

Australia police call for Facebook cop after murder

Australian police this month warned teenagers to be vigilant about their privacy settings after a man allegedly used a fake Facebook profile to lure 18-year-old Nona Belomesoff to an isolated bushland area and murder her

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Sydney: Australian police Wednesday said they would push for social networking giant Facebook to introduce a local law liaison after the murder of a teenager who met her alleged attacker on the site.

Australian Federal Police Assistant Commissioner Neil Gaughan travelled to Washington to meet with global police chiefs over the growing number of crimes linked to Facebook and discuss transnational strategies.

"What I'll be pushing for from an Australian perspective is a dedicated law enforcement liaison person in Australia," Gaughan told ABC radio ahead of Wednesday's meeting at the US Department of Justice.

"I'd also like to see a 'report abuse' button on each profile page to make it easier for people to report their concerns to law enforcement ... (and) some age-verification software placed on the system so we don't have people under the age of 13 becoming members of Facebook," he added.

Australian police this month warned teenagers to be vigilant about their privacy settings after a man allegedly used a fake Facebook profile to lure 18-year-old Nona Belomesoff to an isolated bushland area and murder her.

Police believe Belomesoff's alleged killer preyed on her by using the interests openly listed on her Facebook page to strike up a rapport.

"We're certainly seeing instances of stalking and grooming people for sexual activity. We are seeing instances where illegal content is being shared amongst users as well," Gaughan said.

"There is criminality within that particular environment and we need to come up with strategies to address that."

Gaughan said his concerns were shared by law enforcers in other countries and he was hopeful that with a "united front ... we'll get some action".

Gaughan's comments came as major Australian bank ANZ launched an internal probe after staff allegedly set up a phony Facebook profile to track down defaulting customers who had moved house without telling the bank.

Facebook has come under fire from US privacy and consumer groups, US lawmakers and the European Union over new features which allow partner websites to incorporate Facebook data.

Critics claim the move compromises the privacy of its more than 400 million members.

Australia's Communications Minister Stephen Conroy this week slammed the popular site as a "corporate giant who is answerable to no one and motivated solely by profit", with "complete disregard" for users' privacy.

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