

CARER CONNECT NEWSLETTER



**OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
ALTHEA PROJECTS FOSTER AND
KINSHIP PROGRAM OCTOBER -
DECEMBER 2021 | ISSUE 23**

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

**TODAYS LITTLE MOMENTS, BECOME
TOMORROWS SPECIAL MEMORIES!**

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STAFF LIST



Below is the list of all current employees for Althea Projects Foster and Kinship Program and the Corporate Team.

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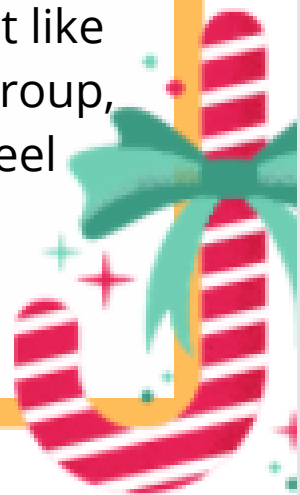
INTRODUCING PROGRAM MANAGER

Hi everyone! My name is Louise Skennerton, and I began in the role of Program Manager on the 20th of September, 2021.

A tiny bit about me is I have lived in Townsville since 2007 and consider it home. I have worked with children and young people and their families for over 20 years now and before joining Althea I worked in the Fostering and Kinship care space for the previous 2 years. I am really happy to have joined the Althea Projects family.

I have met quite a few of our Carers so far at various meetings, home visits and the Carer support group or when you have dropped into the office. I look forward to continuing to meet other Carers as I settle further into the role.

As mentioned, I have dropped into the Carer support group a couple of times since I started, and I love to see Carers connecting with and supporting each other. We know providing great foster care is a tough gig and the self-care you put in place for yourself/ves is so important. If you have ideas about what you might like to see discussed or happen at the carer support group, please talk to Beverley Barry who organises it or feel free to send me an email or call me for a chat.





INTRODUCING PROGRAM MANAGER

Our Cultural Advisor Lena Watego finished in her role in October, we were sad to see Lena go as we truly valued her knowledge and guidance and the support she provided Carers. We wish Lena and her family all the very best. We are currently recruiting a new Cultural Advisor.

We are very happy to have had Anita Penny join the Fostering and Kinship team as a second Assessment worker. Anita and Yana are working really hard to build our carer capacity by providing carer assessments and deliver pre-service training.

As we slide into the last weeks of December I would like to wish all of our very valued Foster and Kinship Carers and their families a wonderful, safe and happy Christmas and healthy and happy 2022.

Kind Regards,
Louise Skennerton
Program Manager





MESSAGE FROM CEO

Merry Christmas everyone. I hope this is a wonderful time of year for you all and I wish you many special blessings for the year ahead.

I want to thank you all for opening your hearts and homes to provide a loving caring home to over 350 children this year. I am in admiration of what you do and we are grateful to work in partnership with you.

It was wonderful to catch up with many of you at the Townsville Christmas party. I am sorry that due to unexpected personal circumstances, I was unable to get to Charters Towers and Burdekin.

As we face an immediate future that is still impacted by COVID-19, I wanted to let you know we implemented a COVID-19 Policy in our workplace. Working with the Queensland Government requirements, we are asking anyone who visits our sites to use the Check In app and while we have cases in our community, we ask anyone who is unvaccinated to wear a face mask when engaging in person with our staff, whether this be in home or in office.





MESSAGE FROM CEO

It is only our Wee Care service at this time that has mandatory vaccination requirements, as the service is viewed as a childcare model. I hope you are managing with the requirements and we know how challenging it can be as changes flow through. I also appreciate what is happening can be confusing and make you feel conflicted with what is required. Please never hesitate to contact us for support. I believe together we will continue to look after each other to ensure continuity of service. It is possible that further changes may flow through. We will endeavour to keep you updated as soon as we can on anything that may impact on you.

It has been another challenging year and we can only hope that 2022 brings us some positive changes.

Merry Christmas and see you in 2022.

Paula La Rosa
CEO



LEARNING LANGUAGE

Althea Projects Foster and Kinship Program is going to make it a standing page in the Carer Connect Newsletter to have an Indigenous Australian word and/or words and definition, as well as which tribe it originates from.

