

**THE HON BRENDAN O'CONNOR MP
MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS**

**HELPING PARENTS PROTECT KIDS ON THE
INTERNET**

The Minister for Home Affairs, Brendan O'Connor, today launched the Australia-wide rollout of the ThinkUKnow program to educate parents, carers and teachers about how to create a safe online experience for the nation's youth.

Mr O'Connor said there is little divide between the real and online world for today's generation and it is important that adults have a good understanding of the internet and what youth are doing on it—highlighting the importance of today's launch.

Following a successful pilot program run by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Microsoft in 2009, the ThinkUKnow program is now being rolled out nationally with Ithaca Creek State School the first Queensland school to receive the presentation.

“While the internet provides many benefits, there are people who seek to use the internet and mobile technologies for criminal purposes, and to harm others, including young people. This program is designed to ensure our children have fun online, stay in control and report anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

“The Australian Government is serious about preventing the exploitation of children online, which is why we hope to educate parents, carers and teachers on the risks young people face and how to mitigate these risks.”

In May 2008, the Australian Government dedicated \$125.8 million over four years to a cyber-safety plan to inform and educate parents and children about the risks of internet use and provide internet safety advice, tools and online help.

“I congratulate the work of the AFP, Microsoft and Ninemsn that has enabled the national roll-out of this most valuable program,” Mr O'Connor said.

“It is important that those in rural and regional areas, as well as those in cities, have access to the ThinkUKnow program and that's why the AFP and Microsoft have made an online seminar available. The seminar explains the various technologies and online applications that young people use on the internet, the potential risks and also how to report issues along with various other resources.

“Protecting children online requires a multifaceted response. Late last year I launched the ThinkUKnow YouTube channel which is used to host a range of internet safety videos promoting the work of ThinkUKnow, as well as educational information to assist in preventing online child abuse. This all links together to raise awareness among both adults and youth online.

The ThinkUKnow YouTube channel can be viewed at www.youtube.com/ThinkuknowAUS. For further information and resources on the ThinkUKnow initiative, or to register your school for a presentation, go to www.thinkuknow.org.au.

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