



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Child Sexual Abuse

SPEECH

Tuesday, 8 December 2020

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP	Question No.

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (16:09): Today I attended a briefing from the Australian Federal Police, the AFP, kindly organised by a colleague, the member for Ryan. That briefing was disturbing and confronting. Candidly, it was bloody awful—it really was. It was on the issue of online child sexual exploitation—a tough, tough topic. How some of our AFP work in this space, day in, day out, I just do not know, especially those who spend hours looking at images of children. But they do, and thank God they do. At the end of the briefing, I asked a very simple question: how can we best help; what can we do as federal MPs? Their short answer was, 'You need to speak about it.' This is the first opportunity that I've had to get on my feet, so let's talk about online sexual exploitation, starting with the importance of mums, dads and carers being aware and understanding.

I will talk about some of the stats that they shared today. Only 16 per cent of parents and carers seek information on the topic of online child sexual exploitation and only three per cent of parents and carers list online grooming as a concern—only three per cent. They also said that in 2019-20 the AFP triaged 21,668 reports of child sexual exploitation and laid charges on 1,214. We have to be aware that kids have access. Four out of five children aged four are using the internet; one in two children under 12 have their own personal device; and 70 per cent of parents and carers allow their children to use the internet anywhere in the house, 22 per cent with no oversight whatsoever.

If there's one thing that I think we can all do, particularly those of us who are mums or dads, is make sure that we are speaking to our children about their online activity. A tool that the AFP mentioned to me today was ThinkUKnow. If you Google or search ThinkUKnow that will assist.