



Taiyo was only 2 years old when he was diagnosed with Lymphoma

## Starlight shines bright for sick kids this Christmas

With the December holidays fast approaching, [Starlight Children's Foundation](#) (Starlight) is urging Australians to help raise \$1.3 million to bring happiness to more than 30,000 sick kids and teens in hospital and in the community this Christmas.

Every minute of every day a child is admitted to hospital in Australia. What comes next for thousands of children is a lifechanging diagnosis - many facing months on end of treatment and hospital stays, even during Christmas.

The current health situation and ongoing restrictions are impacting hospitals and sick kids in the community like never before. The need to bring joy and positive distraction to sick children has never been greater.

CEO of Starlight, Louise Baxter, said: "During this special time of year, there are no less sick kids. With infection control paramount, sick kids undergoing treatment are spending even more time in hospital rooms and are more isolated than ever. At a time traditionally spent with family and friends, current restrictions mean many in hospital will have only one loved one to help them celebrate Christmas Day."

During this challenging year, Starlight has been there to bring happiness to sick kids in any way it can. Christmas will be no different.


Working alongside the hospital community, Starlight will deliver happiness to thousands of sick kids and teens over the festive season, through services including:

- Christmas gifts and Starlight Surprise Packs delivered to sick kids in hospital wards filled with Christmas arts, crafts and games to enjoy;
- Bedside visits from Captain Starlight, Santa and other Christmas activities to keep kids entertained and feeling connected on hospital wards;
- Interactive livestreams with special guests via Starlight TV and [Starlight's Facebook page](#) including Starlight's annual Christmas Pantomime;
- Virtual and physical Christmas Parties in children's hospitals nationally;
- Granting an additional 150 Starlight Wishes by Christmas including pets, cubby houses, gaming setups and bedroom makeovers;
- Engaging teens with peer-support network Livewire.org.au, with 2000+ expected logins in December alone.

Cris, mum to 3-year-old-Taiyo who was diagnosed with Lymphoma last year (pictured), knows all too well the loneliness and isolation experienced in hospital over Christmas.

"Being in hospital for Taiyo's 3rd birthday and Christmas last year was extremely tough. It's devastating to even think of what it would've been like without Starlight around. With Taiyo's suppressed immune system and ongoing chemotherapy, we know we could spend a second Christmas in hospital this year."





Professor Les White AM, President of Starlight's Health Professionals Advisory Board said: "Total care' means more than excellent medical care - it's a healing environment that includes entertainment, diversion, fun, laughter and joy. Starlight is a key partner in providing these aspects of care - especially over the festive period when they need an extra boost of fun, joy and happiness" he said.

The need for Starlight's services has never been greater. Starlight has been there for sick kids and teens throughout the challenging situation we've all faced this year. Only with the help of the community can we continue to be there for sick kids when they need it most.

"Starlight's challenge is that every dollar spent on our vital services must first be raised and Starlight relies on the generosity of the community. This holiday period, Starlight needs to raise \$1.3 million to bring the joy of Christmas to over 30,000 sick kids. As little as \$39 will give a sick child access to our vital services," Louise Baxter said.

"The impact of 2020 has devastated Starlight's fundraising and the future is full of uncertainty. With your support, we can ensure every seriously ill child has access to the happiness so essential to their health and wellbeing. Why? Because happiness matters," said Louise Baxter.

Australians are urged to visit [starlight.org.au/Christmas](https://starlight.org.au/Christmas) and donate today to give the gift of happiness to sick kids and teens this Christmas.

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