



Grace, 5-years-old

MEDIA ALERT / PHOTO CALL

November 2020

Captain Starlights blast-off into NT communities to help improve healthcare uptake and outcomes for sick kids

WHAT: A visit to the doctor for NT children is about to get a whole lot more fun thanks to Starlight Children's Foundation (Starlight) and Masonic Charities SA/NT. Working in partnership with health professionals, Starlight's Healthier Futures Program will see superhero, [Captain Starlight](#) take-off into community to make ongoing, regular visits to NT healthcare clinics more positive experiences for children and their families.

This important program will help improve the uptake of healthcare and therefore the wellbeing of Indigenous children living in rural and remote communities. It focuses on detection and early treatment of chronic health conditions by engaging families through entertainment, music, art, storytelling and play.

With a boost from a new supersonic [Masonic Charities SA/NT](#) partnership, the team at Starlight are ready to blast-off into regional NT Indigenous communities where they have been missed for many months to once again bring joy, laughter and happiness to sick kids. Masonic Charities has committed \$900,000 to Starlight over the next three years.

Captain Starlights will embark on around 300 trips over the next 3 years, visiting children like Grace (pictured), in remote Northern Territory communities from Wadeye to Groote Eylandt in the Top End and Kintore to Lake Nash in Central Australia.

WHERE: Darwin Airport, Hardy's Aviation Office, 8 Slade Ct Marrara NT 0812

DATE: Thursday 12 November

TIME: 9.45am arrival for 10am – 10.45am photo call and filming / interview opps

ONSITE CONTACT: Emma Puddy, Starlight Hospital Manager, 0431 344 912

VISION / INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

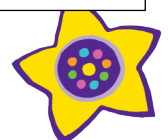
- **Louise Baxter**, CEO, Starlight Children's Foundation
- **Captain Starlights** Blast-Off moment from Darwin airport as they fly back into community celebrating travel to clinics for the next three years thanks to new partnership with Masonic Charities SA/NT. Captain Starlights will share their personal accounts on the program and how they make a significant difference and encourage healthcare uptake in NT communities.
- Vision of Captain Starlights with their 'fun kits' demonstrating how they engage kids and families through song, dance and storytelling, just as they will be doing in community clinics.
- **Emma Puddy**, Starlight's Hospital Program Manager NT
- **Dr. Neil Jensen**, Masonic Charities Grand Master

To confirm attendance please contact:

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Starlight acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work, live and play.



**Healthier
Futures
Initiative**



BACKGROUND

- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children have some of the highest levels of preventable diseases (such as Rheumatic heart disease) in the world¹. Research shows that health professionals and partners in remote communities rate the impact of Captain Starlight on children as significant²
- Evidence-based outcomes of Starlight's Healthier Futures Initiative (HFI) on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children include increased attendance at clinics, early detection of chronic disease, easier management of clinics and positively changed attitudes and beliefs about health care.²
- The new partnership with Masonic Charities will support over 30,000 seriously ill children and their families in South Australia and the Northern Territory over the next three years
- By engaging families through song, dance and storytelling, Starlight's HFI helps improve health clinic attendance, promoting prevention and early intervention. In addition to keeping children engaged during their healthcare visits, Captain Starlight provides a sense of connection and familiarity for these families, reducing their anxiety when seeking treatment in the clinic or hospital.

¹ AIHW (2016) Australian Burden of Disease Study Impact and causes of illness and death in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 2011, page viii

² Treadgold C, Dann J, Bowden A. Starlight's Healthier Futures Initiative: A partnership model supporting health care delivery to Indigenous children and adolescents. *International Journal of Integrated Care*. 2018;18(s1):90

² Harrison N, Walker D. (2008) Evaluation of the Starlight Children's Foundation's activities in regional and remote communities of the Northern Territory. Darwin: Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health (now Lowitja Institute)

