

# CARER CONNECT



## SHARING. CARING. CONNECTING.

## IN THIS ISSUE

Shared Family Care Program has had an exciting year with our move in August to the new premises at 296 Ross River Road, Aitkenvale. Our new offices provide greater accessibility for our foster carers and greater exposure to the general public.

The Shared Family Care Program has enjoyed staff retention and stability over the past 12 months and it is worth mentioning that in the most recent Human Service Quality Framework external audit, nil operational non-compliances were recorded for the program. This is a huge achievement in such a highly regulated service, and this is indicative of the commitment and dedication demonstrated by the staff of Shared Family Care and Althea Projects Corporate Team. Shared Family Care remains the largest funded organisation for the provision of foster carer support services in the Townsville Regional area.

Shared Family Care Program has experienced a very productive year over the past 12 months with a huge emphasis on recruitment of new foster carers.

This has seen the program undertake some new advertising initiatives which have never before been done, such as advertising in two local movie cinemas with screenings up to 420 times per week, undertaking radio advertising, and sponsorship of team member Chevannah Paalvast from the Townsville Fire WNBL team.

Recruitment activities are being consistently undertaken by staff within the greater community to ensure our vision and purpose are visible to our community. Shared Family Care are always in desperate need of new foster carers and visibility in the community is very important in achieving this.

Shared Family Care has continued to support the 120 Foster and Kinship Carers, by completing 3021 hours of home visits within the carers homes, to provide support to both the carers and children in their care. Shared Family Care has also provided 42,489 placements (bed nights) for children in care.

**Sharon Thorburn**  
Program Manager, Shared Family Care,  
Annual General Report 2015

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Please send your contributions to [admin@altheaprojects.org.au](mailto:admin@altheaprojects.org.au)



# Health and Wellbeing

## THE RELUCTANT READER

For many kids, reading just doesn't come easily. Some kids have difficulty connecting letters and their corresponding sounds. Others have yet to discover a special story that sparks their imagination and shows just how fun reading can be.

For all kids, though, being at ease with letters, their sods, and words is an important foundation for learning throughout life.

Read to and with the children in your care as often as possible, and try these other simple ways to help them become eager readers:



**Start with the child's picks.** Comics or joke books may not be your first choice to boost literacy, but the reality is they can be very motivating. Kids will often amaze you with their ability to read something that they really want to read.

Don't worry that these texts may not be substantial enough. They can help kids understand some fundamentals, like how events take place in a sequence and how stories are laid out. They also help build vocabulary and show that books can be visually appealing. Once your child is

comfortable with the experience of reading, you can encourage other literature selections with a variety of challenging content.

Sometimes electronic books (e-books) can help get reluctant readers reading. When the child becomes interested in a book, regardless of the format, help make connections between the story and the child's own life. Start conversations that will build a love of reading and learning.



**Read and reread.** Many kids reach for the same books over and over again. That's not only OK, it's a good thing! Through repetition, kids learn the text and eventually read it with ease and confidence. Each new reading of the book also may help them notice something new and understand the story a little better. And that positive experience can inspire kids to give new books a try.



**Read aloud.** Reading aloud to a child helps them build their vocabularies and introduces new concepts, facts, and ideas. You also show that you enjoy reading for fun, and help them connect sounds with letters on the page. Reading aloud provides together time that you'll all enjoy. And it doesn't have to end once kids get older — the comfort of a carer's voice and undivided attention is something the child will never outgrow.



## Create opportunities to read and write beyond the pages.

Provide kids with many chances to read every day. Write notes and leave them on your child's pillow, in a lunchbox, or in a pocket. Leave magnetic letters and words on the refrigerator, and you may find the child spontaneously creating words, sentences, and stories.

On road trips or errands, play word games that strengthen language skills. You might try "I Spy" ("I spy something that starts with an 'a' ...") or games where you pick a category (like "food") and everyone has to name foods that begin with a certain letter. Kids often enjoy reading the signs they see while on the road (like those on restaurants and stores, plus road signs and billboards).



## Get help if you're worried.

If you're concerned about a child's ability or willingness to read, don't wait to get help. Consult with your child's Child Safety Officer, Doctor or Teacher. They may be able to suggest additional resources to help the child become an eager reader.

