LINK-UP [NSW] Aboriginal Corporation



# ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation acknowledge that our work is conducted on the traditional lands of the Aboriginal nations across New South Wales.

We pay our respects to Elders both past and present, and to those emerging leaders who will guide us into the future.

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to Link-Up (NSW) and our communities.

We also acknowledge members of the Stolen Generations whose connection to their country was interrupted and search for belonging and identity has been long and difficult. We stand by them in their struggle.

**WARNING:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that this document may contain images of deceased persons





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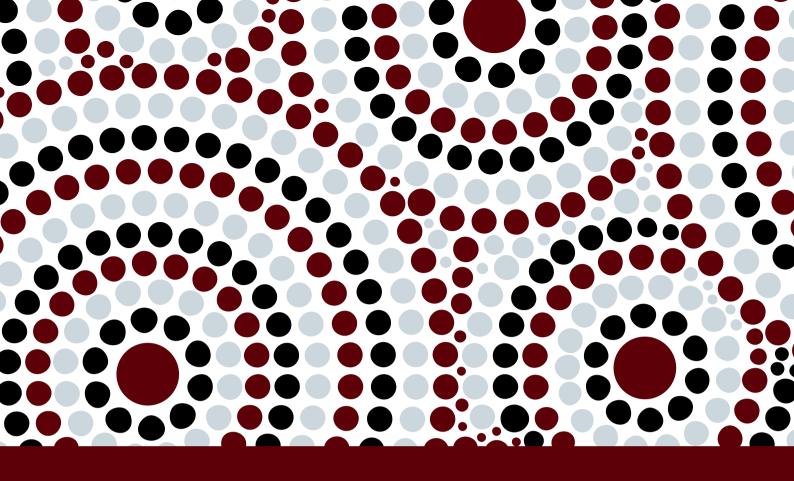
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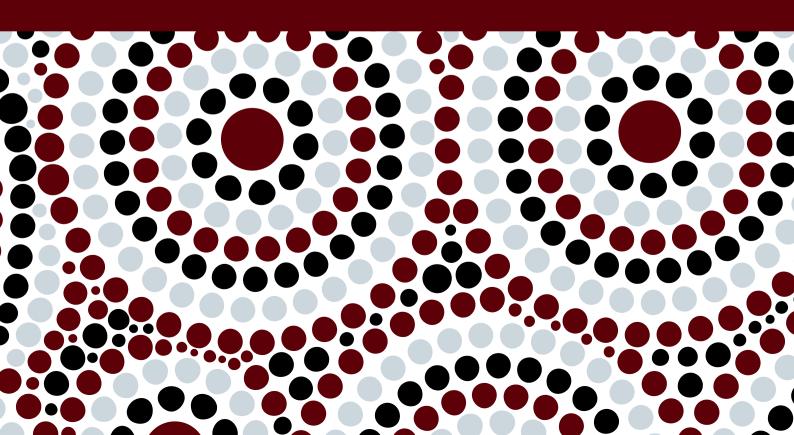
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STANDING IN THE PRESENT, ACKNOWLEDGING THE PAST, LOOKING FORWARD.



# OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Message from the Chair
- 1.2 Our Board
- 1.3 Message from the CEO
- 1.4 Senior Management Team

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

#### Yaama,

Firstly I would like to pay my respects to the traditional custodians of this land both past, present and emerging and acknowledge the importance of knowing where we come from. May we all have the opportunity to connect to our country, kin and culture.

This has been my third year running as the Chair of the Board of Directors for Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation and on behalf of the Board, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2019-2020.



We would like to acknowledge and thank our Commonwealth and NSW funding partners for their continued support; The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet for the Social, Emotional and well-being programs, the Department of Social Services for the Redress program and the Department of Communities and Justice for the Family Link and Community Builder programs. Without this funding, we would be unable to continue assisting Aboriginal people and communities in NSW.

Link-Up (NSW) has seen a challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however we also saw significant change and growth with the appointment of our new Chief Executive Officer, Janelle Clarke. Janelle brings an array of knowledge and experience to the organisation, with a strong vision and strategic view that will better support us to deliver services to our clients and community. The board is very proud to have Janelle heading Link-Up (NSW) and is excited at what the future now holds.

Our main focus remains our core business of reuniting the Stolen Generations with their family, country and communities. The Board remains active within the community, with a focus on ensuring the organisation creates and maintains solid partnerships with other organisations and stakeholders. Link-Up (NSW) invests in our board through the undertaking of governance training to ensure our processes remain strong.

Our staff have shown tremendous dedication through a challenging year. The COVID-19 restrictions meant that we needed to get creative on how we delivered our services. This saw the transition from face to face reunions and client contacts, to online meetings where possible. Our counsellors did a deadly job at checking in with our clients over the phone regularly so as to ensure their mental health did not decline with the restrictions in place. An activity book was created and distributed across NSW as a tool to keep our clients minds active. The feedback received overall is a credit to our staff who continue to impress me with the care and compassion they show our clients.

### CONTINUED...

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Link-Up team, who supported the Board vision and have remained trusting of our decisions. It's true when they call Link-Up a family.

I would like to extend my condolences to all the families and communities who lost loved ones this year. Link-Up (NSW) are very saddened to let you know we lost 2 of our Link-Up family members this year. We lost our former Chairperson, Victor Morgan who was our long standing leader and supported Link-Up (NSW) through some very tough times. Victor was a former staff member and client of Link-Up. We also lost our long-standing counsellor John Westbury who reunited many clients with their families. These true warriors will be missed tremendously by their families and all of us at Link-Up. Both were an inspiration to us all. We will always remember and celebrate their achievements and contribution to our clients and community.

This year, we celebrate our 40-year anniversary. What an amazing achievement that started out with Aunty Coral (Oomera) Edwards and Peter Read looking for Aunty Oomeras family, and has turned into 30+ employees and 40 years of bringing our people home. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 restrictions, we have had to postpone our gala dinner which will now take place in 2021. I look forward to being a part of the next 40 years of reuniting clients with culture and kin.

COOEE Festival 2020 was bigger and better than ever before. Celebrating the oldest surviving culture in the world. It was an amazing way to celebrate another year of our survival on Survival Day. Uncle Archie Roach was a highlight, along with all the other talented entertainment, art, kids' activities, Elders hub and food. This festival is so important for the Western Sydney community, we receive a lot of good feedback that it gives our mob something positive to do on a day that can bring so much pain. We cannot wait to present another COOEE in July 2021 (due to COVID restrictions, we have chosen to move the date to ensure we have another deadly day).

