Research on youth exposure to, and management of, cyberbullying incidents in Australia

Part B:
Cyberbullying incidents involving Australian minors, the nature of the incidents and how they are currently being dealt with

Prepared for:
Australian Government Department of Communications
June 2014

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Research on youth exposure to, and management of, cyberbullying incidents in Australia

Eight reports were produced in this series of publications; these are listed below.

Synthesis report

Part A:

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The Young and Well CRC, through Dr Michelle Blanchard, provided in kind support to this research by helping the research team engage with young people and those who care for them in the project, as well as providing access to its participant organisations through a workshop held ahead of the CRC's Connect 2014 Conference and through the promotion of surveys.

Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank the people who generously shared their time with us, both through interviews and by completing the online survey. This research particularly relied on the generous time and contributions of stakeholders that provide support to victims and cyberbullies. We would also like to thank Julie Hodgkinson and the team at the Department of Communications for their support, direction and contribution to this research.

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Abbreviations

ADC	Anti-

Executive Summary

This is the second report of a three-u(he[(J 4T)-11(alut)(r)an m)-2(hi1t)-oon-dthree

Legal advice bodies and other agencies tend to deal with complex cases. They receive referrals from a wide range of sources including victims and their families, as well as other organisations including police and schools.

Different organisations tend to respond to different types of cyberbullying reports. Schools tend to receive more complaints about text messages, emails etc., whereas other organisations tend to receive complaints involving social media. Incidents involving social media appear to account for the majority of incidents overall.

More females than males were reported to schools as being cyberbullies, but males appeared to be involved in the more significant incidents. The peak age of cyberbullies was 10-15 years old, with a large drop off of students reported as being cyberbullies who were older than 15 years old.

Most stakeholder groups indicated that reports of cyberbullying are increasing, with some organisations seeing sharp increases in reports in the recent past. However, the actual rate of increase is not possible to quantify. There are a number of possible reasons for this increase, but the most 7(i)3(n-11.37 T3(y)9(i) eas)-47p(or)-6(e -7(hi)3(-23.489 -

issues; organisations are having to change their working practices and staff profile in order to be able to better understand and intervene in the cyber environment.

The most important barrier encountered by police and other agencies in dealing with cyberbullying is the lack of accountability of social media and other service providers, who are reluctant to take down offensive material and are often slow to respond to such requests, even from police. The global nature of the cyber environment makes it very difficult for police or other authorities to take action on behalf of victims, for example, where the social media provider is located overseas.

There was not a consensus view from stakeholders as to whether and how the existing laws should be changed. However, many participants welcomed the idea of a more simplified legal framework.

These findings should not be considered in insolation and should be read in conjunction with Part A and Part C of this research.

1.Introduction

The Australian Government Department of Communications commissioned the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2

The survey covered the following topics:

- School characteristics (level of school, educational sector, number of students)
- Number and type of cyberbullying incidents reported to schools in the 2013 calendar year
- How schools generally handle reports of cyberbullying incidents
- Case studies outlining the age and gender of cyberbullying victims (and where possible offenders) and the social media / social network(s) for each cyberbullying behaviour reported.

- Data from this component is referenced ‘school survey data’.

2.2 Stakeholder survey

An online survey was developed to

Table 2: Stakeholder analysis

2.3 Stakeholder interviews

captured. Contacts were provided by the Department of Communication. The researchers asked a range of questions, listed in Appendix C, relating to the number and type of incidents reported to the police, how they are managed and the outcomes that are achieved, what barriers exist to addressing cyberbullying, and their views on the proposed potential law and other reforms. Participants were also asked how cyberbullying data was recorded, how police records could better reflect how cyberbullying is dealt with, and the outcome of police interventions in cyberbullying allegations.

3. Reported incidence of cyberbullying

As indicated in the Part A report, cyberbullying incidents are most likely to be reported in the first instance to friends or families. Most reports to formal authorities are made to schools, as young people are in contact with school personnel far more than any other authorities. Schools in turn may either deal with the report themselves or may refer out to other agencies including the police, local NGOs and legal aid centres. This section reports on how different organisations deal with incidents of reported cyberbullying and the outcomes of those reports.

