



LINK-UP [NSW]
Aboriginal Corporation



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

.....

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation acknowledges 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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STANDING IN THE PRESENT,
ACKNOWLEDGING THE PAST,
LOOKING FORWARD.



OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Chairperson Report
- 1.2 Board of Directors
- 1.3 CEO Introduction
- 1.4 Senior Management Team

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Yaama,

I would like to acknowledge that we are all on Aboriginal Land that has never been ceded. I pay my respect to elder's past, present, and future; for those who have not made it home, or are still on their way, we hope you make it home soon. We would like to pay our respect to the many Stolen Generations members who will never make it home and send our love to them and their families. I recognise the importance of knowing where we come from, our identity, kin, and culture. May we all have the opportunity to connect to our country, kin, identity, and culture.

This has been my fourth year running as the Chair of the Board of Directors. On behalf of the Board, staff, members and clients, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2020-2021. We would like to acknowledge and thank our Commonwealth and NSW funding partners for their continued support; National Indigenous Australians Agency for the Social, Emotional and well-being programs, the Department of Social Services for the Redress program, the Department of Communities and Justice for the Family Link and Community Builder programs and CAPO for the Closing the Gap initiative. Without this funding, we would not be able to continue assisting Aboriginal people and communities in NSW.

Link-Up (NSW) has seen a challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the lock downs, restrictions and operating without a CEO since April 2021. We are looking forward to 2022 as we are pleased to announce the appointment of our new CEO who will commence in early December, Mr Jamie Sampson. Jamie is a proud Kamilaroi man from Coonamble and brings extensive knowledge and experience to the organisation.

Our focus remains our core business of reuniting the Stolen Generations with their family, identity, country, and culture. The Board has remained 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 ongoing governance training to ensure our processes remain strong.

Our staff have shown tremendous dedication and resilience through a difficult year by meeting the challenges of the pandemic the best they could.

CONTINUED...

Our head office is located in a suburb within Western Sydney that was classified as a major hot spot for COVID-19, which meant our staff worked from home for a large portion of the year. While this has been difficult, we have had some great gains.

The deadly staff have been creative in their approach to delivering services, coming up with great ideas to connect with our clients and community. Our social media platforms have been utilised to stay connected with mob, keeping them informed of COVID-19 restrictions and health advice, as well as providing our mob with some useful tips on keeping themselves safe. Our wonderful Counsellors did a great job maintaining regular contact with our clients to ensure their mental health did not decline during these tough times and we hosted online trivia which had a fantastic response.

As face-to-face reunions had to be postponed, our Reunification team successfully held virtual reunions - a first for Link-Up (NSW). We simply could not wait until the lock down was lifted to continue reuniting families.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our SMT and staff who supported the Boards vision and have remained trusting of our decisions. It's true when we say we are the "Link-Up family". The fantastic initiatives developed to ensure we could continue to provide services to our clients is a credit to our staff, who never fail to impress me with their care and compassion they show our clients. We are so lucky to have such a deadly team.

We would like to acknowledge the challenging time our mob are facing during the pandemic and offer our sincere condolences to those who lost loved ones, particularly those who were not able to give their loved ones the send-off to the dreamtime they deserve.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the Board for their continued support and guidance. It is a privilege to work alongside each of you; you all inspire me

There will be many challenges ahead of us, but we have our strength and determination to rely on. We owe it to our ancestors, our elders, our kids and our future to support each other, to take care of each other, our communities and to continue to reunite families and heal broken hearts

This, is why we do, what we do.

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 4 years and has played an integral role during this time. 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.



REBEKAH CURTIS
Vice Chairperson

Rebekah is a proud Noongar woman from Western Australia and has been on the Board of Directors for 6 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.



RAELENE CORAK
Secretary

Raelene has been on the Board of Directors for the last 5 years and takes her role as Secretary very seriously. Raelene feels a great sense of pride representing the members of Link-Up (NSW) and the important work that is being undertaken every day. Raelene has enjoys working alongside the other Board of Directors.



JANET SMITH
Treasurer

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 and shares her own personal experiences through Link-Up (NSW).



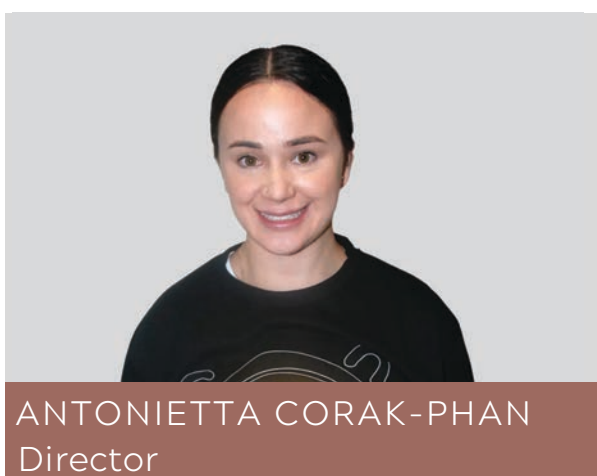
JEAN BARTLEY
Director

Jean is a proud Wiradjuri woman who was forcibly removed as a child. Link-Up (NSW) assisted Jean in finding her family and reunited them in 2013. She has a wide skill set she brings to the board. As a Stolen Generations survivor herself, Jean is proud to be a Link-Up (NSW) board member and enjoys supporting clients being reunited with their families, communities and land.



AILEEN BELL
Director

Aileen Bell (Edwards) is a proud Kamilaroi woman who has been on the Link-Up (NSW) Board of Directors since 2013. Aileen enjoys her role helping make a difference to our Stolen Generations. Aileen would like to be on the Board of Directors for as long as she can, so she can continue to improve the lives of our people and community.



ANTONIETTA CORAK-PHAN
Director

Antonietta is a proud Biripi woman. She has recently completed a Certificate III in Early Childhood and enjoys working with young children. Her Grandmother and Great Grandmother were both from the Stolen Generations. With the support of Link-Up (NSW), she was able to connect with family members which helped deepen her cultural identity. Antonietta looks forward to supporting more families to have the same experience.



