

Talkabout

Issue No. 188 February/March 2026



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TOPIC 01

Back to School

The start of the school year is a time of change and establishment of routines for children and families. While many children feel excited, others feel anxious and require extra support as they return to routines and learning. Helpful tips for a smooth transition:

- Re-establish morning and bedtime routines early
- Talk with your child about how they are feeling
- Celebrate small victories
- Keep communication open with teachers and your children
- Allow time after school to rest and unwind

A little preparation and support can help children feel confident, safe, and ready to learn as the year begins.



Find us on
Facebook



Talkabout

Upcoming Events

Please see the articles in the following pages 4 and 5 detailing social mornings and child trauma counselling

Community Support Centre Innisfail Inc.

Social Morning

Every Thursday 9:30am to 11:30 am

Please join us for a morning tea, activities a chat!

*Everyone
Welcome!*



For more information please contact
Community Support Centre
Phone: 07 4043 8400
Email: info@csci.org.au
13-17 Donald St. Innisfail

**We provide
FREE!**

**Child and Family
Counselling!**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ELIGIBILITY
CONTACT THE CENTRE**

Community Support Centre Innisfail:
13 - 17 Donald St, Innisfail
07 4043 8400



TUNING INTO KIDS

Tuning into Kids is a free evidence-based parenting program for parents and caregivers of children aged 3- 10 years of age

Learn how to have a better understanding of your child

Help your child manage their emotions

Help prevent behaviour problems

Teach your child to manage conflict

5 sessions run weekly from:
Friday 27th February to 27th
March

Time: 9:30am to 11:30am
Community Support Centre,
13-17 Donald Street, Innisfail

Register today

☎ 40 43 8400

or
scan QR Code



Tuning
in to Kids

Tuning In to Kids® Parenting Program is an evidence-based program that supports parents to better understand their child's emotions and respond in ways that build strong relationships, emotional regulation, and resilience. It helps parents develop practical skills to support children's emotional development, behaviour, and wellbeing through everyday interactions.

Talkabout

Words from our CEO



Introducing Road Map to Stronger Futures: A New Chapter for Children and Families Across the Cassowary Coast

Over the past few months, the Community Support Centre Innisfail (CSCI) has been walking alongside local partners, families and community members to imagine what a stronger future for our children could look like. Together, we've begun shaping an exciting new initiative: **The Road Map to Stronger Future**

The Road Map to Stronger Futures initiative is bringing communities from Aloomba to Cardwell together to shape a stronger future for children, young people and families across the Cassowary Coast. This region-wide movement responds to long-standing concerns about centralised service models, siloed systems and limited local decision-making, all of which have contributed to inequitable outcomes for families in rural communities.

Guided by community voices and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander leadership, the initiative is built on three key foundations: Reconciliation, the Human Services Quality Framework, and Child Safe Organisation Standards. Together, these frameworks ensure the work stays grounded in human rights, cultural safety, accountability and community-led practice.

At the centre of the project is a Collective Impact approach, an evidence-based model recognising that no single organisation can drive systems change alone. Instead, it brings together partners

across sectors to build a common agenda, share data, coordinate activities and communicate continuously, supported by a dedicated backbone organisation. In this case, the Community Support Centre Innisfail (CSCI) will guide coordination, engagement, governance and data management.

Community involvement is key. A Steering Committee will provide cross-sector leadership, while Collaborative Clusters will focus on areas such as early childhood, health, wellbeing, culture and community resilience. Local residents can also participate as Community Champions, contributing their lived experience, local knowledge, and stories that will inform shared data and decision-making.

With upcoming Federal Government opportunities, including Child and Family Hub funding and the Thriving Kids initiative, the region is well-placed to attract resources and strengthen local service systems.

This is a call to our community: big challenges need many minds. By joining the Road Map to Stronger Futures, you help shape a thriving, equitable future for all children and families in the Cassowary Coast.

Help us collect data that will guide this project by completing this survey



**For more information on how to get involved, contact Tracey Dickinson -
CSCI CEO
0499 838 448 | ceo@csci.org.au**

Talkabout

Get to know our staff and volunteers

Hello, my name is Anne. I have been a volunteer, at the Community Support Centre Innisfail, these past few months. Being here has been worthwhile, as I have found a new sense of purpose and feel calm and relaxed.

While being on reception it has been great to see the change in folks, if they come in looking sad & lost, then leave with plenty of moral support &/or emergency relief & a smile.

Participating in the community social morning (9:30am to 11:30am) has been fun especially rummy numbers game. As well as, meeting new friends, chatting, sharing ideas with crafts, puzzles or colouring in. I've also been involved in reinvigorating life into the garden, with planting herbs and veggies which have extended health and mood benefits.



