

MEDIA RELEASE

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New media literacy resources for all secondary schools

Federal Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, will see first-hand how the Albanese Government's commitment to deliver media literacy resources to all Australian secondary schools will keep children safe from harm in a visit to Footscray High School on Wednesday.

The eSmart Media Literacy Lab, developed by not-for-profit organisation, Alannah & Madeline Foundation, will become available for every secondary school from 1 July this year following the Government's commitment of \$6 million over 3 years in the October Budget. The funding will allow the Foundation to roll out their eSmart digital and media literacy products to all Australian schools during the three-year period, helping keep children and young people safe online.

Minister Rowland will visit Footscray High School in Melbourne's inner west to observe students using the eSmart Media Literacy Lab and see first-hand how teachers help their students to critically analyse what they read and see online.

In 2020, the Alannah & Madeline Foundation worked with leading experts and educators to develop eSmart Media Literacy Lab – a digital learning resource delivered by educators in schools and is designed to equip students with the critical thinking skills they need to effectively navigate their ever-changing and often uncertain online environment.

“Young people find their news from a mix of social media, friends and family, and TV, but only half of those using social media pay attention to the source of news online. It can be hard to spot ‘fact’ from ‘opinion’, said Sarah Davies AM, Chief Executive Officer at the Alannah & Madeline Foundation.

“Without media literacy knowledge and skills, young people are susceptible to online harm, manipulation, misinformation, the many faces of fear and hate speech,” she added.

eSmart Media Literacy Lab aims to create a generation of media users who will understand how information is published online, how to identify trusted sources of information, while providing tools to ‘fact check’ and tips for developing critical thinking when consuming information.

The \$6 million in funding will allow the Alannah & Madeline Foundation the opportunity to deliver a suite of digital learning resources to Australian primary and secondary schools, including:

- The eSmart Digital Licence+, for students aged 10 to 14 to learn how to meet the demands and challenges of the digital world.



- The eSmart Media Literacy Lab for secondary school students aged 12 to 16 to help support the development of critical thinking skills and online civic engagement.
- A new eSmart Junior Digital Licence+ for primary students aged 5 to 9 years to support the increasing number of young children who are active online.

Minister Rowland said the tools will be available to every school in Australia and form a key part of the Government's commitment to keep vulnerable Australians safe from harm.

"As a result of the Albanese Government's \$6 million funding commitment, every primary and secondary school in Australia will have the opportunity to engage with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation's digital and media literacy resources by 2025", Minister Rowland said.

"These tools will give Australian children the skills they need to become critical thinkers and stay safe from harmful online content like mis- and disinformation," the Minister added.

The staff at Footscray High School recognised the immediate need to equip students with the skills and knowledge to interpret what they encounter online and have recently implemented the eSmart Media Literacy Lab with their year 7 cohort.

Executive Principal, Frank Vetere explained, *"At Footscray High School we are committed to every student having access to a world class education and Media Literacy Education is an important part of that. The eSmart Media Literacy Lab is a great and engaging way to develop skills ensuring students have the tools and knowledge to navigate the online environment in a positive informed way."*

To find out more about the eSmart Media Literacy Lab please visit:
www.medialiteracylab.org.au & www.alannahandmadeline.org.au

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