

# SCHOOLS FACE AI BULLYING

MATTHEW KILLORAN, REBECCA WHITFIELD-BAKER

Generative artificial intelligence is being used to amplify cyber-bullying among schoolchildren, including the use of sexualised images to create distressing deepfake videos and audio, the nation's eSafety Commissioner has revealed.

Julie Inman Grant says she fears a recent report received by her office about AI-generated sexually explicit content being produced by students to bully other kids is "just the tip of the iceberg". "We suspect the harms being unleashed are much more widespread," she said.

Ms Inman Grant said the nature of the emerging technology meant that it no longer took huge amounts of computing power to create convincing deepfakes - an image or video of a person digitally altered to make them appear to be someone else - to be used as porn, child exploitation or cyber-bullying material.

She is concerned teachers, particularly females, were also expected to become targets of abuse using the emerging technology.

Sonya Ryan, CEO of Adelaide-based online safety program provider the Carly Ryan Foundation said while the commission's revelation was disturbing, it wasn't unexpected.

"It doesn't surprise me at all ... unfortunately, I think we are going to see a rise," she said on Saturday.

"As we go deeper into the rabbit hole of AI, I predict we are looking down the barrel of more suffering; there are a number of issues around AI in relation to people using fake personas, fake voices ... things are becoming less real in the online world.

"When it comes to cyber-bullying we are dealing with a horrible pandemic (where), in the most tragic circumstances, we have seen children taking their own lives.

"I implore technology and social media companies to come up with safety mechanisms before they let this sort of technology just roam free," said Ms

Ryan.

South Australia's Commissioner for Children and Young People Helen Connolly said finding ways to keep children safe online must be prioritised.

"We have to get a better understanding from the kids themselves about what they are actually seeing, when they are seeing that and how they are seeing that ... it needs to be part of a public health approach," she said.

The nation's education ministers are due to meet in Hobart this week with AI on the agenda,

SA Education Minister Blair Boyer is to report on a state pilot which has seen eight public secondary schools trial the use of an AI app, or chatbot, to support their studies.

"AI will be a part of our work and lives in the future, which means we have a responsibility to educate young people about its appropriate and effective use," Mr Boyer said.

"If we don't, then we are doing them an incredible disservice."

While the department wasn't aware of "any specific cases" as detailed by the eSafety Commission, Mr Boyer said it was "always monitoring the situation".