PETER READ
Director

Peter is a non-Indigenous Director on the board of Link-Up (NSW). Peter is permitted under the category in the Constitution as one holding Special Expertise. In 1980, Peter Read and Oomera Edwards co-founded Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation where he was an employee until 1986. He remained a Public Officer for a several years after that. His knowledge and passion for the Stolen Generations is invaluable.

INTRODUCING THE NEW CEO

Link-Up (NSW) welcomes newly appointed Chief Executive Officer, Jamie Sampson.

Jamie is a proud Kamilaroi man from Coonamble with strong family ties to Moree and Gulargambone. He was originally primary trained but gained qualifications as a secondary Mathematics Teacher. He worked as a Teacher, Head Teacher and Deputy Principal in Western NSW in towns such as Coonamble, Narromine, Dubbo and Condobolin. He was inspired to become a teacher to make a difference for Aboriginal students and ensure they had a passionate and energetic teacher who wanted to assist them in achieving their goals.



He spent the past 7 years working in TAFE NSW leading teams of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal peoples to improve community engagement. Essentially, the role was to ensure that our most rural and remote Aboriginal communities are provided with first class training that is supported by the other teams that he led, Aboriginal Student Support Officers.

“I am so excited to be joining Link-Up (NSW) as CEO. The desire to lead this organisation comes from my passion for the Stolen Generations. I believe every Aboriginal family has been affected in some way by the past Government policies, so I am proud to work for an organisation that reunites our people back to culture, community and kin while supporting them on their healing journey. Link-Up (NSW) provides high quality programs such as Reunification, Family Link, Redress and Community Builder. Link-Up (NSW) is part of the Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (CAPO) and has huge role to play in the Closing the Gap Reforms for NSW, alongside other CAPOs and the NSW Government. I can’t wait to work with the Senior Management Team, Link-Up (NSW) employees and the Board of Directors to achieve our outcomes of supporting Aboriginal Peoples across the whole of NSW”

MEET THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM



KYLIE NORMAN
Business Manager



LYNNE KINGHAN
Finance Manager



JODIE MATTHEWS
Programs Manager



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



OUR TEAM

2.1 Vision, Purpose & Objectives

2.2 Organisational Chart

2.3 Staff Development

VISION, PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES



Our Purpose

To redress the grave injustices, deprivations and incursions into the health & emotional well-being & 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 Vision

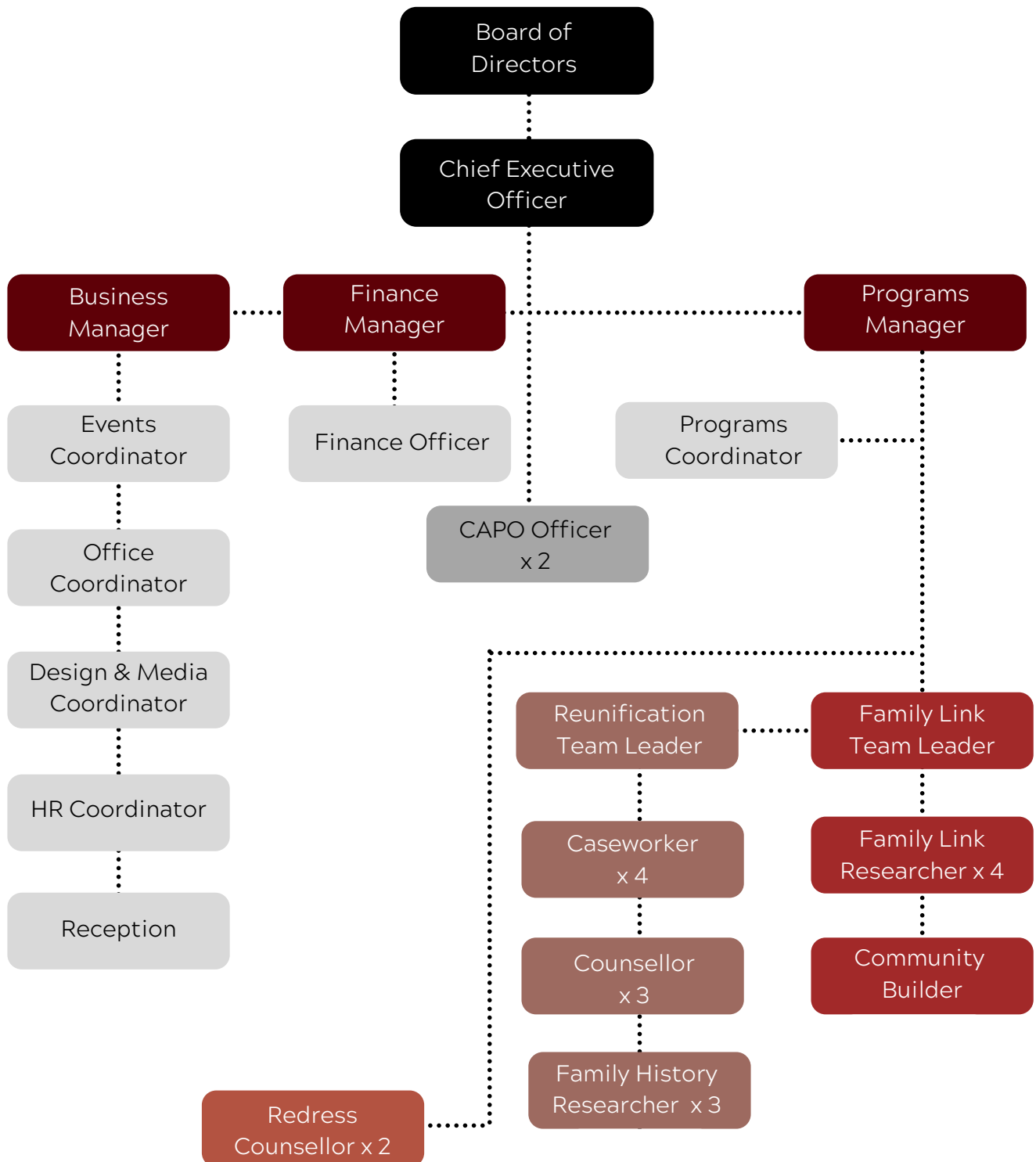
To lead the way in the design & delivery of culturally safe holistic services to build a healthy and strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community



