

## AHISA MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **AHISA welcomes Australian Government support to help keep young Australians safe online**

The Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA) has welcomed today's announcement that the Australian Government has committed \$6 million to support free access to online safety resources for all Australian schools.

The federal Minister for Communications, The Hon Michelle Rowland, has announced free access for schools to existing digital and media literacy resources offered by the Alannah and Madeline Foundation will be extended by three years. Students will also have access to a newly developed version of the Foundation's eSmart Digital Licence+ suitable for students aged 5 to 9 years.

'The online safety of young Australians is a national issue, and it makes sense that we invest in freely available national resources,' said AHISA's CEO, Ms Beth Blackwood. 'Educators, parents and students also benefit from national resources and teacher training offered by eSafety.'

Ms Blackwood said schools play a vital role in helping students acquire the skills they need to navigate the online world, but responsibility for children's online safety must be shared.

'AHISA commends the Australian Government for its readiness to act on behalf of young Australians,' said Ms Blackwood. 'We appreciate tangible forms of federal government support for the efforts of schools and families, through maintenance of the Office of the eSafety Commission and support for organisations such as the Alannah and Madeline Foundation. We are equally appreciative of the Government's willingness to take legislative and regulatory action to help keep our children safe online.'

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AHISA is a professional association of 450 Heads of independent schools. Its members lead schools that collectively account for over 11 per cent of total Australian school enrolments, 70 per cent of independent sector enrolments and 20 per cent of total Australian Year 12 enrolments.