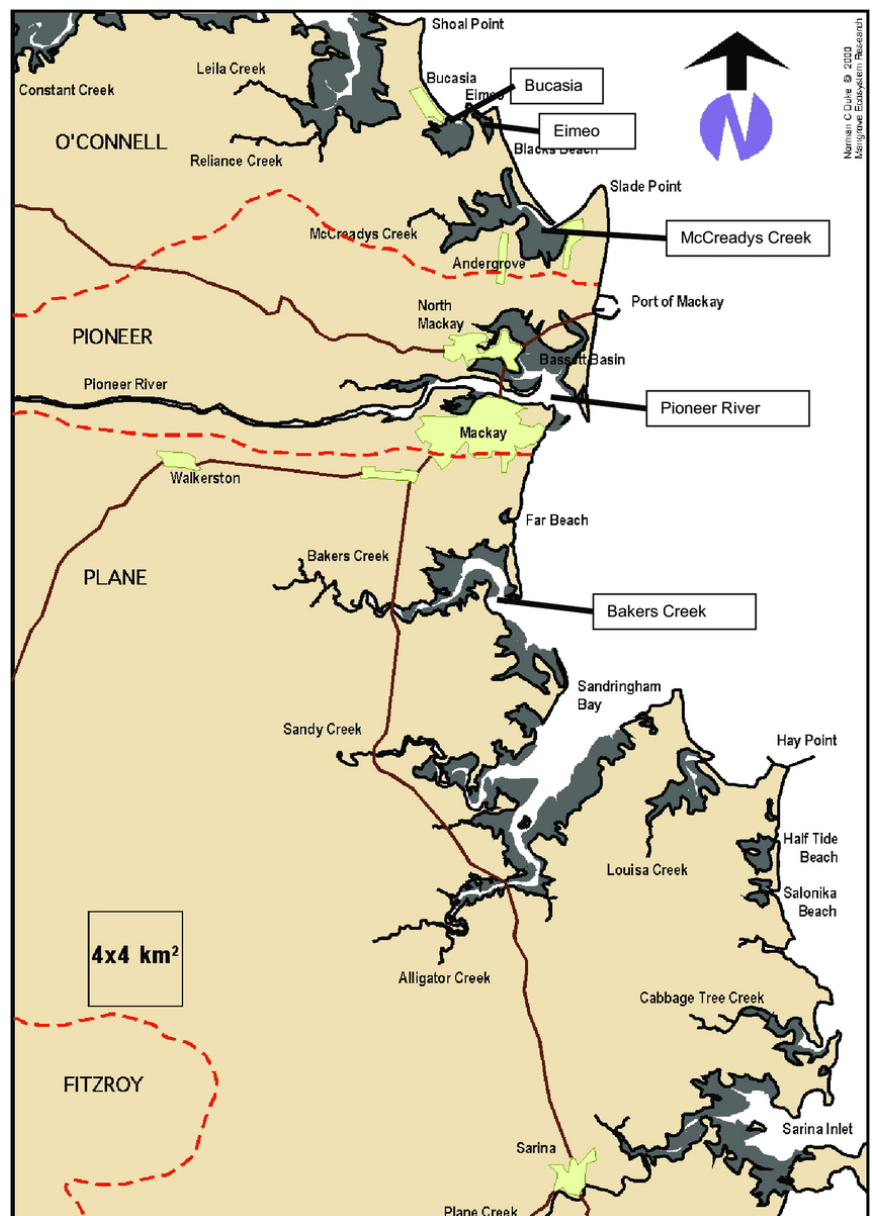
BOOTAN means
NOSE in
Yuwibara
Language. It is
pronounced
"Boo-tun".

BUMUGUL
means ANKLE in
Yuwibara
Language. It is
pronounced
"Boom-uh-gull"

WINGARA means
SHOULDER in
Yuwibara
Language.
It is pronounced
"Win-ah-rah".

Note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages were oral-based; there may be several variations in spelling and pronunciation. The following list should be seen as a guide – check with local language speakers as to the preferred local pronunciation.

Yuwibara is the name of the language and Aboriginal people of the **Mackay Region** – often it is listed under the broad term of Yuri or Birri which refers to groups of related languages in North Queensland, extending from Marlborough to Townsville.