Our Objectives

1. 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

ORGANISATIONAL CHART





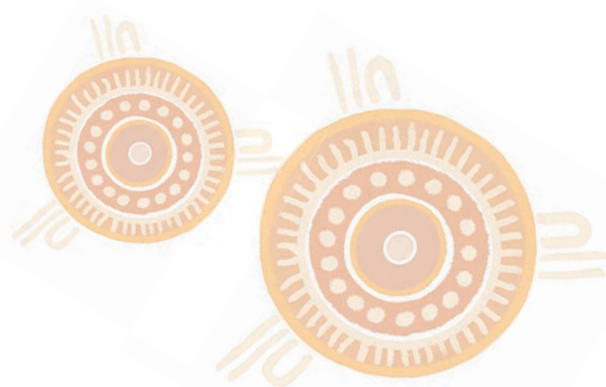
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

TRAINING

- First Aid
- Mental Health First Aid
- ORIC Rulebook workshop training
- Bullying & Harassment training
- ABSEC Conference
- Say No to Violence training
- Creating Personal Resilience with Workplace Mental Health Institute
- Closing the Gap Conference
- AH&MRC Suicide Prevention Symposium “Let’s Walk together.. Let’s talk together
- The Australian Bookkeeping Summit 2021 - Opportunity Meets Influence
- Australia Wide Payroll and Taxation Seminar

TAFE

- Diploma of Family History
- Diploma of Community Services
- Diploma of Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Diploma of Counselling
- Diploma of Business





PROGRAMS

- 3.1 COVID-19 Impact
- 3.2 CAPO
- 3.3 Reunification
- 3.4 Healing Weekends
- 3.5 Redress
- 3.6 Family Link
- 3.7 Community Builder



For the second year in a row like many other organisations, Link-Up (NSW) has been challenged by the COVID-19 global pandemic. While our main concern was ensuring the health and safety of our staff and clients, our priority was to continue our service delivery, in particular reuniting the Stolen Generations which remains our core business.

The harsh lock downs and restrictions in NSW meant we were unable to connect with our clients in person. For the first time ever, Link-Up (NSW) transitioned into virtual reunions with the view to take these clients back to Country when safe to do so. However, this still affected the amount of clients we were able to safely reunite this year.

We engaged with community via our social media platforms. Link-Up (NSW) took the stance of protecting our people and therefore encouraged mob to get vaccinated. We also played an important role in supporting our Stolen Generations communities and kin to promote good hygiene and mental health during this tough period.

Our dedicated staff worked from home, maintaining regular contact with our clients and each other with weekly all staff meetings to stay connected and come up with ideas on how to better service our community virtually.

While we aim to maintain a strong presence virtually, can now commence face to face engagement, taking clients back to country and connecting them back to their culture.

COALITION OF PEAK ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS (CAPO)

Link-Up (NSW) has been part of the National Coalition of Peak Aboriginal Organisations since its inception in 2009. Link-Up (NSW) continues to raise the voices of our clients and communities, advocating towards closing the gap; in particular focusing on families, justice, health, language, culture and data.

Closing the Gap Targets

- to close the life expectancy gap within a generation
- to halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade
- to ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four-year-olds in remote communities within five years
- to halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade
- to halve the gap for Indigenous students in year 12 attainment rates by 2020 and
- to halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

NSWCAPO formed in April 2011 through the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Founding members came together to strengthen their collective advocacy for improved social, economic and cultural well-being of Aboriginal people in NSW.



NSW CAPO is currently made up of:

Absec (NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation)

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation

AH&MRC (Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council)

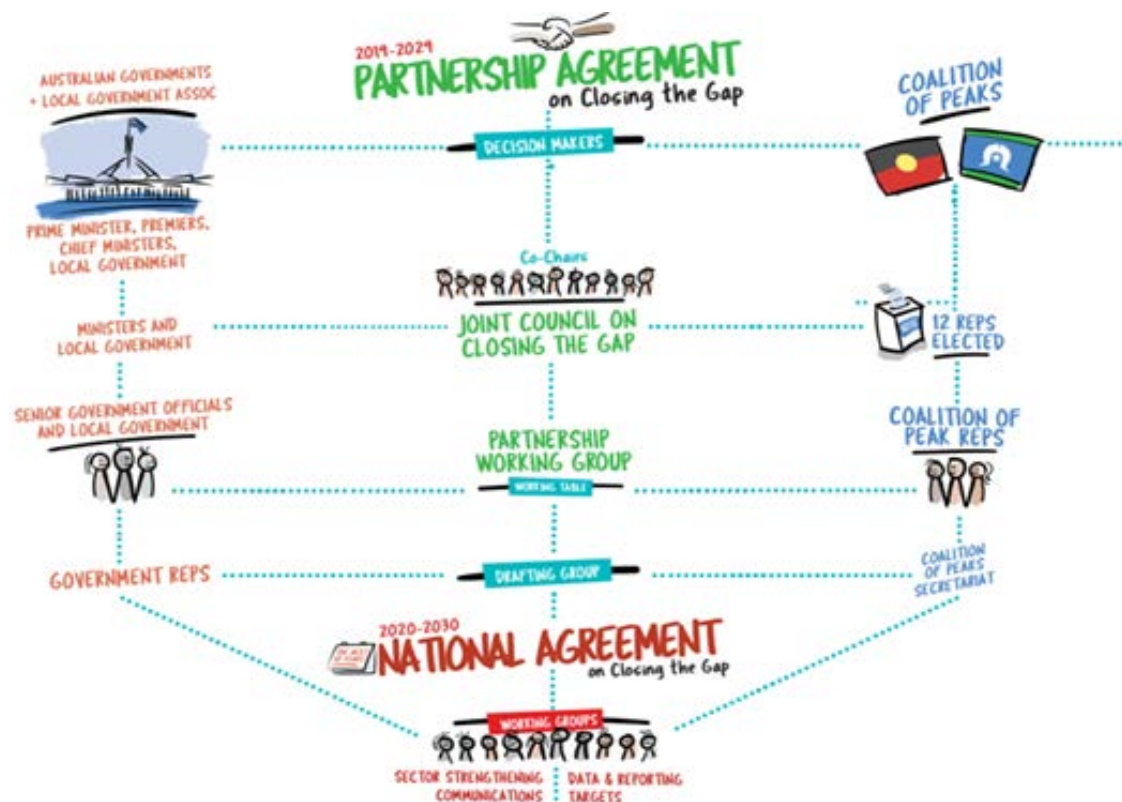
ALS (Aboriginal Legal Service)

NSW Aboriginal Land Council

AECG (Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc.)

