



News: Helping schools to eliminate bullying



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A new video that gives teachers techniques to tackle schoolyard bullying will be sent to all of the State's high schools as part of the Rann Government's ongoing efforts to reduce bullying in schools.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith launched the DVD – ***Reducing Bullying: Evidence Based Strategies for Schools***, which will be sent to all high schools shortly.

"Bullying is an all too common part of society and a significant issue in school communities, affecting up to one in six students in a week," Dr Lomax-Smith says.

"Everyone in a school community, including teachers, principals, classmates and friends, needs to help stop bullying.

"We have progressively rolled out a number of initiatives over the past few years to give our schools a greater ability to address bullying and harassment.

"Importantly, we have involved local experts in schoolyard bullying to make sure our work is at the forefront of efforts around Australia to deal with this age-old issue.

"There has already been interest nationally and internationally in this new video following its preview at various conferences and meetings. It will be available for sale to other jurisdictions.

"I would like to thank everyone involved with the production of this new DVD, which will be welcomed in high schools around the State."

The work of Flinders University documentary filmmaker Alison Wotherspoon and the academic research of her colleagues are reflected in the video's strong focus on 'best practice' approaches.

Seven short videos are featured, capturing the voices of students, teachers, parents, experts and health professionals and providing schools with anti-bullying information and strategies.

Dr Lomax-Smith says the new DVD will complement a number of other Rann Government initiatives to tackle bullying in schools, including:

- ✦ A **comprehensive information package** provided to all schools to reduce bullying.
- ✦ Highlighting **cyber bullying**.
- ✦ **Training programs** to give teachers and school counsellors the skills to deal with bullies and their victims, and to take preventative action by creating friendlier school communities.

- ✦ A special **coalition to decrease bullying, harassment and violence** in all SA schools, comprising the three schooling sectors and internationally recognised researchers.
- ✦ A **Safer South Australian Schools Conference**, held last year, with international and national speakers and examples of 'best practice' in our schools.

Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, Humanities, Law and Theology, Professor Faith Trent, says the DVD provides teachers with a valuable resource that is based on research and experience.

"Teachers work extremely hard to ensure that classrooms and schools are places where students are free to learn and play without fear of being bullied," Professor Trent says.

"This resource has been trialled in schools and found to be effective because of both its form and content, and is now easily accessible to teachers."

Academics used questionnaires and focus groups to collect data from more than 1400 secondary school students at five schools over a year and guide the contents of the DVD.

Alison Wotherspoon, a filmmaker and senior lecturer at Flinders University, worked with cinematographer Helen Carter, sound recordist Mylene Ludgate and editor Dale Ross to produce the videos.

Schools featured have each been leaders in anti-bullying strategies and include Craigmore High, Fremont-Elizabeth City High, The Heights School, Parafield Gardens High and Smithfield Plains High.

The seven videos cover a range of bullying-related issues, including:

- ✦ Bullying: an introduction
- ✦ Policy
- ✦ Power, disempowerment and bullying
- ✦ Respectful relationships
- ✦ Adult relationships
- ✦ The language of bullying
- ✦ Anti-bullying strategies: bringing about change

The DVD is the result of collaboration between schools, teachers, the State Government's health and education departments, and academics from education and screen studies at Flinders University.