I would like to close by thanking the Board members for their continued support and guidance. It is a privilege to work alongside you all, as always.

I look forward to helping Link-Up secure funding beyond 2022 and continue to provide this vital service to our people.

Lizzie May Chairperson Proud Wiradjuri woman from Nanima NSW

### OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



LIZZIE MAY Chairperson

Lizzie May is a proud Wiradjuri woman from Nanima who grew up in Mt Druitt. Lizzie has been the Chairperson for the past 3 years and has played an integral role throughout 2019. Lizzie was fortunate enough to be reunited with her sister in 2011 through Link-Up NSW, which is one of the reasons she is so passionate about the important work conducted.



Vice Chairperson

Raelene has been on the Board of Directors for the last four years and takes her role as Vice Chairperson very seriously. Raelene feels a great pride representing the members of Link-Up NSW and the important work that is being undertaken every day. Raelene has gained a lot of experience working alongside the other Board of Directors.



AILEEN BELL Secretary

Aileen Bell (Edwards) is a proud Kamilaroi woman who has been on the Board of Directors since 2013. Aileen loves making a difference for her people and the community. Aileen would like to be on the Board of Directors for as long as she can, so that she can continue to improve the lives of our people and community.



Janet Smith is a proud Birripai/Dunghutti woman and has been a long-standing Board Director, sitting on the Board for almost 11 years. Janet has a wide skill set with qualifications in Social Work and Visual Arts. Janet believes it is very rewarding working for the community.



#### REBEKAH CURTIS Director

Rebekah is a proud Noongar woman from Western Australia and has been on the Board of Directors for 5 years. Rebekah has formed strong friendships on the Board with the Members of Link-Up NSW. Rebekah received assistance from Link-Up NSW to re-connect with her own family and enjoys supporting other families to reunite and reconnect.



#### WENDY CRAIG Director

Wendy is a proud Gumbaynggirr woman who works in many community-based projects in Coffs Harbour. Wendy thinks it is important to raise awareness of the Stolen Generations, she does this by sharing her story and encourages others to do the same. Wendy enjoys being on the Board of Directors as she believes in the important work that is conducted every day.



DENISE KRAMER Director

Denise is a descendant from the Kamilaroi tribe and was removed from her mother when she was 2 years old. Denise is retired and enjoys learning more about her family history and loves being involved in making a positive change in our communities and people's lives.



PETER READ Director

Peter is a non-Indigenous Board Director permitted under the category in the Constitution as one holding Special Expertise. With Oomera Edwards in 1980, he co-founded Link-Up (NSW) and worked until 1986. He remained a Public Officer for a several years after that.

### MESSAGE FROM THE **CEO**



I am very proud and honoured to be part of an organisation that shows what can be achieved with courage, dedication, compassion and persistence.

I came to Link-Up (NSW) on 15 June 2020 after serving as the Chief Operating Officer and the Acting CEO of the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT. I would like to express my gratitude to Shaun Middlebrook, who had served as our Acting CEO. I am grateful to Shaun for the valuable contribution he has made to the organisation.

It has been a tough year with the bush fires last summer in 2019 and COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. We had to think quickly and creatively to overcome challenges and alter our services to maintain continuity. It had a massive impact on the mental health and well-being of the staff.

The impact resulted in cancelling our events that bring our clients and families together for support, counselling and follow-up care. Our healing weekends and reunions are paramount in supporting our client's continuation of healing. This was, and still is very challenging. Our clients, being some of the most vulnerable people regarding COVID-19, were affected tremendously by the isolation and restrictions. They are our focus and we need to ensure their safety and well-being.

There has been sadness and happiness within the Link-Up family.

We have had sadness this year with the loss of a respected community man and former Chairperson, Uncle Victor Morgan, and the retirement and passing of long standing staff member John Westbury.

Uncle Victor Morgan was a dedicated staff member, Link-Up member who then joined the Board of Directors in 2011 and was appointed Chair up until 2017. He will be sadly missed for the true hero and gentleman he was. His smile will always be remembered as it brought so much joy to all at Link-Up.

Mr John Westbury was a respected employee with Link-Up, who last year in November 2019 retired after 15 years with us. Unfortunately, he passed away on Monday 6 July 2020 after a battle with cancer. John was very popular with staff and clients alike, touching many lives throughout his career. Johns easy going, quiet and thoughtful demeanor made him an asset to the organisation and the many families he reunited.

## CONTINUED...

His commitment to his clients, community and colleagues is a testament to the truly remarkable person John was.

There has been many achievements throughout this year with staff winning awards, playing in the women's NRL grand final, completing a biggest loser competition with staff collectively losing 27kgs and being interviewed and then aired on ABC News about the growing number of Australians retracing their Indigenous heritage and reconnecting to their families. These are all fabulous initiatives within the community.

Link-Up showcased the second COOEE Festival on survival day, January 26 on Darug Country. We celebrated culture and unity with live entertainment, artwork, kids hub, Elders tent, language and yidaki classes, petting zoos with native Australian wildlife and plenty of food. Our major sponsor was NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) in which we thank for their contribution.

And so, we are looking ahead. We must work together; within our organisation, with sector colleagues and with our mob. I am looking forward to implementing business improvement and planning, which is essential within an organisation.

Finally, a huge thank you to the Link-Up NSW Board and team, volunteers, funders, fundraisers and donors. We are appreciative for our many partners and supporters who have made this progress possible. But we need to still do better. And with so much still to be done, I am determined we will achieve all we set out to do.