MAKE YOUR HOME CULTURALLY SAFE

To assist with making your home culturally safe for our young First Nation's people here are a few suggestions:

- Turn your Television onto Channel 34 for our Indigenous TV network called NITV.
- Listen to our Indigenous radio station 4K1G which is on channel 107.1FM.
- Althea Projects Foster and Kinship Program will encourage you to attend the different CULTURAL Events in the region. This is an opportunity to acknowledge leader's past, present and emerging and experience First Nation's Culture.
- Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork around your house.
- Display photos of the children and their families in their bedroom.

Thank you!



BILLABONG SANCTUARY

Althea Projects Foster and Kinship Program offers access to Billabong Sanctuary all year round for Carers and family members.

There is no better way to spend your weekends, public holidays and school holiday then enjoying a day at Billabong Sanctuary meeting your favourite animals in a tropical bushland setting, on the shores of the billabong, where everyone is guaranteed a rewarding personal experience.

Billabong Sanctuary offer a range of activities for a family fun day, including shows throughout the day showcasing Australia's unique animals. Blinky Bill's licensed café offers hot and cold drinks, freshly made meals and desserts, gluten free options are available too or you are welcome to pack a picnic and use their free gas BBQ's on site.

Head over to their website to view opening and closing hours, show times and what the sanctuary has available. Be mindful COVID-19 restrictions have been put in place to ensure the safety of everyone. Information regarding COVID-19 can also be found on their website.

To book in call your Foster and Kinship Case Worker or the Admin staff on 4779 3332.



MOREHEAD MEALS

ALTHEA PROJECTS

5 MEALS FOR \$25

1 MEAL FOR \$6



HOMECOOKED MEALS DELIVERED TO YOU

0419 624 267

meals@altheaprojects.org.au

 [moreheadmealstsv](https://www.facebook.com/moreheadmealstsv)

46-48 Morehead Street St, South Tsv

A BIT ABOUT US

Morehead Meals is the beginning of a multi-levelled social enterprise connecting our community through affordable, ethical, healthy and delicious pre-made frozen meals that can be collected directly from our kitchen in South Townsville or delivered by our to your home or workplace. By purchasing meals from us you are directly contributing to a healthier, resilient, and more connected Townsville.

Althea Projects knows that human connection plays a massive role in all our lives and through the Morehead Meals program we aim to connect with some of Townsville's vulnerable population through the power of good food and conversation when delivering meals. When you purchase meals wouldn't it be nice to know that you are helping someone in need? Money from each meal purchase will be reinvested back into Morehead Meals to assist us to grow the enterprise.

www.altheaprojects.org.au

Important update to Carer Connect!

In exciting news foster and kinship carers can now take photos of receipts and submit CRC requests for reimbursement directly to your local CSSC through the CarerConnect App.

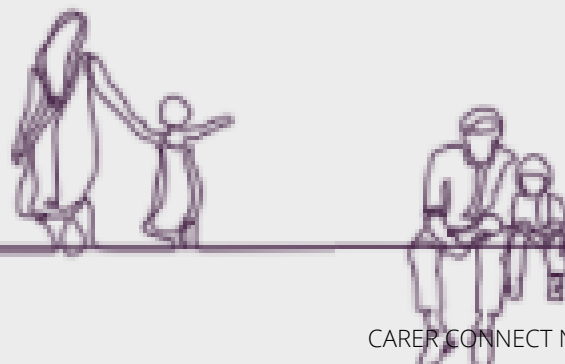
Carers using the App will have noticed a new 'CRC Reimbursement' tab has been available since February and is there to help you submit CRC applications.

The App is available to all carers. Carers not already using the App can register via: <https://carerconnect.communities.qld.gov.au/#/login-or-register>
For carers with frequent CRC, using the App can be a real time saver.

Changes to CRC Delegations!

At the same time as improving the App, the Department has also introduced new financial delegations for Business Officers and Senior Business Officers to support quicker processing of CRC reimbursement under \$250.

These changes have been developed as a direct result of carer feedback through Partners in Care forums and should see real time improvements for carer reimbursements.



Blue Cards – No Card, No Start Law

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FOR FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARERS

New Legislation changes will come into effect from the 31st August 2020 for Blue Cards No Card, No Start laws.

