



MEDIA RELEASE

April 2024

Help make hospital a happy place this Starlight Day

Australia's broadest-reaching children's charity, [Starlight Children's Foundation](https://www.starlight.org.au) (Starlight), hopes to raise \$1 million by the end of June to help make hospital a happy place for seriously ill children and their families. The fundraising appeal launches on Starlight Day (Tuesday, 21 May) and the money raised will help grow Starlight's vital hospital programs nationally.

Every minute of every day, a child is admitted to hospital in Australia. In that moment, they often receive a diagnosis which turns their world upside down. Suddenly, smiles disappear, and life is filled with hospitals, doctors, needles, and pain. That's why Starlight exists - to bring happiness to seriously ill children when they need it most.

Funds raised will help support more than 26,000 sick kids across the country access Starlight's vital hospital programs, including [Captain Starlight](#), the [Starlight Express Rooms](#), and the new interactive digital platform [Planet Starlight](#).

These programs see Starlight partner with healthcare professionals to transform the hospital experience for seriously ill children to help them thrive, as well as bringing sick kids and their families together to enjoy social connections and a sense of belonging within hospital.

In the year ahead, Starlight expects around 400 daily visits to Starlight Express Rooms and Captain Starlight will visit nearly 550 seriously ill children on wards every single day.

Taylor Malpass knows how essential Starlight's programs are to bring happiness to seriously ill children after her five-year-old son, Zack, was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia in 2023.

Zack's life has since been consumed by hospitals and aggressive and invasive treatment, which often left him feeling sad, isolated, and alone. Thankfully, Captain Starlight has been with Zack every step of the way helping to provide laughter and fun to keep his spirits high.

"Once he met Captain Starlight, Zack would come out of the hospital no longer talking about the horrible time he had. Instead, he'd talk about Captain Starlight and the fun they had together."

"Starlight creates the only happiness Zack gets in hospital. Knowing there's a place he can have fun is huge, it allows him to just be a kid and to have a break from the tough treatment he endures. The Starlight Express Room is Zack's source of happiness in hospital. It's important places like these remain accessible to sick kids" said, mum Taylor Malpass.

Starlight CEO, Louise Baxter says: "Being seriously ill shouldn't mean missing out on the fun and joy of childhood. At Starlight we know happiness in childhood is one of the strongest determinants of how one will perform in healthy life behaviours."

"Starlight transforms the healthcare experience for sick kids, provides important social connection and moments of fun through entertainment. This positive distraction helps the children and families we support to build resilience in the most challenging of times."



"As we continue to recognise the way in which our mental health and wellbeing impacts our physical health and wellbeing, the need to bring happiness to sick kids is growing. So, thank you for giving generously this Starlight Day.. because happiness truly matters"

To allow people to make an even greater impact, Starlight's generous philanthropists and partner Mineral Resources will match online donations on Starlight Day (May 21) so the community can double their impact for sick kids.

Additionally, Starlight partners Spotlight, Repco, Chevron and Cashrewards will also be supporting the campaign nationally with fundraising across May.

For more information on Starlight Day or to donate, please visit www.starlight.org.au

– ENDS –

For more information, please contact:

Alice Spence | Starlight Children's Foundation | alice.spence@starlight.org.au | 02 9436 5116

Geraldine O'Shannessy | Starlight Children's Foundation | geraldine.oshannessy@starlight.org.au | 03 9468 2025

About Starlight Children's Foundation

Starlight Children's Foundation brightens the lives of seriously ill and hospitalised children and young people by replacing pain, fear and stress with fun, joy and laughter. Since its establishment in 1988, Starlight has expanded to become the broadest reaching children's charity in Australia and was awarded the number one most reputable children's charity in Reptrak's 2022 Charity Reputation Index. Starlight was also recently endorsed as a 2023 Great Place to Work. There is a Starlight Express Room in every major children's hospital around Australia. In 2023, Starlight created over 1.9 million positive Starlight experiences for children, teenagers and their families, and Captain Starlight brought fun and laughter to 120 hospitals and 134 remote communities. Starlight also granted 474 wishes in 2023, including its milestone 13,000th Starlight Wish. www.starlight.org.au