You're never too old,  
too wacky, too wild,  
to pick up a book  
and read to a child.

-Dr. Seuss



# Cultural Connect

## OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

In October 2015, Althea Projects staff participated in a workshop with the very talented and inspirational local Indigenous artist Michelle Pilot Tyhuis. The workshop was also brilliantly co-facilitated by Management Committee member Jo Bentley-Davey.

The aim of the workshop was for staff to engage in the conversation about reconciliation and also channel their individual vision for reconciliation through artwork designs as guided by Michelle.

The workshop was a great success with many staff unlocking their creative talent and beautiful interpretations on the subject. Check out some of the artwork and stories that were masterfully created;



**My artwork:** Land and Sea

**Artist:** Teresa Smith, Quality Manager

Althea Projects formally Wee Care Family has been in Townsville for many years and together with the red rich dry Townsville rock and the blue sea we have co-existed. People have come and gone through Althea but the Land and Sea has remained fixed unchanging.



**Artist:** Sharon Thorburn, Program Manager

**My story:** The Kangaroo is one of only two Australian animals that cannot walk backwards, so for me this represents all peoples moving forward with reconciliation and it being important not to go backwards. We all need to be looking toward the future and where we want to be to have a reconciled community. It is important to acknowledge the past, however we cannot reside in the past, so The Flower represents these new beginnings.



**My artwork:** A brighter future

**Artist:** Marina Cross, Senior Practitioner

The blue lines represent a number of streams all flowing and leading towards the sun - symbolising pathways to a brighter future of reconciliation, respect and togetherness. Inside the streams are arrangements and patterns of dots, all different, some organised and some unclear, symbolising that everyone's

journey towards reconciliation will be different and unique.



**Artist:** Jemma Stewart, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Case Worker

**My story:** My artwork incorporates many continuous circles representing the journey towards reconciliation, relationship building and laying the foundation of awareness and trust between our First Nations peoples and all Australians. In the center I included footprints which represents the journey of reconciliation needing to be done side by side, together as we walk into the future. I included yellow tall ant mounds also which you find throughout Australia symbolising speed bumps in the journey of reconciliation however the feet between each bump continues to keep walking towards a reconciled future regardless of these hurdles. I paid tribute to our organisation's milestone towards this journey by incorporating our new Indigenous Corporate Logo in the very heart of my artwork.



**"Here in Australia we're fortunate enough to have one of the richest and oldest continuing cultures in the world. This is something we should all be proud of and celebrate" - Dr Tom Calma, Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair**





# Events & Opportunities

WITHIN THE ORGANISATION & COMMUNITY



**Christmas Party**

**The Foster & Kinship Family Movie Afternoon**

To thank you for your family's commitment and dedication to children in care your family is invited to join the Townsville Foster and Kinship Services and Child Safety Services for Christmas celebrations and an exclusive pre-screening of the new Pixar movie

**'The Good Dinosaur'**

**Saturday 12th December 2015**

@ Event Cinemas, Cnr Sturt & Blackwood Streets

One Free Midi Popcorn & drink per person

Doors open @ 3pm; Event commencement @ 3.30pm

Special guest appearance from Santa

**Tickets are limited, RSVP to Admin at SFC by Thursday 3rd Dec on 47793332.**

Hope to see you there



The staff at Shared Family Care would like to wish you all a very safe and festive Christmas and New Year period. We will be closed on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2015 from 5pm and will reopen on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 9am.

## Events within the Community

### A room for wild animals

13 November to 26 January 2016  
Museum of Tropical Queensland

### Artbox: Art activities for under 5's

1<sup>st</sup> December – 10am  
Pinnacles Gallery  
Gold coin donation

### Carols by Candlelight – TAIHS

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December – 5.30pm.  
Free sausage sizzle, fireworks, jumping castle & gift bags.

### Ann Robert's Hansel and Gretel

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December to Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December  
Townsville Civic Theater

### Strand Night Markets

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December – 5.00pm

### Carols by Candlelight – Reid Park

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December – 5.00pm

### Reef weekend workshops: Fantastic Plastic

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December  
\$30, recommended for 15 years +

### Riverway Movie Night – Elf

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December – 7.15pm  
FREE EVENT

### Stable on the Strand

18<sup>th</sup> December to 22<sup>nd</sup> December -  
FREE EVENT

### New Year's Eve – Picture in the Park – Strand

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> December – 7.00pm  
FREE EVENT  
Fireworks – 8.45pm & midnight



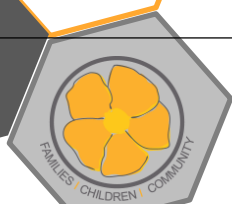


Once a month, Launch Zone invites you to come and experience a new kind of event - jump, dance and have a great time! Bring your friends along and check out a dance party like no other!

