

Policing

Policing and justice

- 12.1 It is clear that the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and State and Territory police forces are committed to improving safety in the online environment. It is equally clear, however, that some people who report bullying or harassment to local police stations often do not receive much support. It was noted that, because of resource constraints, stations are 'far too overstretched' to engage with anything but high-level cyber-crime and in some cases an understanding of the issues.¹

Criminalisation of online behaviour

- 12.2 The Attorney-General's Department noted that the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) contains comprehensive offences dealing with the misuse of telecommunications, and cyber-crime.² The Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions submitted:

There are a number of Commonwealth offences which relate to the potential abuse of children online, such as offences involving grooming and procuring children using a carriage service (sections 474.26 and 474.27 of the Code) and offences of using a carriage service for child pornography material and child abuse material (sections 474.19, 474.20, 474.22 and 474.23 of the Code). These

1 Name withheld, *Submission 140*, p. 2.

2 Attorney-General's Department, *Submission 58*, p. 2.

offences are prosecuted by the [Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions] (CPP). The CDPP is prosecuting an increasing number of offences involving the on-line exploitation of children ... The Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences Against Children) Act 2010 (Cth) inserted new offences into the Code which specifically relate to the potential abuse of children online.³

Table 12.1 Proven Offences to 22 June 2010 of offences under the Code

| Act/Section | Outcome | <i>FY05/06</i> | <i>FY06/07</i> | <i>FY07/08</i> | <i>FY08/09</i> | <i>FY09/10</i> | Total |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Criminal Code 474.19 | Proven | 2 | 22 | 38 | 110 | 129 | 301 |
| Criminal Code 474.20 | Proven | | 4 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 15 |
| Criminal Code 474.22 | Proven | | 4 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 24 |
| Criminal Code 474.23 | Proven | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| Criminal Code 474.26 | Proven | | 4 | 6 | 12 | 14 | 36 |
| Criminal Code 474.27 | Proven | 1 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 14 | 30 |
| Totals | Proven | 3 | 36 | 57 | 149 | 164 | 409 |

Source *Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, Submission 49, p. 5. Table relates to a total of 356 defendants.*

12.3 It was suggested that, while there is enough legislation that can be applied to abusive behaviour, enforcement mechanisms are required. The Stride Foundation made the point that students see cyber-bullying as it relates to student to student:

One of the key components of the definition of Cyber Bullying is that it relates to students on student behaviour. It does not include adult on student or adult on adult behaviour as there are clear laws and definitions that cover these areas.⁴

12.4 Further, the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia make the point that:

Many teachers and parents may not be aware that as well as being morally wrong, cyber-bullying and other inappropriate behaviours may also be against the law. An e-crime is where technology, for example a mobile phone, is used to commit an offence such as harassment. E-crimes can be reported to police and offenders can be prosecuted. This is not widely known throughout the community.⁵

3 Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, *Submission 49*, p. 1.

4 Stride Foundation, *Submission 6*, p. 4.

5 Association of Independent Schools of SA, *Submission 19*, p. 12.

- 12.5 The possibility of enforcement of criminal laws for behaviour online is not always appreciated.⁶ The Stride Foundation believe that,

Assumed anonymity and the perceived lack of penalties have created the image that the internet is a lawless world which provides great freedom to the user. What is often lacking is an awareness by students of the potentially serious legal ramifications of their behaviour. Teachers and students need to be made aware of current penalties that exist. For example in NSW the Crimes Act, Section 545AB covers the offence of intimidation. Teasing or spreading rumours about someone online is considered intimidation and under the Act carries a maximum penalty of five years detention and/or \$5500 fine. Harassing someone online or making threats electronically can carry penalties of up to 10 years detention.⁷

- 12.6 Students need to be made aware that the misuse of telecommunication devices is considered a very serious situation in Australia and a Commonwealth offence. Interviews with cyber-bullies have often revealed they considered their online harassing behaviour as 'pranking' or joking around. Both students and adults involved with online behaviour need to understand the sending of offensive or harassing messages is considered by the law as assault.⁸

- 12.7 The criminalisation of young people has attracted the following sentiments:

It may seem to some that a criminal prosecution would be an extreme response to bullying behaviour. In the first place, the Director of Public Prosecutions may be dubious in a given instance that a case can be established beyond reasonable doubt, particularly with respect to the necessary intention to commit the relevant crime. Nevertheless, even where there is such reticence on the part of the prosecuting authority, targets of cyber bullying may find that the very involvement of a police investigation helps them to regain a sense of control and power otherwise lost to the bully.