3.1 How many incidents are being reported?

3.1.1 To schools

The schools survey found that in 72 per cent of schools an incident of cyberbullying was reported to the school in the calendar year 2013, with an average of 8.7 reports for all schools surveyed.[3]

When taking account the size of the schools it was found that Australian students had a 2.1 per cent (1 in 50) chance of being involved in an in-scope cyberbullying incident to their school. However, as shown in Table 4, the rate of reporting was much higher for secondary schools than for primary schools, with secondary school students having a 9.1 per cent chance of being involved in a report (nearly 1 in 10), whereas primary school children only had a 1.2 per cent chance (just over 1 in 100).[4]

When compared to the estimated prevalence of cyberbullying victimisation in the population (discussed in the Part A Report), these findings indicate that around half to one-third of cyberbullying incidents of secondary school students are reported to the school. These estimates must be interpreted with caution as the questions, definitions, and populations were different across the different surveys.

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Table 4: Mean number of reports of cyberbullying by school level

	Secondary School		Primary School	
	Per school	Per student (%)	Per school	Per student (%)
At least one behaviour	22.8	9.1	3.2	1.2
Cyberbullying behaviour				

> But if I am in the country…I say to them, "…why don't you tell me what you think is the major issue". And over and over and over again I get the same answer. It's got to be bullying of children in schools, typically through cyber or social media. (ADC)

> I talk to many [children] and they also provided information in surveys - bullying, including a cyber element, was one of the utmost issues for them in terms of breaches of their rights, breaches of their privacy. (ADC)

3.1.3 To police

No police jurisdiction records data relating to cyberbullying as a specific offence. However, the majority of officers interviewed noted an increase in reports based on anecdotal evidence:

> I think you will find across every jurisdiction, and probably worldwide, that it is a growth industry. It is definitely increasing. (Police interview)

> I would imagine that we would get one to two calls a day about that sort of behaviour…We do have some community based police, like police in schools...Those people may become more involved. (Police interview)

> We don't have any figures at all...because it's not something that's an offence, we don't make a record of it...But certainly anecdotally...there's definitely a sense that they're getting these calls regularly and several years ago we did not. (Police interview)

Of the police agencies who provided confidential data for the purposes of this research, each jurisdiction used its own method for estimating the number and type of reports, and the estimates vary widely, given the population of the different states and territories. Nevertheless, all reported incidents were very low, even in populous states.

Police estimated the number of cyberbullying reports in various ways, for example by examining allegations relating to victims under 18 years old or for words such as 'school', 'online', 'texting', 'Facebook', etc. All of these methods only give broad approximations of the incidence of reporting of cyberbullying to the police, and the various methods used by different police forces provided very different incidence rates. ri1(t5(t)-7(he-2(e)-1.38 Tri1(([(ri-7(c)-2(ye)-3el)3(at11(a)11(r)-6(ec)-2(o17(i)30 Tw 6.upf11(a)11

police are dealing with matters reported to them informally through means such as assistance or an informal warning. The case study (Appendix D) suggests that whilst sometimes repeated reports are made to police, they are not always recorded.

Discussions with police participants indicated that current categories of recording reports to police do not include bullying as a category. Cyber offences are also not recorded separately although the fact that a report involves the internet or mobile phone may be recorded as the Modus Operandi of the offence. Most cyberbullying offences are recorded as intimidation or telecommunications offences. However, some offences which would be included in the definition of cyberbullying – for example blackmail or coercive sexting – would be recorded under separate offences and therefore would be unlikely to be included in any police estimates of cyberbullying.

Thus it appears that the vast majority of cases of cyberbullying reported to the police are either not recorded or recorded in a way that prevents them from later being identified or categorised as cyberbullying.

In order to better capture cyberbullying in police records, three changes would have to be implemented:

- Police forces around the country would have to agree a definition and description of cyberbullying and a way of recording it.
- The new category would have to be included in police databases.
- Police officers or others who record reports would have to be educated in the use of the new category and encouraged to use it.

Of these, the last is the most challenging, and it may take several years before these reports are accurately categorised and recorded consistently across the country.