These changes have been made as a result of the 2017 Queensland Family and Child Commission's report – *Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: Review of the blue card system*. Although the report showed that the Queensland Working with Children Check system is one of the strongest in Australia, there is opportunity to provide a more streamlined and stronger system.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHANGES?

No Card, No Start law identifies that people cannot work with children or young people until their Blue Card application has been approved. These new rules ensure that employees will be bound by the same rules as those for volunteers and business applicants.

Expiring Cards Rule has changed, this means that people can continue to work with children and young people if they lodge their renewal application before their current blue card expires. If their blue card expires before they lodge their renewal application they will be subject to the No Card, No Start law.

Expiry date for exemption cards – Queensland police and teachers will need to renew their blue cards prior to their expiry if they still require their blue card for work purposes.

Changes to police information – No Card, No Start law incorporates a more streamlined process for applicants to advise Blue Card Services of any changes to their police information.

Stricter rules for restricted persons ensures people who are considered to be a restricted person cannot access an exception to screening by virtue of being a volunteer.

CHANGES FOR FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARERS

Do I need to child safety to sign my blue card application or renewal application

No. Child Safety are no longer responsible for verifying identification (ID) for a blue card application.

When applying for a blue card applicants will be required to verify their ID through the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR). The verification process can occur either through the Blue Card online application portal or in person at TMR.

Child Safety is also no longer required to advise blue card applicants of the disqualified person rule, this will be the responsibility of the applicant when they complete their application.

I cannot access the online portal, can I still submit a paper based application?

Yes. Blue Card Services will continue to accept paper based applications. If you need to apply for your blue card via the paper based system, you are still required to follow the new No Card, No Start law and processes. If you do not have a form of photo ID with TMR, for example a driver's licence, you will need to attend TMR to prove your identity and obtain a photo and Customer Reference Number (CRN).

What role does Child Safety play in my Blue Card application?

To apply for a Blue Card as a volunteer (free of charge), you will require an online account number which will be supplied to you once you verify your identity through TMR. You must supply this online account number to Child safety as a part of your carer application form (APA) to ensure you are linked to Child Safety.

Once linked, Blue Card services will notify you and you will be able to begin your Blue Card application free of charge.

I am being considered for provisional approval (PAC), do I need a blue card?

No. Child Safety Central Screening Unit (CSU) will continue to conduct all required checks for provisional approval applicants, including personal, child protection and criminal histories.

However, once provisionally approved, you will need to have obtained a blue card before your provisional approval expires.

My blue card is due to expire, is there a time limit to lodge a renewal application?

You must complete your renewal application before your current blue card expires. A renewal application can be submitted by a carer any time prior to their current blue card expiring. Your current blue card will remain valid once you have submitted your renewal application, meaning you can continue your caring role while your renewal application is being processed.

If you are renewing an existing blue card for the first time under the new No Card No Start laws and you do not have a form of photo ID with TMR, for example a driver's licence, you will need to attend TMR or you will need to contact Blue Card Services directly.

I have a new adult household member (AHM) planning to live in our home. Does the person need to have a blue card before they can move in?

No. As long as you have correctly informed Child Safety of the change in circumstances and completed the 'Change in Carer Circumstances' form. The new AHM will need to complete the 'New Adult Household Member' form and begin the blue card application process.

Just like carers, an adult household member will need to complete the verification of ID process with TMR in order to provide their online account number to CSU to be linked to Child Safety as a volunteer.

CSU will complete the required checks such as personal, child protection and criminal history. An adult household member can remain in the carer household if CSU deem them suitable while blue card services complete their application.

My blue card has expired and I haven't yet lodged a renewal application, what happens now?

If your blue card expires before you lodge a renewal application, you will be subject to the No Card No Start laws.

Any children placed in your care will require a new care arrangement until you receive your new blue card approval.

A renewal application cannot be lodged after your current blue card has expired. A new blue card application will need to be completed starting with the verification of ID process.

A young person in my household will be turning 18 in a few months and will remain living in my household. When can they apply for their Blue Card?

A young person is able to apply for a blue card from 17 years and 9 months of age.

The young person will need to follow the No Card No Start blue card process, beginning with the verification of ID through TMR.