6 Professor Elizabeth Handsley, President, Board Member and Chair of Executive Committee, Australian Council on Children and the Media, *Transcript of Evidence*, 3 February 2011, p. CS46.

7 Stride Foundation, *Submission 6*, p. 9, citing Signy H, 2007, 'Bullies who leave no bruises', *The Age*, Melbourne.

8 Stride Foundation, *Submission 6*, p. 9, citing Carr-Greg M, 2007, *Real Wired Child*, Penguin Books, Maryborough, Victoria.

Examination of the range of criminal offences that may be relevant is therefore warranted.⁹

12.8 Yet Commander Grant Edwards of the AFP commented:

suffice to say that it is positive in the sense that we are getting very good conviction rates out of the prosecutions that we are putting before court.¹⁰

12.9 While a range of sanctions against abuses of cyber-safety already exists in Australian jurisdictions, several participants in the Inquiry expressed concerns about criminalising some adolescent behaviour in the online environment. For example:

we should be wary about criminalizing behaviour that is more effectively and more appropriately addressed through non-criminal measures, such as education and counselling ... The harms associated with the criminalization (as child pornography) of naïve experimentation or rule-breaking on the part of minors are likely to outweigh the benefits to the community at large or to those minors.¹¹

12.10 It was agreed that cyber-bullying should not necessarily be regarded as entirely different to bullying at school. In particularly serious cases, criminal investigation and prosecution 'may well be warranted'.¹²

12.11 It was also suggested that there is enough legislation on cyber-stalking, misuse of telecommunications and harassment, for example, to criminalise behaviour. But children under ten are not held criminally responsible for their actions and, between 11 and 14 years, courts decide whether young people intended to commit a criminal act.¹³

12.12 There had been a proposal to amend the Criminal Code to ensure that it can deal with serious cyber-bullying. The Alannah and Madeline Foundation believed that 'no-one wanted to criminalise children's behaviour' because this abuse had to be seen in the context of the ways

9 Mr Stewart Healley, *Submission 136*, p. 91, citing Butler D, Kift S and M Campbell, 2009, 'Cyber Bullying in School and the Law Is there an effective means of addressing the Power imbalance?' *eLaw Journal: Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law*: 16(1): 84

10 Commander Grant Edwards, Acting National Manager, High Tech Crime Operations, Australian Federal Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 March 2011, p. CS5

11 Mr Bruce Arnold, *Submission 60*, pp. 3-4.

12 Commander Grant Edwards, Acting National Manager, High Tech Crime Operations, Australian Federal Police *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 March 2011, p. CS23.

13 Associate Professor Marilyn Campbell, School of Learning and Professional Development, Queensland University of Technology, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 June 2010, p. CS26.

they behave. To make ‘an enormous number’ of them of criminals would be an inappropriate legislative response to a behavioural problem that is the responsibility of schools and, particularly, parents.¹⁴

