

## Brodie's Story (full transcript)

leading assistive technology

Brodie, our youngest son, was diagnosed with Leukaemia on July 7 2016 whilst he was half way through Grade 4. Brodie missed most of Term 3 and 4 2016 due to his treatment.



For Year 5, we expressed interest in the iPad class offered at Ferny Grove. We felt that this was the best decision to assist Brodie. complete his schooling if he couldn't physically attend. His teacher could send work to Brodie and he could submit it via the iPad. We were lucky enough to borrow a Telepresence Robot 'Wally' to allow Brodie to attend school via the robot from home. The main benefit of

"Wally" was that he could remain connected with his class but it also increased his participation in school – for example he could attend reading groups. The use of the iPad also increased Brodie's engagement in the academic side of school and as such we saw his grades improve back to pre-diagnosis.

To show their unwavering support on Brodie's first day back in 2017, a large number of students in both his own class and across the school participated in the 'World's Greatest Shave' in March to raise a significant amount of money for the Leukaemia Foundation. As his parents, it was a really special moment to see the students shave their hair to support us and it certainly helped Brodie feel more at ease on his return as he had no hair left due to the chemotherapy. At no time has Brodie been made to feel any different by his peers since his treatment commenced – through a significant weight gain, loss of his hair or his exhaustion.



**Bianca Mullin**

Brodie's story and the school's response was profiled by the ABC, Courier Mail, Women's Day and Channel 9, after which our school connected with an emerging advocacy group in Canberra who had recently been funded to provide these robots to hospitals across Australia.

<http://missingschool.org.au/>

Our work was used as part of their submission for funding and our technical support was provided to maximise the chances of success for the national project. Both Education Qld and Apple have visited since then to capture our experience for sharing.