



Bullying: parents' primary concern

by Matthew Killoran
technology reporter

NEW research shows parents are more worried about bullying than binge drinking and drugs – with cyber bullying among the most prevalent and devastating.

Research from Sydney-based parenting organisation Next Generation reveals 60 per cent of 500 parents surveyed were more concerned about bullying than binge drinking and drugs.

Next Generation founder Dr Ramesh Manocha said cyber

bullying was the most prevalent and destructive form of bullying.

“In the past mum and dad were able to protect you, but with cyber bullying it’s 24 hours a day. It can get to you wherever your computer is, wherever your mobile phone is,” he said.

He said incidents in which attacks were caught on camera and then distributed allowed bullies to turn physical damage into psychological damage.

“It multiplies out the initial contact because it makes it an international

incident. It makes it hard for the victim to bounce back,” said Dr Manocha.

Gold Coast cyber bullying expert and Griffith University education lecturer Roberta Thompson said children who video-taped and posted bullying incidents might not realise the harm they were doing.

“When you use technology, I don’t think kids see it as bad as the physical stuff, (but) if they’re videotaping, they’re as much involved.”

Ms Thompson said posting bullying online was much more intense.

“One single instance can have the same effect as getting picked on all the time for a whole semester.”

She said taking away the internet and mobile phones from teens was not an effective means of preventing cyber bullying because social networking made up a significant amount of youths’ lives today.

Ms Thompson said it was important for parents to monitor their children’s technology use.