Above is pictures of the garden that Anne has been working on

Community Support Centre Innisfail Social mornings

The Community Support Centre Social Morning has been running for several years and is facilitated by our wonderful volunteers. The group meets once a week and enjoys a range of activities, including board games, conversation, sharing stories, and crocheting, to name just a few.

The group is friendly and welcoming to anyone who wishes to join. To get involved, simply arrive on the day and let reception know it's your first time and if you'd like to be connected to one of the volunteers who runs the group, who can help ease you into your first experience.



Above is pictures of some of the members who attend social mornings

Talkabout

Supporting Children Through Trauma-Informed Counselling

Children and young people experience the world differently to adults. After trauma, stress, or significant change, they often express their feelings through behaviour or play rather than words. Our Child Trauma Counselling Program aims to meet children where they are and help them feel safe, understood, and empowered to work toward their own goals.

A key focus of the program is building trust and safety. Sessions are tailored to each child, with an emphasis on choice, consistency, and predictability. Children are never pressured to talk before they are ready, allowing connection to develop naturally over time.

The program uses creative, age-appropriate approaches such as play, art, storytelling, games, and movement to help children express emotions and build emotional awareness and regulation skills. Goal-setting is child-centred and strengths-focused, developed collaboratively with children and caregivers to support confidence and resilience.

Parents and caregivers are also supported with guidance on trauma-informed responses at home, recognising the important role families play in a child's recovery.

The Child Trauma Counselling Program provides a safe, supportive space to help children build resilience and move forward with confidence. The program is free and confidential. For enquiries, please contact (07) 4043 8400 or email counsellingreferrals@csci.org.au.



Child counselling room at CSCI

Self-care after natural disasters

Natural disasters can have a significant impact on our emotional wellbeing. They disrupt our sense of safety and routine, often leaving people feeling unsettled long after the immediate danger has passed.

After a disaster, people may experience shock, heightened alertness, sleep difficulties, irritability, grief, or emotional numbness. These are normal responses to abnormal events and are not signs of weakness. Everyone responds differently, and there is no right or wrong way to feel.

Self-care after a natural disaster is important and can begin with meeting basic needs such as shelter, food, hydration, rest, and access to essential medications. Reintroducing small, predictable routines, like regular meals or consistent sleep times, can help calm the nervous system and restore stability.

Simple regulation strategies can support emotional recovery. Slow breathing, stretching, grounding exercises, and taking short pauses can help the body settle. Limiting repeated exposure to disaster-related news and social media is also helpful. Practising self-compassion is essential, including allowing yourself to rest, lowering expectations, and remembering that recovery takes time.

Children may also be affected and often express stress through behaviour rather than words. Caregivers offering routine, reassurance, and play can help children feel safe and connected. Caregiver wellbeing is important, as children look to calm and supported adults for security.

If distress continues or interferes with daily life, seeking support from a GP, counsellor, or support service can be a helpful next step. Recovery is not linear, but support and connection can help rebuild wellbeing and hope.

Talkabout

Good News Stories

The Community Support Centre Innisfail is proud to have a Community Connect Worker (CCW).

In regional towns like ours, this role is essential. Access to services and resources can sometimes be limited due to distance or funding challenges. That's where the CCW steps in—acting as a vital link between community members and service providers, helping to overcome these barriers.

What does a Community Connect Worker do?

CCWs work to strengthen and support healthy communities. They connect individuals and families with services, support networks, and resources available locally. By addressing social, emotional, and economic challenges, they help improve overall wellbeing and create opportunities for a stronger, more connected community. A big part of the role is building trust and understanding. This allows the CCW to provide tailored support and connect people with the right services for their needs. They also play an important role in reducing stigma around issues such as mental health, disability, and domestic violence helping create a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.

The impact of this role cannot be understated and has had some real positive outcomes for community members. Some of the outcomes have been around individuals being able to access their superannuation to improve their current circumstances. One individual was able to use this support to start their own business creating a pathway toward financial independence, while another two were able to purchase a vehicle significantly improving their ability to access work and services. These outcomes highlight how practical, timely support from the CCW worker can create meaningful and lasting change.

If you'd like to learn more or need assistance, please call 4043 8400.



Good news stories

Christmas hamper success

Community Support Centre Innisfail was proud to once again deliver Christmas Hampers to vulnerable families across the Cassowary Coast, offering not just practical support, but a genuine reminder that no one in our community is forgotten. Each hamper was thoughtfully filled with essential snacks, festive treats, grocery vouchers, and small toys for children, helping to ease financial pressure during a time that can be especially challenging for many households. For families facing hardship, these hampers brought more than food and gifts, they brought dignity, relief, and a sense of celebration during a season that often highlights inequality.

