Cybersmart Hero stands up to online bullies

The fight against cyberbullying continued in June with the launch of Cybersmart Hero, a new school-based activity created to help kids tackle online bullies.

Designed for students in the last year of primary school, Cybersmart Hero aims to educate and empower children to make their own, more-informed decisions about how they can manage cyberbullying in real-life situations, and to know where they can go for help.

The program was launched by the Minister for Broadband, Communications and Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, and ACMA Chairman, Chris Chapman, at an event to mark the beginning of National Cyber Security Awareness Week at Westgarth Primary School in Melbourne. In attendance were representatives from a number of agencies and organisations involved in promoting online safety for young people, including state and federal police, education, government and child welfare advocates.

During the launch, children in schools across Australia worked in teams alongside community professionals to solve a cyberbullying-themed problem.

'The internet has opened up a whole new environment for young people, but unfortunately there are risks that can make the online world unpleasant and potentially dangerous,' said Senator Conroy.

'Cybersmart Hero continues the government's commitment to cybersafety by providing an exciting new tool to educate students about cyberbullying.'

ACMA Chairman, Chris Chapman, noted that cyberbullying is more difficult to identify than face-to-face bullying.

'Adults are much more reliant on children to tell them there is a problem, because they can't necessarily see what's happening themselves,' he said.

'Cyberbullying can happen both at school and at home, so the target no longer has a "safe" place to be. It can also happen day or night. The audience is much wider than other types of bullying and can be reached very quickly. Unpleasant information or humiliating images posted online can be extremely hard to delete.'

Cybersmart Hero is an extension of the already highly successful and popular Cybersmart Detectives program. Both activities are a key part of the ACMA's Cybersmart program, which provides education resources, advice and support for young people, teachers and families, about a range of online safety issues. ☻

For more information and to register to take part in Cybersmart Hero, visit the Cybersmart website at **www.cybersmart.gov.au** or email **isl@acma.gov.au**.