3.2 Are incidents increasing or decreasing?

Stakeholders completing the survey were asked how they thought the number of cyberbullying incidents was changing over time. Ten per cent thought the number was remaining stable, whilst 54.2 per cent noted an increase and 12.5 per cent noted a sharp increase in the number of incidents (22.9 per cent couldn't say). This at least in part may reflect a growth in access to technology, a growth in the number of platforms where cyberbullying can occur, and a greater awareness of reporting

does appear that bullying is reducing as a result of prevention efforts in schools, but

4. Nature of cyberbullying incidents

The nature of cyberbullying incidents reported varied depending on who they were reported to. For example, cyberbullying incidents reported to a sexual assault service were sexual in nature. This section discusses the profile of victims and cyberbullying and the types of cyberbullying behaviours reported.

4.1 Profile of victims

4.1.1 Age and sex

The literature review in Part A found that victims were more likely to be female and that the peak age range for cyberbullying victims was 10–15 years old. This finding is substantiated by the School Principals survey which, when schools provided details of some of the more serious incidents reported to their schools, the majority of victims reported (80.1 per cent) were between 10–15 years old.

Stakeholders also indicated that cyberbullying victims were more likely to be female than male, with nearly three-quarters of victims (71.9 per cent) being female compared to 23.1 per cent male (stakeholder survey).[5] The low estimates for male cyberbullying victims may also reflect the fact that boys are generally less likely to report. The proportions in the School Principals Survey (for the most harmful or distressing types of reports they receive) were 74.7 per cent female and 25.3 per cent male.

Participants in the stakeholder survey were able to be more specific about the age range of victims and identified that victims were more likely to be in the 14–15 year age group[6] than any other and that 82.6 per cent of victims were reported to be between 14–17 years old (see Table 6). This is an older cohort than is reported in the prevalence studies in the Part A Report, and may indicate that older victims are more likely to report to an agency, or that older victims are involved in more serious cases. This may also reflect the sample of the stakeholder survey, which was not a random sample of agencies dealing with cyberbullying.

[5] This does not add up to 100 per cent as the questions were asked separately also these percentages are indicative as they involve a combination of estimates and recorded data.
[6] In the School Principals Survey, however, the age group the schools receive the most serious reports of cyberbullying are from10-13 year olds (54.7 per cent), whereas 25.4 per cent of reports involved 14-15 year old victims.

Table 6: Estimated age at onset by age

	Average %
Under 10	1.2
10–13	16.1
14–15	45.1
16–17	37.5
Total	100.0

characteristics such as people with low self-esteem, trauma, jealousy, belief of superiority, and family issues.

Stakeholders made a number of observations:

> A young person might be bullied, they might bully others, they may be a bystander to bullying. We are talking about a complex web of peer relationships here and a young person could be any one of those three at any time. (Stakeholder interview)

> Our data – and it seems to be consistent with research data – shows that 10 to 14 age group is a peak time for this behaviour to emerge. Some research has put that down to that is the transition years from primary to secondary school. We are dealing with very immature children… I think we need to take that into account when we are planning our responses. (Stakeholder interview)

Some stakeholders were particularly concerned about vulnerable groups, such as people with cognitive impairments, who may form relationships online which may then lead to inappropriate activity and victimisation:

> What we're finding is that they will do things like say, 'Oh but I've got a boyfriend online', whom they've never met face-to-face and that they are sending photographs that they shouldn't be. (Stakeholder interview)

In terms of cyberbullies, many stakeholders commented about youth not understanding boundaries and how to behave online. They also commented about the lack of monitoring of online activities, which are sometimes discovered only after a face to face incident is reported. One participant said:

> These are kids who nobody has monitored their access to the internet. So they've been free - and they are often exhibiting some fairly disturbed behaviour - to do what they want; no-one has noticed that they have been accessing pornography, that they have been bullying other people, that they have been abusive to other people. Often their offending has been online. … we've found that in fact they have been doing a large number of things online that they had not been dealt with about and they've actually moved to it being face-to-face or a contact offence. (Stakeholder interview)

Only one comment was made about the gender of cyberbullies. According to one stakeholder, in Victoria, 120 young people were currently subject to Therapeutic Treatment Orders in relation to cyberbullying, of which only five were girls (Stakeholder interview).[8]

[8] Provisions within the Victorian *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA) that relate to

4.3 Type of cyberbullying behaviours reported

Some types of cyberbullying were much more likely to be reported in schools than others. In both primary and secondary schools, the highest rate of the most serious reports in 2013 was for students receiving threatening, abusive and/or

Stakeholders selecting ‘other’ identified other cyberbullying behaviours including exploitation of young and otherwise vulnerable individuals, organised gossip pages on Facebook, and online harassment.