FPDN (First Peoples Disability Network Australia)

BLAQ - Aboriginal Corporation



NSWCAPO and NSW Government are the New South Wales signatories to the Closing the Gap National Partnership Agreement and work in partnership with other organisations and agencies on Closing the Gap across the state. Over time, NSWCAPO have become the recognised peak body within NSW by both State and Commonwealth governments in relation to Aboriginal leadership, policy negotiations, expertise and advocacy for social, economic and cultural wellbeing. NSWCAPO also carries significant political clout across the country, with many Aboriginal organisations looking to NSWCAPO for policy guidance on key issues.

Partnership with NSW government on Closing the Gap

The NSWCAPO and the NSW Government have agreed on joint governance arrangements to develop, implement and monitor NSW's response to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. These joint governance arrangements make up the NSW Partnership for Closing the Gap.

NSW Joint Council

The NSW Joint Council (NSWJC) is the key decision-making group overseeing the planning and implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap in NSW.

It is jointly chaired by:

- the NSW Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Don Harwin MLC
- and the chair of NSWCAPO, Charles Lynch, Councillor, NSW Aboriginal Land Council

Members include:

- All NSWCAPO members
- Secretary, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet

The group is supported by:

- Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Head of Aboriginal Affairs, Aboriginal Affairs NSW
- CEO of NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

The principles underpinning the NSW Joint Council

The NSW Joint Council is guided by a terms of reference, agrees upon a yearly work plan and releases communiques from their meetings



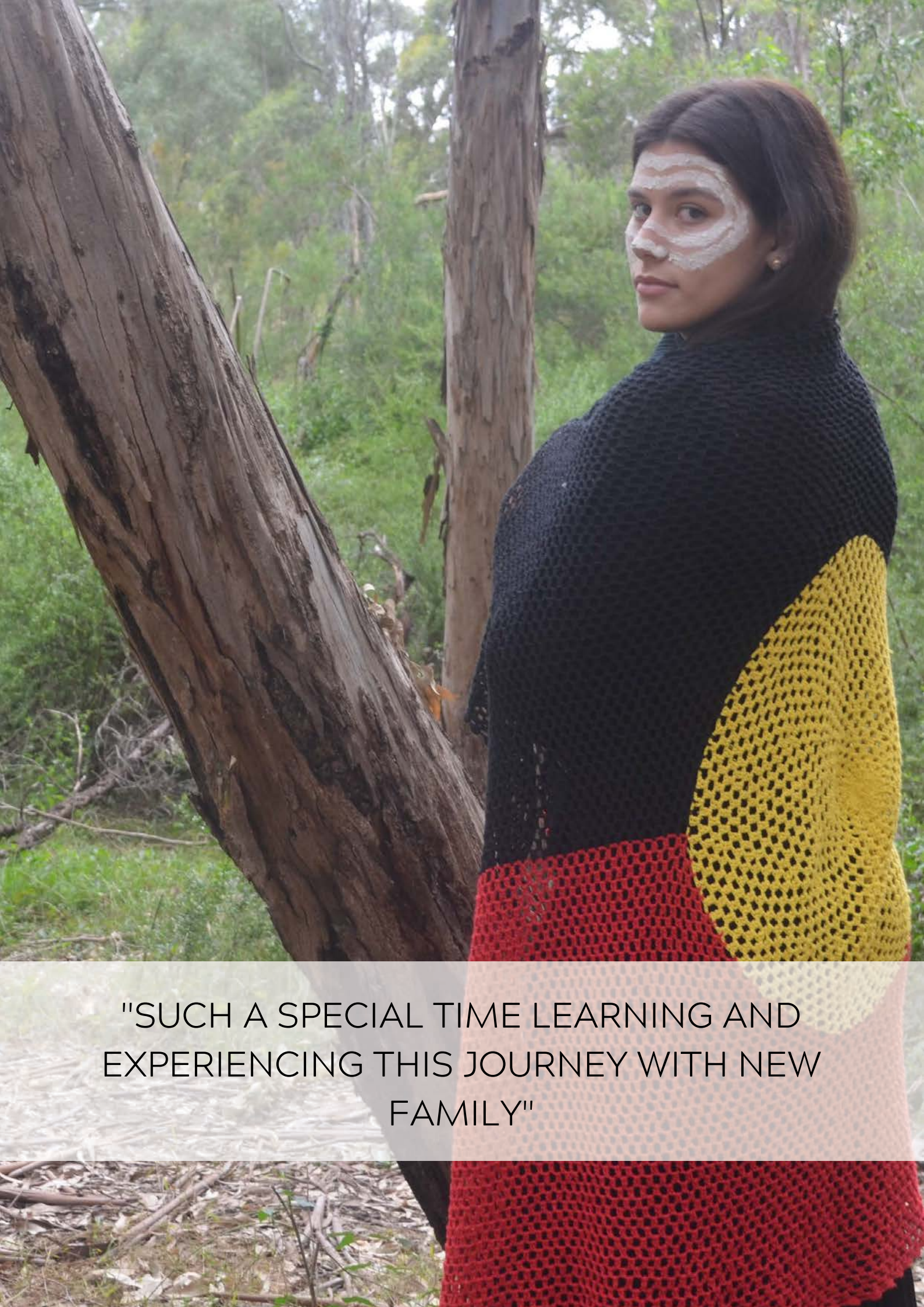
NSW Closing the Gap Implementation Plan

Through the NSW Joint Council, the first Implementation Plan for the National Agreement was negotiated and made public on 23 June 2021.

It was agreed that the Implementation Plan would cover an initial one year, primarily focusing on the Priority Reforms and be built on over time. In addition to the four Priority Reforms in the National Agreement, the NSW Implementation Plan includes a fifth reform: Economic Prosperity and Employment.

The NSW Joint Council also agreed that actions to be included in the next iteration of the Implementation Plan would be informed by further community engagements. The NSWCAPO, particularly the NSWALC, has continually emphasised the importance of further community engagements and have led a number of their own to inform the negotiations of the National Agreement and the NSW Implementation Plan.