If no response has been received from Blue Card Services regarding the young person's application and their 18th birthday is approaching, please ensure immediate follow up with Blue Card Services occurs to ensure continuity of care for the young person.

If a young person turns 18 and Blue Card Services have not advised of an outcome of their blue card application, the new AHM process will need to be followed, pending follow up with Blue Card Services.

For further information regarding Blue Cards No Card No Start associated processes please refer to the [Blue Card Services Website](#).

Link to the [online applicant portal](#)

Link to the No Card No Start [forms](#)

Link to [Blue Card applications](#) information

CAREGIVER TIP #8

Ideas for how and where you and your child can give back to the community

- Pick up rubbish wherever you go.
- Donate your unwanted toys.
- Help bake cookies to give to local service people.
- Make handmade cards for kids in hospital.
- Give outgrown books to local medical center's or daycares.
- Play cards or board games with residents at a nursing home.
- Start a school recycling or awareness program.
- Participate in a fun run to raise money for charity.
- Use reusable packaging for school lunches.
- Organise a park or beach clean up with friends and family.
- Write a message of thanks to a community hero.
- Help with yard work for elderly or unwell neighbours.
- Use manners, smile and say hello when out and about.
- **RESPECT EVERYONE**

POOL SAFETY CERTIFICATES

What is a Pool Safety Certificate?

A Pool Safety Certificate is a document that is issued by the law as an indication that the pool conforms with the safety standard. A Pool Safety Certificate needs to be supplied if there is a child in out- of-home care that will be living at the property with a pool.

What is classified as a pool?

A pool is classified as an excavation, structure or vessel that can be filled with water to a depth of more than 300 millimeters. A pool is an above or below ground structure for swimming, paddling or any other human aquatic activity.

Do you need a Pool Safety Certificate?

Yes, if you care for a child in out-of-home care and the home that you live in has access to a pool you are required to supply a Pool Safety Certificate. This is including non-shared pools on private property of shared pools in unit or apartment complexes.

Renting a property with a pool?

Owners of rented properties are required to obtain a Pool Safety Certificate before renting the property and these are valid for two (2) years from the date of issue for non-shared pools (i.e. a pool on a private property) or valid for one (1) year for shared pools (i.e. units or apartment complexes).

If you are unsure weather the house you are looking to move into already has a Pool Safety Certificate, you can find out via the Queensland Building and Construction Commission website under the Pool Register.

<https://www.qbcc.qld.gov.au/home-building-owners/pool-safety/find-pool-safety-inspector-search-property-psi-login>



Queensland Foster and Kinship Care Become a FAST rep

What is a FAST?

FAST is a team of trained specialist local Foster and Kinship Carers who have volunteered to provide advice, support and advocate on behalf of other Foster and Kinship Carers. FAST representatives are attached to one of five Regions across Queensland. They have the capacity to provide advice, support and advocacy to all carers in their Region and can also provide face to face support to carers within proximity or tele link into meetings where needed. The FAST representative provides a local avenue for Foster and Kinship Carers to receive advice, support and/or advocacy on individual matters.

How were the FAST representatives appointed?

Any carer is able to approach QFKC to become a FAST representative. Interested carers receive an application with a Selection Criteria and a Position Description. Once the application is received, QFKC seeks feedback from key stakeholders in the relevant Region. An interview panel then takes place with the applicant to explore applicant's views on the role, what they hope to offer and other relevant areas. The applicant is then invited to attend two days of induction training and then a final recommendation is made taking into account all of this information to QFKC'S Executive Director.

What else is offered?

As a FAST representative, you have a great opportunity to network in your community to build strong and productive working relationships with key stakeholders. Every year our FAST representatives are provided with regional FAST training over a 2-day period with workshops and personal development opportunities.

To learn more about becoming a FAST representative, becoming a carer, events that are happening, news and/or training, **visit www.qfkc.com.au** or speak to someone over the phone on **(07) 4779 9513**

PREPARE FOR A DISASTER

Create and practice a disaster plan

The four primary factors that your plan should account for include:

- Where to shelter
- A route for evacuation
- Getting emergency alerts or warnings
- Family communication

As you're creating your disaster plan, keep the following preparation elements in mind:

- Sign up for severe weather alerts in your area.
- Program emergency numbers into your phone.
- Decide on a meeting place for your family to gather.
- Plan escape routes from your home and neighborhood, remember roads could be blocked.
- Be sure all adult and teenage family members how how to shut off gas, electric and water lines.
- Consider learning CPR and first aid training.
- Remember your pets. Bring dogs and cats inside during a catastrophe or make a plan for how you'll evacuate them.

