

# Protecting kids *online*



*Photo -Brian Hartigan*

*On 27 January 2005, Commissioner Mick Keelty and Director of the Australian High Tech Crime Centre, Federal Agent Kevin Zuccato, joined law enforcement agencies across three continents to launch a web-based initiative designed to deter and prevent individuals from committing child abuse on-line and to educate people with respect to children operating safely online.*

The website [www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com](http://www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com) is part of the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) international partnership between law enforcement agencies and industry in Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, the US and Interpol and aims to become a one stop shop for all information about child protection on-line.

The VGT website will act as a gateway for information on how to use the Internet safely and will link to a range of support agencies that can advise and support victims of abuse. It will also allow for Internet users to report on-line child abuse to appropriate law enforcement agencies in a number of different countries.

The website provides links to a variety of sites which contain useful information on how to keep children safe online.

“This initiative demonstrates the commitment, on a global scale, of law enforcement agencies to combating on-line child abuse. This website will play a pivotal role in educating the international community about Internet safety as well as sending a clear message to those people who are using the Internet to prey on children that the Internet is not an anonymous place.”

In a media statement chair of the Australian High Tech Crime Centre Board and South Australian Police Commissioner Mal Hyde, congratulated the Australian High Tech Crime Centre (AHTCC) on the role it plays in the VGT.

“Australian police from each State and Territory and the AFP have come together to form the AHTCC and to protect Australians from online crime,” Commissioner Hyde said. “As part of the VGT Australian police are using traditional law enforcement methods in the virtual environment to protect our children from sexual abuse.”

The VGT website has links to a number of other partner organisations which include the Internet Watch Foundation, Barnardos, Childline, Missdorothy.com and Australian focused organisations including the Australian Broadcasting Authority, Net Alert and Child Wise.

The VGT was created in 2003 as a direct response to lessons learned from investigations into on-line child abuse around the world. The alliance delivers crime prevention and crime reduction initiatives with the aim of making the Internet a safer place for children and a more hostile place for those exploiting the Internet to commit crimes against children.