One stakeholder alluded to the ‘grooming and cyber sexual assault of young people’:

> We are a sexual assault support service so the young people who access us come here as a result of a sexual assault. As part of their recovery from the trauma it is often identified that once the sexual assault is known that it has been placed on Facebook. The other issue for us is the grooming and cyber sexual assault of young people. With easy access to pornography we now

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made remarks against others under their identity. The owner of the Facebook account is now being vilified but is in fact an innocent party. The cyberbully then sought help to try to rectify the situation on seeing the damage caused.

In terms of incidents reported to the police, officers commented that the majority of cyberbullying reported was low-level name calling and nasty comments; conduct that fell short of being criminal:

> In virtually all occasions, the conduct people are complaining about is effectively name calling online or people saying unpleasant things. That doesn't reach the threshold of being criminal. (Police interview)

> What we find is a lot of our cyberbullying involves very flippant comments that might be made on Facebook or something like that. (Police interview)

5. How cyberbullying is being dealt with

As expected, cyberbullying is dealt with differently depending on a number of factors, including the type of incident, the age of the cyberbully and victim, and the impact the incident has had. Schools, stakeholders providing advice, and the police, may respond differently due to the nature of the incident and also their internal capacity to manage the incident. Responses often involved a combination of measures and varied in their success.

5.1 By schools

The survey of schools results indicated that schools addressed cyberbullying in a number of different ways. Overall, the main approaches involved a combination of:

- contacting/involving parents
- general discussion/counselling with one or all involved parties
- general warnings/class discussion
- formal punishment according to school policy, and
- referral to police.

Most forms of cyberbullying were first dealt with informally by the school, with parents involved in more serious cases. Sanctions such as suspension and expulsion were used for particularly serious incidents. Most ved a combi.6a43 d2(s)-2(u)6part with

onto social media and the cyberspace. The school can help determine whether the issue needs to be taken further with the assistance of the police. (stakeholder survey)

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> There are protocols …So for instance, which ones we would report to the police, which ones we would deal with internally, what sort of referral options there are for people. (stakeholder interview)

They outlined a typical response to a sexting incident as:

> We would need to ascertain whether there needs to be police involvement. …. We would also need to look at the safety of the young person. … We look at the parental situation because some of the ethnic groups we deal with, the young women in particular are just actually not safe in the home with those sorts of incidents. … We would then have to look at how do we then help that person be resilient to the situation at hand and also working with the parents. (stakeholder interview)

One participant identified the need to develop a specific process for managing a cyberbullying incident:

> We would have to have a totally different … it would have to be a much quicker process than what we currently handle. I think young people would need to have access to an advocate I suspect. … to make sure that they have a fair hearing…. I think they're in some ways they're both vulnerable. They're still growing and maturing and developing frameworks. [Cyberbullies]… need help to work through some of those things. Often the victims are more likely to be more vulnerable. If it's exposed that you are a perpetrator, I think you're also at risk of doing something really silly, and that could include taking your own life or being even perhaps more violent in a physical sense. (stakeholder interview)

Other organisations applied their general policies in this area of work. Where an organisation also provided education initiatives in cyberbullying and online behaviours, more specific policies had been developed in order to implement the program including the legal implications of cyberbullying. Participants identified engagement and early intervention through education as a critical component of minimising cyberbullying:

> We have a policy of engaging in early intervention and one of the ways we do that is through education. It does appear at least from our practice that the more information young people have the easier it is for them to make decisions to keep themselves safe and out of trouble. (stakeholder interview)

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won't apply our normal complaint process because it just doesn't work, in our view. So a whole different way of doing it. (ADC)

In terms of the conciliation model, what we can do about it is always the problem. Who posts the material, can you get them to a conciliation? Can you get the material taken down? Our general comment is we don't think so

5.2.5 Most effective response

Participants were asked what they considered to be the most effective response to cyberbullying. This depended on the nature of the incident, the role of the stakeholder organisation, and the individual case. All highlighted the need to provide ongoing support:

> Ongoing support for the young person until either the behaviour is resolved and/or the emotional impact and other impacts from that are lessened are very important. (stakeholder interview)

> We want to make sure we're supporting young people through that process, not just scaring them, and also that they have some element of control about who we tell and how we help them because someone that's been bullied might feel completely out of control. I think it's important that what the young person wants is taken into account. (stakeholder interview)