- 12.13 Professor Philip Slee thought that there was pressure to go down the legal path of criminalising the behaviour of young people, and that caution should be exercised.¹⁵ Dr Julian Dooley and Ms Robyn Treyvaud supported this view: that behaviour is the problem, not the technology.¹⁶ The Australian University Cyberbullying Research Alliance stated that regulating technology, or taking legal action, would not change behaviour.¹⁷
- 12.14 Mr Bruce Arnold agrees that a cautious stance should be adopted when considering arguments for criminalising behaviour that he believed would be more effectively and appropriately addressed through education and counselling.¹⁸ He also believed that the harms associated with criminalising what he saw as ‘naive experimentation’ or rule-breaking were likely to outweigh the benefits to the community, or the individual(s). Education campaigns were more likely to be effective than trials of 15 year olds, or seizing mobile phones.¹⁹
- 12.15 Ms Robyn Treyvaud noted that mobile phones are probably the area where parents/carers can have influence. It seems to have been assumed that pre-paid services might moderate inappropriate use because of the limited credit available. It appears, however, that behaviour is modified if parents/carers might find out, via account statements, that such images have been sent. Further, it is in schools where students know that there is a log of where they have been that inappropriate images are not sent.²⁰
- 12.16 Professor Sheryl Hemphill suggested that there should be less legal interventions, with more emphasis on the right way to behave, because of the risk of putting young people on the path to criminal behaviour.²¹ The

14 Dr Judith Slocombe, Chief Executive Officer, Alannah and Madeline Foundation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 June 2010, p. CS26.

15 Professor Philip Slee, Australian University Cyberbullying Research Alliance, *Transcript of Evidence*, 3 February 2011, p. CS14.

16 Dr Julian Dooley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 June 2010, p. CS5; Ms Robyn Treyvaud, Founder, Cyber Safe Kids, *Transcript of Evidence*, December 2010, p. CS35.

17 Australian University Cyberbullying Research Alliance: *Submission 62*, p. 27.

18 Mr Bruce Arnold, *Submission 60*, p. 3.

19 Mr Bruce Arnold, *Submission 60*, p. 4.

20 Ms Robyn Treyvaud, Founder, Cyber Safe Kids, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 December 2011, pp. CS39-40.

21 Associate Professor Sheryl Hemphill, Senior Research Fellow, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 December 2010, p. CS24.

Queensland Catholic Education Commission agreed that an emphasis on education, rather than on punitive action, seemed to be a more enduring way to proceed in a complex area.²²

12.17 The Family Online Safety Institute stressed the importance of differentiating between teasing or ‘mean comments’ and actual criminal harassment. It recommends that instead of criminalising behaviour, solutions should include education, empowerment and the use of website tools to reduce the likelihood that young people will fall prey to cyber-bullying.²³

12.18 While the Australian University Cyberbullying Research Alliance accepted the ‘natural tendency’ to avoid criminalising young people’s actions and added the following points:

- Criminal sanctions were appropriate to more cases than was generally appreciated;
- Very few young people seemed to appreciate their potential for attracting criminal liability;
- Recent reports had highlighted that schools, if not teachers and parents/carers, were increasingly inclined to resort to criminal law as a result of fear, frustration, or in the interests of community safety;
- It was imperative to consider either criminalising behaviour or providing ‘formative discipline’;
- Civil law may be invoked when targets decide to turn to the courts to gain some reparation from those responsible for abusive behaviour;
- Under Australian law, parents/carers are not generally legally liable for their children’s acts, so that schools are usually involved in civil litigation;
- While our society is increasingly litigious, consideration needs to be given to the view that the ability of schools to respond appropriately to abuse is hampered by ‘the often unrealistic fear’ of being sued; and
- Finally, there is the issue of extending schools’ duty of care to off-site behaviour, at any time of day or night.²⁴

22 Queensland Catholic Education Commission, *Submission 67*, p. 4.

23 Family Online Safety Institute, *Submission 38*, p. 6.

24 Australian University Cyberbullying Research Alliance, *Submission 62*, pp. 28-29.

- 12.19 Reference was made to a case in Western Australia where an explicit video had been made, sent by mobile phone and downloaded via a memory stick to a computer at home. The young recipient was charged with possessing child pornography. This was seen as an example of laws being used against those they were designed to protect. If found guilty in some Australian jurisdictions, the young person could be placed on a sex offenders' register. Such cases raise the issue of whether laws need to be changed because of the ways technology is changing, and the ages of the users.

