

TAKING IT TO THE STREET

Morcombes and AFP embark on child safety tour

PETER HALL
LAUREN MARTYN-JONES

BRUCE and Denise Morcombe will team up with the Australian Federal Police to launch a new education program on child safety and the dangers of sexting.

Mr Morcombe said sexting posed an "incredible danger" to young people and the alarming trend would form a key part of a two-week Tweed to the Territory child safety tour the Daniel Morcombe Foundation will launch today in Brisbane with the AFP.

"This is frightening and we have not seen the full implications," he said.

"The willingness of younger students to take photographs and share them in

what they think is a humorous way can be very damaging.

"They do not understand the implications of that supposed harmless act, but it can affect their mental state and careers. It doesn't just cause embarrassment, the effects can be more far-reaching."

The AFP and the Daniel Morcombe Foundation's Tweed to the Territory tour will visit more than 20 schools and speak to thousands of students and adults over the next fortnight, beginning today at the Northpine Christian College north of Brisbane.

The tour then heads south, through Tweed Heads and regional NSW, before finishing in Canberra on the annual Day for Daniel, which is October 28.

Mr Morcombe said the tour would include talks to students during the day as well as evening presentations to parents, which would cover topics such as online grooming, sexting, privacy and inappropriate online behaviours.

He said that when it came to checking what children were being exposed to, teachers played a role, but fundamentally it was the responsibility of parents.

"With children, the world is in their pocket with regard to accessing internet sites," he said.

"Would a responsible parent leave pornographic material, such as a magazine on a bench, where a child could see it? No they wouldn't. But they leave a mobile phone

they are paying for with no safeguards in place.

"Kids being kids want to explore, but what they are being exposed to normalises the obscure and bizarre and is giving them a different perspective on what is normal in the world."

The AFP's co-ordinator of crime operations in Queensland Glen Fisher said federal police were proud to continue working closely with the Daniel Morcombe Foundation to deliver these new child safety presentations in schools.

"From a policing perspective, prevention of crime is key," Detective Superintendent Fisher said.



TEAMING UP: Bruce and Denise Morcombe, and the AFP, are on tour to educate kids and parents about the dangers of sexting. Picture: Lachie Millard

GENERATION SEXT FORUM IT'S TIME TO TALK

Get involved in The Courier-Mail Old Government forum tackling the issue of sexting.

We're looking for people to take part as members of the audience. The forum will be

held next Thursday, at the State Library of Queensland from 6pm. The panel will feature Education Minister Kate Jones, Argos chief John Rouse, and Queensland Children's

Commissioner Cheryl Vardon and will be moderated by Frances Whiting.

To attend, register at generationsext@news.com.au. Places are limited.

BOOTCAMP BUILDS BONDS OF TRUST BETWEEN STUDENTS

LAUREN MARTYN-JONES

THE first thing Year 10 students do when they start at the Queensland Academies - Creative Industries campus is head off to a three-day camp to learn about the importance of respectful relationships.

With 14 and 15 year olds moving into the selective senior high school from other schools across the state, the getaway is essential to quickly familiarise students with the school's culture and the standards of behaviour they are expected to demonstrate towards each other.

Following the camp, the high school students are sat down for a technological induction, where standards of appropriate online behaviour are also reinforced.

QACI principal Gavin Bryce said the intensive induction process enabled the school to address issues such as

What can young people do?

- Search for yourself online to find what your 'digital shadow' looks like.
- If an image of yourself appears on a website or app, and you have not consented to the use of it, contact the administrator to seek its removal.
- Contact the person who has shared the photo or video and ask them to remove it and delete copies.
- Keep evidence by taking screenshots and noting web addresses of the content. You can also use another device to take photos of content.
- Google can stop specific pages containing inappropriate images appearing in image search results. It only helps with Google searches; images will still be searchable via other search engines.
- Make sure webcams are covered when not in use.
- If you need support, talk to someone you trust or seek help. Kids Helpline is a great resource.
- Let your friends know if your account has been hacked.

Source: AFP

sexting and cyber-bullying before they became a problem in the school.

"Technology is really important for us. We have theatre, film and visual arts students, so having an understanding of what is appropriate and what is not appropriate is very important," he said.

Mr Bryce said the school culture was prioritised before learning occurred and that helped to positively shape the behaviour of students from their first day of school.

"I was previously a principal in a large state school and I wish I had done some of this there," he said.



SCHOOL CULTURE: Luke Crowley, Chloe Ryan-Uhlrich, and Matilda Knight, all 15, were schooled in appropriate standards when they joined QACI. Picture: Claudia Baxter

“They do not understand the implications of that supposed harmless act ... It doesn't just cause embarrassment, the effects can be more far-reaching.”

Bruce Morcombe

National effort to protect children

MATTHEW CONNORS
NATIONAL POLITICAL REPORTER

A NATIONAL program designed to warn of the dangers of sexting and online child exploitation is being expanded to include children as young as eight.

The Australian Federal Police "ThinkUKnow" program educates parents, carers, teachers and students about cyber safety, including the dangers of sexting.

Justice Minister Michael Keenan told Parliament yesterday that last year the AFP received more than 11,000 reports of online child exploitation.

"Predators can be very clever at exploiting young people online so it is vital and important that we show the risks that our kids face, how they might be exposed to these risks and how we will go about minimising them and to educate people also about where to report problems," Mr Keenan said.

A partnership between the AFP, state and territory police and corporations including the Commonwealth Bank and Microsoft, the ThinkUKnow program has been delivered to more than 150,000 students in

Australia in the past year, including thousands of parents and students in Queensland.

"As a result of the success of ThinkUKnow, and the increased risk of younger people being exploited online, the Government has expanded the partnership to begin educating children, unfortunately from as young as eight," Mr Keenan said.

He said the AFP is working to expand the program to indigenous and culturally diverse communities and Australians with a disability.

In Queensland, 132 volunteers are helping to deliver the ThinkUKnow program across the state. Over the next fortnight, it will be delivered as part of the AFP and Daniel Morcombe Foundation's "Tweed to the Territory" tour across Queensland.

A spokesman for the AFP said stopping online child exploitation was a whole-of-community issue, which started with education to protect and empower young people.

The AFP said if anyone who was a victim or believed their child to be a victim, should talk to local police or call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

EXCLUSIVE MORCOMBES TEAM UP WITH AFP ON CHILD SAFETY P8-9

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