**HAVE A PLAN AND STAY SAFE
IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000.**

Pack an emergency kit:

- Drinking water
- Nonperishable food, such as canned veggies
- Manual can opener
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- A crank, or battery powered radio
- Toilet paper, towelettes, soap, trash bags
- Local maps

Your kit may also include:

- Baby food, bottles and diapers
- Pet food
- Prescription medication
- Extra eyeglasses, contact lenses and solution
- Dry clothes and blankets



MYER

TOWNSVILLE

On Friday November 26th 2021, Althea Projects had their Annual Charity Dinner at Jam Restaurant. We want to send our biggest thank you to everyone who organised, participated and donated. We want to send the biggest thank you to Myer Townsville.

A wonderful night of networking and supporting the work we do at Althea Projects in particulay Wee Care. We want to thank Townsville for their ongoing, amazing support.





CHRISTMAS PARTIES 2021

Althea Projects Foster and Kinship Program held our annual Christmas parties for our Foster and Kinship Carers and families.

Our Townsville Cares and families enjoyed an evening at Chipmunks, our Burdekin Cares and families enjoyed a day at the bowling ally and our Charters Towers Carers and families enjoyed a hot day at the swimming pool.

We would like to say Thank You to all of our families that attended these parties and made the outcome amazing. We hope everyone enjoyed their locations Christmas parties this year.

We will see you all in the year, and we appreciate all of your hard work throughout the year.

Althea Fleming Street Open Day

The Althea Projects Foster and Kinship Program and Corporate team officially opened their Fleming Street office on Thursday October 14th 2021.

We want to thank George our President for helping with setting up and packing up, Minty for hosting the event, Morehead Meals for the amazing food, Brenton Creed, Ashley Saltner and the Wulgurukaba Walkabouts for the Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony.

It was a beautiful day and a beautiful event, and we were very blessed the rain held off until the end of the night.

We want to also thank our Carers that attended the event, and we hope the children had fun playing all of the games.



Thank you Townsville Hospital

Althea Projects Foster and Kinship Program would like to extend our sincerest "Thank You" to the Emergency Department from the Townsville University Hospital.

The Emergency Department has kindly donated Christmas presents, ranging from handmade gifts to colouring in books for our Foster and Kinship families.

We appreciate their generosity and kindness this Christmas period. Your kindness does not go unnoticed.



Thank you Townsville Grammar School

Althea Projects Foster and Kinship Program would like to extend our warmest 'Thank You' to the year 4 cohort from Townsville Grammar School.

They have very kindly donated board games and handmade Christmas cards for our Foster and Kinship families.

We appreciate all your support and your hard work and kindness does not go unnoticed.