Restorative justice programs

- 12.20 Restorative justice programs are based on shared ownership, or a peer approach, to resolve problems that arise at schools. They take the form of conferences involving a range of people, including community representatives, perpetrators, victims, parents/carers, law enforcement, teachers and school staff. Incidents are discussed, as are ways of resolving them, and perpetrators are present when victims explain the impact incidents had on them. Community and law enforcement representatives can discuss ways of restoring harm that has been done.²⁵
- 12.21 As this process seeks to be educative rather than punitive, it can be effective in resolving issues. Though these programs are becoming more widely used in schools, their effectiveness is not clear.²⁶
- 12.22 Most schools have effective policies and programs to address bullying and its effects, but the prevalence of cyber-bullying seems to be growing. The damage that this abuse can do to some students as either victim or perpetrator indicates that, in terms of schools' duty of care, prompt and effective action should be taken.
- 12.23 While it was pointed out that such programs take a great deal of staff time, involving perpetrators in a restorative process should enlighten them about the hurt that they have caused. Such programs would be a structured way to reduce that hurt for victims, to assist in their recovery

25 Dr Russell Smith, Principal Criminologist, Manager, Global Economic and Electronic Crime Program, Australian Institute of Criminology, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 March 2011, p. CS23.

26 Associate Professor Sheryl Hemphill, Principal Research Fellow, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 December 2010, p. CS27; Australian Secondary Principals Association, *Submission 33*, p. 3.

from the abuse and lead to greater involvement of parents/carers, police and local communities in schools.²⁷

- 12.24 The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia commented on the firm, supportive and considered manner in which schools deal with cyber-bullying and referred to:

The Restorative Justice approach is used by some AISSA member schools when dealing with incidents of cyber bullying. It focuses on developing an understanding in students of the social and emotional impact of their behaviour, for oneself and others, rather than an emphasis on tangible consequences. The focus is on restoring an appropriate relationship.²⁸

- 12.25 The Australian Institute of Criminology supported the restorative justice approach in which:

You have conferences of the victim, the offender, community representatives and law enforcement all meeting together to discuss the nature of the incident and how it can best be resolved. You have an offender present when a victim explains the impact of the activity on them. The parents can also be present. The representatives from the community and law enforcement can talk together about restoration for the harm that has been done. I think that could be a good alternative approach.²⁹

- 12.26 The NSW Government also supported the restorative justice approach, as it:

concentrates on promoting values likely to lead to responsible citizenship, such as pride in one's school and an obligation to help others. Addressing the problems of bullying is seen as requiring confrontations with the person bullying, the deliberate inducement in them of appropriate shame, and action undertaken by them to restore positive relations with the person being bullied... There is Australian data that indicates that there is a decrease in suspension rates through the application of restorative conferencing in schools, along with high rates of participant satisfaction (e.g. person harmed, parents and

27 Association of Independent Schools of SA, *Submission 19*, p. 13.

28 Association of Independent Schools of SA, *Submission 19*, p. 13.

29 Dr Russell Smith, Principal Criminologist, Manager, Global Economic and Electronic Crime Program, Australian Institute of Criminology, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 March 2011, p. CS23.

wrongdoer) and high rates of compliance with agreement (above 90%).³⁰

12.27 Mr Stewart Healley advised:

Police are often reluctant to charge young people with criminal offences where other, less punitive, measures can be used. This may involve the use of restorative justice, where the person who has been cyber bullied and the people doing the cyber bullying (as well as their support network) are brought together to talk through the issues and come up with an agreed solution. Other options include cautions or disciplinary action taken by schools or parents.³¹

12.28 He also made the point that restorative justice program do not work in all cases:

Unfortunately, for the remaining 10% of teenagers that do not “choose to be” or “accept” any form of Social Responsibility; and are usually supported “blindly” and sometimes “aggressively” by their Parents / Guardians no matter what evidence is produced, will not be suitable for the Restorative Justice Pathway and will be assessed as an “Ineligible Offender”.³²

