SENATOR THE HON. STEPHEN CONROY,
MINISTER FOR BROADBAND, COMMUNICATIONS
AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

ACMA releases report on measures to protect children online

On 21 February, the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator the Hon. Stephen Conroy, authorised ACMA to release its report, *Developments in internet filtering technologies and other measures for promoting online safety*.

The Minister welcomed the report during his address to the Internet Industry Association's annual gala dinner, highlighting that as consumers increasingly engage with interactive technologies, the risks associated with online interpersonal communications will grow.

'With increased interaction through Web 2.0 applications, online risks have shifted from being just content risks to now include communication risks,' said Senator Conroy.

The Minister commented that the report's findings are 'consistent with the government's policy of implementing a range of measures to address cybersafety, including education for children, parents and teachers; research; ISP filtering and police resourcing'.

The report investigates international developments in internet filtering technologies and other safety initiatives. It also identifies content communication and e-security risks, and discusses how users can be empowered to manage these risks.

The Minister acknowledged that 'there is no silver bullet solution to the problem of online risks, especially as there is a shift from web pages to interactive internet technologies, such as chat rooms'.

ACMA's report highlights that clusters of measures can more effectively minimise risks than can single initiatives. For example:
* Filtering technologies can be used effectively to address particular static content risks.
* Security software can help address viruses, spam and online identity theft.
* Education initiatives can raise awareness of issues and develop protective skills and behaviours.

ACMA's report includes a study of the European Union's initiatives in mitigating online risks through the international INSAFE suite of national safety nodes and the INHOPE network of hotlines, which comprises 30 hotlines in 27 countries.

Australia has developed a range of safety programs that emphasise technological and non-technological measures, and since 2000 has had an established hotline for reporting prohibited material. Individuals who are concerned about material they have seen online can report it to <www.acma.gov.au/hotline>.

Developments in internet filtering technologies and other measures for promoting online safety is available on the ACMA website at <www.acma.gov.au> and has also been promoted by INHOPE at <www.inhope.org.au>.

ACMA improves **smart**numbers® system

ACMA has recently improved the administration of the **smart**numbers® auction system. The auction system was introduced in 2004 to more efficiently allocate freephone (1800) and local rate (13 and 1300) numbers—known as **smart**numbers®.

The changes include:
* **Including introductory text on the smartnumbers® home page, <www.smartnumbers.com.au>**
  A brief explanation of the **smart**numbers® system outlines how the numbers are allocated and the benefits to businesses of obtaining a **smart**numbers®.
  The inclusion of this text also makes the **smart**numbers® website more accessible. Prior to this upgrade, the website was not found by all internet search engines, which meant that some new users who did not know the correct web address could not find the **smart**numbers® website through a general internet search.
* **Resetting accounts (issuing of temporary passwords)**
  Administrators can now reset accounts while a user is on the telephone. A temporary password is automatically sent to the user, allowing the administrator to confirm the receipt of this password while speaking to the

user. Until now, the **smart**numbers® team had to contact the IT team in a separate office, which was time-consuming for both the user and the administrator.
* **Introducing a pre-auction cooling-off period**
  Users can now cancel nominations within a specified time period. Previously, nominated **smart**numbers® could not be cancelled. This development has already led to fewer bad debts and complaints.

These upgrades are designed to assist both users and administrators in navigating and utilising the **smart**numbers® website.

Other internal upgrades have also been introduced so administrators can more effectively assist **smart**numbers® users. The **smart**numbers® team will continue to monitor the system to determine how usability for both users and administrators can be further

improved. Additional upgrades are planned in the coming year.

smartnumbers® public auctions are held fortnightly, with an average of 300 numbers per auction. Access to these auctions is online at <www.smartnumbers.com.au>.

The auction system allows registered **smart**numbers® users access to a large supply of numbers. Once users have been issued enhanced rights to a **smart**number®, they can connect the number for their own use or sell/lease the rights to the number.

smartnumbers® are also available to charities through a concessional arrangement, whereby each particular charity is required to demonstrate a 'strategic link' to the desired number.

Further information about **smart**numbers® is available on the website at <www.smartnumbers.com.au>.

What is a smartnumber®?
smartnumbers® are freephone (1800) and local rate (13 or 1300) telephone numbers that ACMA allocates through an online auction system on behalf of the Australian Government.

A **smart**number®—or phone word—can be a valuable marketing tool if it is a highly patterned number (1800 222 222) or if it can be translated into a memorable phoneword (13 2287 = 13 CATS). A caller dials a phone word by pressing the letters on a telephone keypad. **smart**numbers® are easy for callers to remember, particularly if they can be linked to an organisation's name or function.