Centre for Excellence
in Child and Family Welfare Inc.

Media release

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Facing up to Facebook promotes safe technology for the young

Today social media brings many benefits as well as challenges, with technologies such as Facebook looming large in often sensational media coverage. With vulnerable children, young people and families, a key challenge is supporting the safe use of technology rather than preventing access and further entrenching disadvantage across the digital divide.

These issues will be tackled in a technology symposium tomorrow, Friday 22 July, hosted jointly by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and the University of Melbourne's Alfred Felton Chair of Child and Family Welfare.

Facing up to Facebook: The impact of technology on children, young people, families and the sector will feature keynote presentations from Darren Kane, head of Telstra's Corporate Security & Investigations Group, and Fiona Smart, branch manager of FaHCSIA's Safety Taskforce.

Senator Catryna Bilyk, chair of the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety, will also present key messages from the Committee's recently tabled interim report, *High-Wire Act*, and will take questions from the audience (from 3.00pm).

"I would like to thank the Centre for bringing to the attention of the broader community the unique challenges that social networking poses to the safety of children online. While the committee's report focused on the ways the Australian Government can improve the cyber safety of young people online, there are also many practical ways that parents, schools and others in our community can act, and through conferences like *Facing up to Facebook* these practical ways can be taught and promoted," Senator Bilyk said today.

The symposium will also offer two streams of concurrent sessions – one looking at issues for children, young people and families, the other examining the issues posed by technology for the community services sector. These include presentations from Edith Cowan University, Berry Street, Headspace, InfoXchange, Swinburne University, ChildWise and the Centre.

"The outcome we're all working for is to safely harness technology to address the disadvantage of vulnerable children and young people. This event is an important opportunity to hear how that can be achieved," said Centre chief executive officer, Dr Lynette Buoy, today.

"In presenting this timely symposium, the Centre acknowledges the support of the William Buckland Foundation, and our partnership with Professor Cathy Humphreys, the Alfred Felton Chair of Child and Family Welfare at the University of Melbourne. We also thank Senator

Catryna Bilyk and the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety for their continuing work on these vitally important issues," Dr Buoy concluded.

Facing up to Facebook will be held this Friday 22 July from 9.30am–4.30pm at the Arrow on Swanston, 488 Swanston Street, Carlton.

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