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MEDIA RELEASE

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**National pilot to increase cyber-safety
in schools**

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today announced the 164 schools selected to take part in a national pilot project to address cyber-safety.

The Australian Government is providing \$3 million for the world-first cyber safety initiative developed and conducted by child safety charity, the Alannah and Madeline Foundation.

Schools participating in the project will implement policies and practices to support the smart, safe and responsible use of technology. They will be provided with web resources designed to help them create an approach to cyber-safety that meets their own specific needs.

Government and non-government primary and secondary schools in urban, rural and remote Australia will participate in the cyber-safety pilot which will run until 30 April 2010.

The project will help clarify the role that schools play in ensuring responsible and safe use of technology.

The pilot aims to:

- Make cyber-safety an integral part of student wellbeing practices in schools;
- Improve the curriculum in relation to cyber-safety;
- Increase the skill and confidence of teachers to confront cyber-safety issues; and
- Help schools work with parents and the community to keep children safe.

The development of content for the initiative has been informed by extensive research and by a number of cyber-safety experts from across Australia.

The pilot's outcomes will be independently evaluated and used to inform the Government's review of the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF), due to finish in June 2010.

This coincides with the announcement that in the next sitting week, the Rudd Government will seek to establish its Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Cyber Safety.

This Committee will further support the Government's work to make the internet a safer place for young people to socialise, research and engage with broader society online.

The Rudd Government has already started engaging with young people to address cyber bullying through the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) which provides advice to the Government on a range of cyber safety issues including cyber bullying, mobile phone safety, social networking sites, privacy and online computer games from a young person's perspective.

The cyber-safety pilot will incorporate feedback from the YAG.

The Government is deeply concerned about the emergence of cyber-bullying in our schools and the impact it is having on students. All the research tells us cyber-bullying is on the increase and is under-reported.

We also understand there is no one size fits all approach to bullying in schools but we are determined to provide teachers and school leaders with a range of tools to help them deal with bullying.

A full list of schools involved in the pilot and information about the current NSSF and its review is available at www.safeschools.deewr.gov.au.