In putting together the Implementation Plan, the NSWCAPO pressed the NSW government to include new actions and how existing policies and programs are being transformed to align with the Priority Reforms, rather than existing policies and programs mapped against the Priority Reforms. This requires further effort in the next iteration of the Implementation Plan.



"SUCH A SPECIAL TIME LEARNING AND
EXPERIENCING THIS JOURNEY WITH NEW
FAMILY"

REUNIFICATION PROGRAM

The Reunification team is made up of researchers, caseworkers and counsellors who collectively connect our clients back to culture, community and kin. The team works diligently to ensure our clients receive a thorough and trauma informed experience.

Link-Up (NSW) is now in its 41st year of providing this vital service to the community, an amazing milestone to be proud of. It is an honour to be part of each client's journey towards healing.

In the past year, we successfully reunited 25 people with their families, virtually and in person. Before COVID restrictions were in place, our reunions took us across NSW, working collaboratively with Aboriginal health services, land councils and community members.



Photo of our reunification team holding a virtual meeting

THEY ARE NOT CLIENTS TO US, THEY ARE FAMILY



REUNIFICATION PROGRAM

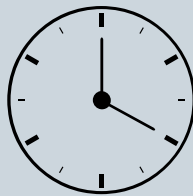
A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

13

reunions
completed

550

hours spent on
reunions



25

people reunited

3,068

hours spent
researching family
history



2,078

contacts made

53

counselling
sessions



24-76

age range of clients that
attended reunions

Our statistics were largely affected by the COVID-19 restrictions

REUNION

STORY



Kenneth Edwards is a man who has spent his entire life looking for his family, identity and culture

On Sunday 19th of December 1976 at Crown Street Women's Hospital, Sydney, Kenneth Edwards was born to Elizabeth Podham/Handy. He was later removed and they were never to see each other again. Elizabeth went back to her family in Mildura, VIC while Kenny was placed into foster care.

Kenny was in his early teens when he ran away from his foster home and spent the next few years on the streets.

Kenny got a break in his 30's when he was reunited with his older brother Robert. Robert in turn, arranged for Kenny to meet their younger sister Trudy. The three siblings are still in touch today and have regular contact with each other.

Kenny applied to Link-Up (NSW) looking for more family and information on his Mum to help him to establish his identity.

Link-Up (NSW) was able to find his maternal family history and provide Kenny with a mob to identify to. Kenny can now proudly declare himself as a Wiradjuri man from Murrin Bridge in the Lake Cargelligo region of NSW.

Kenny's reunion was held in Mildura in March 2021, with Kenny, Uncle Michael 'Widdy' Welsh (a support and mentor to Kenny) and three Link-Up (NSW) staff. The reunion took place over two days where Kenny got to meet more members of his family, including his Mother's sister. Link-Up (NSW) would like to thank Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS) for their assistance in providing a culturally safe space for the family meeting to take place.

Kenny was also lucky enough to attend a few family members homes and was immediately accepted as family by everyone. During the reunion, Kenny was able to visit the Dareton Mission where a cousin of his lives.

The most difficult part of the reunion was attending the grave site of his late Mother Elizabeth. It brought great sadness to Kenny to see she was in an unmarked grave with no-one knowing it was her. Kenny felt it was undignified.

Kenny works for Kinchela Boys Home, helping people in difficult times with similar stories to his (we know every person's story is different, with the same commonality - REMOVAL). Kenny has been trying hard to save enough money to have a headstone placed on his Mother's grave, Unfortunately because Kenny was removed after the June 1969 eligibility date for the Reparations Scheme, he is ineligible to claim and therefore the total cost for Elizabeth's headstone will need to be paid by Kenny.

Kenny stated he gained way more than he expected from his reunion and felt the most outstanding part of the reunion was "meeting my family and being close to where mum was".

Kenny is still in touch with all family members he was reunited with in Mildura. Link-Up (NSW) have now, after months of searching, been able to obtain a copy of Elizabeth's adoption file. It will be our utmost pleasure to provide this to Kenny knowing it will fill in some of those missing pieces and bring some healing to Kenny.

REUNION

STORY



Jackie was 47 years old when she asked Link-Up (NSW) to help find her family she was removed from at the tender age of 3

Jackie Trindall was placed into care at 3 years old. Jackie came to Link-Up (NSW) at 47 years old seeking help finding her family, her country, her identity and what it means to be a part of the Aboriginal community.

The Trindall Reunion took place in December 2020 in Wellington, where with the help of Caseworker Shanarah Kendall, and our counsellors Mary-Anne Frail and Luke Roseworne, she was reunited with 3 of her cousins. The cousins were very emotional meeting for the first time. Sitting down with their Caseworker Shanarah, they were shown the family tree links to each other and given an opportunity to bond before returning to Country at Nanima Wellington NSW. Jackie's 3 daughters went on this journey with her and were all taken out to the Town Common Mission by Aunty Anita Johnson, an Elder from Wellington.

The family arrived to a beautiful Welcome to Country and a performance by cultural dancers Milan Dhiyaan that Auntie Anita had organised. This was followed by a lunch at The Town Common. They were presented with old family photos and a diorama of the Nanima Mission in its 'hay' day for keepsake.

After a tour of the old houses that were still standing, the family spent quality time sharing stories and took some photos together before heading home for the day.

The next day Shanarah had organised a graveside visit to Wellington Cemetery where they paid respects to some of the families lost Aunts and Uncles before heading off to Molong to see the historic gravesite of Yuranigh, Sir Thomas Mitchell's Aboriginal assistant, the only known site in Australia where Aboriginal and European burial practices coexist.

After her reunion, Jackie has become a member of Link-Up (NSW), regularly attending healing weekends and other events.

Jackie is now a Link-Up (NSW) family member for life.