12.29 Mr Healley added that:

However, my previous 11 years as an operational Police Officer have given me the knowledge and experience to know however few in number, whatever conflict resolution methods you employ there are some children and adults that do not wish to alter their behaviour choices and see that they have a right to do whatever, wherever, whenever they chose and that includes inflicting pain and suffering on others with an attitude of “who’s going to stop me, then!”³³

Intervention orders

12.30 Dr Helen McGrath referred to the number of intervention orders being taken out by students against students:

30 NSW Government, *Submission 94*, p. 25.

31 Mr Stewart Healley, *Submission 136*, p. 46.

32 Mr Stewart Healley, *Submission 136*, p. 135.

33 Mr Stewart Healley, *Submission 136*, p. 44.

My experience has been that parents tell me that when they have tried to make a complaint to their local state police branch, even though the local state police branch may be aware of the federal e-crime offences, they are usually discouraged from going further and it is not made easy for them. One of the areas of concern that I have is how effectively the Australian Federal Police are working with state police to facilitate that process if that is the way in which parents want to go.³⁴

12.31 While victims can take out intervention orders against perpetrators, these are 'almost impossible in practice to enforce'. Where a school is reluctant to take action, desperate parents/carers sometimes complain to local police because they cannot see any other way to stop the abuse. Going to the police or taking court action is not usually an effective first step, as complainants seem generally to be discouraged from proceeding further.³⁵

12.32 The Independent Education Union of Australia made the point that:

If one of the things that arises from that approach and then taking it to the next logical step by seeking apprehended violence orders against students at the same school where proximity becomes the determinant, it is actually an unworkable solution that they cannot be within 50 metres of each other. That might be the entire length of the school buildings in that particular school. It becomes an unworkable solution even though it is an approach that the law provides for. I think it is really critical that the point she makes is upmost in our minds in that whatever solutions we are proposing, they have to be absolutely workable.³⁶

12.33 Dr Helen McGrath explained that sometimes parents are desperate and while this may not be a good solution:

the reason why so many intervention orders are taken out against children and young people is that the parents could not get the school to make it stop, therefore they thought they had absolutely no other action. The action per se, even though it might have been hard to implement, which I would agree with you about, was enough to project the school into action. She suggested that, if there were mandatory reporting of ongoing psychological harm to

34 Dr Helen McGrath, School of Education, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 June 2010, p. CS25.

35 Dr Helen McGrath: School of Education, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 June 2010, pp. CS25-26, 28-29.

36 Mr Chris Watt, Federal Secretary, Independent Education Union of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 June 2010, p. CS28.

young people, it might at least trigger a response such as there is now going to be a mandatory restorative justice conference with that family, with those children, with the school leadership, et cetera.³⁷

- 12.34 Details were provided to the Committee of what could be regarded as a case study in the lack of effectiveness of schools, law enforcement and the justice system. A 15 year old was recently forced to change schools because of bullying, harassment intimidation, and defamation on social networking sites, lack of action by senior school staff and an assault. Restraining orders were successful on the protagonists.³⁸ The writer explained the impact of the event:

The other members of the group continued to post on Facebook about the event and as a result of the physical attack I determined to take out restraining orders on behalf of my child.

Two girls (the one who admitted to the physical attack and another who was facing charges for another incident) accepted the restraining orders. However the other four continue to be seen as a collective (I lodged six individual orders) and continue to contest the orders.

At the initial hearing the magistrate who granted the interim orders stated something to the effect that he could not include Facebook and MySpace as he was not personally familiar with and did not understand those sites.