To minimise the impact of cyberbullying, early intervention was identified as critical:

> Obviously, the earlier the intervention, the better the outcomes for victims, offenders - everyone. (stakeholder interview)

> In relation to young people who are attending the same school, or in the same neighbourhood or community cohort, we often find that addressing those issues by having a discussion about them or making an apology often resolves the matters more favourably. (stakeholder interview)

Resolution of incidents has often been successful using different methods:

> I have seen some of those matters to be quite effectively resolved …by people within their school communities [and] by community agencies.…It may depend upon the type of bullying, the persistency of it, the relationship between the parties and the severity of it obviously. (stakeholder interview)

Where there is a significant impact, an intervention order was seen as effective:

> The intervention order will cover electronic harassment as well. Therefore if the person continues to [cyberbully], they will then be in breach of the intervention order, which then means that the criminal system can come into effect.(stakeholder interview)

A number of stakeholders highlighted education and therapeutic treatment addressing an incident and reducing the likelihood of repeat offences. This also had the benefit of not attracting a criminal record which could have long-term consequences for the young person concerned.

> The [Victorian] legislation says if you willingly engage in treatment, then you're dealt with under the Therapeutic Treatment Order legislation …. They don't have a criminal record. (stakeholder interview)

One participant commented on the need for victim assistance programs to better address the needs of cyberbullying victims:

> In a purely clinical sense, victims of cyberbullying can suffer similar mental injury as victims of violent crime. Most victim assistance programs were designed pre-Internet and rest on a social work paradigm that perhaps does not match the needs of victims of cyber-bullies. Further, victim assistance is often constrained by geo-politico borders (usually defined by the place the offence happened), yet cyberbullying is not constrained by such borders. (stakeholder survey)

Stakeholders were also asked if legal action was taken, **t effect h aw we ideal h** (stakeholder survey). Some did not know the outcome of most cases referred, 'but clients express frustration at early stages in the case with limitations of what can be done legally'. Participants provided a number of comments:

> The child protection laws need to be enhanced to cover cyberbullying and sexual assault activities. Work is being done in Queensland to address some of these issues. (stakeholder survey)

> We have had some reports of schools and/or police not addressing cyberbullying under existing policies and laws, but we think connecting the young person with an adult advocate helps ensure that appropriate action is taken. (stakeholder survey)

> Shortcomings in the law exist locally, nationally and internationally. For instance, one case … the victim lived overseas and the perpetrator [was] in another Australian State. Jurisdictional priorities, especially for the police, also negatively impacted on the victim practically and emotionally / psychologically. Victims' rights (such as their fundamental right to security of the person and right to privacy) should know no borders. (stakeholder survey)

> [The laws are] probably not that powerful as they are not that well understood or sufficiently tested. (stakeholder survey)

> From our recent observations, police often refuse to take action because they cannot fit the behaviour within a threat to harm/kill using a carriage service (the existing offence) or forcing the victims to resort to civil remedies under harassment / stalking laws (i.e. personal safety intervention orders) where they are generally not eligible for legal aid assistance. (stakeholder survey)

> Referrals to the police are reasonably effective because this results in the parents taking the matter seriously and actually deciding they need to intervene in terms of the offender…for the victim's parents this is often the first time they become aware there is a problem. (stakeholder survey)

5.3 By police

All police officers interviewed alluded to

> remove the threat. If that comes to at the end of the day you have to take an arrest situation to remove that threat, get court orders about injunctions on internet access, use and that sort of thing, so be it. (Police interview)

All officers commented on youth offender legislation and the diversionary opportunities it provides. They all saw youth offender options as available depending on the circumstances of the case:

> The juvenile justice, there have always been parameters that that is a more serious step and whatever action was taken would have to be justified and warranted. Criminal proceedings - we don't want to be charging children. (Police interview)

> So we would provide a range of things like just talking to them to cautioning to a formal written caution, which is part of our youth diversion sort of system. (Police interview)

Some officers could offer no example of a serious cyberbullying incident leading to significant police involvement, such as a prosecution:

> I don't have personal knowledge…of an incident involving young people that has really justified police involvement. (Police interview)

