18

Everywhere I go children and young people tell me they want to contribute. It is also my experience that children and young people often have a good understanding of what is best for their wellbeing, have unique insights into issues and can offer creative solutions to the problems under discussion.[1]

It's not about being prescriptive as is implied by 'talk about it more' or 'learn about it'. It's about experience, adaptability, and interest. If people aren't interested in their safety, they won't be safe. If people don't know how to adapt to the internet, they won't be safe. If people don't have brushes with unsafe use that really affect them, they'll continue to act brazen and be unsafe.[2]

Input from young people

18.1   As demonstrated throughout this Report, the Committee values the input of young people into the development of new methods to promote cyber-safety and reduce cyber-bullying. Young Australians have a wealth of experience with new technologies and are more equipped to respond appropriately to online risks than is often assumed.[3] Indeed, young people genuinely hold the key to their own security online; adults can learn as much from young people as they can learn from adults.

18.2   As Dr Helen McGrath from the Australian Psychological Society commented:

---

1   Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, *Submission 54*, p. 4.

2   Survey respondent, Male aged 17.

3   Third A et al, 2011, *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, p. 2.

> Young people need to part of that process, because if we do not listen to what they have to say about what works and does not work, we are going to go down some dead ends.[4]

18.3 Furthermore, the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition suggested that:

> That children and young people be directly engaged to share their experiences and help develop relevant solutions to cyber safety.[5]

18.4 The Alannah and Madeline Foundation commented that:

> Young people are essential to the solution and must be involved in policy development, parent education and development of multi-media education materials.[6]

18.5 The Youth Affairs Council of South Australia believed that the inherent risks are largely within the competencies of young people to manage:

> By framing young people's internet use in the language of "threats," it is easy to overlook the opportunities available to young people online, and also the fact that young people are usually able to understand and manage any risks they may take online.[7]

18.6 A recent report by the Cooperative Research Centre for Young People. Technology and Wellbeing argued that, by positioning cyber-safety:

> within an online risk-management paradigm (particularly within policy) is inherently limiting given the substantial range and substantive benefits associated with online practise.

18.7 That report also found that the benefits of social networking are largely associated with the:

> participatory nature of the contemporary digital environment, yet participation in creative content production, dissemination and consumption is largely overlooked in cybercitizenship frameworks. [This] should be informed by young people's own experiences and perspectives.[8]

---

4   Dr Helen McGrath, Psychologist, Australian Psychological Society, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 December 2010, p. CS58.

5   Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, *Submission 28*, p. 3.

6   Alannah and Madeline Foundation, *Submission 22*, p. 6.

7   Youth Affairs Council of South Australia, *Supplementary Submission 25.1*, p. 3.

8   Collin, P et al, 2011, *The Benefits of Social Networking Services*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, pp. 21-22.

18.8   Indeed, the apparent experience of young people participating in the Committee's *Are you safe?* survey was that current programs do not value their existing knowledge and consequently are delivered at a very basic level. This is demonstrated by the following comments, submitted in response to questions on what can be done to improve safety online:

> Young people dont care about giving information out because they don't know what will happen. More talks need to be given at school by people that have gone through identity theft or something else on the internet, not just people that make up silly stories and tell us that our bluetooth names are wrong (Female aged 15).
>
> [I am safe] because i belive that i do know what i am doing. i have the knowledge, on how to handle viruses and worms. i think it would be useful to teach people on how to handle these (Male aged 15).

18.9   Dr Barbara Spears commented:

> young people want education from research, they want to know what is legal and what is not and they want to be involved in the educative process as well.[9]

18.10   The capacities, resilience and ability of young people to absorb information was also discussed by the National Children's and Youth Law Centre:

> Children's positive engagement with the Lawmail service shows a yearning for information and support. In particular, there has been a growing interest in cyber-safety marked by a 50 per cent increase in Internet related questions in the past year since 2004. Interestingly, these young people have had the initiative and forethought to ask the question. This is the kind of behaviour that in our view should be encouraged in young people: thoughtfulness, critical thinking and openness to learning. This displays maturity, respect for the law and wisdom in their interactions with the world. This resourcefulness should be matched and supported by adults in providing appropriate services.[10]

---

9   Dr Barbara Spears, Senior Lecturer, School of Education, University of South Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 June 2010, p. CS28.

10   National Children's and Youth Law Centre, *Submission 138*, p. 5.

18.11   This sentiment was also reflected in comments submitted by survey
         respondents. An example was submitted in the final free-text space:

> I think it should be monitored more and individuals should take more
> of a responsibility. Some teenagers don't realise what they put on may
> be detriemental to their future goals. In saying that, preaching to us
> about it makes the people who listened the first time more aware and
> those who don't listen care less (Female aged 15).

18.12   The clear message from both young people and other participants in the
         Inquiry is that programs should seek to value existing knowledge and
         build upon this with appropriate and resourceful strategies. Some of those
         strategies are discussed below, and in Chapter 19.

18.13   The Committee's *Are you safe?* survey also asked respondents aged 13
         years and over whether they believe more can be done to make the
         Internet safer. 62.9 percent of respondents believe that more can be done.

Figure 18.1   Can more be done to make the internet safer? *(Aged 13 and over)*
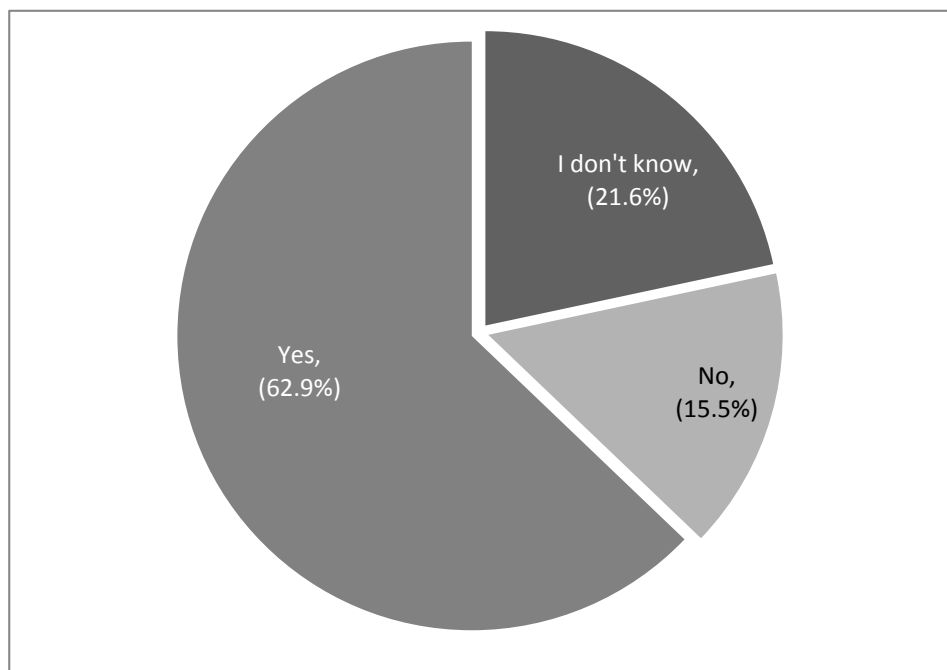
18.14   The survey asked respondents what they believe can be done to make the
         internet safer. Respondents were able to select more than one of the
         following options, and Figures 18.1a ad 18.1b indicate percentages of the
         collective total of responses to the question.