Janelle Clarke Chief Executive Officer

#### MEET THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM





KYLIE NORMAN Business Manager



LYNNE KINGHAN Finance Manager



JODIE MATTHEWS Programs Manager

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HEALING HUNDREDS OF YEARS WORTH OF TRAUMA, ONE ABORIGINAL PERSON AT A TIME

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NEW YO

# OUR TEAM

2.1 Vision, Purpose & Objectives2.2 Values & Behaviours2.3 Organisational Chart2.4 Staff Development

## VISION, PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

### Our Vision

To lead the way in the design & delivery of culturally safe holistic services to build a healthy and strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community

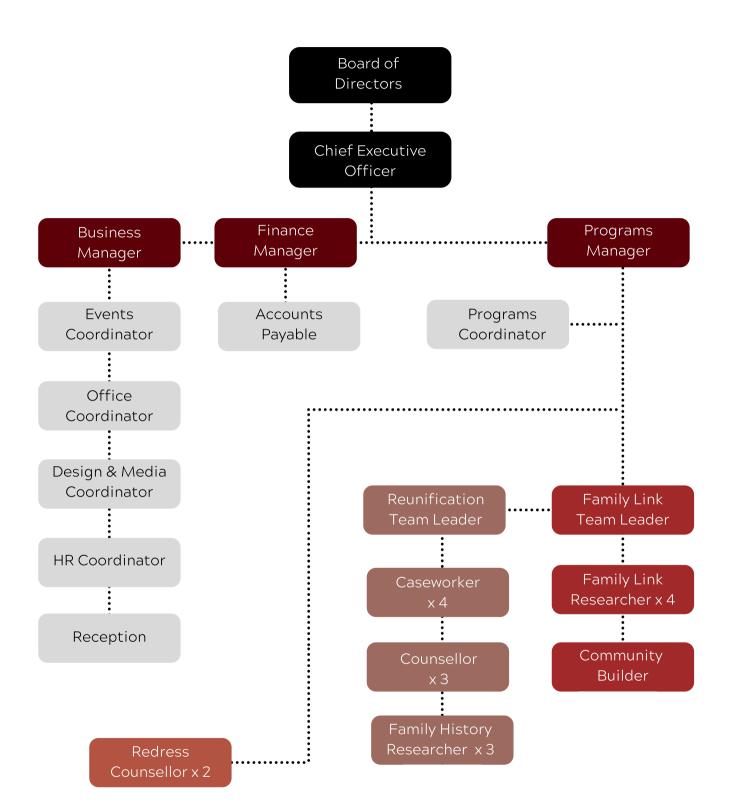
#### Our Purpose

To redress the grave injustices, deprivations and incursions into the health & emotional wellbeing & culture of Aboriginal people resultant from the impact of removing Aboriginal peoples from families, communities and country. Addressing trauma & delivering services with a holistic approach, with the aim to build a healthier & stronger community.

### Our Objectives

- Deliver professional services for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people
- 2. Deliver contemporary culturally safe and appropriate services
  - 3. Maintain & evolve a secure and stable foundation
- 4. Enhance community influence & outreach
- 5. Engage & develop staff

### **ORGANISATION** CHART





### TAFE

- Diploma of Family History
- Diploma of Community Services
- Diploma of Case Management
- Mentoring Diploma
- Project Management Diploma
- Diploma of Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Diploma of Mental Health
- Diploma of Counselling

# CONTINUOUS

- Red Dust Healing
- First Aid
- Mental Health First Aid
- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
- Financial literacy training
- ORIC Rulebook workshop training
- Bullying & Harassment training
- Hands on computer ancestry DNA
- Working with Adult Survivors training
- Casenote writing training
- ABSEC Conference
- Say No to Violence training
- Closing the Gap Conference



### THIS IS WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

# PROGRAMS

- 3.1 Reunification
- 3.2 Healing Weekends
- 3.3 Redress Counsellor
- 3.4 Family Link
- 3.5 Community Builder
- 3.6 COOEE Festival 2020
- 3.7 Highlights

### COVID-19 IMPACT

Link-Up (NSW) has been challenged by a global pandemic of COVID-19. Our main concern has been the health and safety of our staff and clients. During this period, our ability to meet and connect with clients has been limited and for the safety of our workforce, we have conducted out of office work opportunities.

COVID-19 has created a space for Link-Up to redefine and improve our processes to ensure going forward, our absolute focus is on our core business and serving our community.

At Link-Up, we played an important role in supporting our Stolen Generations communities and kin to promote good hygiene practices, social distancing and culturally appropriate mindfulness to maintain social connections.

During COVID-19 we have continued to self-enrich our staff by participating in meetings and educational webinars with various Aboriginal organisations, Government agencies and stakeholders.

As we have been unable to facilitate most reunions and healing weekends for our clients, this has put us in a unique position to promote our services online.

We will continue to be observant of government guidelines and as soon as safe to do so, we will continue with our services within the community.



Reunification Counsellor Mary-Anne Frail and Reunification Team Leader Gene Kelaher have successfully developed a cultural puzzle book to send to our clients. The idea stems from Mary-Anne calling a client who was battling mentally with COVID and it's restrictions.

The 66 page booklet entails hotlines to call if you need to have a yarn, Aboriginal Dreamtime stories from various nations across Australia followed by word search, sudoku and some colouring in exercises.



## **REUNIFICATION** PROGRAM

Link-Up (NSW) has been changing peoples lives since 1980. We are proud of the work that we do and are committed to providing the best service possible for our clients and communities.

The Reunification team is made up of Researchers, Caseworkers and Counsellors, and their days are spent walking side by side with our clients through their journey towards healing.

We spend our time travelling all over Australia taking families home, visiting Country and the gravesites of family members who are no longer with us. The journey can be emotional but spiritual, and we are with our clients every step of the process.



#### THEY ARE NOT CLIENTS TO US, THEY ARE FAMILY

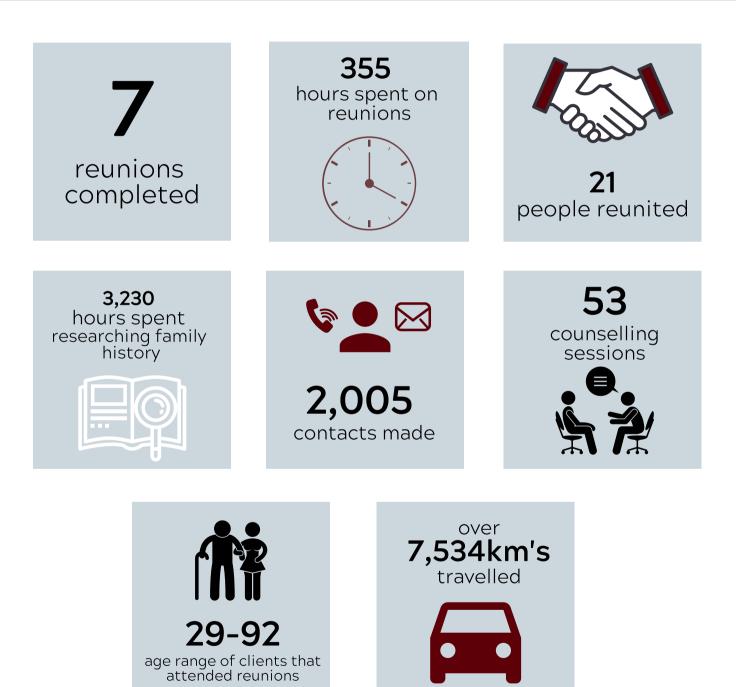






### **REUNIFICATION** PROGRAM

#### A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



Our statistics were largely affected by the challenges presented over the past 12 months including bush fires, floods and COVID-19 restrictions.