> Off the top of my head I don't have specific knowledge of an incident occurring between youths. What we do find is most of the youth on youth cyberbullying or cybercrime is very much at the lower end. So they may have taken a selfie - an explicit selfie. They might be in a relationship and forward it on or something like that and we've gone and told them, 'We know that you are learning about life and that sort of thing but it is just wrong. It is child abuse material,' issue a verbal caution, that type of thing. What we do find more prevalent at the moment is older males, so ranging between the ages of 20 and 30 who are preying on schoolgirls ranging between the ages of 12 and 16 via Facebook. They're coaxing or grooming young girls into sexual relationships with money, with a whole heap of things. (Police interview)

One officer commented that both his state/territory laws and the Commonwealth laws were not practical in the context of youth cyberbullying. This officer was of the strong view that the cyberbullying conduct that he was aware of was not illegal:

> I suppose the main offence in our [state or territory] legislation that would apply to some of this behaviour is stalking. In this jurisdiction stalking is an indictment offence... STw 1.315 0 Td (.)(P-0.012 (h)3(e) 3(T)4(i)-1 (a)-1 (p)-1 (r)-0.7 (o)-3 (p)-1 (r)-0.7 (i)-1 (a)-1 (t)-1 (e)-3 (s)-3 (t)-1 (a)-1 (l)-1 (k)-1 (i)-1 (n)-1 (g)-1 (i)-1 (s)-3 (a)-1 (n)-1 (i)-1 (n)-1 (d)-1 (i)-1 (c)-1 (t)-1 (a)-1 (b)-1 (l)-1 (e)-3 (o)-3 (f)-1 (f)-1 (e)-3 (n)-1 (c)-1 (e)-3 (.)-1 (.)-1 (.)-1 (S)-3 (T)-1 (w)-1 (1)-1 (.)-1 (3)-1 (1)-1 (5)-1 (0)-1 (T)-1 (d)-1

> police force. Primarily, they're responsible for the enforcement of Commonwealth law. We effectively enforce Commonwealth law when there's some interest in us doing it, but we don't do it as a matter of course. (Police interview)

All officers commented on the existence of a range of offences that covered criminal cyberbullying behaviours. Officers did not volunteer a range of cyber behaviours that they had encountered that would 'fit' those offences, other than the name calling etc. mentioned above. However, when prompted on the issue of non-consensual sexting, officers immediately recognised the potential for criminality:

> If [non-consensual sexting] involves minors, yes, because if the photo or image is explicit, then it's the production of child abuse material… It would depend on the type of image, it would depend on how the victim feels about it and whether the victim wants to make a formal complaint about it. I can say that we don't have too much of that reported to us formally in terms of, 'Yes, please, investigate this fully',...I dare say it is happening quite a bit…It would be - as a youth, distribution of child abuse material, it would be highly unlikely that we would go to youth diversion for something like that. (Police interview)

One officer held a strong view that the cyberbullying encountered by his force was not criminal. He alluded to some occasional dissatisfaction with the police's role:

> I suppose what we do do is provide information. For some people that's effective. Some people unfortunately are unwilling to follow advice… but because they want someone else to fix the problem, they won't do that themselves; they'll want the police to organise to have any sort of offensive content taken down. It is certainly not our role to do that. (Police interview)

The same officer also offered the interesting insight that there was little opportunity for general deterrence through policing cyberbullying in his jurisdiction:

> I suppose the criminal law is all about penalties; it's all about offenders being caught, being penalised for their bad behaviour and that penalty acting as a specific deterrent to them doing it in the …. We don't penalise children. So the ability of police to use law enforcement as a way to prevent future offending when we're talking about children is not very easy. The whole youth diversion process tends to be very focus6(al)3(d1/a)-2(om)(ant)-7(s op)11(4r)-6(t)-7(o)141 62(f)-17(polo u)(t)-7(he i)7(ou)11(behe

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5.4.2 Guidance

Many stakeholders believed that the overall multi agency approach should be underpinned by clear guidance:

> One of the other barriers to seeking resolution to these issues is, to be honest, I think we can do more to support police in the field from a what is the best practice for resolving cyberbullying incidents? I don't know. I couldn't tell you what best practice is. I can give you a whole range of options but is there a suite of options and steps, some sort of process rigour that has a better chance of yielding a positive outcome for all parties concerned… Hopefully some research down the track will give us the guidance that we need to be more effective. (Police interview)