REUNION

STORY



Daphne and her cousin shared an instant bond the moment they met, proving the collaboration between the two Link-Up organisations was a success

Daphne Wallace phoned Link-Up (NSW) one morning feeling very anxious. She had provided Link-Up (QLD) with contacts in Walgett for a reunion they were organising. The reunion was for Daphne's cousin Margaret to return back to Country. Daphne was upset that she was not able to attend the reunion and meet her cousin, as she did not have the money nor the transport for the 5 hour trip from Armidale to Walgett. Daphne's mother was in a nursing home in Walgett and was one of the family members arranged to meet with Margaret. Daphne's phone call was to see if we could assist her in paying for fuel to a friend of hers who was willing to drive her to Walgett in her own car, so that Daphne wouldn't miss out on meeting with Margaret.

Link-Up (NSW) signed Daphne up as a client and provided her the support she needed to get to Walgett. This included case management, pre and post reunion counselling, financial support during reunion, accommodation and reunion meals.

Link-Up (NSW) and Link-Up (QLD) worked closely together to assist and support Daphne and her cousin with the reunion.

Unfortunately, a week before the reunion, Daphne's mum passed away. Margaret was upset and phoned Daphne who convinced her to continue with the reunion so they could meet. Daphne stated to her caseworker and counsellor that Margaret needed to come home, as it had been too long and that her mum has been waiting for Margaret to return to home for far too long. Both were so excited to meet one another.

Margaret and Daphne brought gifts for each other, without knowing - the bond was there almost instantly. It was an amazing to witness them exchange their gifts and hug for about 5 minutes with tears running down their cheeks.

Daphne and Margaret talk frequently and are planning holidays to visit one another. It is apparent that the collaboration between the two Link-Up organisations was a great success.



HEALING WEEKENDS



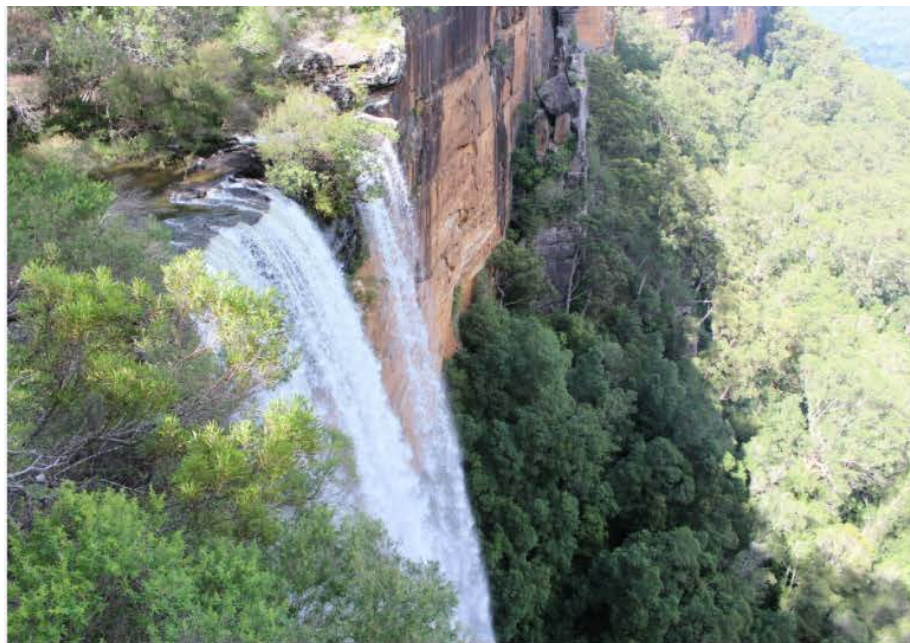
What are Healing Weekends?

As part of Link-Up (NSW)'s ongoing commitment to helping our clients heal, we invite them to our Healing Weekends which are held twice a year. The clients have the opportunity to yarn with counsellors, other Stolen Generation survivors, visit sacred sites & landmarks, and participate in cultural activities, such as traditional art, dance, crafts & song.

Attending Healing Weekends and participating in these activities has a positive impact on our clients social, emotional, cultural, spiritual and physical wellbeing, helps strengthen their knowledge and connection to culture, and improve their mental health.

"I was so overwhelmed and grateful for the experience.
I feel very blessed"

HEALING WEEKENDS GALLERY



HEALING WEEKENDS GALLERY

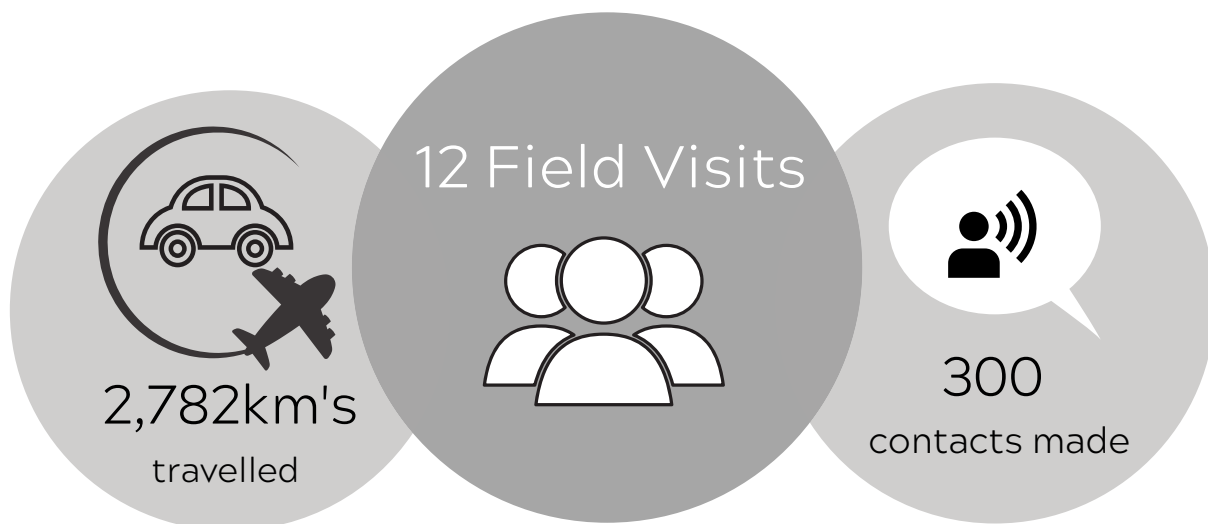


REDRESS PROGRAM



The National Redress Scheme is in response to the Royal Commission into institutional child sex abuse. People that qualify for this service can apply for compensation and seek additional support services. Link-Up (NSW) has been advocating for our clients since 2018.