I will clarify that when the orders were put into effect, my subsequent complaints for breach of an order as a result of Facebook activity by some of the Respondents were taken seriously and acted upon by Police.³⁹

- 12.35 The Stride Foundation cautioned about the potential to compound the harm by trivialising cyber-bullying incidents and not taking them seriously:

To tell the target to 'ignore it', 'get over it', 'don't worry, or it happens to everyone' does not in anyway help the target to

37 Dr Helen McGrath, School of Education, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 June 2010, pp. CS28-29.

38 Name withheld, *Submission 130*, pp. 2-3.

39 Name withheld, *Submission 130*, p. 3.

deal with the lack of confidence, self-esteem or social comfortability.⁴⁰

- 12.36 Baily commented that promoting a safe online environment or bully-free zone is nowhere near as effective as enforcing and policing, and making young people aware that it happens.⁴¹ Similarly, Lisa commented:

Police enforcement is really needed. I had an issue, which turned really bad and when I contacted police, I was told to grow up and that they can't do anything about it. How is that going to help the youth that are receiving death threats, and police will do nothing to help and put it done to "teenage drama"? I suggest getting a better police force who actually do their job, instead of ignoring laws.⁴²

- 12.37 Therefore, there needs to be greater awareness of the options available to parents and young people in situations where the school have not been able to resolve the situation adequately.⁴³

Coordination

- 12.38 South Australian Police and Western Australian Police drew attention the need for greater coordination of available resources between agencies to deal with cyber-safety issues. The WA Force argued that there was a need for a national body to investigate, advocate and act on cyber-safety issues.
- 12.39 Google commented on its cooperation with law enforcement to combat child exploitation:

Google cooperates with child safety investigations, and has a legal team devoted to this effort 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We respond to thousands of law enforcement requests for assistance, and hundreds of subpoenas, each year. We also provide training and technical assistance to law enforcement officials investigating online crimes against children through forums such as the Internet

40 Stride Foundation, *Submission 6*, p. 8.

41 Baily, *Submission 147*, p. 1.

42 Lisa, *Submission 145*, p. 1.

43 Dr Helen McGrath, School of Education, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 June 2010, p. CS34.

Crimes Against Children National Conference and the Virtual Global Taskforce.⁴⁴

12.40 The Australian Council for Computers in Education stated that:

To date, police responses to Risks associated with SNS use in all Jurisdictions studied for this report have tended to be fragmented and insufficiently coordinated.⁴⁵

12.41 The AFP detailed where cooperation would be particularly beneficial:

For example, from a law enforcement perspective, it is vital that information about trends, offenders' modus operandi derived post each operation is linked into current prevention strategies. This ensures prevention and awareness raising campaigns are targeting the vulnerabilities in which online child sex offenders have identified and pursued.⁴⁶

Legal risks

12.42 The Australian Council for Computers in Education highlighted the need to consider the legal risks arising from using social networking sites as there is a concern about the level of understanding of the nature of the risks. The areas of law where there are potential liabilities for young people using social networking sites include:

- Privacy disclosure and breach of confidence;
- Intellectual property rights especially copyright infringement;
- Defamation; and
- Criminal laws including harassment and offensive material.⁴⁷

12.43 The National Children's and Youth Law Centre stated that in most cases bullying had occurred at schools as well as online and the centre has had requests for advice in relation to possible legal recourse.⁴⁸

44 Google Australia & New Zealand, *Submission 13*, p. 3.

45 Australian Council for Computers in Education, *Submission 128*, pp. 2-3.

46 Australian Federal Police, *Submission 64*, p. 4.

47 Australian Council for Computers in Education, *Submission 128*, p. 2.

48 National Children's and Youth Law Centre, *Submission 138*, p. 6.

Feedback from young people

- 12.44 The Committee's *Are you safe?* survey revealed that overall, young people are generally positive in their engagement with police. Demonstrating the breadth of police involvement in this area, the following comments were made by survey participants responding to various questions throughout the survey.

Government should create a cyber-safety police force and have a website where kids can report cyber-bullying. Police can chase this up and parents of the other kids will be held liable. This would reduce and deter people from bullying (Male 18).