Such a best practice guide might assist to overcome what one police officer suggested was the occasionally dismissive police officer:

> I think some [police] are really dismissive of the complaints because they assume that it's not going to be criminal. Irrespective of whether it is criminal or not1 Tc .52(an)11(g)-opefinner is

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> at it because they would have to get special permission to be allowed to use Facebook. (stakeholder interview)

5.4.4 Support for schools

The role of schools in addressing cyberbullying was raised by some participants:

> [Need] consistent frameworks across education facilities for dealing with this issue now. … We need some, again, some body to work with schools across Australia to develop effective responses. That involves I think both legislation, policy, training of educators in terms of this issue and the impact of this issue and heightened awareness amongst children and young people that there is help available if they do speak out about this experience. (stakeholder interview)

> Children are in schools. …That's where they're going to experience bullying and cyberbullying. That is where their support is best placed to deal with this issue. …One of the impacts of bullying and cyberbullying is that young people will withdraw from school or, if they attend, will not engage in education activities. Teachers have to work with young people to overcome this issue if they're going to achieve their educational aims with their students. I think schools need a lot of assistance and help to do that. Again, it needs to have a national approach in relation to that issue. (stakeholder interview)

ADCs were of the view that the leadership of school principals is critical to the success of anti-cyberbullying campaigns:

> I think one of the things would be principals around Australia need to understand their leadership role and they might need to be pointed out perhaps their vicarious liability in failing. Or have in their contracts or something. Because I think the leadership issue is essential to the way bullying is dealt with from school to school. (ADC)

> …in all of the research around domestic and family violence, teaching children respectful relationships in schools is the starting point. And then the leadership. And so bullying as part of that respectful relationship training that happens in schools has got to be the future. So it's more holistic. It's part of the way that we actually just treat each other as human beings. (ADC)

Other stakeholders highlighted the need to encourage young people to address the problem. For example:

> You might ask the question about how can young people be an irresistible force to ensure cyberbullying doesn't exist in Australia? ... It is getting people to take ownership of the issue and be accountable for having action and change. (stakeholder interview)

> So I think actually using children to actually teach other children and seeing themselves and the consequences and the solutions by children and by children who are from the communities which the campaigns are going into. So children from traditional communities and children from urban communities. (ADC)

5.4.5 Education and awareness

Many advocated for the use of education as a first resort, backed up by a civil enforcement regime.

> I think there are better ways to deal with [young people], which is usually education. So I think you could ask that they attend certain programs … but I wouldn't support jailing them or juvenile justicing them or something. It sits on their record forever. It sets them up in some ways to not have a successful life. (stakeholder interview)

> The enactment of a civil enforcement regime, which I personally [think] is a good initiative because at the end of the day if education has failed to end the problem and it's continuing, given the impacts of cyberbullying, I think it is quite reasonable to have a backup, last resort system where people can go and call parties together and seek some action to end it in a more public setting. (stakeholder interview)

> … I don't think that victims or offenders are particularly well served by a greater criminalisation in this area. [Should tailor] the ones that we have to deal better with these particular kinds of incidents… geared towards deferral, education, restorative justice practices instead of criminalisation, long-term criminal record implications and in more extreme cases, sex offender registry. (stakeholder interview)

Education about the legal consequences of cyberbullying could help young people understand the long-term consequences of their actions:

> Longer-term consequences of some of these charges…anything to do with the child pornography pictures, there is a very real risk if these things go to court and young people are found guilty of very long-term consequences like the sex offenders register. (stakeholder interview)

Participants identified a number of different issues concerning awareness, including awareness of what is happening online (general online activity and cyberbullying), awareness of the resources available, the power of education, and the need to create new social norms for online behaviour.

Young people spend a lot of time online. Awareness of what is happening online is hard for parents, teachers and counsellors to understand without themselves being familiar with latest trends and technology.

> I think the whole uptake of the harm of online deviant behaviour is a very challenging field for a lot of places. A lot of workers are used to dealing with real world things. So they don’t even understand the technology and how someone can be upset about words on a screen. They also don't tend to grasp how much young people…actually live online and the impact it has on them. (stakeholder interview)

> We really have to deal with this because it's a huge change. I don't think any of us saw it coming. No-one thought if you gave young people iPads, iPhones that they would either send people pictures of themselves in