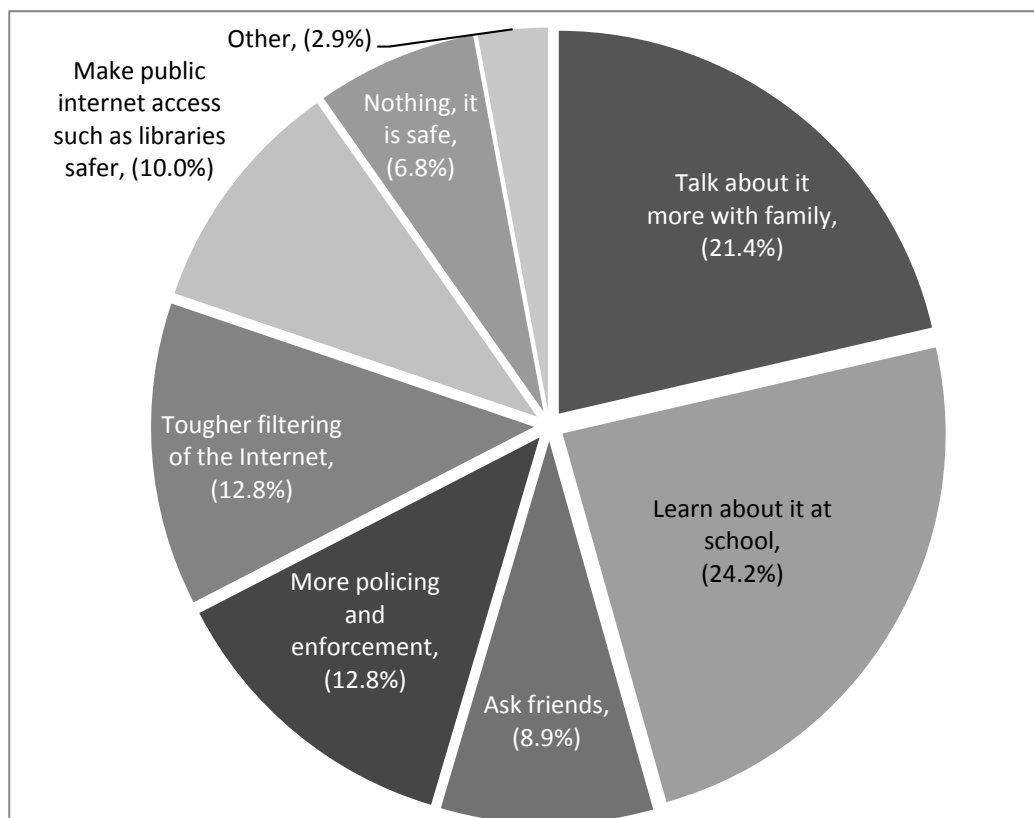Figure 18.2   What can be done to make the online environment safer?

Table 18.1   What can be done to make the online environment safer?

	Sex	Talk about it more with family		Learn about it at school		Ask friends		More policing and enforcement		Tougher filtering of the internet		Make public internet access such as libraries safer		Nothing, it is safe now		other	
		%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
5 Years	M	45.3	34	46.7	35	28.0	21	20.0	15	22.7	17	21.3	16	25.3	19	21.3	16
	F	40.2	33	37.8	31	29.3	24	25.6	21	31.7	26	22.0	18	23.2	19	18.3	15
6 Years	M	54.2	26	60.4	29	31.3	15	33.3	16	12.5	6	25.0	12	6.3	3	8.3	4

Age	Sex															
	F	65.6	42	57.8	37	31.3	20	28.1	18	23.4	15	20.3	13	14.1	9	4.7	3
7 Years	M	69.1	76	64.5	71	31.8	35	35.5	39	16.3	18	20.9	23	10.9	12	4.5	5
	F	80.4	78	67.0	65	28.9	28	24.7	24	14.4	14	12.4	12	4.1	4	2.1	2
8 Years	M	64.2	272	56.8	241	25.2	107	31.1	132	19.6	83	20.5	87	6.6	28	3.8	16
	F	73.0	360	63.7	314	26.2	129	23.7	117	13.2	65	13.8	68	3.4	17	2.6	13
9 Years	M	70.4	707	60.4	606	24.1	242	26.6	267	19.6	197	19.3	194	6.1	61	4.9	49
	F	74.0	798	66.7	719	22.6	244	27.2	293	16.9	182	18.8	203	2.9	31	4.8	52
10 Years	M	66.7	1134	61.6	1048	22.4	381	25.9	440	23.6	402	21.3	362	5.8	99	2.9	49
	F	74.6	1342	70.8	1273	24.5	441	24.9	447	20.3	365	19.4	349	2.8	50	6.3	113
11 Years	M	65.8	1517	63.9	1473	23.0	530	26.9	620	30.9	713	25.1	579	5.7	132	4.4	102
	F	69.7	1745	69.6	1741	24.9	623	28.4	710	28.0	701	26.0	650	3.0	74	7.6	191
12 Years	M	59.0	1320	63.2	1414	24.9	557	28.8	644	35.0	783	25.3	567	9.2	205	6.0	134
	F	63.9	1446	70.7	1599	28.2	639	30.2	684	33.4	756	27.4	621	4.9	112	7.2	164
13 Years	M	40.2	760	49.0	926	20.3	384	25.6	672	35.8	676	28.6	540	3.4	64	10.2	192
	F	39.9	980	51.8	1272	20.3	498	24.3	842	38.8	953	28.3	696	2.3	56	9.8	241
14 Years	M	35.3	569	46.4	748	18.3	295	30.9	498	31.0	500	25.9	418	4.8	78	9.1	146
	F	33.7	667	48.1	954	17.7	350	35.2	698	37.4	741	25.0	495	2.2	44	7.8	155
15 Years	M	27.9	332	41.1	489	17.6	210	29.1	346	27.4	326	23.8	283	4.8	57	7.4	88
	F	31.9	438	49.5	680	18.4	253	37.1	509	39.5	543	26.9	369	2.8	38	6.2	85
16 Years	M	28.4	229	42.1	340	17.1	138	30.5	246	26.3	212	21.7	175	5.5	44	8.8	71
	F	27.2	271	48.1	480	14.9	149	37.3	372	36.7	366	24.2	242	1.7	17	6.1	61
17 Years	M	22.8	90	33.9	134	14.2	56	28.6	113	20.0	79	17.5	69	7.8	31	9.6	38
	F	26.8	152	50.9	289	14.3	81	41.2	234	40.8	232	28.2	160	2.5	14	6.2	35
18 Years	M	26.6	83	33.3	104	17.9	56	30.8	96	18.9	59	19.6	61	9.3	29	12.2	38
	F	30.5	79	37.8	98	18.5	48	36.7	95	32.4	84	24.3	63	9.7	25	11.2	29

Getting the message right

18.15   Although young people and the broader community are aware of risks online, it appears that the positive message of staying safe online and limiting exposure to risks is not being fully understood or communicated effectively.