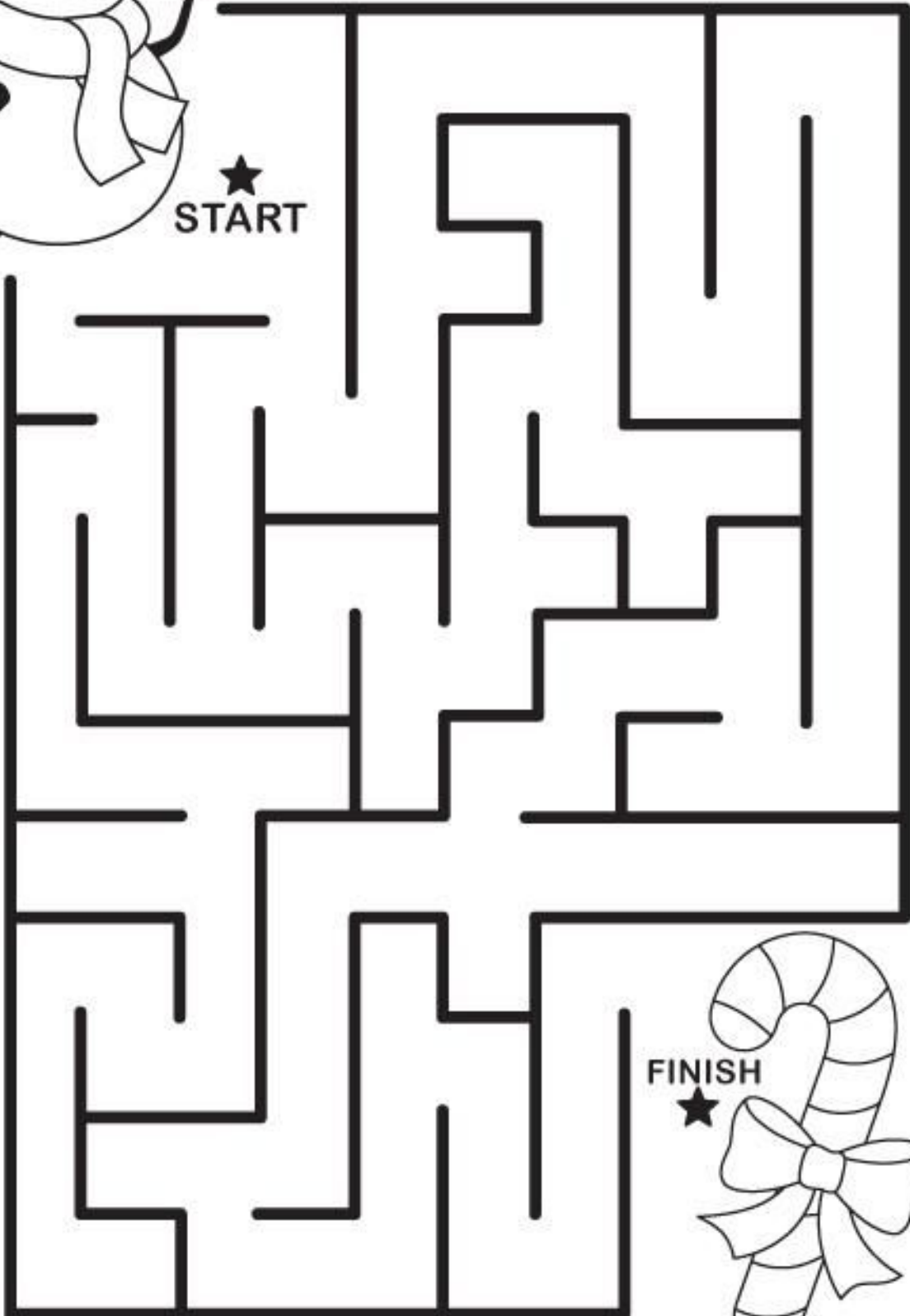


KIDS CORNER



Help Frosty find his way to the candy cane!