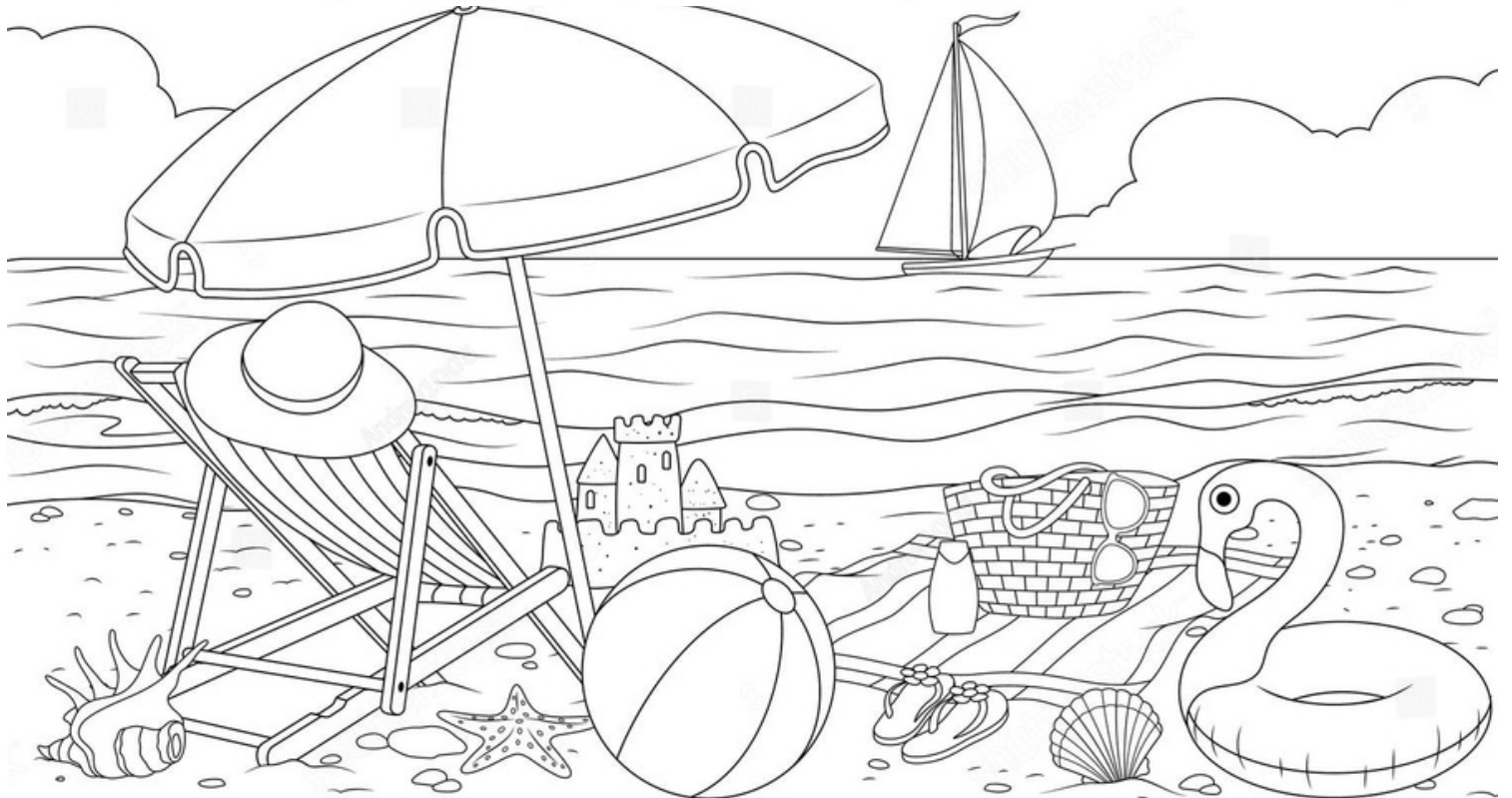
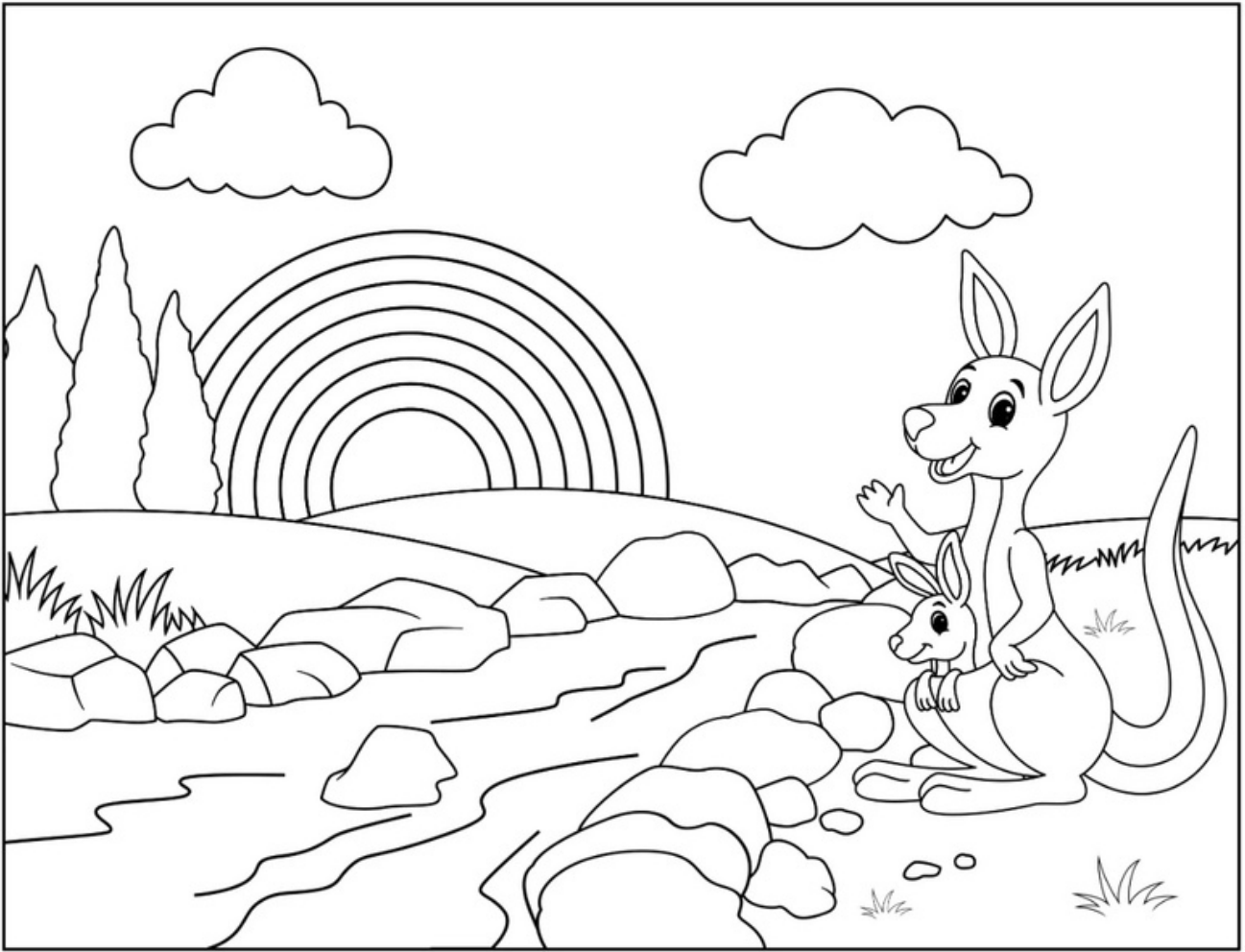
None of this would be possible without the extraordinary generosity of our local community. Every donation, sponsorship, and shared act of kindness directly translated into smiles, full cupboards, and lighter hearts for families who needed it most. The impact extended far beyond Christmas Day, strengthening connection, hope, and trust between families and the community that continues to stand beside them.



