



MEDIA RELEASE

Children's Safety in Schools of Paramount Concern

1 September 2009

Brisbane-based charity, Children's Safety Australia Inc. will be distributing 1500 Children's Safety Kits to Queensland Primary Schools in a bid to raise the awareness of key children's safety messages.

The Children's Safety Kit Project, funded solely by the Queensland Government's Gambling Community Benefit Fund, was undertaken in response to concerning levels of personal violence against children and the lack of effective children's safety information being provided to children by parents and teachers.

Children's Safety Australia Director and Founder, Kim Jackson said, 'Many protective adults teach children 'stranger danger', even though known people pose a far more likely threat. Failing to provide children with practical strategies and skills to effectively respond to safety threats significantly increases their vulnerability to abuse.'

Children are among the most vulnerable members of the Australian community with physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying occurring at concerning levels, as evidenced below:

- Child abuse is Australia's most serious social problem. In Australia, a child is reported abused or neglected every three minutes.
- It is estimated that one in every three boys and girls will experience some form of sexual abuse before they leave school. Most children are abused by people they know and trust and about one third of abuse is perpetrated by other children or young people.
- At least one in six Australian children is bullied by another child or group of children on a weekly basis.

The Children's Safety Kit Project aims to raise the awareness of four key children's safety messages forming the foundation of the *Safe Start: Protective Behaviours for Children and Young People* program. The Safe Start program has been independently reviewed and has been found to reflect current best practice in child protection. The four key children's safety messages are:

1. **I am special, so are you!**: to build a healthy self esteem and encourage respect and empathy for others.
2. **Safety is my right**: to identify and effectively respond to potentially unsafe situations, including bullying.
3. **My body belongs to me**: to identify, prevent and stop all forms of abuse.
4. **I can get help**: to access help from trusted adults and relevant organisations.

The kit contains a range of resources for teachers, parents and students including lesson plans, worksheets, posters, stickers and postcards.

Launch Event:

The kits will be launched on 7 October 2009 at the Queensland Police Academy, Oxley. Special guests include: Denise and Bruce Morcombe, Daniel Morcombe Foundation; Meshel Laurie, Nova 106.9 (MC); and Chrislyn Hamilton, 2008 Australian Idol Finalist.

Children's Safety Australia Inc. has extended an invitation to representatives of Queensland Primary Schools to attend. Interested school representatives should contact Children's Safety Australia via email: admin@childsafety.org.au. Schools who are unable to attend the launch but would like to receive a free Children's Safety Kit, or further information, are also invited to contact Children's Safety Australia Inc. via email: admin@childsafety.org.au.

For further information:

Contact Kim Jackson via tel: 3379 4475, mob: 0423 532 868 or email: admin@childsafety.org.au.