

# **SUBMISSION No. 97**

National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

[www.napcan.org.au](http://www.napcan.org.au)

**NAPCAN**  
**PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE**

**Submission to the Australian Parliament's Joint Select Committee on  
Cyber-Safety Inquiry**

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**Submitted by**

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NAPCAN welcomes the opportunity to provide a Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Cyber-Safety. This submission addresses Terms of Reference (a) (iii), (iv) and (vi).

### **Australian and international responses to current cyber-safety threats**

NAPCAN notes that the Government would like to introduce a mandatory filter to block overseas-hosted URLs that contain Refused Classification material, the bulk of which are child sexual abuse images. Australia has international legal obligations to protect children. Australia ratified the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1990. Under the treaty, the Australian Government is legally bound to prevent:

- (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; and
- (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, in 2007 Australia ratified the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child trafficking and child prostitution*, the Preamble of which states:

*“Concerned about the growing availability of child pornography on the Internet and other evolving technologies, and recalling the International Conference on Combating Child Pornography on the Internet, held in Vienna in 1999, in particular its conclusion calling for the worldwide criminalization of the production, distribution, exportation, transmission, importation, intentional possession and advertising of child pornography, and stressing the importance of closer cooperation and partnership between Governments and the Internet industry...”<sup>2</sup>*

Protecting children’s human rights must be at the forefront of policymakers’ minds. NAPCAN supports any effort – by mandatory and/or voluntary means – to stop child abuse material being available to internet users in Australia.

NAPCAN urges both industry and government to take all steps to prevent or reduce the availability and distribution of child abuse material online.

### **Opportunities for cooperation across Australian stakeholders and with international stakeholders in dealing with cyber-safety issues**

NAPCAN has a program that educates children and young people in their online environments that can be used, or adapted for use, in other jurisdictions.

SOSO is a unique digital collaboration between NAPCAN and industry to continuously educate young people, fostering safer online behaviours. Operating within the online space, SOSO raises awareness and educates kids about how to

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<sup>1</sup> Article 34, Convention on the Rights of the Child

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc-sale.htm>

be smart online in order to stay safe. SOSO campaigns target online threats such as predation, grooming, cyber bullying and identify theft.

SOSO is a collaboration between NAPCAN and digital marketing group, Zuni. Initially seed funded by the Australian Government, SOSO then secured philanthropic funding through the Telstra Foundation.

SOSO is a demonstration of NAPCAN's approach to breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect by engaging directly with children and young people. SOSO uses a behaviour change framework: it works directly with kids, in their language and online environments, to:

- address issues real to them
- raise awareness of these issues
- establish personal relevance
- create the desire for change
- demonstrate a path for action, and
- re-affirm the message with practical action.

### **Online Predation**

This campaign teaches kids about being cyber-smart, giving practical advice on how to stay safe online and educating kids on the dangers of giving away personal information. Evaluation data shows the SOSO campaign reached 1.7 million kids in its first six weeks and had a significant impact on the awareness, attitude and intended behaviour. The campaign can be accessed here: <http://www.soso.org.au/> and click on "Stranger Danger".

### **Cyber Bullying Affects Real Lives**

This is an innovative digital campaign designed to help young people reduce the growing incidence of cyber bullying. It educates young internet users between ages 9-15 about the destructive nature of cyber bullying and empowers them with tools to help prevent it. A key element of this campaign sees young people signing up to an anti-bullying advocacy network, *Web Warriors*, taking a stand to say No to Cyber Bullying. To date, SOSO has reached 80% of the target audience. See [www.webwarriors.org.au](http://www.webwarriors.org.au)

### **Ways to support schools to change their culture to reduce the incidence and harmful effects of cyber-bullying**

Cyber safety programs in schools are important but - as we have learned from drug education in schools - not enough on their own.

### **Respectful Relationships Education**

NAPCAN is currently developing a whole of school approach (K-12) to respectful relationships education, called RESPECT(ED). It teaches children and young people how to create and enjoy respectful relationships, with a coordinated approach throughout the school, curriculum and broader community for the prevention of relationship violence. Cyber bullying is one aspect of relationship violence that is covered within RESPECT(ED).

As a pilot, RESPECT(ED) is being implemented in Tempe Public School and Tempe High School over 2010. This project has been funded by the NSW Government, the UBS Optimus Foundation and Google, and is being evaluated by Dr. Michael Flood.

### **LOVE BITES**

Cyber bullying is also addressed in **LOVE BITES**, a NAPCAN program for 14-16 year olds on preventing domestic violence and sexual assault. It has been delivered in schools as well as juvenile justice centres. The LOVE BITES program:

- Targets future parents: teaches respectful relationships for 14-16 year olds
- Is active in school and youth services in over 70 communities across NSW, NT, QLD and TAS
- Has trained over 2,500 LOVE BITES trainers since 2007
- Reaches and helps over 70,000 young people.

### **Conclusion**

NAPCAN thanks the Committee for the opportunity to contribute to its Inquiry.

NAPCAN also welcomes the opportunity to continue its engagement with the Committee to ensure the best interests of children remain at the forefront of policy.