

**THE HON JULIA GILLARD MP  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

Minister for Education; Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations;  
Minister for Social Inclusion.

**MEDIA RELEASE**

17 February 2010

**School safety**

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today joined with all Australians in expressing her profound sorrow at the death of a school student in Brisbane earlier this week. The Government's thoughts are with the family and friends of the student at this time.

That tragic event and other safety incidents at schools this week are deeply disturbing.

Australian schools are overwhelmingly safe and happy places for students but understandably parents will be concerned at events this week.

State education authorities are working with police on these incidents.

The Australian Government has a number of programs in place to make schools safer places for students and to combat bullying.

The \$20 million Safer Schools program assists at-risk government and non-government schools to meet their particular security needs. Projects funded under the program involve security related infrastructure such as closed circuit television systems, fencing, lighting and improving window security.

Cyber safety is particularly important as bullying can now follow students into their homes with the increase in social networking sites and the prevalence of mobile phones. Cyber bullying can also be strongly linked to physical bullying.

Last week, the Government announced the recipients of a \$3 million pilot program being run in conjunction with the Allannah and Madeline Foundation to combat cyber bullying. The program will run in 164 schools around Australia.

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.

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) agreed in November last year that all States, Territories and the Commonwealth will work together to promote student safety and prevent all forms of bullying in schools through sharing successful approaches and best practice.

The Government has committed \$125.8 million over four years for a Cyber-Safety Plan through the Dept of Broadband, Communication and the Digital Economy. This program tackles the issue of cyber-safety from a number of directions to help protect Australian children from the dangers of the internet.

Since January 2009, almost 3,000 teachers have participated in professional development workshops. Around 150 schools have registered for On-site workshops for 6,500 staff.

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