

New fund in memory of Declan

Laura Packham

packhaml@tcp.newsltd.com.au

FRIENDS and family of Cairns teenager Declan Crouch bravely spoke of the tragic impacts of suicide at the combined launch of a new fund and Facebook page in the boy's honour.

The Declan Crouch Fund and FNQ Suicide Prevention Facebook page was officially launched at the Cairns City Library yesterday, with a strong show of support from friends, politicians and the community.

Declan, 14, disappeared on March 9 last year. After an extensive and very public three-month search, his body was found near his Machans Beach home.

Declan's close friends spoke on their experiences, with one girl bravely revealing her own struggle to reach help, which resulted in a recent suicide attempt.

Embracing social media, the Dr Edward Koch Foundation and the Cairns Regional's Council's youth advisory group created the online resource to provide young people with advice and help.

Dr Edward Koch Foundation CEO Dulcie Bird said Facebook was the way of the future to connect with young people.

"Facebook will make it easier for



Brave: Declan Crouch's mother Ruth and sister Grace at the launch of a fund for suicide prevention yesterday. Picture: ANNA ROGERS

us to interact with those young people and provide guidance," she said.

"We will also be able to post information and positive messages on our wall."

Mrs Crouch said that this time last year she was putting up posters to help find her then missing son.

"We didn't know at the time that he (Declan) had taken his own life and when his remains were found the community was profoundly affected," she said.

"Experiencing such a loss is a life-changing event and one that will stay with you forever.

"Part of the reason for that is because suicide is such a taboo subject itself, attracting such shame and embarrassment that it's hard to talk about it, even to think about."

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