



Media Release

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Super cyber safety with SuperClubsPLUS Australia and the Telstra Foundation

Keeping children safe online is a concern for all parents, but with *SuperClubsPLUS Australia*, we now have, for the first time in Australia, a positive and practical solution to help.

SuperClubsPLUS Australia is a social network, similar to Facebook, My Space and Bebo – except that it is completely safe, it is for children six to 12 years of age and it is fun as well as educational.

SuperClubsPLUS Australia teaches children how to keep themselves safe online no matter where they go on the internet. This protected online learning community is being rolled out across Australian schools in partnership with La Trobe University, supported by the Telstra Foundation.

Dr Martyn Wild, internationally recognised e-learning expert, cyber safety advocate and leader of the project, said that *SuperClubsPLUS Australia* was a fully protected online community for primary school children.

“*SuperClubsPLUS Australia* is an environment where primary age children build their own web pages, communicate with friends in Australia and around the world, and get involved in any number of online projects, local and international, designed to help develop their online technology skills. But most importantly the children learn in very practical ways how to keep themselves safe online at all times.

“*SuperClubsPLUS Australia* provides an online voice for six to 12 year olds and has been optimised for Australian children as well as their teachers. This includes having Australian mediators that protect and encourage children in real time.

“*SuperClubsPLUS Australia* stimulates young people to safely explore their identity, their creativity, and reach out to others. From our earlier experiences with *SuperClubsPLUS* in the UK, we knew that Australian children would also benefit from this safe social networking tool as it is mediated constantly by highly trained professionals, all carefully vetted and with educational backgrounds,” Dr Wild said.

The Telstra Foundation has provided \$1 million to help roll out *SuperClubsPLUS Australia* across the country.

“The Telstra Foundation is delighted to be supporting this program to be rolled out in Australia,” Matt Pfahlert, Telstra Foundation Director said.

“The online community in *SuperClubsPLUS Australia* is a safe alternative to the communities found in MySpace, Club Penguin and Bebo.

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“Access to the site is only possible through schools, which ensures that the community is only made up of children it was designed for. And the mediation helps teach the children online safety and etiquette,” Mr Pfahlert said.

Mr Pfahlert said new cyber technologies provide many exciting learning and communication opportunities, but there are also some potential problems.

“Increasingly parents and the wider community are becoming aware of issues such as cyber-bullying and harassment and identity theft which place the safety and well-being of children and young people at risk.

“*SuperClubsPLUS Australia* is a fantastic initiative as it takes out the risk factor completely and ensures children are safe, and all their interaction is monitored when they go online,” Mr Pfahlert said.

“What *SuperClubsPLUS Australia* means for children is that they can communicate, express themselves, and learn in a fun, social and interactive way. These kids are learning even when they don’t know they are. What it means for parents is that they can feel assured that their children are engaging in an online environment that is safe and moderated at all times,” Dr Wild said.

The Telstra Foundation’s support of *SuperClubsPLUS Australia* is part of a wider, \$3 million focus on cyber safety.

Access to *SuperClubsPLUS Australia* is required through primary schools. Parents are encouraged to ask their children’s school if they have registered for *SuperClubsPLUS Australia* or are planning to. More information is available at www.superclubsplus.com.au or by contacting Dr Martyn Wild at martyn.wild@intuitivemedia.com.

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About the Telstra Foundation

The Telstra Foundation is a program devoted to enriching the lives of Australian children and young people, and the communities in which they live. Since 2002, the Telstra Foundation has provided close to \$26 million through over 4,600 projects to help make a positive and lasting difference to the lives of children and young people. For more information visit www.telstrafoundation.com.

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