- Full use of the trampoline park
- Music pumping by DJ J-Man
- Laser show
- Food and beverages on offer at Launch Cafe
- Fully air-conditioned

For more information on our Dance Parties, call **1300 LAUNCH**, or email us: [enquiries@launchzone.com.au](mailto:enquiries@launchzone.com.au)

**LAUNCH  
ZONE**  
JUMP 2 IT



ARE YOU READY TO SET THE FOUNDATIONS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND THE ACQUISITION OF SKILLS AND ABILITIES FOR YOUR CHILD?

Blue Skies Kindergarten is a community based centre located at RAAF Base Townsville, offering both a 3 year old and a 4 year old kindergarten program. We have been C&K affiliated since 1957 and celebrated 50 years of quality service in 2007. Offering a stimulating, natural and nurturing environment with highly qualified caring staff, Blue Skies is definitely the place for your child!

EVERYONE WELCOME!

INTRODUCING A 3 YEAR OLD GROUP IN 2016 – ENROLMENTS NOW OPEN.

CONTACT THE CENTRE FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON 07 4752 1153  
OR EMAIL [blueskieskindy@dodo.com.au](mailto:blueskieskindy@dodo.com.au)



**Chipmunks – Play land and Cafe**  
1-3 Woodman Court, West end  
Townsville, QLD 4801  
Tel: (07) 472 42219 (newly opened)

#### Admission Pricing

Adults & under 1's entry is always FREE

#### School Day Special

1 - 11 Years \$9.90

#### Weekends, School Holidays, Public Holidays & Pupil Free Days

1 - 2 Years \$9.90

3 - 11 Years \$13.90

# Training

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Let's change the way we do things in 2016.

Shared Family Care would like to know when the best time is to schedule training opportunities. We understand our carers often lead busy lives.

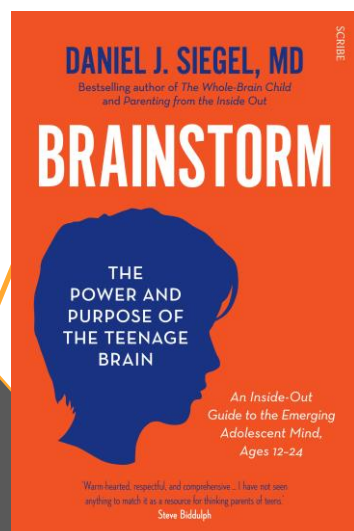
Shared Family Care is committed to ensuring you are provided with tailored and in-depth training, building on your knowledge base in continuing to provide exceptional out-of-home for children and young people.

We need your feedback though! Are weeknights preferable or weekends? Be sure to chat to your Family Case Worker during your next home visit. Your feedback is valuable and important to us.

**EVOLVE Trauma-Based Care Training** resumes March 2016-dates TBA.

***Talk to your Family Case Worker about enrolling in this valuable training opportunity!***

## Check out this book!



## COMING IN 2016... Dates/times TBA

### Reunification Training

**Length of training:** 3 hours

Reunification is the ultimate goal for most children and young people in out of home care. A successful reunification will see children return to their family of origin in a home environment that has been assessed as being no longer harmful.

This training provides participants with an overview of Reunification and includes

- Exploring parenting
- Assessing and planning reunification
- Building resilience
- If you have concerns
- Grief and loss

### Foster Carer Support Finance

**Length of training** 3 hours

This training provides participants with an overview of what financial entitlements carers can access. Specifically the training covers:

- Fortnightly Caring Allowance
- Child Related Costs
- Ex-Gratia Payments
- Dual Respite
- HSNA
- Foster & Kinship Carer Card

Everyone comes away from this training having learnt something !!