"I just want to thank all the staff for the hard work and dedication they shown while assisting us through our journey"

# REUNION Stories



The Lewandowski reunion brought together family that had been separated since 1920's after the removal of Vicki's grandmother, Clorine to Cootamundra Girls Home at 13 years old. Clorine went on to have 3 children, who each had 1 child of their own.

Due to Clorine passing away at an early age, the cousins never had a chance to meet or know each other and for 49 years, had no knowlede of the Mother's side of the family let alone her Aboriginality until starting the journey to search for her Mother's family.

Link-Up (NSW) searched every record of people with the surname "Aboriginal" on Birth, Deaths and Marriages website, and that's how Chlorine's Mother, Ida was found. This was the final piece of the puzzle; a death certificate that shown where she had lived, who her parents were, her marriage and the children she bore.

## CONTINUED...

Finally, Link-Up could pinpoint not just the area where the family was from, but also that they were Dunghutti nation. Further research found that the family had been the traditional owners of the land where Kinchela Boys home was placed and that the family were in fact the first children removed to Kinchela Boys Home in 1923 before it had even been established.

A call to the Dunghutti Elders council asking for any remaining family members to contact Link-Up seemed like a long shot until Link-Up was contacted by 3 different family members who confirmed all the information.

Once confirmed, Link-Up was able to take the family members who had been separated back to Country, not just to see where the ancestors and family called home, but to meet the family they never knew existed. A family reunion was organised with many of the remaining family that were available to attend, with Link-Up holding a lunch in Kempsey.

By chance, Link-Up were lucky enough to meet up with Uncle Bob of the Dunghutti Elders Council, chairperson and relative of the family. Bob took the clients on a journey along the coastline to significant family places, visiting Kinchela Boys Home where the clients weretold about the family's relationship to the area.

In attendance at the lunch, Link-Up was lucky enough to witness the eldest and youngest of the family members including a 1 day old baby.

At the family lunch, Vicki's Mother (who has since passed) expressed she was very emotional and wish she had met her family sooner, but was grateful for the opportunity Link-Up had provided her with.

Different members of the family brought their own research to the lunch, so the family shared their history and stories, creating a family tree that was now complete.

By the end of the reunion, the clients gathered and interacted like cousins who had always known each other.

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## CONTINUED...

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Coming on this journey together brought them closer than they ever could of imagined, while healing parts of themselves that they never knew were broken.

Each client made known how appreciative they were to have gone through the experience with the support of Link-Up. They acknowledged the immense of the past, but knew this was the first step to healing their futures.



# REUNION Stories



The Coad reunion in South Australia saw Link-Up (NSW) and Link-Up (SA) Nunkuwarrin Yunti come together to collaboratively take 2 sisters back to Ngadjuri country, the country of their grandmother and great grandmother. While the sisters had grown up with their grandmother, they never had a chance to get to know their Aboriginal culture as Pamela's maternal great grandmother was removed to The Holy Cross Parish Orphanage in 1911 due to the government policies at the time.

As a teenager she was sent to work for the Casey family and had a child with one of the property owners Edward Casey, who she would go on to take to court for maintenance at Peterborough courthouse.

Link-Up (NSW) client was taken to South Australia where we met with Link-Up (SA), who had organised an amazing Ngadjuri Tour Guide, Quenten Aguis to take us to Ngadjuri Country and to other areas of cultural significance.

## CONTINUED...

In the town of Riverton, we stopped to see the sculpture of Aboriginal Woman and Child that represented the continuity of Ngadjuri people, then continued onto Burra where we were taken to a natural healing spring the old people used for healing ailments, which were even blessed by priests when white settlements occured as they recognised the healing properties in the spring water.

In the morning we were taken to Redbanks, where the tour guide showed us a billabong in the national park. We sat and told stories of the dreamtime, explored fossils and artifacts that were left behind from the old people and even skeletons of extinct animals.

In Blackrock sat the old house belonging to their great grandfather. The sisters were amazing at the resilience of their great grandmother but also saddened at the life she lead, all because she was an Aboriginal woman.

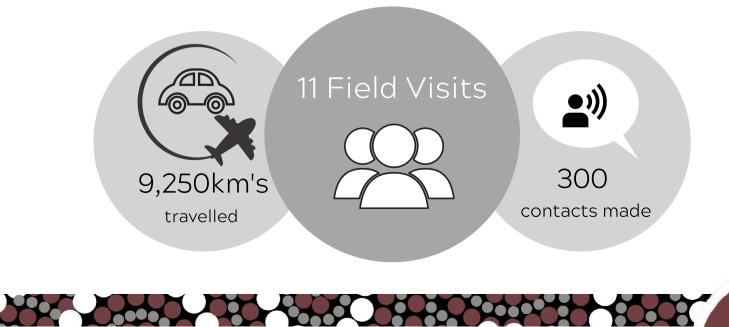
It was an amazing experience for 2 women in their 70's to return to country having lived there life as "white women" only to leave being proud Aboriginal women with knowledge of who they are, where they were from and the life their people had led. They knew they could pass this history onto their children and grandchildren.



### **REDRESS** PROGRAM



The National Redress Scheme is in response to the Royal Commission into institutional child sex abuse. Link-Up (NSW) has two full-time counsellors employed to support people through the application process of applying for compensation and referring to other services when necessary. This is a vital service in the community and one we are very proud to be a part of.



### **REDRESS** PROGRAM

Another year has come and gone for the Redress team, and it was a year faced with many challenges.

John Westbury, on of our long standing counsellors retired in November 2019 leaving very big shoes to fill. Uncle Dennis Dunn was up to the challenge and started to work alongside Dianne Royce on the complex cases that come with The National Redress Scheme.