★
START



★
FINISH



Dear Santa

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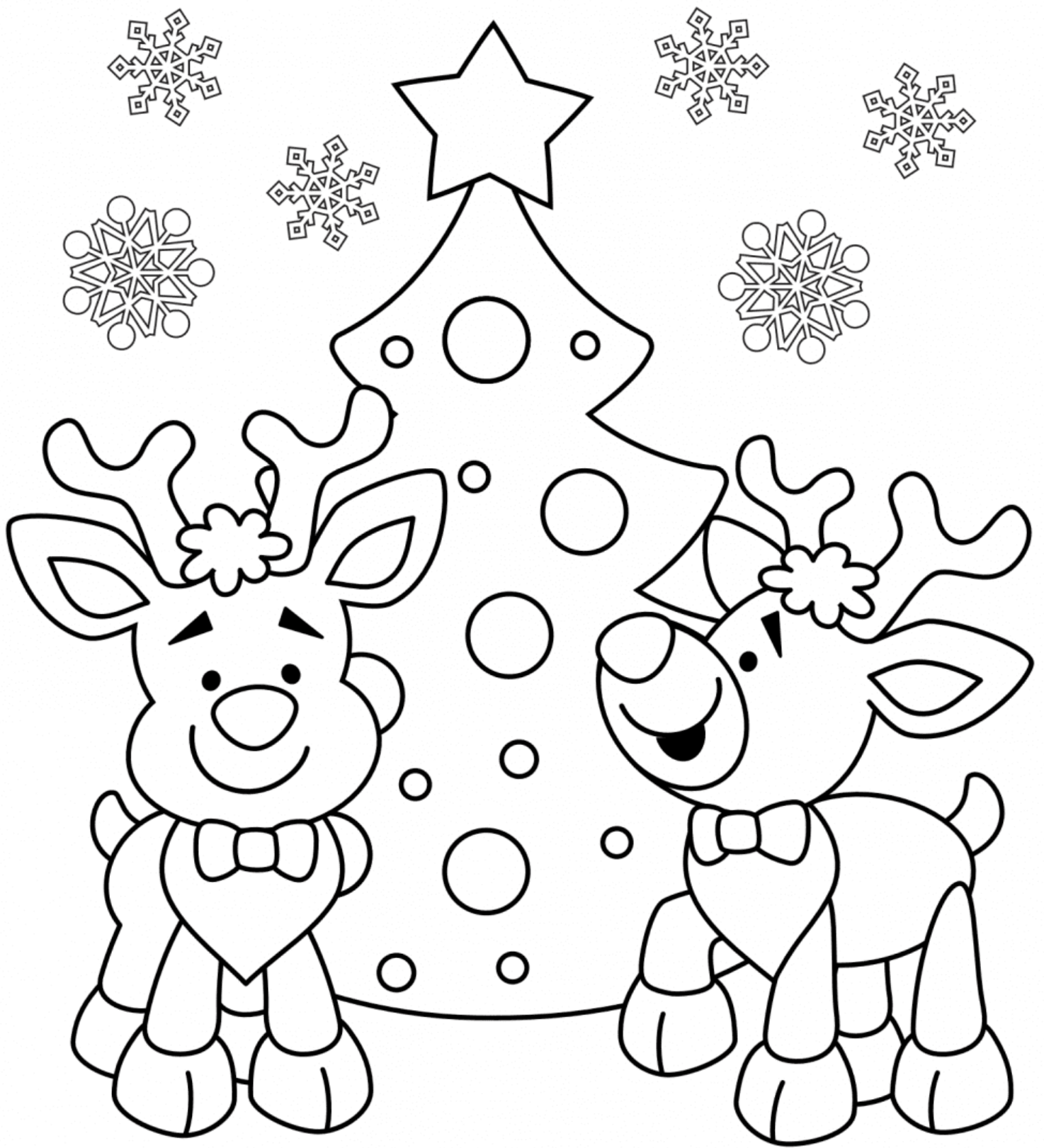
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© 2011 OTC

2022

School calendar

Queensland state schools

DECEMBER 2021 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	JANUARY 2022 S M T W T F S 30 31 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29	FEBRUARY S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	MARCH S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	APRIL S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
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 School terms	 School holidays	 Public holidays	 Staff professional development/student free days
 Part public holiday after 6 pm			

There are 194 school days in 2022.

Semester 1, 2022 commences for teachers on 20 January and for students on 24 January 2022.

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS

Staff professional development days for teachers are 20 and 21 January, 13 and 14 April and 2 September 2022. Schools are able to decide when they undertake the required hours for professional development for the flexible days, as long as they are on the flexible days, in the school holidays or out of school hours.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Queensland public holidays are set by the Industrial Relations Minister.

Public holidays for local show days are not shown due to diversity of dates across the state.

FINAL DATES FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE

18 November is the final date for Year 12 attendance for receipt of a Senior Statement. 25 November is the final date for student attendance in Years 10 and 11.

Some schools in regional, rural and remote areas will close for the summer holidays on 2 December.

The information in this calendar was correct at the time of publication but may be subject to change.

For more information and the latest version of this calendar, visit

www.education.qld.gov.au



Queensland
Government

PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT

We wouldn't be able to do any of the important community work that we do without the support of our sponsors and partnerships.



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

We would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Thank you all so much for your support and dedication throughout the year.

With the year coming to an end, and holidays right around the corner, we would like to leave you with all relevant and important information.

Office closure: Friday December 24th 2021 3:00pm
Office opening: Tuesday January 4th 2022 9:00am

Our staff are On Call 24/7, contact our Foster and Kinship Case Workers directly on 0418 150 229.

**HAVE AN AMAZING HOLIDAY, AND STAY SAFE.
WE WILL SEE YOU IN THE NEW YEAR!**