**BRAINSTORM:** Between the ages of 12 and 24, the brain changes in important, and often times maddening, ways. It's no wonder that many parents approach their child's adolescence with fear and trepidation. According to renowned neuropsychiatrist Daniel Siegel, however, if parents and teens can work together to form a deeper understanding of the brain science behind all the tumult, they will be able to turn conflict into connection and form a deeper understanding of one another.

In *Brainstorm*, Siegel illuminates how brain development impacts teenagers' behaviour and relationships. Drawing on important new research in the field of interpersonal neurobiology, he explores exciting ways in which understanding how the teenage brain functions can help parents make what is in fact an incredibly positive period of growth, change, and experimentation in their children's lives less lonely and distressing on both sides of the generational divide.



# Kids Corner

RECIPES, ARTS & CRAFTS, ACTIVITIES & MORE



## The amazing advantages of colouring pages for children's development.

Do you know that this simple activity could provide lifelong benefits to children? Yes, you read that right! This simple and fun activity can help greatly in the development of children. Here's a few reasons why you should encourage colouring in within your home;

### Improves handwriting.

Children need hand strength and dexterity to manipulate a pencil on a paper. Working on strength can eliminate the possibility of incorrect pencil grasp. Activities like children colouring pages and sheets will help them to hold the writing tool the correct way. This will improve children's handwriting.

### Hand and eye coordination.

The basic coordination skills like the proper way of holding the crayons, sharpening the crayons and recognising what colour to use, can help children greatly.

Colouring diagrams require kids to colour within the specified area. This helps to develop the hand and eye coordination in kids. It also fights cognitive loss, especially if you choose challenging and difficult drawing sheets.



### Relaxation and patience.

Colouring can help children to learn the skill of patience. It allows children to be relaxed and comfortable while creating a piece of art.

Children can colour the shapes and figures anyway they like. It also gives kids a sense of accomplishment and control when he finishes colouring a page.

### Focus.

Focus is one important lesson that children can learn from colouring. It has been proven that children who spend their time colouring have better concentration and focus skills.

As children grow older, they also learn the importance of boundaries in the colouring worksheets for kids. The exposure to boundaries will be a great help while learning to write.

### Knowledge.

Colouring a picture can help children to recognise line, perspective, colour, hue, shape and form. Children also learn to recognise patterns.

This, eventually, aids children to decide on what colours they will use in their next picture.

### Confidence.

Regular colouring also improves confidence in young kids.

Completing a colouring sheet and then displaying this gives kids a sense of accomplishment, which builds their self-esteem and confidence.

### Self-expression.

Some children like to express themselves through words, while some use the form art. You can tell a lot about a person by the colours he uses and the image he draws.

If a child draws disturbing images like skulls, then he needs your help urgently. If a child draws sun, hearts and other cheerful objects then he may be expressing content and satisfaction.

### Motor skills.

The act of colouring can improve motor skills in your children. The motions involved in colouring like holding the tools and scribbling with crayon can help in the development of the tiny muscles in his wrist, fingers and hands. Fine motor skills help your children to write and manipulate small objects. This helps your children to perform better academically.

Colouring helps to develop and strengthen the hand muscles, which later helps with activities like typing, lifting objects and playing sports.

### Stimulates creativity.

Colouring gives kids an opportunity to express their creative side. A child makes an imaginary world in his mind before drawing the picture on the sheet. So, hand kids a box of crayons and set them free. This can lead to many highly desired outcomes. It allows children to think about the different colour combinations that he or she can use to give an appealing look to the picture.

Do not fret if kids are not colouring properly or if he is colouring outside the lines. Praise them for his effort. If you see kids making mistakes while colouring, help them with it instead of chastising. Teach him how to fill a space and do up and down strokes. You can also teach him to use complementary colours to make the picture appear more vibrant. Colouring is also an excellent medium of expression. Children often express their personality through drawing and colouring.

### Therapeutic.

Colouring is a proven therapeutic tool for children, especially if they do it frequently. They vent their feelings, frustrations and other emotions through colouring. It aids in mindfulness, regulating emotions and also allows children the time and space to process their thoughts.

# Child Safety News Legal

## CHANGE IN POLICIES, UPDATES, NEWS & EVENTS

In this issue of the newsletter we take a look at some information from the Foster and Kinship carer handbook. If you don't have a copy, speak to your Family Case Worker at Shared Family Care.