In November 2019, Dianne and the then Programs Manager Karen Carter travelled to Cairns to attend the Healing Foundation Aboriginal Redress Support services gathering. Services from all over the country came together to be supported by the Healing Foundation. Sessions were held by the Seedling Group on how to work with traumatised people in the hope of minimising the risk of re-traumitising them.

It was a great opportunity for our Link-Up employees to network with other services and support each other through the difficulties they are faced with.

#### "The money doesn't change what happened to me, but it will make a difference to the rest of my life"

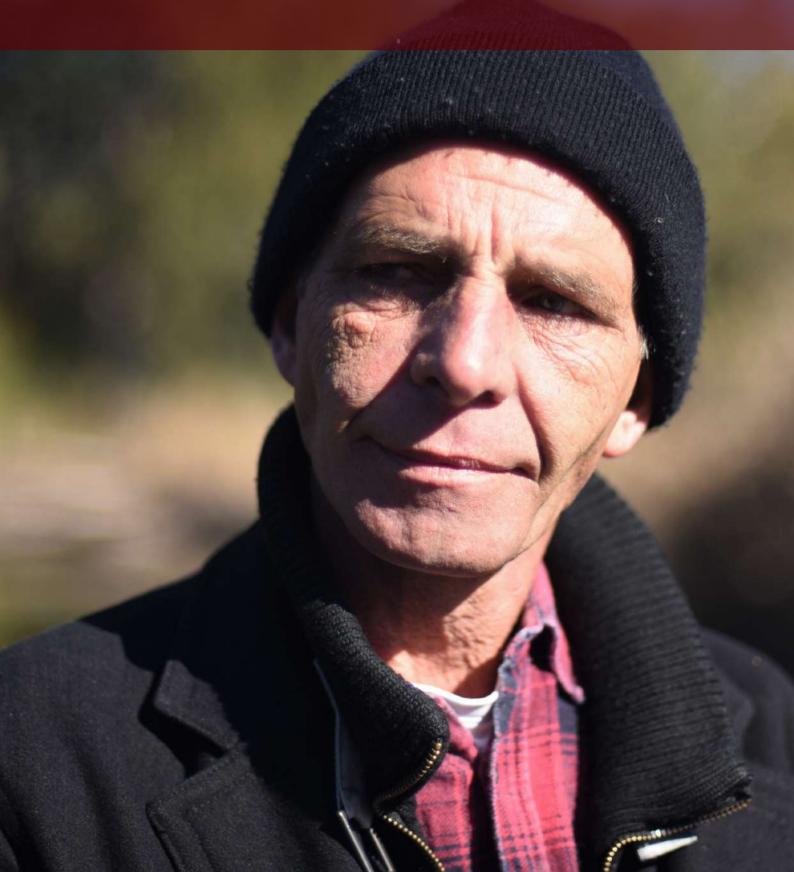
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our client visits has been impacted enormously however, our counsellors were able to travel to The Entrance, Armidale, Gosford and Bellbird to assist clients in completing their applications.

The Redress team has had two training sessions from Knowmore Legal on how to prepare an application to receive the best outcome for the clients. Prue Gregory was warmly received by the team with her wealth of knowledge.

Our counsellors became very adept at Zoom meetings over this time, and attending many training sessions and service meetings by The Healing Foundation, Red Dust Healing, Victim Services and Cootamundra Girls.

In closing for this year, we would like to share the good news that three of our clients received and accepted payment from the scheme, totalling \$320,000.00.

### "AS A FOURTH GENERATION OF REMOVAL, LINK-UP GAVE ME A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF MY ANCESTRY"



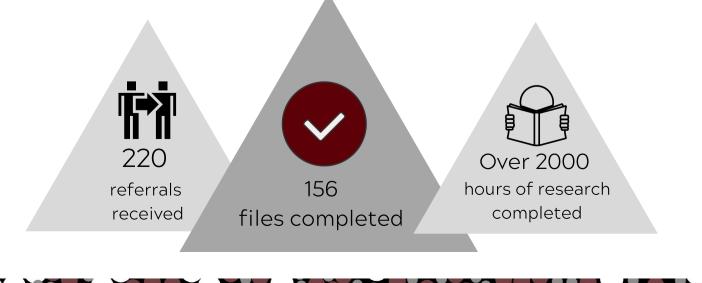
### FAMILY LINK PROGRAM

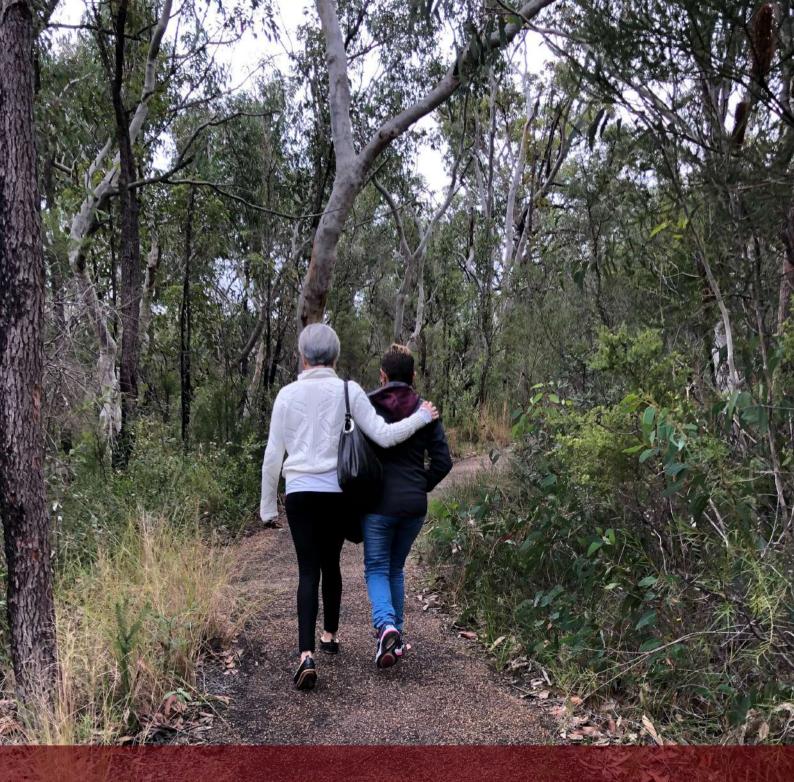


Our Family Link team have had yet another busy year researching and supplying Kinship tracing to referrers, assisting children and youth who are in or at risk of entering the Out of Home Care sector.