18.16   Dr Julian Dooley highlighted the importance of getting the message right:

> One thing that is very clear, not from cybersafety research but from social marketing research, is that, if the message is really obvious and transparent, young people are much less likely to pick it up. It is really important that we develop strategies that are attractive, that convey and develop positive messages and that promote positive behaviours. One of the strongest predictors of bullying behaviours is a smaller social response repertoire. So we need to encourage social behaviours but do it in a fun way in which the message is not so blatantly obvious that it turns people off.[11]

18.17   Dr Roger Clarke commented:

> Although the Slip, Slop, Slap example that keeps cropping up is a bit of giveaway, a bit of a stab in the dark, there is a benefit if you think through what objectives we are trying to reach. That kind of campaign did demonstrably reach parents and it also reached a proportion of those that are normally fairly hard to reach. That message got through. It got through to a lesser extent, I think, to young people, so if we are trying to target young people we have to find other channels. Advertisements are not the key thing for kids. They absorb their information in other ways. But mass media campaigns for parents, done the right way—it has to be really catchy; it has to be one of those ads that really clicks for the age groups we are trying to reach, which are current parents, not us grandparents—do have some merit in trying to reach a reachable part of those missing parents. As I say, the majority of kids are going to learn the majority of what they want from their peers and from their environment... is that with young people viral marketing is going to be the most important mechanism that you are going to need to use. I do not believe advertisements in the sense of billboards and billboards converted into other media are having a big impact on young people these days. I do not speak as

---

11   Dr Julian Dooley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 June 2010, p. CS38.

an advertising executive or an advertising researcher, but that is my impression. Viral marketing is perceived to be within their community—that is the reason it works.[12]

18.18   Mr Darren Kane of Telstra Corporation warned, however, that:

one of the young children during one of the workshops, when they were speaking about Facebook, indicated, 'Facebook isn't that bad.' That is where we go back to that message that I spoke of earlier. We have got to be very, very careful around our educational programs to make sure that that is not the perspective young people have of Facebook. We have got to be careful about how we educate them to the risks of using Facebook without actually pushing them away from using a product that allows them to keep connected.[13]

18.19   Young people also commented on the need for an age-appropriate and positive message. When asked what can make the online environment safer, the following comments were submitted:

Everyone knows [about what they should and should not post online], they just dont think that these things will happen to them. so you dont need to tell us how to be safe, tell us more about what will happen if we aren't (Male aged 15).

i think people of higher, let me say, authority, need to come to schools and tell children, particularly teenagers about being safe on the internet. they cant just say 'please be safe whilst online' because that doesnt get through to us. they need to enforce laws and rules upon us. they need to get to the kids, not the parents or teachers. they dont run our lives and we are smart enough to know how to go behind their backs. we, as teens, must know the dangers and consequences and it must be told to us as a serious matter, not some light thing we can have a laugh about later (Female aged 15).

I think that more public awareness is needed to make Online Safety an issue of importance for the youth of Australia. Essentially, the only way this message will really be heard is if the Australian youth have a greater exposure to it, outside the typical environment of school. For example, seminars could be held for the broader community as a way of educating parents AND students about online safety. In this way, the

---

12   Dr Roger Clarke, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 March 2011, pp. CS26-27.

13   Mr Darren Kane, Director, Corporate Security and Investigations, and Officer of Internet Safety, Telstra Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 July 2010, p. CS25.

> message would be reinforced in a positive way which would most probably be reflected in the statistics of online safety awareness (Female aged 17).
>
> I think you just need to keep talking to everyone about it. There is no other way to enforce it, but to just keep talking about it (Female aged 13).
>
> Just keep increasing awareness, sooner or later people will listen (Male aged 16).
>
> Just to keep talking about it at school and making sure younger kids understand, and make sure everything is as private as it could be so strangers can't look you up (Female aged 14).
>
> talking about it all the time just makes me annoyed the more paranoia of your parents and teachers that gets shoved down your throat the less you actually care, yeah theres bad people out there but everyone knows that it should e taught once or twice but after that it should only be remided when someone is actually doing somthing stupid, bad people are everywhere not just on the net (Female aged 17).

18.20   They also commented on how these messages might be delivered:

> pop ups on the web, featuring information on safety, but being etiquette and not coming up to often so it doesnt annoy annoyone (Male aged 14).
>
> Reminders when you ARE online.   Everyone knows this information, but if someone was faced with a choice (eg, between giving information out and not) it is most usually the 'giving' side of the argument that wins because there is someone to persuade you. The 'safety' side needs to be persuasive too (Female aged 15).

Appropriate educational materials

18.21   Mr Nick Abrahams and Ms Ju Young Lee submitted that,

> There is not enough educational material being produced or distributed that truly has an impact on teens. Much of the educational material being produced is in hardcopy, or is difficult for teens to relate to as it is usually presented from an older perspective. Educational materials that are relevant and produced from their peers' perspective are essential. Additionally, these

material should be distributed through the mediums that teens function in (email, social media) to be effective.[14]

18.22   Similarly, Facebook commented:

> One of the big frustrations that I see is that the government is thinking, 'I want people to come to the government website to look at X,' but few kids are going to do that and few parents actually do that.[15]

18.23   Respondents in the Committee's *Are you safe?* survey commented extensively on the current approach of education programs, and how they might be adapted. Some of the comments made throughout the survey are extracted below:

> Educate adults as well as children, teenagers (Male aged 15).
>
> educating people of incidents that have occured with other people, so they know what has and can happen to them. It can also be seen as a scare tactic as this can work well for teens (Female aged 15).
>
> Education about the repurcussions, if you wouldn't do it in real life... Hence why filtering isn't the answer... (Male aged 17).
>
> Education is the key, if kids know the dangers they know what to do. Force facebook to make privacy settings easier to understand for kids. Make parent liable for what happens to their kids online (if parent monitors then child will be safe). Provide free good filtering software for parents who can't afford to buy it (Male aged 18).
>
> Get everybody to learn about safety on the internet and help eachother and always make sure the site is safe and that all your settings are privately set. Make sure younger kids especially learn because they can just easily clock on anything without any cyber-bullying knowledge or safety (Female aged 13).
>
> Have more police officers come into the schools and share with students what penilties there are against offenders and what you could do if you were in that situation (Female aged 14).
>
> I cannot stress enough, how important it is for children to be aware of the damage they can do with a single click. Education of the dangers of the internet and how to safely and responsibly use the internet needs to

14   Mr Nick Abrahams and Ms Ju Young Lee, *Submission 66*, p. 2.
15   Hon Mozelle Thompson, Chief Privacy Advisor, Facebook, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 June 2010, p. CS36.

be a priority in solving cyber bullying issues. Also I am aware that no specific laws or policies are able to be enforced upon the perpertrators, so there is no deterrent for would-be cyber bullies to bully other peers online (Female aged 17).

I think it is important just to educate people about internet safety, and not focus so much on filtering instead. I think that students should be educated more on specifically what they can do to be safer on the internet, because at the moment we aren't really taught a lot and I know that a lot of other people know nothing about internet safety (Female aged 14).

I for one need a better understanding of viruses and online safety with the computer. A public body of informatio would be helpful (Male aged 14).

Most sites are safe, it's the users that tend to be the issue, whether they don't know what to do and get into trouble or someone who does bad things anyway takes advantage of them. I reckon educating people on how destructive their actions can be, whether they realise it or not, is the solution as well as teaching them about the philosophy behind the morals of their actions (Male aged 17).

not necessarily at school, we get a lot of lectures already, but deffinately something else.. maybe a website? or some kind of interesting game? or up-beat documentary, nothing corney. or posters? but all of them designed and influenced by children our age. not some random people in an office. its important that we feel involved in our own production of saftey. otherwise we will just see it as another boring lecture (Female aged 16).

To make things safer online, people should actually be realistic in seminars given about online safety. Usually they are lame. People usually know not to do stupid things on the internet anyway (Female aged 14).

We learn a little about it at school but not much. Make it more understandable for kids. alot of people make there age older so they make acctons for facebook ect (Female aged 14).