I have been cyber-bullied, but it was a few years ago. It was 27 pages of teasing and swearing, then my dad told the bullies that they will see him in the school office the next morning. I was too scared to go to school, but I did. The next morning, the principal said they couldn't do anything, because it was out of school, so they got no punishment. He said to not bother with the police because we were only 12. I still got cyber-bullied, and I got very upset. I hope in the future, they will get punished (Female 14).

I think that if you want bullying to be controlled, more laws should be enforced, police men and women should come to the schools and talk to youth about it and make children scared and instead of teachers handling it police should get involved. The bullies at my schools are mostly the rich ones that get whatever they want and have more than everyone else, or the girls that are really beautiful and use their looks to bully people in ways (Female 15).

I think the main problem or reason that cyber bullying seems to be increasing is that most young people are unaware that cyber bullying can be as serious/harmful as face-to-face bullying. It seems that many people are willing to post a nasty comment online, often people who would never dream of saying the same to a person's face. Young people need to be made aware that cyber bullying is just the same and can have the same disastrous consequences as other bullying forms. There is also the issue of anonymity, where bullies believe they cannot be traced and are therefore able to say whatever they wish. Ensuring young people are aware that police or other authorities have full access to internet history and the ability to track internet use I think would reduce the number of people willing to bully on the internet (Female 17).

kids are all wrapped in cotton wool now and arnt allowed out side due to media making parents believe pedophiles are everywere. if kids had something to do (and police chilled out and wernt so enfocive over things such as riding/skating on the road) kids wouldnt even go on a computer (Male 17).

Kids need to be taught not to be idiots and make others lives a living misery. If you become a victim of cyber bullying, immediately block the person that is doing it, if it is taking place on Facebook or the like. Then report the person to your teacher or the police if it is serious enough... (Male 16).

Most people don't quite understand that there are people who can help and some people don't think the police can do anything to stop stalking or cyber bullying. Also people don't understand that it is the World Wide Web and its huge and terrifying because you just don't know (Female 16).

police should come and talk to students and should be putting fear into the bullies not the victim (Male 14).

The police came in to tell us about how 3 clicks on a girls facebook page could tell us what her house looked like and where she lived and what school she went to. enough to stalk her! I think that scared most people a bit to check their privacy settings (Female 14).

“after seeing a email about how a police person who went undercover who found out enough information about a person that they could locate there house just by saying what sport team they play for. Is is worrying how easy it is to get information about people (Female aged 13).

the police should do more to protect us and teach us about all the bad things (Female 15).

the protection could be increased, by having a random conversation check, this could be done by police or any form of authorities. you could teach people to report this (Male aged 15).

There is a huge fuss over cyber-bullying. I have been an online gamer since I was 6, and cop crap every day from anonymous gamers, and I have no trouble with it, I just treat it as banter and ignore it. Although, inter school cyber-bullying is a totally different thing, and on a more serious level (especially as the bully and the victim know each other), it is quite overated. Calling names etc, is so easily blockable, and ignorable. however, when it gets to matters such as, embarrassing pictures of the victim being posted by the bully, that's when the police

should be involved straight away. I really think people my age just need to grow up (Male aged 15).

There should be a lot more police/government visits to us students at school, to help reduce the bullies and make the charges even more heavier (Female aged 15).

we need cyber police!!! (Male aged 13).

we should have the police/teachers supervise kids on the computer (Female aged 13).

Well being exposed to the internet is a bad thing because the police can get involved and shit will hit the fans i reasently got kiked out for what i did. All i can say is teach them better things make the internet safer. Protect the young people (Male aged 15).

what made me really think about and realise what some of the things i did was cyberbullying and wrong, was when we had a police officer come to our school to tell us what cyberbullying really was. this was when i realised some of the things i did were wrong and illegal (Female 17).

Concluding comments

- 12.45 Policing is an area where a great deal is happening and there is a lot of work still to be done. While legislative change is being mooted in a number of jurisdictions, the expansion of educative and restorative justice approaches provide alternative approaches.
- 12.46 Australian police forces are actively involved in a number of international law enforcement initiatives which are covered in Chapters 1 and 15.