The work that the team does helps our kids stay connected to their culture and identity, with the goal being able to ensure these children are culturally safe at all times. The team has received over 200 referrals this year and as demand continues to grow for this vital service that has limited funding, restriction on the number of children that we are able to assist increase.

We continue to pursue additional funding for this essential service to ensure the future of the program.





"DUE TO THE HARD WORK AND PERSISTENCE OF LINK-UP, THIS REUNION WAS SO MEMORABLE. THANK YOU"

## COMMUNITY BUILDER PROGRAM



Our Community Builder, Aunty Pat Field has had another successful year assisting clients in the Nepean Blue Mountains region, connecting the local community to support services and working with them towards positive outcomes. Each year the program is in higher demand due to the incredible outcomes achieved.

The program is funded to assist community members through financial, legal, health, family and housing crisis. Some of this years highlights:

#### Koori Court

This year, 75 children and 551 services were supported by our Community Builder through the Koori Court. Many of these young people are either Out of Home Care (OOHC) children under the care of the Minister or under the radar of Department of Community and Justice (DCJ) and require adequate cultural support.

Last year, all stakeholders involved in Koori Court from the Magistrates, the Aboriginal Legal Aid Solicitor, Police Prosecutor, Marist 180 and the Community Builder from Link-Up proceeded to help a young family who were in crisis, providing accommodation and furnishing their home. A statement from one of the young boys was "this was the first time he had his own bed to sleep in, and not the floor".

#### **Community Justice**

Our Community Builder was invited to Reiby Detention Centre at Campbelltown by Justice Youth to create a cultural program for Aboriginal girls.

## COMMUNITY BUILDER PROGRAM

The program consisted of talks about culture, dream time stories, native language and traditional dancing. The young women even had an opportunity to perform in front of the Minister of Justice and respected Aboriginal Elders from Airds.

#### Police Aboriginal Consultive Committee

Our Community Builder continues to play an integral part in the local Aboriginal community, advocating for Link-Up at the PACC meeting which has been formed to create a positive relationship between the Police and Aboriginal people resigning in the local Blacktown, Mt Druitt and Nepean area.

#### **Blue Mountains**

Aunty Pat was selected for the Blue Mountains City Council Indigenous Advisory Committee by local community members, and has been continuously building relationships, referring new clients for reunification, redress and reparation. As a result of this, Link-Up has been involved in many different celebrations in the Blue Mountains including:

- Blue Mountains Family fun days
- Community Services days
- NAIDOC Day
- Elders Luncheon
- Koori Playgroup
- Elders day trips
- Playgroup excursions

#### Koori Playgroup - Hebersham Public School

Our Community Builder has been involved with Koori Playgroup at Hebersham Public School since 2016, referring families to the Holy Family for assistance with:

- Food and utility bills
- NDIS applications and advocacy
- Transport to specialists' appointments
- Assessments for medical issues
- Working with Aboriginal children with disabilities



# COMMUNITY BUILDER PROGRAM

- Working with grandparents who have care of their grandchildren
- Connecting to other services
- Supporting the school with events such as NAIDOC week, parents and student days
- Working with Aboriginal Pre-School children transitioning to Primary School.

#### Chifley College Presentation

Our Community Builder presented to 20 Shalvey High School Students currently completing Aboriginal Studies, speaking about Link-Up (NSW) and the services we offer across NSW. The purpose was to encourage Aboriginal Students to work in an Aboriginal organisation, practice respect and have knowledge of the culture.

#### Marrin Weejarli

Our Community Builder works closely with Marrin Weejarly, an Aboriginal organisation from Mt Druitt. Marrin Weejarli run many programs servicing our clients and local community such as:

- Drug and alcohol programs
- Parents programs
- FACS support
- Food pick-up programs to help and support community members in need
- The Family Facilitating program
- Counselling programs

#### Baabayn

Our Community Builder was directly involved in creating the Aboriginal Policy for Baabayn, supports their volunteer teachers and priests at the Elders group, the Homework centre and on many occasions has supported clients in the local community with:

- Homelessness
- Health issues
- Removal and identity issues
- Stolen Wages Trust Fund applications

#### Men's Shed

Our Community Builder attend the Men's Shed weekly supporting clients with:

- Housing and furniture
- Reunification applications and referrals
- Utility Bills and food support
- AOD support
- Referrals to other organisations

- Transport
- Health Issues
- NDIS Information
- Cultural Care Plans with DCJ





# COOEE FESTIVAL 2020

Link-Up (NSW) proudly presented the second ever COOEE Festival which was held at Regatta Park, Emu Plains on the 26th of January; Survival Day. The theme for 2020 was "Past. Present. Future. Survival".

COOEE allows the Western Sydney community to celebrate the world's oldest surviving culture on a day that is otherwise painful for our people. This event promotes bringing everyone together in solidarity to engage with the Aboriginal culture through music, dance and art.

2020 saw an array of talented artists such as none other than Uncle Archie Roach, Emma Donovan, Col Hardy, Jarrod Hickling, The Merindas and up and coming young Mt Druitt local talent, Montanah.







# COOEE CONTINUED

COOEE had no shortage of culture with two dance groups putting on deadly performances, Nulungu Dreaming and Djiriba Waaguru. There was also a Yidaki sessions, Storytelling and Artifacts workshop by Brendan Kerin, language lessons by Erin Wilkins, art exhibition showcasing artists paintings, sand art by Walangari and weaving workshops by Culture of the Move.

The NRL was represented by our Indigeneous stars Jack Wighton, Cody Walker and Latrell Mitchell who were crowd favourites. We were also lucky enough to have the Kinchella Boys bus present, and Walkabout Barber who was servicing the Elders with haircuts and trauma counselling.

The kids hub was full of activities such as face painting, reptile petting, a ball pit, sand pit, finger painting painting, basketball and play-doh.

The Elders were kept cool in their own hub with a deadly feed, centred to the left of the stage so they could watch all of the entertainment without moving.

Link-Up (NSW) was the event sponsor while NSW Aboriginal Education Consultive Group (AECG) came on board as the major sponsor. We thank the AECG for their valuable contribution. Without your support, and other organisations who helped sponsor this event, COOEE Festival would not go ahead.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, COOEE festival has been pushed back to July 2021. We wanted to ensure we were able to deliver another quality festival without the worried of COVID-19 restrictions.

