

Wednesday, 12 October 2016

## It's smart to take action and stay safe online!

**This Stay Smart Online Week, Kids Helpline is reminding children and young people that if they are being cyberbullied that there is always something they can do – take action and seek help.**

According to Kids Helpline Centre Manager Tony FitzGerald, last year Kids Helpline (KHL) received more than 4,000 contacts from young people who were concerned about themselves or others being bullied either face-to-face or online.

There were also close to 36,000 visits to the KHL website's bullying self-help 'Tips & Info' for children and young people, including close to 23,000 visits to the cyberbullying/staying safe online topics. 'Staying Safe Online' was the number one child focussed 'Tip & Info' topic visited in 2015.

"Both stats and the media frequently demonstrate how widespread cyberbullying is, with viral nudes, hacked accounts, and threats made online," Mr FitzGerald said.

"It's clear from some of the young people we speak with that many of them are worried there's nothing they can do about online bullying. They don't know what to do or where to turn to take action. We need to ensure they know they can take action and stay safe online."

KHL works in partnership with the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) to help children and young people tackle cyberbullying.

"Last year, more than 8,300 referrals were made from the eSafety website to the KHL site where kids can either choose to talk to one of our counsellors or look through our self-help resources," Mr FitzGerald said.

"If a young person visits the eSafety website and needs additional counselling support they can be referred directly to our web counselling service where they receive priority support from one of our counsellors."

Kids Helpline is also working with eSafety on their new 'Rewrite your story' (RYS) initiative, launched this week.

"Central to the initiative are eight short films that give examples of cyberbullying and lead young people to discuss this issue and find solutions. It empowers them to effect positive change and write a new story about their online experiences," Mr FitzGerald said.

Young people can check out RYS at <http://www.rewriteyourstory.com.au/> or join the conversation on the RYS Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/RewriteYS/>. RYS enables young people across Australia to be the voice and centre of these conversations.

Visit the KHL website [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au) to check out KHL's 'Tips & Info' about staying safe online or to access counselling 24/7 - free call 1800 55 1800 or [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au).

KHL gives children and young people choices, support and someone to listen. KHL is Australia's only national 24/7 counselling service specifically for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years.

It is a service of **yourtown** (formerly BoysTown) and is 72% funded by the **yourtown** Art Union, donations and corporate support. Federal and State Governments fund 28%.

ENDS

## INTERVIEW/PHOTO/FILMING OPPORTUNITIES

- Tracy Adams, **yourtown** CEO
- Tony Fitzgerald, Kids Helpline Centre Manager
- Brendan Bourke, **yourtown** Head of Client Services
- KHL Counsellors
- VNR footage available of Kids Helpline call centre

## MEDIA CONTACTS

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