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**LIFE ED QUEENSLAND LAUNCHES GROUNDBREAKING PROGRAM IN RESPONSE TO BULLYING CRISIS**

**Gaven, QLD** – Life Ed Queensland today launches Phase 2 of its innovative Stand Up for Respect program – a bold, evidenced-based initiative designed to tackle bullying and violence head on.

The launch at Gaven State School – one of five Queensland schools selected to pilot the next stage – comes amid growing national concern over the mental toll of bullying, with children as young as 10 tragically taking their own lives.

“Bullying in Australian schools has reached crisis point,” said Taryn Black, CEO of Life Ed Queensland. “We’re seeing a sharp rise in distress among young people – linked to both online and in-person bullying. It’s not enough to tell kids to be resilient. We need an urgent whole-of-community response that includes schools, families and society at large.”

Developed in partnership with Social Marketing @ Griffith University and the Behaviour Change Collective, the Stand Up for Respect program draws on global best practice to deliver a multi-layered, whole-school program that goes beyond classroom lessons and includes:

* Face-to-face education sessions where students learn to identify different types of bullying – physical, verbal, social and online – and understand the impact of their actions
* Team-building playground activities that foster empathy, inclusion and positive peer relationships
* Parent and teacher seminars that build adult confidence in recognising and responding to bullying behaviours
* Peer-led initiatives that empower students to become upstanders – those who safely intervene or seek help when they witness bullying.

One in three Qld children experience bullying, 52 per cent of kids aged 10 to 15 are cyberbullied and 85% of bullying is witnessed by peers. \* By equipping students with the tools to act, the program helps foster a culture of upstander behaviour, confidence, empathy and stronger mental wellbeing.

Following impressive results from the 2024 pilot – including a 56% reduction in physical harm, 53% decrease in cyberbullying, and significant improvements in student confidence and peer relationships – Phase 2 aims to deepen impact and reach more Queensland communities.

“This isn’t just about stopping bullying,” Ms Black said. “It’s about helping children understand what bullying looks like, build respect and gain the courage to stand up for themselves and others. Prevention starts with education and connection.”

Life Ed Queensland also welcomed the Queensland Government’s recent $33 million anti-bullying strategy, which includes Rapid Support Squads, more chaplains in schools and a 24/7 crisis line for parents.

“It’s vital to have these supports when things go wrong,” Ms Black said. “But we’re proud to complement these efforts with a prevention-first approach – one that tackles bullying from the grassroots up.”

“It takes the whole community to foster a culture of respect so that we can give our young people the best chance to thrive.”

Member for Theodore Mark Boothman MP praised Gaven State School’s leadership in tackling bullying through proactive, evidenced-based strategies.

“Bullying no longer happens only in the classroom or playground,” Mr Boothman said.

“Technology has enabled it to follow children home – into their bedrooms, onto their devices and into their private lives.

“Creating safe and respectful learning environments is one of the most important things

we can do for our children to give them a strong foundation for positive peer relationships,” Mr Boothman said.

“It’s fantastic to see Gaven State School leading the way.”

Following the initial pilot last year, students reported feeling more confident in standing up for others, seeking help and resolving conflict. Nearly twice as many students felt they could make a difference in preventing bullying.

Teachers observed students becoming more inclusive, using respectful language, and showing a greater awareness of how their behaviour affects others. Parents also reported positive changes at home, including children setting boundaries with peers, understanding and applying consent in social settings and speaking up for themselves and others.

“We’re not just teaching kids to cope – we’re changing community conversations,” Ms Black said.

“Every child deserves to be safe, happy and supported and that’s why our approach includes students, teachers and parents working together.”

Evaluation findings from Phase 2 will be released in Term 4, with scope for a broader rollout of the program across Queensland schools.

 **Source:**

\*The State of Queensland, (Queensland Family and Child Commission), Growing up in Queensland, 2023

\*eSafety Commissioner’s Research Report (Dec 2024 – Feb 2025)

\*Bullying No Way

**ENDS**

<https://www.lifeedqld.org.au/>

Life Ed Queensland is the state’s largest non-government provider of preventative health education for children and young people.

With the help of iconic mascot Healthy Harold and a team of specialist educators, Life Ed has been empowering students to make safer, healthier choices for 38 years in Queensland, and more than 45 years nationally.

Each year, around 180,000 children across 1,000 schools and early learning centres take part in Life Ed’s programs, which cover topics including nutrition and exercise, drugs and alcohol, vaping, bullying prevention, respectful relationships, consent, personal safety, mental health and wellbeing.

Life Ed Queensland also delivers Talk About It – the state’s largest puberty, relationships and sexual health education program – reaching more than 50,000 students annually.

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