Parents should be educated about this topic more. If they are more aware about this topic, majority of parents would be able to prevent it and intervene (Female aged 16).

People just have to use there brains more. I mean its common sense to know if its a good idea or not. If it doesn't feel right then don't do it

> (Male aged 15).
>
> Teach people about the dangers, and how to avoid them and avert them with proper security. This would make people aware of the dangers but not scare them out of using the internet (Male aged 14).
>
> Teachers can talk to students in small groups or by thereselves so that they get the message quicker (Female aged 13).
>
> teaching critical thinking skills to school students to improve common sense and make them think! But this would involve overhauling education curriculum and is probably beyond the scope of the parliamentary inquiry (Male aged 18).
>
> I think there needs to be something done in teaching children morals; what is right and what is wrong, no matter who's beliefs this may infringe on (Female aged 18).

Recommendation 27

That the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy invite the Consultative Working Group on Cybersafety, in conjunction with the Youth Advisory Group, continue to advise Government on enhancing the effectiveness of cyber-safety awareness campaigns including targeted media campaigns and educational programs.

Empower young people to better assist each other

18.24   It is important that positive initiatives empower young people to promote their own safety, and that of their peers. The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria noted:

> We know through our work with young people that they get most of their information from each other and that they share a lot of information. Not all of that is reliable information, so we need to be really careful about monitoring what young people are telling each other and listening to the stories that they are telling each other about their online experiences.[16]

16   Ms Georgie Ferrari, Chief Executive Office, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 June 2010, p. CS27.

18.25   Facebook's Chief Privacy Advisor also commented:

> When they sense something is not right they will warn all their friends but not necessarily tell their parents or their teachers, and that is an important challenge.[17]

18.26   Dr Julian Dooley noted that:

> So having peer driven student leadership based programs where there is open, engaged discussion about what happens online and what does not happen online is a great way to encourage positive uses.[18]

18.27   The Alannah and Madeline Foundation observed that:

> if we are to be successful in developing those resources, we need to engage young people as the experts, because they are the only ones that know what is cool, what is now and what appeals.[19]

18.28   Ms Sonya Ryan noted young people's capacity and interest in working collaboratively:

> I think it is about getting through to children through mediums that they can relate to, to really get them enthusiastic about coming together and taking a stand against this kind of crime. I find that the kids at high schools tend to get quite agitated about what has happened to my daughter—the way in which she was lured by the promise of love—and they are very keen to let all their friends know, to pass the information on, to talk to others about it, to talk to siblings about it and to talk to parents about it. There needs to be more information, more education and more awareness in the curriculum and also through different means. As I have said, it needs to go through avenues in which the children are already engaged and so they are in a place where they feel comfortable. Then we tend to see them come forward with information because they are in an environment where they feel as though they can.[20]

18.29   Similarly, Ms Candice Jansz commented:

---

17   Hon Mozelle Thompson, Chief Privacy Advisor, Facebook, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 June 2010, p. CS32.

18   Dr Julian Dooley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 June 2010, p. CS44.

19   Dr Judith Slocombe, Chief Executive Officer, Alannah and Madeline Foundation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 June 2010, p. CS38.

20   Ms Sonya Ryan, Director, Carly Ryan Foundation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 3 February 2011, p. CS59.

The design and implementation of peer-run educational programs should also be a central facet of any such measure, as youth place great importance on the views and actions of their peers. This diversification of advice and information will ensure that messages concerning the permanency of actions, the gravity of choices and the dangers of online disclosure are reiterated and more comprehensively understood by young people in the long term.[21]

18.30   Indeed, young people completing the *Are you safe?* survey commented on their peer-support networks when feeling unsafe on the Internet. When asked who they would talk to if they saw something concerning online, the following comments were made:

> I would say talk to someone you trust and make sure they know whats going on.its very hard for people to talk to there familys and others (Male aged 15).
>
> I would talk to my sister, because she understands me, but not like anyone else in my family (Female aged 14).
>
> Maybe a family friend...i dont trust those around me enough to not go back and tell my father what i may have accidently come across while on the internet and i know my dad would jump to conclusions (Female aged 15).
>
> Think about it in depth by yourself, perhaps communicate on the appropriate forums (Male aged 16).

Peer education

18.31   A strategy that is likely to be the most effective in combating the negative effects of online interaction for children and young people is peer-run education. This could be through groups such as Privacy Victoria's Youth Advisory Group, or mentor groups within school and community environments. Groups such as these, composed of enthusiastic and dedicated young people, are more likely to be able to reach and connect with a young audience than older presenters. This is in spite of a lack of formal training and experience.

18.32   Ms Jansz stated that young people,

---

21   Ms Candice Jansz, *Submission 44*, p. 3.

are at an age where they are mature enough to understand and communicate the risks and issues involved in online communication, yet young enough to remember their childhood and teen years clearly, making them able to easily relate to and empathise with their audience's issues, concerns and communicative needs... Dynamic and enjoyable presentations on cyber-safety by young people in schools and community venues for children, young people, parents and teachers alike are more likely to be remembered than academic or expert testimonies, which can inspire message fatigue as old materials and slogans are constantly rehashed and reused... The use of young people to educate young people also means that messages can be dispersed through alternate delivery methods, for example peer-created artwork, merchandise and posters, concerts, dynamic websites (including vox pops, videos and competitions etc.) and even delivery on the mediums deemed problematic in the first place, for example, Facebook advertising, groups or fan pages.[22]

18.33   Similarly, the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Western Australia commented:

Directly involving children and young people in decisions that impact on them and taking their views into account in the development of laws, policies and programs results in better outcomes for children and young people. This is true for all areas that impact on children and young people but is especially the case when considering their engagement with technology and the online environment – no one knows more about the ways they are engaged, the issues they face and, therefore it follows, solutions that are most likely to work for them.[23]

Crossing the inter-generational divide

18.34   Young people's perceptions of what their parents/carers and other adults know about new technologies greatly impacts on the level of acceptance and value they place on the information and advice given to them. However, many young people do not believe that their parents in particular are fully aware of what happens on the Internet and,

---

22   Ms Candice Jansz, S*ubmission 44*, p. 6.
23   Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, *Submission 54*, p. 4.

consequently, often overstate dangers or misrepresent risks. The following comments were made in response to two different questions in the survey:

> parents definitely do need some insight into what their child or children are doing on the internet and teachers should also be aware of what goes on. but they cant really stop or change things like they should, there are many ignorant parents out there. i would know as my dad is one of them. im not saying i act irresponsibly on the internet, because i dont, im not that....immature. but MANY people do the wrong thing on a regular basis (Female aged 14).
>
> just a note that parents seem to follow after kids in exploring the internet, while professional development in some employment areas covers this if a parent asks their child "can you help me get facebook" the privacy responsibility is somewhat on the child to explain it to the parent thus school education is vital for families as a whole unit (Female aged 17).

18.35   Indeed, the Inspire Foundation reported that:

> There was a prevailing attitude amongst young people that teachers, parents and youth workers didn't really understand technology/how young people use the Internet and therefore weren't in a position to (credibly) advocate safe Internet practices.[24]

18.36   It has been argued in published papers that, as Australia moves into the future, the inter-generational divide is likely to become a key social issue. It is widely acknowledged that Australia needs a comprehensive plan for dealing with the effects of an ageing population, and that this planning needs to address inter-generational communication practices:

> The rise of new technologies has led to the emergence of new patterns of communication and social connection between young people. If we don't act to enhance intergenerational communication, we risk generating a culture structured by a digital/communication divide between young people, their parents and older members of the community. It is vital that we harness the potential for intergenerational communication facilitated by social networking services. This will require a concerted effort to educate older Australians about [social

---

24   Inspire Foundation, *Submission 3*, p. 9.

networking and new technologies], and enable them to understand how young people identify and respond to the risks and opportunities they present.[25]

18.37   One innovative way of crossing this divide is to invert traditional teaching relationships, so that young people become the teachers in adult education.

