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MEDIA RELEASE

Disappointed students finally enjoy a Joyful day

Ayr State School has one of their tools to address bullying back in operation thanks to the generous donation of a Buddy Bench by the Joyful Foundation.

Member for Burdekin, Dale Last, originally donated a bench to the school in late 2017 but it was stolen from the school in April.

"The idea behind the Buddy Benches is to help address bullying by helping students create and strengthen their relationship with other students," Mr Last said.

"To have some low life take something like that from children was a real kick in the guts but ultimately some good has come out of it."

The Joyful Foundation, established to continue the efforts of the late Joy Donellan to help disadvantaged students, became aware of the theft of the original bench and stepped in to help the students of Ayr State School.

Joyful Foundation Trustee and father of Joy, Ron Donellan, said the Foundation had previously undertaken a program similar to Mr Last's and had seen the positive effect the benches had.

"The benches were our way of helping to spread Joy's light into schools and when we saw what happened to the bench Dale donated, we simply had to act." Mr Donnellan said.

"I know Dale has donated several of the benches and we basically have the same belief that strong relationships are one way to reduce bullying so I guess we are working together and I am confident we will help address this important issue."

Mr Last said the support of the Joyful Foundation meant he would be able to help even more students in the electorate and that the finishing touches were currently being put on another five benches.

"I would like to acknowledge and thank the Joyful Foundation for their generous donation and their ongoing support of this important issues," he said.

Mr Donnellan also thanked Hand Heart Pocket, a charity arm of Freemasons Queensland, for their contribution to the Ayr State School bench and the foundation's other projects.

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