Link-Up (NSW) is looking forward to putting on another deadly event for our people.



"COOEE FESTIVAL GIVES MY FAMILY SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE ON SURVIVAL DAY. IT IS SO IMPORTANT FOR US WESTERN SYDNEY MOB"



# HIGHLIGHTS



Link-Up (NSW) was invited to be involved with the NSW Public Service Commission's new cultural capability E-learning tool they are developing called "Everyone's Business".

The key objective for this project is to create awareness and knowledge about the history of the Stolen Generations to support the NSW Public Service Workforce. In attendance on filming day was our Programs Manager Jodie Matthews, Redress Counsellor Dianne Royce and Researcher Cindy Duncan.

ABC news attended Link-Up (NSW) office to interview Shaun Middlebrook, former acting CEO and Dianne Royce on a story about Stolen Generations, Aboriginality and Identity. Aboriginal journalist, Sarah Collard covered this piece highlighting the growing number of Australians retracing their Indigenous heritage and reconnecting with their families and past. The story aired on Monday, 25th of May on ABC news, TV digital and radio affairs. We were extremely proud to be a part of this.



# HIGHLIGHTS

Link-Up (NSW) was the proud major sponsor for the Dreamtime Awards 2019. The Dreamtime Awards are an annual celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander for their achievements in sports, arts, academic and community. It is an opportunity for our First Nations people from across the Country to come together & recognise the excellence we have within our community. Former CEO Shaun Middlebrook, Chairperson Lizzie May and Treasurer Aunty Janet Smith took to the stage to announce the Dreamtime Person of the Year award.



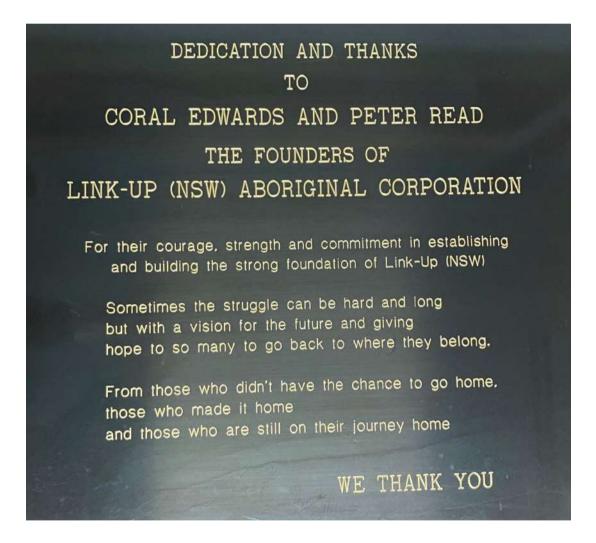


Link-Up (NSW) attended the opening ceremony of the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHAC) Mobile Education Centre. KBHAC transformed a retired commuter bus into a Stolen Generations mobile truth telling and healing centre to promote what happened at KBC, being one of it's kind. It also provides workshops and training aimed to educate young people and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Link-Up (NSW) was proud to be a part of this initiative.



### **40 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

This year, we celebrate our 40-year anniversary. What an amazing achievement that started out with Aunty Coral (Oomera) Edwards and Peter Read looking for Aunty Oomeras family, and has turned into 30+ employees and 40 years of bringing our people home. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 restrictions, we have had to postpone our gala dinner which will now take place in 2021.



We look forward to having our funding extended past 2022 to continue the important work we do reconnecting our clients with their culture, kin and country.

"MEETING MY FAMILY MEMBERS FOR THE FIRST TIME, I FELT LIKE I HAD COME HOME"

### POEM BY OUR CLIENT

### Link-Up

Link-Up is an organisation Who assist people like me In search of their connections To family, culture and history

We approach them when we need Their knowledge and assistance to succeed Much of the research done by them With access to resources and only then

Can we move forward in a positive light In order to end our ongoing plight Those people that they employ Are so helpful and full of joy

With standards that are well above Search for family we know not of Deserving of recognition you see Because they really have helped me

We'd like to thank you for your time Researching on this file of mine So time consuming, many rivers to cross Boarders to enter, we are no longer lost

> Thank you, Anita Johnson

# FINANCE

4.1 Treasurers Report4.2 Abridged Financials

### MESSAGE FROM THE **TREASURER**



The 2019-2020 financial year was one of change and consolidation for Link-Up (NSW). We are in a strong and stable position, poised for growth in 2020-2021. Link-Up (NSW) received a clean unqualified Audit Report, and received no Audit Management letter criticisms for 2019-2020 which is a great result that reflects the ongoing improvements in the finance department.

I am please to present the financial position of Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation for our members. The financial Statements for 2020 have

been prepared on an accrual basis, in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006.

The Board have overseen a year of a strong and viable Corporation; however the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic globally is causing significant disturbance and slowdown of economic activity. Link-Up (NSW) has considered internal and external information while finalising various estimates in relation to its financial statements, up to date of approval by the Board of Directors and has not identified any material impact on the carrying value of assets, liabilities or provisions. However, the impact assessment of COVID-19 is a continuing process given the uncertainties associates with its nature and duration. Link-Up (NSW) is monitoring the situation closely and shall take actions as appropriate based on any material changes to future economic conditions.

During the period, Link-Up (NSW) recorded Grant Income of \$3.8M (2018-2019 \$3.7M) and total revenue of \$4,078,664. With total assets valued at over \$3.8M and equity of \$3.3M.

The Australian Government, through the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, contributed \$2.33M for Link-Up (MSW)'s Social and Emotional Wellbeing Reunification program and other activities. The NSW Government contributed \$1.07M for Family and Community Services programs. The Australian Government, through the Department of Social Services contributed \$392K in relation to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse program and Redress program.

## CONTINUED...

Additional income amounting to \$283K is also reflected in the Profit and Loss Statement for the year under review. This comprises bank interest received of \$11.6K, dividends received, insurance recoveries of \$182K, Fee for Service Income of \$68K, Sponsorship, Donations and sale income for COOEE of \$62.9K.

Operating expenditure (including depreciation) totalled \$4.269M (2018-2019 \$4.08M) resulting in an Operating Deficit for the year of (\$191k) 2018-2019 (130K deficit).Link-Up (NSW)'s assets at 30 June 2020 amounted to \$3.81M (30 June 2019 \$4.35M) and liabilities totalled \$447 (30 June 2019 \$702K) resulting in total equity at 30 June 2020 of \$3.35M (\$130K deficit).