Decisions that can ONLY be made by Child Safety or the guardian (parent) include;

## Medical

- Immunisations
- Blood tests
- Major medical and surgical procedures or examinations
- Blood transfusions
- Testing to determine parentage (DNA testing)
- Pregnancy termination
- Contraception
- Acting on a second medical opinion
- Prescribed medications to manage behaviour or mental health conditions (for example, anti-depressants, dexamphetamines)

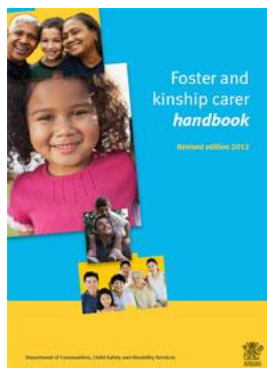
Health practitioners can consider a child's ability to understand and provide consent in emergency and non-emergency situations if the custodian or guardian cannot be contacted.

Doctors have the legal authority to treat a child in an emergency if Child Safety, the parent or the guardian cannot be contacted before treatment, and delaying treatment may jeopardise the child's health and safety.

## Education

- Enrolment in a new school, TAFE or other training arrangement
- Day excursions involving high or very high-risk activities
- Sporting or recreational activities that are high or very high-risk
- School camps
- Participation in curriculum-related activities that may not be consistent with the child's or family's views and beliefs (for example, religious education)

- Changing the child or young person's surname
- Granting permission for the child to marry under the age of 18 years of age
- Giving permission for the child to join the Australian Defence Force (under 18 years of age)
- Allowing interstate (other than a non-air travel day trip) or overseas travel.



## Pool safety is everyone's business.

From the 30th November 2015, there will be only one pool safety standard in Queensland, which applies to homes with new or existing pools as well as short and long-term accommodation premises.

## When do I need to comply?

Pool owners have until 30 November 2015 to comply with the pool safety standards, or earlier if your property is sold or leased.

## What types of pools need to comply?

Swimming pools, spas and some portable (blow-up) pools.

A swimming pool is an above or below ground structure principally used for swimming or bathing. If your portable pool or spa can hold more than 300 millimetres of water, has a volume of more than 2000 litres or has a filtration system, then the laws may apply to you. The pool laws do not apply to fishponds.

## How do I register my pool?

All pools in Queensland must be registered with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC). List your pool on the pool safety register at [qbcc.qld.gov.au](http://qbcc.qld.gov.au).

## Does my pool comply?

The standard covers such things as the height and strength of barriers, mandatory non-climbable zones, gates and their latching requirements and preventing direct access from a building into a pool area.

To assist in finding out if your pool meets the current pool safety standard, you can start with the following checklist:



## Fences

- The minimum height from finished ground level to the top of the barrier is 1200mm.
- The maximum allowable gap from finished ground level to the bottom of any barrier is 100mm.
- If your horizontal rails are a minimum of 900mm apart, the gaps in the vertical members must not exceed 100mm.
- If your horizontal rails are less than 900mm apart, the gaps in the vertical rails must not exceed 10mm.
- Climbable objects must be at least 900mm away from the pool barrier on the outside and 300mm on the inside.



## Doors and windows

- There can be no direct access through a door from the house to the pool area.
- Generally, any windows opening onto the pool area must not open more than 100mm or must have a security screen fitted.





## Signage

- A current CPR sign must be displayed. Either attached to the pool fence, or displayed near the pool, so that the sign is easily visible to anyone near the pool.



## Gates

- Pool gates must not open inwards to the pool area and must be self-closing and self-latching from all positions.
- Latches on the gate must be at least 1500mm high from ground level (or if your latch is located on the inside of the gate, it must be a minimum of 150mm below the top of the fence and be covered with a 450mm radius shield).
- Pool gate hinges must be at least 900mm apart or the lower hinge must have a non-climbable (sixty degree) safety cap fixed to prevent climbing.