Inverting the teaching relationship

18.38   Dr Helen McGrath commented on this approach:

> There could be more intensive opportunities for parents to become aware of the issues above and beyond what is already available. One very wise principal of my acquaintance said that the only way this could be done is to have kids present about the issues to parents. In doing so you get the double learning but, at the same time, parents are more likely to come and see their children perform. And if, for example, the children were doing a presentation about cybersafety and then they stopped, for a freeze frame, and said, 'What we had to check on before we did this was A, B, C and we were very careful not to do E and F,' then that could be a really engaging way of doing it. It would be getting the kids to teach the parents, but in an engaging way as opposed to a preachy way.[26]

18.39   Importantly, recent studies have been conducted trailing this proposal. Released on 5 April 2011 by the Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing (YAW-CRC), the *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety Report* was based on a Living Lab study.[27] The study reversed traditional teaching hierarchies: young people developed and delivered a cyber-safety education workshop to a group of parents.[28]

---

25   Collin, P et al, 2011, *The Benefits of Social Networking Services*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, p. 21.

26   Dr Helen McGrath, Psychologist, Australian Psychological Society, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 December 2010, p. CS66.

27   A 'living lab' is a user-centric research methodology for sensing, prototyping, validating and refining complex solutions in multiple and evolving real life contexts. A living lab simulates a particular social context that allows researchers to observe and analyse 'authentic' interaction.

28   Third A et al, 2011, *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing.

18.40   Significantly, the YAW-CRC's report found that this model of cyber-safety education established an inter-generational conversation between young people and adults that lead to four substantial outcomes:

- The dialogue leads to a demystification of social networking services and increased parental understanding of the role of these sites as communication tools;

- Adults become more familiar with these services and began to feel more comfortable with the technologies used by their children;

- As a result of this increased familiarity and understanding, parents became more aware of how they could assist their children to be smart, safe and responsible when online; and

- The study's young participants gained a sense of achievement and self-efficacy.[29]

18.41   Furthermore, while the study's participants acknowledged the value of conventional cyber-safety education, they also emphasised that the majority of effective strategies they had developed for maintaining a safe online presence had been learnt informally. This is primarily conducted through consultation with their peers or a process of trial and error.[30]

18.42   Adult participants reported that this insight into supportive peer relationships was comforting, with one parent noting, 'It was reassuring. If they don't know how to deal with it they reach out to parents or their friends'.[31]

18.43   Similarly, parents were reassured by the fact that the young participants' online safety was strongly informed by the knowledge and skills they use to remain safe and responsible in the offline world. As one participant commented, 'whenever I'm unsure, I fall back on the things my parents have told me about keeping safe generally'.[32] One parent noted that 'my young person [participant] uses the same moral compass in her face-to-face world as in the online world'.[33]

29   Third A *et al*, 2011, *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, p. 23.

30   Third A *et al*, 2011, *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, p. 24.

31   Third A *et al*, 2011, *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, p. 18.

32   Third A *et al*, 2011, *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, p. 18.

33   Third A *et al*, 2011, *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, p. 18.

18.44   In its recommendations, the Study advocates a series of guiding principles that should be applied in the development of future cyber-safety education models. According to the authors, education models should be:

> developed in partnership with young people and acknowledge their expertise; be experimental as opposed to didactic; combine online and face-to-face delivery; have scope to meet the specific technical skills needs of adults, as well as providing capacity for high level conversations about the socio-cultural dimensions of young people's technology use; and be flexible and iterative so that they can keep pace with the emergence of new online and networked media technologies and practices.[34]

18.45   Engaging young Australians in the study's learning lab reportedly provided participating parents with a supportive environment in which to explore technologies with which they would otherwise feel uncomfortable.[35] The Study quoted parent-participants who remarked that

> Instead of having adults come to schools to talk about cybersafety, [we should] get young people to share their real life experiences.

> and,

> The young people have been there, done that, and can talk from experience.

> and,

> It was very refreshing to speak to someone who is young, open and frank.[36]

18.46   This Study commented that the youth-led workshops inspired adults' confidence in 'young people's capacity to engage in online interactions in responsible and risk-minimal ways'.[37] Further, the study's model of cyber-safety education validated and strengthened young people's knowledge and experience in this area.

---

34   Third A *et al*, 2011, *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, pp. 8- 9.

35   Third A *et al*, 2011, *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, pp. 16-17.

36   Third A *et al*, 2011, *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, p. 17.

37   Third A *et al*, 2011, *Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab*, Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing, p. 18.

18.47   The Committee proposed this idea to the participants of its High School Forum in Hobart:

> Hayden-Other generations need to be enlightened as well. Those generations have perceptions. Our generation is the modem generation where everything is about technology and that kind of thing. My parents really do not understand that. They cannot comprehend where we are coming from. They need to be placed in the situation so they can understand where we are coming from.

> CHAIR-So would it be better for adults to be taught by other adults or do you think you would do a better job of teaching them? Should it be you out the front teaching parents about it?

> Hayden-I think that would be good because it would give the actual view.

> Sally-I think that is an excellent idea because a lot of parents have views of internet sites and social networking that are not necessarily true. They have an idea. My dad still gets Facebook and YouTube confused, for example. Seeing that social-networking sites are used predominantly by young people they are probably the best people to inform their elders about that sort of thing.

> Dylan-I would tell my parents. If you arc close enough to tell your parents and you guys do not mind sharing then I would tell them what is happening and even log on and show them if I am getting bullied or whatnot so that if it comes to it dad or mum can talk to them. I do know a friend who was being bullied on Facebook and their mum logged on and talked to them all, which I suppose is good. We should also be educating the older generation about the things we are using so that when stuff happens they can get involved and help us.

> CHAIR-So, rather than the parent going down to the school, they logged onto the technology and spoke through that?

> Dylan-Yes, it probably would not be as confronting and if the other people are not willing to come and talk then yes.

> Harris-Carrying on from where Sally and Hayden were, I agree it would be a good idea for younger people to educate adults on these things. I agree with a lot of people. We want private conversations like adults want to have conversations with their friends that they do not want children to hear. As a lot of people already know, there are some things that parents do not want their

children to know about, and there are things we do not want our parents know about.

...

Georgia-On the idea that the parents learn, they also have to want to learn. I know the Y generation is meant to be stubborn and to want it all and that sort of thing, and I really want to tread carefully here, but the parents and the adults need to realise that they are also very stubborn. Trying to explain to your mum or a relative or someone like that who is older than you what is going on Facebook is like talking to a brick wall. They do not understand that it is meant to be fun and that. although it does sometimes cause people emotional pain, it is not meant to. They cannot get that around their head--does that make sense?

CHAIR-Thanks.

Harris-Coming back to what I have been saying and following off what Georgia was saying, I think a lot of parents view us as pretty much rebellious: we want to do what we want and we arc not going to listen to you. Of course, quite a lot of us do listen to our parents and talk to them, but we also have our views on things and we want to be able to express ourselves. In this sort of generation that we have, I suppose it is similar to when they were growing up as well, because they had their ways to communicate and talk to each other. In a way. you cannot really stop what we are doing. but I see their point: we need to be careful But we still also need to express ourselves in ways that we understand. We have grown up basically like this; we can just talk and be more communicative--communicate better. The internet has opened up a whole new world.[38]

---

38 *Transcript of Evidence*, April 20, pp. CS23-24.

