

Monday, 29 January 2018

yourtown welcomes Premier's decision to tackle cyberbullying nationally

National youth charity yourtown welcomes the opportunity to be part of today's (Monday, 29 January) roundtable at Queensland's Parliament House to discuss a detailed proposal to tackle cyberbullying.

According to yourtown CEO Tracy Adams yourtown has been tackling the issues impacting young people in Australia for over 56 years, including youth unemployment and mental health, and issues like family and domestic violence.

"We welcome the opportunity to share what we've learnt with Premier Palaszczuk and ideas on what we know from experience can help combat the serious issues affecting Australian children and young people," Ms Adams said.

"For over 26 years, Kids Helpline has played a critical role in protecting children and young people nationally with the 24/7 phone and online counselling service talking to more than 7.5 million children over that time.

"Young people contact us about anything, from relationships with friends and family and school worries, through to homelessness, bullying, mental health and suicide.

"Last year, 3,187 contacts to Kids Helpline were from young people concerned about online or texting activity. Of those, 14% were experiencing suicidal thoughts at the time of the contact.

"Kids Helpline plays a crucial part in helping these young people who sometimes feel they have nowhere else to go. We need to ensure children and young people know they are never alone and that help is always available when the most vulnerable reach out.

"yourtown's Parentline phone and online counselling service for parents is also an important support service for parents and carers across Queensland the Northern Territory. Operating since 1995, we have counselled and supported tens of thousands of parents about parent-child issues, including child mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns."

Kids Helpline would like to assure young people and families across Australia that it is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for telephone and online counselling support.

In addition, Kids Helpline in partnership with Optus supports the Australian community via its digital education Digital Thumbprint Kids Helpline @ School program available free to all schools nationally.

"We believe that early intervention and prevention is key. Professional counsellors talk with students and their teachers in group class sessions via digital technology key about issues such as respect, online safety and cyberbullying," Ms Adams said.

"Supported by Optus and an eSafety certified program, the Digital Thumbprint program was delivered to close to 12,000 primary school students in 2017. Programs like this are crucial to ensuring children at an early age learn about online safety and most importantly how to reach out for help from adults if they need it."

Kids Helpline's website has tips for young people and parents and carers about cyberbullying.

CYBERBULLYING TIPS

For young people: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/cyberbullying>

For parents and carers – what to do if it's your child:

- Take the time to talk to them. Be open to listening and understanding their experience of cyberbullying.
- Teach them that cyberbullying is never ok
- Reassure them that they're loved
- Report the activity to the relevant social media platform. If this does not help, you can lodge a complaint via the safety website eSafety
- Support them to speak to another trusted adult or counsellor if they want to
- Advise them to avoid opening emails or responding to cyberbullies
- Respect that they may not want to limit online access as this can seem like a punishment and lead to greater social isolation
- Most importantly, reassure them they are not alone and that help is always available.

Go to <https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/issues/cyberbullying> for more about how parents, carers and others can help.

To find out more about **Kids Helpline @ School** and the **Optus Digital Thumbprint** program see <https://kidshelpline.com.au/schools>

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service specifically for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years. **FREE call 1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelpline.com.au**

Parents or carers in Queensland and the Northern Territory looking for support can contact Parentline on **1300 30 1300** or parentline.com.au

Kids Helpline would like to remind media to include [Kids Helpline](#) contact details at the end of coverage and articles where children and young people may need support.

-ENDS-

INTERVIEW/PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES

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Tony Fitzgerald, Kids Helpline Virtual Services Manager

John Dalglish, **yourtown** Head of Strategy and Research

Kids Helpline and Kids Helpline @ School VNR available

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