Link-Up (NSW) is funded for two full-time counsellors to assist clients through the application process. The counsellors provide social and emotional well-being support warm referrals and linkages within communities. They work closely with Knowmore Legal, who provide pro-bono legal and procedural advice.



REDRESS PROGRAM

2021 saw our counsellors attend training with Aunty Rosemary Wanganeen, Griefologist and Educator specialising in all things associated with the human experiences of loss and grief. The 2-day program focused on 7 phases to integrating loss and grief model. Counsellors are taught to be first responders and how intergenerational suppressed unresolved grief has compounded and complicated contemporary Aboriginal people's lives, and is particularly relevant to understanding self-harm and suicide prevention. We believe this training is particularly beneficial for our counsellors to adequately support our clients.

In August, Redress counsellor Lisa Polyblank represented Link-Up (NSW) at the Joint Select Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the National Redress Scheme. The Joint Select Committee examines the Kruk two-year review of the NRS. The conference was attended by organisations from most states, including Link-Up (QLD), The Healing Foundation and VACCA Victoria.

Link-Up (NSW) welcomed the announcement from Prime Minister Scott Morrison for reparation compensation for Aboriginal people forcibly removed and placed into institutions in former Commonwealth Territories of ACT, Jervis Bay and Northern Territory.

The Government has promised more than \$1 billion dollars of new funding to Close the Gap strategy over the next 5 years. Of particular note is the long overdue allocation of \$378.6 million for members of the Stolen Generations who were removed as children from their families in former Commonwealth Territories. Many Stolen Generations are now ageing, and this allocation of funds acknowledges and validates the ongoing grief and trauma they experience as a result of being removed.

As a Nation still dealing with the ongoing legacy of removing Aboriginal children from their families, this announcement is a positive step in the right direction towards healing and well-being, not only for the individuals, the families and communities, but also for the Nation.





"THE WHOLE HEALING PROCESS HAS BEEN
MADE A LOT EASIER WITH THE SUPPORT FROM
LINK-UP (NSW)"

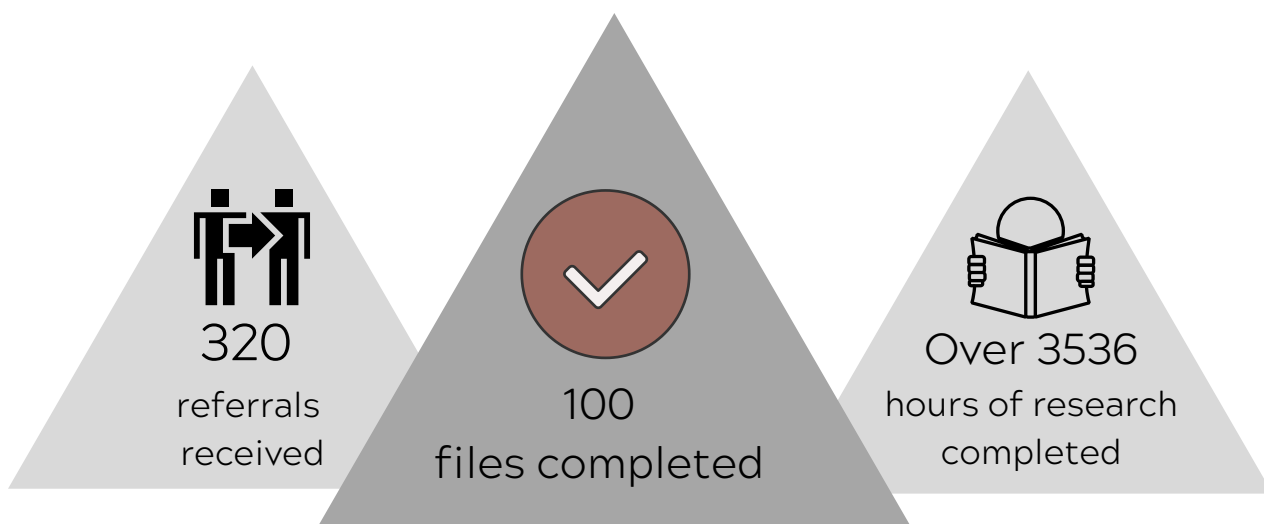
FAMILY LINK PROGRAM



Photo of our family link team holding a virtual meeting

Link-Up (NSW) is funded by Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) for our Family Link program. Our team of family history researchers dedicate hours thoroughly researching and supplying kinship tracing to referrers, assisting children and youth who are in, or at risk of entering the Out of Home Care (OOHC) sector.

This year, Link-Up (NSW) successfully negotiated a new 3 year working partnership agreement with DCJ. This new agreement is the first for any non-for-profit Aboriginal community-controlled organisation. This vital funding assists kids stay connected to their culture and identity with the goal being able to ensure these children are always culturally safe.



"LINK-UP (NSW) IS A GREAT ORGANISATION.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE I WOULD
BE WITHOUT THEM"



COMMUNITY BUILDER PROGRAM

Our Community Builder program is funded to provide assistance to clients in the Nepean Blue Mountain region through financial, legal, health, family and housing crisis. The program connects local community to support services while working with them towards positive outcomes.

With the COVID-19 virus impacting our state, the Community Builder program saw an increase in different types of requests for assistance this year. Link-Up (NSW) responded to this by utilising extra staff and with the help of both of our Elders, Aunty Pat and Uncle Dennis Dunn. There were also changes to how we communicated and networked. NSW being in lock down for many months meant many of our services were provided virtually instead of face to face. We continued to engage with important stakeholders like Primary Health Network, Youth Justice, Justice Reinvestment and Department of Communities and Justice.

Penrith Highlights

- Joining the Aboriginal Workforce Development Program (AWDP)
- Collaborating with Sydney University, tackling issues on Aboriginal children in Out of Home Care
- Over 200 Indigenous Community Engagements
- Over 100 stakeholder visits
- Providing cultural mentoring for the Fostering Lifelong Connections project
- Building links within 14 local schools
- Engaged in activities at Cranebrook Neighbourhood Centre
- Participated in the Breakfast Club at Koolyangarra Aboriginal and Child Family Centre
- Worked with PHN to provide and pack breakfasts and lunches while assisting with after school activities.