Recommendation 28

> **That the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth consult with the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy to develop measures to introduce:**
>
> - **youth leadership courses enabling students to mentor their school communities about cyber-safety issues, and**
>
> - **courses on cyber-safety issues for parents/carers and other adults are developed in consultation with young people and delivered by young people.**

Other suggestions

18.48   As this chapter has already discussed, young people are eager to contribute to developing messages, programs and strategies to promote cyber-safety and ethical online behaviour. Thousands of comments were submitted, through free text spaces in the Committee's survey of how government, industry and other stakeholders can promote safe online practice. Some of these are included below.

Industry

18.49   Young people appear to appreciate the role that industry plays in contributing to safe online experiences. Survey respondents submitted the following comments regarding the possibilities for industry to have a greater role in making the online environment safer:

> Put in mechanisms on chat rooms and social media so that anyone who is under 18 gets extra protection so their names don't come up unless being search by a friend and people don't have to use thier real names or ages on their page if they select privately that they want an under-age account or you make and age limit on how old a person can be to be friend wtih a minor or you make police more prolifty and send cyber-stafey instant messages to enveryone who is under 25 about cyberstalking. Have filters to pick up suspicious bejhaviur and make a board to monitor inappropriate pictures so that they can't be put up and allow people to request that slanderous or humiliating images cna be completely deleted off the server and the internet or request that they be buried deeper so that they cant be accessed on google images or searched for (Female aged

15).

Reminders when you ARE online. Everyone knows this information, but if someone was faced with a choice (eg, between giving information out and note) if is most usually the giving side of the argument that iwns because there is someone to persuade you. The 'safety' side needs to be persuasive too (Female aged 15).

Site Administrators and Developers

18.50   Many comments were submitted by young people discussing the responsibility and opportunities for site administrators and developers in creating positive online environments. Some of the suggestions were broadly framed for site developers and administrators, and some specifically discussed privacy settings.

an easier 'reporting' system, for example on facebook it mike take two and a bit weeks for actions to be examined and an account suspended when it should be a bit sooner (Female aged 14).

any complaints (that are valid) that their is a person that may be a stalker or dangerous or anything like that they should NOT be allowed to have access to social networks (Female aged 16).

before a child\adolescent activates a profile on facebook, there should be a page of information that must be read about the risks that they are putting themselves into from just one click of a button (Female aged 14).

Change default settings on social networking site to a higher setting (Male aged 13).

make websites that are the same as websites like faecbook and myspace but make them only for kids adn set a certain age group so unsafe adults cannot acsesse it but make it with very high security standars (Female aged 14).

On social networking sites, it should be a rule to keep user's pages 16 and under on the highest privacy setting (Female aged 13).

Social Networking sites should make it so that people that are tagged, must agree for the photo to be posted (Male aged 14).

Social networking sites when creating an acount sould have a section where you have to fill in like a licence or other information and then complete the rest of the stuff. The networking sites could then send that information to the goverment and then check it and give approvle to the

> sites profile to go ahead and the permantlaly destroy/very highly protect that information (Female aged 13).
>
> talk to the creators of facebook and ask them to enforce tougher filtering (Female aged 14).

Privacy settings

18.51   Young people are concerned about the privacy settings on social networking sites and gaming sites. It appears that they believe that enhanced services and knowledge of privacy settings would assist them to stay safe online.

> Allow more choices for what you can allow people to see - both friends and strangers on your social network site (Female aged 14).
>
> Alot more privacy settings on all the social sites (Male aged 13).
>
> automatically have a privacy setting when you get a facebook etc. account (Female aged 13).
>
> Easier to access or adjust privacy settings- some are hidden, it almost seems like they're trying to trick you (Female aged 16).
>
> easier to understand privacy settings. They need to be a lot shorter then maybe more people will be willing to read them (Female aged 15).
>
> giving you the option, when you set up an account, to have private settings instead of having to find the private settings yourself (Female aged 14).
>
> have compulsory settings such as only your friends being able to see your photos or asking a question when you add someone on facebook and if it adds up to the answer the person you are adding has made the friend request will be sent (Male aged 17).
>
> have higher quality privacy pages to allow only the people you chose to acssess it (Male aged 17).
>
> I think tighter safety settings could be applied on social networking sites, etc, as these sites are used by so many people around the world. There are many ways to view people's private information and a very long & arduous process has to be gone through to get the settings on totally private, as if the website is trying to make it hard enough to set things on private so people won't be bothered to do so. Also there are times when these privacy settings go down, e.g. when new settings are being

updated, allowing everyone's information to become totally public no matter what their privacy settings were. I think this should be improved. I also think that the default security settings on social networking sites should be set at a higher privacy, instead of automatically being available to a large number of people (Female aged 16).

it needs to be easier to access the privacy settings, people who are not that good on computers might want to update the priacy but fdont know how to (Female aged 13).

make sure that on sites such as habbo you can not put your full name and email address out there for everyone to see, because to sign up for those things you need to tell the network that stuff anyway so why cant they just monitor it and if you mention someones full name have it not shwn to everybody else?? (Female aged 14).

More privacy laws need to be enforced and implemented for all social networking sites (Female aged 17).

On social networks, you could be forced to read the privecy policy (Female aged 13).

privacy settings being easier to access on social networking sites and all settings being on private (Male aged 15).

Put in mechanisms on chat tooms and social media so that anyone who is under 18 gets extra protection so their names don't come up unless being searched by a friend and people don't have to use their real names or ages on their page if they select privately that they want an under-age account or you make and age limit on how old a person can be to be friend with a minor or you make police more prolific and send cybersaftey instant messages to everyone who is under 25 about cyber stalking. have filters to pick up suspicious behaviour and make a board to monitor and inappropriate pictures so that they can't be put up and allow people to request that slanderous of humiliating images can be completely deleted off the survour and the internet or request that they be buried deeper so that the cant be accesed on google images or searched for (Female aged 15).

Social networking sights need to make account and privacy settings more user-friendly as well as maybe giving 'recommended' settings according to one's age (Male aged 15).

stronger privacy settings on social networking websites (Female aged 17).

The privacy setting on Facebook should not be optional-it should be an

automatic requirement of the site (Female aged 15).

To have more privacy settings, more control over who can see what (Female aged 13).

When setting up an account on facebook etc apart of signing up you have to look though the settings (Female aged 15).

with facebook, twitter or myspace. many people can still get past your safety, so i feel that internet sites should enable i higher security level for people and a higher age in which they can make the account. theres too many creeps/pedofiles out there (Female aged 15).

With the privacy settings on social networks such as facebook, people you aren't friends with should not be able to see all your information - the setting where they are allowed to should be de-activated.   Default security settings - you should only be able to raise them, not lower them (Female aged 15).

you should have easier access to privacy settings. many websites like facebook make it difficult to find them (Male aged 16).

Technology

18.52   Young people also submitted comments in the *Are you safe?* survey regarding possible developments in technology that would assist them to feel safer.

A button you can click on to make the site reported on the web if your scared (Male aged 13).

Also having web 'hubs' with most of the things that children enjoy doing on the internet is another way of ensuring safety on the web (roller coaster website is a good example), so a list of website 'hubs' that comply with set guidelines could be a way to help make the internet safer for children, as parents can ensure t(guidelines could include not allowing links to outside webpages and forum areas that are screened and/or policed by administrators - or just have a general age specific section of the website to visit) (Male aged 16).

