following a nationwide search of exciting and supportive community-based programs, the Telstra Foundation identified five projects which will arm young people with the skills to be 'cyber smart' and help educate parents, teachers and communities as well," Ms Symmons said.

"We were inundated with excellent proposals and it was difficult to select just five programs. This showed us that there are many organisations across the country which take the issue of cyber safety as seriously as the Telstra Foundation does."

The five organisations and programs selected are:

- **Centacare Sandhurst's Loddon Mallee Cyber Safety program**
Centacare Sandhurst, a Bendigo-based not-for-profit organisation, will use a whole-of-community approach to engage young people, parents, employers, teachers, agency workers, police and local government leaders in cyber safety issues to generate solutions. With a distinct rural and provincial focus, this project will be particularly relevant for regional young people. The Telstra Foundation's commitment to this project is \$270,000.
- **Child Health Promotion Research Centre's Parent Education program**
This Western Australian project will be developed and evaluated by Edith Cowan University's Child Health Promotion Research Centre. Following on from their previous research, the program will fill a significant gap, providing parents with much needed support and advice on how to deal with cyber safety. It will target parents with children aged 10 to 15 years and will develop and test educational strategies to build parents' skills to assist their children increase their cyber safety skills. The Telstra Foundation's commitment to this project is \$341,000.

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Australian children and young people**

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- **National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect's (NAPCAN) Smart Online Safe Offline program**

This national program will develop a digital communications strategy to help teach young people on how to stay safe while online. Adapting a successful UK strategy of the same name, the program will teach children aged nine to 14 years about the dangers of giving out too much personal information when using online social networking websites and how to counteract online 'grooming'. The program will also provide education and support to parents, teachers and the community regarding cyber safety behaviour. The Telstra Foundation's commitment to this program is \$534,000.

- **Student Youth Network Media's 'youth led public debate on cyber safety' program**

Victorian youth media organisation, the Student Youth Network, will give young people a voice to drive public debate on cyber safety issues. A small team of reporters aged 16 to 25 years will use radio, television and online media to research and discuss cyber safety. The Telstra Foundation's commitment to this program is \$80,000.

- **The Alannah and Madeline Foundation's CyberSmart campaign**

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation's CyberSmart campaign aims to create cultural change in cyber space. By the end of the campaign, a national system for accrediting primary and secondary schools in cyber safety will be developed and rolled out to all schools across Australia. The Telstra Foundation has committed \$200,000 to this project.

"All of these programs offer tangible solutions and opportunities for children, parents, schools and the community when dealing with cyber safety," Ms Symmons said.

"We have an opportunity to help enrich children's lives through their use of technology every day. But to do so, children, parents, schools and communities need to feel that they can use technology in a fun yet safe way.

"The selected projects represent a good cross-section of research and programs that will work towards building a safer technology environment and help our kids become cyber smart. Education about the potential issues and developing an environment where children feel they have the confidence to work and play safely with technology is the best outcome for all."

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¹ Source: *Media and Communications in Australian Families 2007, Report of the Media and Society Research Project*, Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), 2007

² Ibid

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