



## President's Comment 36

19 November 2009

Dear Colleagues

School bashing by the media is very much alive and kicking if the lead story on the TV3 News on Monday evening is anything to go by. I was astounded that 15 individual schools were named in a story on fake IDs with the underlying insinuation that somehow or other the schools were at fault. This came across as a deliberate attempt to name, blame and shame. Sure the people who purchased and produced the fake IDs were probably all secondary school students (but not necessarily so) but what was the purpose of naming the schools? Identifying the suburbs these people live in, or the places where they have part-time work or various sports teams they play for would have just as much relevance.

Producing fake IDs and purchasing them is a crime and one that could lead to serious consequences – there are obvious links with youth, alcohol and driving. We do have a responsibility to educate our students about making sensible choices and complying with the law, and our role here is to support parents who have the greatest influence on developing the behaviour patterns and the values which their children exhibit. There is absolutely no fault or blame that can be placed on individual schools when young people decide to break the law and make bad choices in their own time and in 'out of school' environments. I would suggest to those schools that were named in the TV3 News item to register their disapproval and complain – there could even be cause to register a complaint with the Broadcasting Standards Authority. Good luck if you decide on that pathway.

I have always found it beneficial to engage with the media and grant them an interview if they request it – they have a 'story-line' and will produce it anyway if you give them a comment or not. By providing a personal comment and challenging their story it is sometimes possible to change their tack or at the very least provide some balance.

**Peter Gall**  
President

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**Comment 34 - 5.11.09**  
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**Comment 30 - 24.09.09**  
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**Comment 29 - 17.09.09**  
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