Design a proper internet filter to stop both internet criminals, hackers and viruses. Make sure the filter is nationally introduced and recognised aswell as free or cheap so it is available for everyone (Male aged 18).

Develop better anti-virus and anti-malware programs and make them

avaliable freely to the public (Male aged 14).

I think that more comprehensive virus-protection should be easier to download and cheap for everyone. I also think that there should be tougher laws on people doing inappropriate things on the internet (Female aged 15).

make programs able to block unsafe websites and ads avalabale free or come with new computers (Female aged 17).

Maybe, there could be a filter that could detect these things and warn the person adding this information on the internet and warn them about what would happen if they did do that (Female aged 14).

Pre-install computers with anti-virus programs to prevent viruses (Female aged 13).

Community

18.53   Comments were also submitted discussing broader community awareness and appreciation of cyber-ethics. Notably, when asked how the online environment can be made safer, the following comments were made:

The morals of people themselves need to change. Many people are not perceptive or don't care about awareness advertising. If we are to fix this problem we need to fix societies problems in general. I think manners need to be improved amoung young people. We also need to spend more time outdoors and not on the internet. Too much technology is a very bad thing. The reason why I did not choose the options of 'learning about it at school' is because most kids just don't listen, it's as simple as that (Female aged 16).

If a difference is to be really made we must look at the problem holistically - as i said, it's all linked.   Really what must be done is a whole paradigm shift - changing Australian culture and moving away from the materialistic western way of life to create a more happier harmonious society. I'm not being idealistic, probably the easiest and most effective way to do it (and its possible) is to overhaul school curriculum to make critical thinking skills the focus and centre-piece of education in Australia. Of course it involves a lot more than that, but it's a good start! (Male aged 18).

Without an entire attitude shift to a school or community, no amount of education is going to change the values of a bully, or prevent bullying from being a recurring behavior throughout their life. Perhaps its a

> pessimistic view, but i think its partly human nature to bully the weak, (survival of the fittest, etc), but added to that is the representation of teenage life on American television shows which portray bullying as a social necessity to become popular and liked (Female aged 17).
>
> The community as a whole has to take action to ensure that children are not left in these unstable and emotionally damaging environments and do not learn from the bad examples of their parents or carers. To rid the world of bullying, children must comprehend that being cruel is an inappropriate way to act and that bullying is wrong (Female aged 15).

Legislation and law enforcement

18.54   Young people also recommend amendments to legislation and law enforcement.

> Stronger laws should be passed in Australia to punish (if not internationally then domestically) those involved in cyberfraud, virus writing, identity theft and hacking (Male aged 15).
>
> A better reaction to internet based crime, rather than just leaving it (Female aged 13).

Tackling cyber-bullying

18.55   Through its *Are you safe?* survey, the Committee received thoughtful and considered views by young people how cyber-bullying can be reduced. Survey participants made the following suggestions about how cyber-bullying might best be addressed.

Education programs and awareness campaigns

18.56   The following comments were made by respondents when asked what can be done to reduce cyber-bullying in the Australian community. They highlight young people's assessment on the successes of education programs:

> The procedures in place to reduce bullying seem like a joke to me, and bullying is only increasing so they aren't working. I never listened to the bullying advice seriously, neither did any of my friends, as the way it

was presented to us was laughable (Female aged 17).

I think bringing children up to accept others better will help solve the problem better, a prevention is better than a cure. if students learnt to be more accepting then we wouldnt have to worry about such strict online policies. i know thats unrealistic but it would be nice :) (Female aged 16).

Cyberbullying is a serious matter and should be a major part of learning in schools, whether in primary or secondary. Even though things are being taught in school older people don't realise that even if cyberbullying is being reported to an adult it will still be continued (Female aged 13).

we learn to much about cyber bulling. its really boring because i keep hearing the same thing. Stop with learning. BORING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (Female aged 13).

We should have programs where we learn about it that is more effective, for example sometimes the only way to make people more aware of cyber bullying is to scare them and show them the results of cuber bullying (Female aged 13).

show those 'cold-truth' stories about cyber bullying and especially stalking. definitely make some videos about cyber stalking and danger (Male aged 17).

I think that schools where children are more educated about cyberbullying usually tend to have less incidences. For example I know that my school has speakers come at least once a year to inform students of the consequences of cyber bullying (Female aged 16).

Again I think it really all depends on people being smart. I think our education on staying safe online is fantastic, however it doesn't target the one thing that can really stop cyber-bullying, and that is peoples attitudes and values to others (Female aged 15).

Changing the infrastructure (e.g. by filtering) will not address the root of the problem. It is more important that people learn to treat one another with humanity and compassion (Male aged 17).

Educate people about the serious consequences of it. People have committed suicide over cyberbullying incidents, it's a pretty serious topic (Male aged 18).

Educate people on how to not make fools of themselves at school. Usually, within our generation, someone with a lack of intelligence is often targeted (Female aged 16).

Educate the common Australian to accept people from different backgrounds instead of judging, maming and inflicting slander on those that are of a minority instead of being ignerant and uneducated racists (Male aged 18).

Educating children about acceptance and tolerance of others who are different to themselves (Female aged 14).

Education about ways to improve self esteem without affecting others (Female aged 15).

Education with the right sources, having a boring government site or spokesperson is hardly an effective education tool. Find a way to educate people of the consequences of cyber bullying an misuse of the internet, be it social or legal (Male aged 17).

Helping kids to undestand what it is so they dont end up playing a 'bad joke' and getting in trouble when they didnt know something was wrong in what they were doing (Female aged 14).

if someone came into my school to teach my how to get along better with other people i truthfully wouldnt listen you need to apporch it with a diffrent angle (Female aged 15).

just get people to be more socially aware of what cyber-bullying effects are and to teach young ones how to show respect to other yet to still have fun (Male aged 17).

just talking to students about cases where cyber bullying has happen and how much it has effected a person and stuff like that might show more meanfulness if someone see hwo much it can actually hurt and effect someones life (Female aged 14).

more publicity about people getting in trouble over cyber bullying, so possible bullies know what trouble they will get in (Female aged 15).

scare campaigns. Education about the possible ramifications of cyber bullying eg not being able to get a job (Female aged 17).

Teach people that there are actually block buttons on things like Facebook and Youtube that will stop communications altogether. This should be done instead of trying to make up with the person as it blocks ALL contact with the bully. People should be more aware of this (Male aged 14).

Teach people to actually have some respect for others. It'd fix more problems than just cyberbullying (Female aged 16).

> Teach stronger school/community spirit - a prevention instead of cure (Female aged 16).
>
> To reduce cyber bulling people actually need to experience what it is like. I think what worked best for me was seeing videos put together about kids taking there lives because of it (Female aged 15).
>
> When most people come and educate us about cyber bullying, it really doesnt stop or redice it at all. i think what might help is by a speaker coming in and talking to us and saying something like ' if you are cyber bullying, why dont you do a decent thing and apologise or just STOP' (Female aged 13).

18.57 Nathan submitted to the Committee that site administrators should exhibit greater awareness and utilisation of existing technological services.