While there is no requirement from Link-Up (NSW)'s Members of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations to disclose payments made to Directors for Sitting Fees for travelling expenses, in the interest of transparency, the following represents a breakdown of payments during the year under review for Board expenses:

| Item                 | Amount (\$) | Amount (\$) |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                      | 2019-2020   | 2018-2019   |
| Sitting Fees         | 16,006      | 21,102      |
| Travel Costs         | 33,841      | 32,480      |
| Meeting Costs        | 353         | 1,380       |
| Mobile Phone Costs   | 0           | 0           |
| Teleconference Costs | 0           | 0           |
| Total Board Expenses | 50,200      | 54,962      |

The Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2020 together with the Independent Audit Report are included in the Annual Report on pages 49-53.

I commend the 2019-2020 audited Financial Statements for Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation to the Membership.

Janet Smith Treasurer

### Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation

ABN: 99 731 805 429

### **Directors' Declaration**

The directors of the Company declare that:

- The consolidated financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 4 to 22, are in accordance with the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2008 and:
  - a. comply with Accounting Standards Reduced Disclosure Requirements as stated in Note 1; and
  - b. give a true and fair view of the Group"s financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.
- In the directors' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Group will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.

Director ... ...... Elizabeth May - Chai

1 mit Director ....

Janet Smith - Treasurer

Dated: 24 November 2020

### Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation

ABN: 99 731 805 429

### Consolidated Statement of Financial Position As At 30 June 2020

|                               |      | 2020      | 2019      |
|-------------------------------|------|-----------|-----------|
|                               | Note | \$        | \$        |
| ASSETS                        |      |           |           |
| Current assets                |      |           |           |
| Cash and cash equivalents     | 5    | 1,802,975 | 2,153,989 |
| Trade and other receivables   | 6    | 29,268    | 47,446    |
| Other assets                  | 8    | 6,487     | -         |
| Total current assets          |      | 1,838,730 | 2,201,435 |
| Non-current assets            |      |           |           |
| Financial assets              | 7    | 2,221     | 2,221     |
| Property, plant and equipment | 9    | 1,977,988 | 2,152,053 |
| Total non-current assets      |      | 1,980,209 | 2,154,274 |
| TOTAL ASSETS                  |      | 3,818,939 | 4,355,709 |
| LIABILITIES                   | _    |           |           |
| Current liabilities           |      |           |           |
| Trade and other payables      | 10   | 165,132   | 169,581   |
| Financial liabilities         | 12   | 13,825    | 13,622    |
| Short-term provisions         | 11   | 127,593   | 164,299   |
| Contract liabilities          | 13   | 140,969   | 355,099   |
| Total current liabilities     |      | 447,519   | 702,601   |
| Non-current liabilities       | _    |           |           |
| Long-term provisions          | 11   | 18,430    | 32,531    |
| Total non-current liabilities | _    | 18,430    | 32,531    |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES             | _    | 465,949   | 735,132   |
| NET ASSETS                    | _    | 3,352,990 | 3,620,577 |
|                               |      |           |           |
| EQUITY                        |      |           |           |
| Asset revaluation reserve     |      | 413,957   | 490,412   |
| Retained surpluses            | _    | 2,939,033 | 3,130,165 |
| TOTAL EQUITY                  | _    | 3,352,990 | 3,620,577 |

HOO H

### Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation

### Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

|  |            | 2020        | 2019  |
|--|------------|-------------|---|
|  | Note       | s           | \$  |
| Revenue  | 3          | 4,046,015   | 3,892,597   |
| Other income                                       | 3          | 32,649      | 62,771  |
| Legal and consulting expense                       |            | (439,479)   | (237,292)   |
| Depreciation, amortisation and impairment expense  | 4          | (124,329)   | (122,668)   |
| Employee benefits expense                          | 4          | (2,688,839) | (2,599,249)   |
| Finance costs                                      | 4          | (330)       | (355)   |
| Motor vehicle expenses                             |            | (49,296)    | (38,531)  |
| Occupancy expenses                                 |            | (153,181)   | (146,348)   |
| Printing and stationery                            |            | (19,735)    | (21,132)  |
| Repairs and maintenance                            |            | (72,176)    | (140,803)   |
| Reunion expenses                                   | 4          | (523,629)   | (472,713)   |
| Travel expenses                                    |            | (67,114)    | (85,639)  |
| Other operating expenses                           |            | (131,688)   | (221,124)   |
| Deficit before income tax                          |            | (191,132)   | (130,486)   |
| Income tax expense                                 | 1(e)       | 1000000     | 1.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - 0.000 - |
| Deficit for the year                               | 8          | (191,132)   | (130,486)   |
| Other comprehensive income                         |            |             |   |
| Revaluation adjustment for land and buildings      | 03         | (76,455)    | -   |
| Total comprehensive income / (loss) for the year   | _          | (267,587)   | (130,486)   |
| Deficit attributable to:                           | 178        |             | N.  |
| Members of the parent entity                       | 84         | (191,132)   | (130,486)   |
| Total comprehensive income/(loss) attributable to: | 170        |             | 57<br>2220-1221-2020-5  |
| Members of the parent entity                       | . <u> </u> | (267,587)   | (130,486)   |

### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF LINK-UP (NSW) ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

#### Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation (the Company) and its subsidiaries (the Group), which comprises the consolidated statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020, the Consolidated consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the Consolidated statement of changes in equity and the consolidated statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Group is in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001 and the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the Group's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its financial performance for the year ended; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the Corporations Regulations 2001 and the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2008.

#### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Group in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006, which has been given to the directors of the Company, would be in the same terms if given to the directors as at the time of this auditor's report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Responsibilities of Directors for the Financial Report

The directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the Corporations Act 2001 - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the Group's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the Group or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

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#### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that
  are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness
  of the Group's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based
  on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that
  may cast significant doubt on the Group's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a
  material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related
  disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our
  conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However,
  future events or conditions may cause the Group to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

We also provide the directors with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.

PKF

SCOTT TOBUTT PARTNER

24 NOVEMBER 2020 SYDNEY, NSW

# **FUNDERS** 5.1 Our Funding

### To our Funders, Thank You

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation, would like to acknowledge the assistance and funding of:





**Social Media** @linkupNSW



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