

**Question on Notice
No. 592
Asked on 25 March 2010**

MS MALE asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (MR ROBERTS)—

QUESTION:

How is the Queensland Police Service assisting parents and children to be cyber safe?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question and interest in the safety of children.

The Queensland Police Service is strongly committed to protecting children and has adopted a range of strategies to assist parents, guardians and carers to keep children safe from predators on the internet.

On 3 September 2009, the Premier and I launched the Queensland Police Service DVD “Who’s chatting to your kids?”. This government-funded DVD forms a new component of the “Who’s chatting to your kids?” campaign. The DVD (45 minutes in length) has been created as an educational resource to be used by police (Child Protection Investigation Unit officers, Crime Prevention officers, school-based police officers and adopt-a-cops) when they visit schools and community groups and speak with parents, guardians and carers.

The DVD complements the “Who’s chatting to your kids?” information brochure produced in 2005 and 2007 by the world-renowned Task Force Argos. This brochure advises parents, guardians and carers of the risks associated with children using the internet and the dangers posed by child sex offenders online. The brochure has been updated to reflect current internet safety advice and advances in technology. To date, 30 000 copies of the brochure have been printed for dissemination to the public. The brochure is also available on the Queensland Police Service website.

Additionally, the “Surf Safely” program is an education resource for children which explains how to use the internet safely. This project was launched in 2006 and continues to be successfully presented to schools and community groups across Queensland.

The Queensland Police Service proactively targets persons possessing and distributing child exploitation material. Many of these persons have the propensity to commit contact sexual offences against children. In March 2009, detectives from Task Force Argos launched an operation (Operation Hotel Quiet) targeting the trade of child exploitation material via the internet. From March 2009 to February 2010, this operation has resulted in the apprehension of 29 offenders who have been charged with 94 offences relating to child exploitation material and contact offences relating to indecent dealing of children. Additionally and more importantly, 15 children have been removed from harm as a direct result of the proactive work being undertaken by Task Force Argos. This is a clear indication the Queensland Police Service is targeting those persons who exploit children.

Task Force Argos is recognised nationally and internationally for its achievements in the investigation of online child exploitation cases and for developing proactive policing strategies. One such strategy includes the adoption of the state-of-the-art Wyoming Toolkit software. This software is specifically focused on identifying the distribution of child exploitation images across 'peer to peer' networks. The software is geographically specific, enabling law enforcement agencies to focus resources on offenders within their area of jurisdiction.

In March 2010, Task Force Argos hosted training to investigators from other law enforcement agencies from New Zealand, New South Wales, Western Australia, Victoria, South Australia, the Australian Federal Police and the Crime and Misconduct Commission. The hosting and sharing of this technology is a key platform for strengthening partnerships with other law enforcement agencies to better protect children in Queensland.

The Queensland community can have confidence that the Queensland Police Service is committed to maintaining community awareness of the dangers of predatory offending against children on the internet, and to the proactive targeting of those who engage in that offending.