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IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE:

22 June 2010

The Secretary
Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety
R1-109, Parliament House
PO Box 6021
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Brown

Thank you for giving the Queensland Teachers' Union ("QTU") the opportunity to respond to the Joint Selection Committee on Cyber-Safety. The QTU believes that there are major safety issues affecting children and young people who use cyber technology. Children should be made aware of these issues and the dangers they pose.

With the ever increasing demand on schools and teachers, it would be impossible with the current funding/staffing arrangements to provide to students an effective and appropriate cyber- safety.

The QTU believes that cyber-safety education is a "two-way street". The students need to be aware of cyber-bullying which can and does occur from students to teachers. In recent years, the QTU has had numerous concerns raised from its members over comments made by students about teachers on Facebook and websites such as Rate-My-Teacher. The Union's experience is that the number of false and defamatory statements made about teachers by students on such sites is increasing. It is quite common for teachers to be falsely accused of being "paedophiles", and the teacher's actual private address was included on that site. In addition to that the Union is aware of false profiles of teachers, that is profiles purporting to have been put there by students, being included on sites such as dating sites.

If the federal government wants to pursue an effective campaign into cyber-safety, the QTU believes it needs to be funded/resourced appropriately not just forced on to schools with teachers having to add this to the ever increasing curriculum.

For more information please contact Mark Anghel on (07) 3512 9000.

Yours sincerely

Kate Seed
Acting General Secretary

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