> It may seem like a big deal, but as people may not notice, websites such as Facebook and YouTube provide a very good service to stop Cyber-Bullying. First of all, YouTube for example. YouTube provides a "block" button that immediately stops ALL contact with the person that is causing the havoc. People actually see through this "block" button. They may not notice it, or may have the need to actually confront the person when this is not necessary. Blocking a person is a very proficient way of stopping all contact with the person and/or ever speaking to then again. Bullying at school is a different matter, and not related to the Cyber-Bullying in these cases. Facebook on the other hand, goes even further. They provide a "block" button similar to YouTube, which completely blocks ALL contact online, but goes a step further. If the person being hassled may want to keep this person as a friend; they can stop them from posting on their wall, liking their status', and commenting on anything relating to them. This is the quickest way to block ALL contact online, and is an easy way to stop this Cyber-Bullying problem.[39]

Greater support networks

18.58 The following comments about the need for more support were made by respondents:

---

39   Nathan, *Submission 129* p. 1.

> Counselling to cyber-bullies and victims of cyber bullying; support networks for youths (Female aged 16).
>
> Ensuring that children who are bullied are offered support, so that they do not bully others and ensuring children are not allowed to stay in homes where they are abused and consequently wish to abuse others (Female aged 15).

More actions by site administrators

18.59   Young people also submitted that site administrators need to become more involved in delivering appropriate support services:

> The amount of times that I have reported people to the Facebook Admins and nothing has been done- the only way to make them care is to legislate, but I realise that isn't a practical measure (Male aged 15).
>
> abusive language should be flagged by facebook and if they see that the language was used to offend someone not just as a joke to a friend their facebook account should be terminated (Male aged 15).
>
> clearer report functions and punishments (bans or fines) depending on how bad offence is (Male aged 14).
>
> For website managers to keep a much closer, stricter eye on what is being posted on their site (Female aged 15).
>
> Forcing websites like Facebook to simplify privacy settings so its easier for parents/kids to lock down aspects of their accounts (Male aged 18).
>
> Have people who monitor sites and if they see cyber bullying they report it to authorities (Male aged 14).
>
> Make website administrators respond effectively and timely (Male aged 15).
>
> More information about what cyberbullying is and how to report it (Female aged 14).
>
> More privacy options on social networking sites and a way to change your mobile number easily (Female aged 13).
>
> On social networking sites, I think a reputation system would help (Female aged 16).
>
> Provide manger contact details so that if it does happen you could email

them and they would be removed (Female aged 13).

the people that own websites like facebook, myspace or anything else should have a program that when someone is caught cyber-bullying they should be banned from the website for a couple of hours or a certain amount of time (Female aged 13).

there should be a minimum age requirement for possession of a phone or access to social networking sites. People should know and appreciate its value and recognise that they can hurt people by misusing it. The technology is becoming available to children at a younger and younger age and they are not responsible enough to hand this technology and its dangers (Female aged 16).

Why not make a system that recognises cyberbullying or an online fight and it suspends the students involved from using facebook for 24 hours (Male aged 15).

18.60   A similar comment was made during the Committee's High School Forum, with Ebru commenting that:

When you first get on Facebook there are terms and conditions about bullying, and everyone here has obviously accepted that. It is strange that there can be so much bullying and harassment on Faccbook but no-one at Facebook sees it. In the terms and conditions it says that they check to see what we are doing and what kinds of photos we have up, and that if there are harassment reports they will check them. But nothing happens with it at all.[40]

Innovative suggestions

18.61   The following suggestions were made by respondents:

Why not make a system that recognises cyberbullying or an online fight and it suspends the students involved from using facebook for 24 hours (Male aged 15).

Let these bullies do something creative with their time and hence they can achieve. Eg Making Flash movies, rating Flash movies, drawing, making music etc (Male aged 18).

---

40   Ebru, *Transcript of Evidence*, 20 April 2011, p. CS20.

General comments

18.62   The following general comments were made:

> Cyber bullying is an inevitable problem that should not be seen as something that can be completely eradicated. It is a natural exponent of adolescence and will be an inevitable feature of the internet as we know it. Filtering or restricting will not solve the problem, and though prevention and education can help the problem, the underlying cause (adolescence, stupid people doing stupid things etc.) will not go away. Treating these underlying problems will, in the long run, prove to be more beneficial than merely reducing the prevalence of cyber bullying (Male aged 17).
>
> You guys think you know a lot about cyber bullying, but it has been around for a LONG time, you need to work WITH young people about cyber bullying (Female aged 15).
>
> In todays society technology is so easily accessible. Currently i am on my laptop with my phone just by my side. These tools can be used to our advantage or they can be easily abused and mistreated. ... Like anything there are positives and negatives and with Facebook for example it keeps everyone in touch and up-to-date with our friends or families lives, it also can be used as source to find a bullies next victim and so easily done. [Cyber-bullying] is a problem and does need to be fixed. but the problem comes [from] the bullies themselves, because in all honesty who has the time or motives to get on the internet and for their own pleasure make someones life horrible? ... So my theory is don't treat the symptom treat the disease... For example don't have a panadol every time you get a headache, its better to think- why have i got a head ache, oh im dehydrated, then have a glass of water to treat the hydration and then the headache will sort itself out. if we sort out the problems of these bullies the rest of it will all sort itself out (Female aged 16).
>
> I think that cyber-bullying can be prevented by the victim, each of the activities listed above that supposedly cyber-bullying can be prevented. for example unwanted emails can be blocked from the specific sender. if the victim doesnt want to talk to someone on the internet then they can do things to prevent it (Male aged 16).
>
> No one stands up for them... teachers talk big but when you report it... they really dont take action (Male aged 14).
>
> There aren't really any consequences for bullying online, its hard for the

victim to fight back (Male aged 17).

Cyber bullying only happens if you respond. If you block all contact then it cannot happen, the kids need to learn to just not respond. Responding feeds the "trolls", an internet term to describe someone that acts in a way to annoy someone ect (Male aged 17).

cyber-bullying has existed since the beginning of the internet - there is little that can be done to prevent it. but, maybe it would decrease in frequency if social networking sites (deviantart etc.) could be accessible in learning environments, children would not be so inclined to bully, for teachers could assist in the prevention (Female aged 14).

cyber-bullying is the manifestation of bullying in the internet age, so the failures to reduce playground bulllying and aggression in Australian society might be the same failures we will begin to see occuring in the attempts/efforts/intiatives to reduce cyber-bullying (Male aged 18).

DISCOURAGE the use of social networking sites. Yes, they are gerat in keeping in contact with friends and for other necessary communication, but people are using them far too frequently and they are taking over other aspects of life. People, particularly younger people, need to recognise how superficial they are, and that they are NOT an essential part of life (Female aged 17).

I don't think anything can really be done, but maybe raising awerness can help a little (Female aged 17).

I think teenagers have to grow up to the fact that what they say/do/post to/about someone can actually hurt (Female aged 15).

If a student ect reports something DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT - not just get the student to 'appologise' because they NEVER mean it (Male aged 14).

Not very much. Trying to control behaviour intrudes personal freedom and independence unless they were taught to be well behaved from the very beginning (kindergarten) and they understand the value of being a warm hearted person. Forcing one to learn may cause inconsistency of leading a positive life, and may backfire as a result of self independence and rebellion. That is a danger (Male aged 16).

Tell kids that it's okay to block or report people that make them feel uncomfortable. It doesn't make them weak if they do (Female aged 16).

Conclusion

18.63   It is important that cyber-safety initiatives value the contributions, ideas and existing knowledge of young people, and seek to build upon that knowledge. They have a wonderful capacity to adapt, learn and inform their peers, and this capacity should be harnessed in initiatives that government, industry and non-profit organisations develop.