A big thank you to those that donated to our hampers which are pictured above

Kids Zone

Colouring in



Recipes

Hot Chocolate

Ingredients

- 1 cup (500 ml) full-cream milk
- ½ cup of sweetened condensed milk
- 50-100grams of chocolate (80%+ cocoa), finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar (adjust to taste)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)
- Pinch of salt
- Whipped cream

Method

1. Heat the milk
2. In a saucepan over medium-low heat, warm the milk and condensed milk until steaming. Do not boil.
3. Add chocolate
4. Reduce heat to low and add the chopped dark chocolate. Whisk continuously until fully melted and smooth.
5. Sweeten and season
6. Add sugar and a pinch of salt. Taste and adjust sweetness.
7. Finish
8. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla if using.
9. Serve immediately
10. Pour into small cups or mugs, and squirt out whipped cream on top



Banana Pancakes

Ingredients

- 2 ripe bananas
- 1 cup plain flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup milk
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- Small pinch of salt
- Butter

Method

1. Mash the bananas, In a bowl, mash bananas until mostly smooth.
2. Mix wet ingredients, add the egg, milk, and vanilla. Whisk to combine.
3. Add dry ingredients, stir in flour, baking powder, sugar, and salt. Mix gently until just combined do not overmix.
4. heat a non-stick pan over medium heat with a little butter. Pour about ¼ cup batter per pancake.
5. Cook until bubbles appear (about 2 minutes), flip, and cook another 1-2 minutes until golden.
6. Serve warm and add on toppings of your choice