For further information check out the **Townsville City Councils webpage** [www.townsville.qld.gov.au](http://www.townsville.qld.gov.au) or phone **1300 878 001**

**Althea Projects Inc.**  
would like to say  
**thank-you to those**  
who have supported  
and partnered with  
our organisation in  
**2014/2015.**

**Your continued**  
support is highly  
valuable and greatly  
appreciated.

**Thank-you!**

# Partnerships and Supporters 2014/2015

### Anonymous Donors

Aboriginal Women's Shelter - Flora House

Adspeak Marketing

Australian Government - Dept of Social Services

Backpacks 4 Aussie Kids Inc

B-Fitt

Brothers League's Club

Café Bambini

Centacare Townsville

Child and Mental Health Services

Churches of Christ Pathways Fostering Service

Coast 2 Country Housing Company

Cocoa Late Café

CWA Country Women's Association

Danielle Josey

Drug Arm Australasia

Drop-In Centre

Families of Townsville

Family Emergency Accommodation Townsville

Food Relief NQ

Food Rescue

Fortel Communication Pty Ltd

Foster Care Queensland

Francesca Church

Life Without Barriers

Lions Club City of Townsville

Lotsa Printing Pty Ltd

Maria House - Women's Shelter - Ozcare

Mayors Christmas Tree Appeal

Moore Stephens Queensland Limited

Nth Qld Domestic Violence Resource Service

Outcome Results

Pyjama Foundation

Qld Dept of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Qld Youth Services

Red Cross

Relationships Australia

Rollin Dough Bakery

Ron Keeler

Rotary Club of Townsville Sunrise Inc

Second Bite

Second to None Nutrition

Sera's Women's Shelter

Southside Milk Supplies

Sportscene Super Warehouse

Spotless Cafes at Townsville Airport

Sun City Trees

TATSICHS Recognised Entity

TAIHS Foster & Kinship Services

TM & VM Thomson Builders

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

The Townsville Hospital

Townsville Tidy Bags

Undees for Kids

VARIETY—The Children's Charity

Zambrero Stores

Cannon Park

Willows Shopping Centre

Castletown

Thuringowa

Domain Central

Flinders Street

Stockland Centre - Aitkenvale

# Regional News

UPDATES, NEWS, EVENTS

## Charters Towers



### Pizza & Pool Party, Charters Towers Pool

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December  
2015  
9:30am - 1:30pm

RSVP: Marina Cross by 1<sup>st</sup> Dec  
2015

## Burdekin



### Pizza & Pool Party

Ayr Pool

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December  
9:30am to 1:30pm

RSVP: Justin Pascoe by 1<sup>st</sup> Dec

Events within the  
community

## CHARTERS TOWERS

### Christmas lights competition

Show your community and festive spirit by adorning your home, business premises or community organisation's premises in Christmas lights and decorations and entering the "Light Up Our World" Christmas Lights Competition.

Entries close at 4:00 pm on  
Monday, 7 December 2015.

## BURDEKIN

### Community Christmas Carols 2015

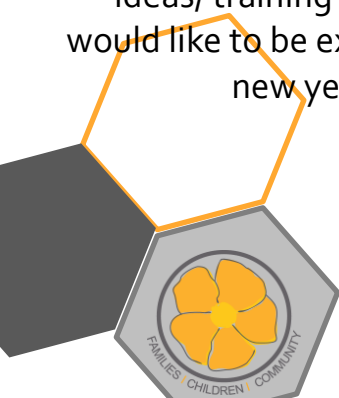
Sunday 6 Dec 2015 6pm –  
8:30pm

Anzac Park

No "CARER CONNECT" in  
Dec 2015/ Jan 2016 - will  
resume in FEBRUARY 2016

New calendar to be provided  
to Carers.

NB: Please advise of any new  
ideas/ training topics you  
would like to be explored in the  
new year!



Do you know anyone who has  
considered becoming a **Foster  
Carer in Charters Towers or in  
the Burdekin?** We are always in  
need of more Carers in this  
region - so please direct anyone  
interested to contact **Shared  
Family Care** main office on  
**4779 3332.**

Should you require **emergency assistance** during our closure period – Thursday 5pm 24.12.2015 through to Monday 9am 04.01.2016 – please contact;

Child Safety After Hours – 1800 177 135

Shared Family Care After Hours – 0418 150 229

**Carer Connect  
SFC**

Address: Level 2, 296 Ross River Road, Ross River Road (PO Box 905, Aitkenvale Q 4814)

Phone: 07 47 793 332

Fax: 07 47 793 303

**[www.altheaprojects.org.au](http://www.altheaprojects.org.au)**

