

MEDIA RELEASE

24 March 2009

061/2009

Telstra Foundation funds new child abuse education and support program

A new online education program that aims to help children develop skills to manage their safety online and prevent child sexual abuse in primary school-aged students will be developed by the University of the Sunshine Coast thanks to a three-year \$483,000 grant from the Telstra Foundation.

The project will develop a freely-accessible, online, best practice resource. It will help children learn strategies, through game-based activities, for positive self-management and protection online, and sexual abuse prevention. It also will put into place the programs, structures and skills to provide equal and free access to sexual abuse prevention education and support to all children across Australia.

Dr Christian Jones, lead researcher on the project at the university, said: “Thanks to the support of the Telstra Foundation and our other partners, FeelingSafe will increase young people’s awareness of situations threatening their safety and empower them with the skills to help protect themselves from sexual abuse.

“Uniquely, it will teach children personal safety skills and strategies by engaging with them using contemporary technologies, multimedia scenarios and game-based learning, delivered in a safe, secure and supported online environment.”

The program features a comprehensive review of international research best practice in child sexual abuse prevention and builds on expert experience and real-life evidence from Australia.

Telstra Foundation Chairman, Herb Elliott AC, MBE, said: “The Telstra Foundation Social Innovation Grants program proudly supports projects such as FeelingSafe to help build positive self management skills, resilience and social connections for young Australians through the creative use of information and communication technologies.”

“This grant to the University of the Sunshine Coast’s FeelingSafe project recognises the importance of empowering children and their teachers to identify, avoid and report threats to their safety.”

FeelingSafe will be comprehensively evaluated in schools across Queensland, before the program is made available nationally. The program has the support of the Queensland Police Service, the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, Education Queensland and the Department of Child Safety.

- Ends -

**Making a positive and lasting difference to the lives of
Australian children and young people**
www.telstrafoundation.com

About the University of the Sunshine Coast

Located in one of the country's fastest growing regions, the University of the Sunshine Coast campus at Sippy Downs has grown to accommodate almost 6,000 students. Since its establishment in 1996, the university has focused on community engagement, campus development, innovative programs and a personalised approach to learning.

About the Telstra Foundation

The Telstra Foundation is a program devoted to making a positive and lasting difference to the lives of Australian children and young people. Since 2002, the Telstra Foundation has provided over \$28 million through more than 4,850 projects to help make a positive and lasting difference to the lives of children and young people.

www.telstrafoundation.com

**Making a positive and lasting difference to the lives of
Australian children and young people**
www.telstrafoundation.com

Media contact: xxxx
T: (xx) xxxx xxxx

Lauren Fragapane, Red Agency
T: 03 9670 8350