Blue Mountains/Hawkesbury Highlights

- Attending the ACRC Koori Playgroup
- Together with Blue Mountains Council and ACRC, lead the food hamper delivery to families in need



Mural "Life along the Durubbin"

COMMUNITY BUILDER PROGRAM



Auntie Pat Field at a community event

Blue Mountains/Hawkesbury Highlights Continued

- Liaising with over 50 stakeholders to ensure those in need had access to food, water, health services & transport
- Working with Court Advocacy Services on domestic violence matters
- Working with Hawkesbury District Health Services providing NDIS support
- Attend St John of Gods presentation of their new mural "Life along the Durubbin".

Mt Druitt Highlights

- Continuing to build strong and meaningful relationships with local Mt Druitt services such as Marrin Weejali, Babaayan, Holy Family and Kimberwalli
- Assisting a local family raise a funeral fund
- Helping a local community centre prepare their own Reconciliation plan
- Stolen Generations presentation at Shavley High to students studying Aboriginal studies.

COVID assistance

Our Community Builders worked with various local services supporting the community during the pandemic assisting with food, utility support, health, OOH, alcohol and other drugs and help completing applications for various support services.

Department of Communities and Justice

Link-Up (NSW) is part of the Yura Murana Community Network, an interagency hub formed by DCJ comprising of stakeholders from different organisations working together to improve the lives of Aboriginal children in OOH. Identifying the need for Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to improve their work with Aboriginal families across several domains, our community builders continue to:

- Provide consultation and advice on cultural matters and service provision options.
- Raise issues on behalf of community or individuals
- Ensure DCJ are hearing the voice of Aboriginal communities and the individual families that we work with.



CONNECTING MOB TO THEIR
HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Launch of Stolen Generations Men's Group

Link-Up (NSW) was proud to launch the Stolen Generations Men's Group this year together with Uncle Don from The Shed, Emerton.

Our staff member and Elder, Uncle Dennis Dunn led this initiative, creating a safe place for those who were forcibly removed to come together and meet brothers who are going through the same journey of healing and making their way back home.

“Those who are from the Stolen Generation need to heal from the trauma they went through from the time they were taken, to the present day. They have many struggles they go through, while trying to keep up with society that is ever-changing.

These people are still grasping hold to their own learning of belonging, culture and heritage. Healing plays a big role within their lives; while we can try to heal the trauma, the pain and suffering will never go away, it will always be there within their minds.

What we can do is set up or make new pathways for them to move forward to a better lifestyle, helping not only them but to help their families too. We can work on creating a lasting bond where they as a family can work together, building a place of harmony.

I have put together a list of various ways which I share at the Stolen Generations Men's Group; I believe with the right support, everyone can find peace and comfort within themselves.”

Uncle Dennis Dunn - Stolen Generation Survivor



Community Builder PROGRAM

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

100

stakeholder
visits

14

school visits



200

community
engagement

provided
over **150** kids
with breakfast
and lunch



500

people assisted

60

community
groups attended



Over

50

stakeholder
engagements

Our statistics were largely affected by the COVID-19 restrictions



HIGHLIGHTS

4.1 Community Engagement

4.2 The COOEE Festival

4.3 Social Media

4.4 Other Highlights

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Walkabout Barber Community Bus Launch
Major Sponsor



Dreamtime Awards
Major Sponsor

Tribal League; Dubbo, Central Coast
& Campbelltown



Redbelly Warriors Women's Rugby League Carnival
Major Sponsor



COOEE FESTIVAL



COOEE FESTIVAL

Celebrating the
oldest surviving
culture in the world

3 July 2021



Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation organised the COOEE Festival for 3 July 2021 at Town Centre Reserve Mt Druitt, however after closely monitoring COVID-19 updates, recommendations and restrictions provided by NSW Health, we made the difficult decision to postpone COOEE Festival 2021 until further notice as it is our priority to ensure the safety of our community, particularly our Elders and children. We are currently exploring options to have this event rescheduled to another date in 2022, as we are committed to providing this important day to our people to celebrate culture.

The COOEE Festival 2021 doesn't just include a line-up of performers, food trucks, Elders tent and Kids world, but a line of new merchandise that was planned to be sold at the event.

Although the launch of our merchandise was delayed, we are excited to share that it is now available to purchase on our new COOEE Festival website!



[HOME](#)[MERCHANDISE](#)[GALLERY](#)[KNOCK-OUT](#)[ABOUT US](#)[CONTACT US](#)

LINK-UP NSW

Cooee Festival

Celebrating the longest surviving culture in the world



We are excited to share our newly launched COOEE Festival website designed for the community to access all event details including our deadly line up of performers, purchasing merchandise & other COOEE related news!

visit our new website here:
<https://cooeensw.org.au>



SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

7381

Facebook
FOLLOWERS



6669

PAGE
LIKES

REUNION
STORY POST
REACHED



OVER
8,000
PEOPLE



4814

followers on COOEE
Festival facebook
page

HIGH ENGAGEMENT

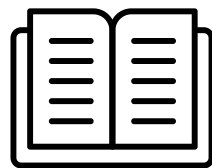


DURING COVID-19
LOCKDOWN

Link-Up (NSW) takes an educational approach with Stolen Generation statistics and achieves high engagement and connections between a client's family in comment section



HIGHLIGHTS



Donation of over

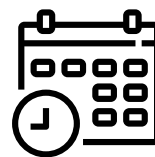
70 Books

to Aboriginal children
schools across NSW for
**Indigenous Literacy
Day**

Passed



ISO 9001 Quality
Management audit with no
major non-conformance's



Additional family link
funding secured for

3 years

COOEE sponsorship
doubled from 2020,
proving this event is so
important for our
Western Sydney
community!



HIGHLIGHTS



Memorandum of Understanding established with Registry of births deaths and marriages

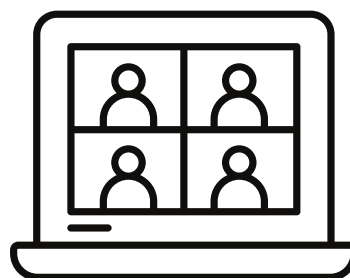
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Passed 2021 Financial audit

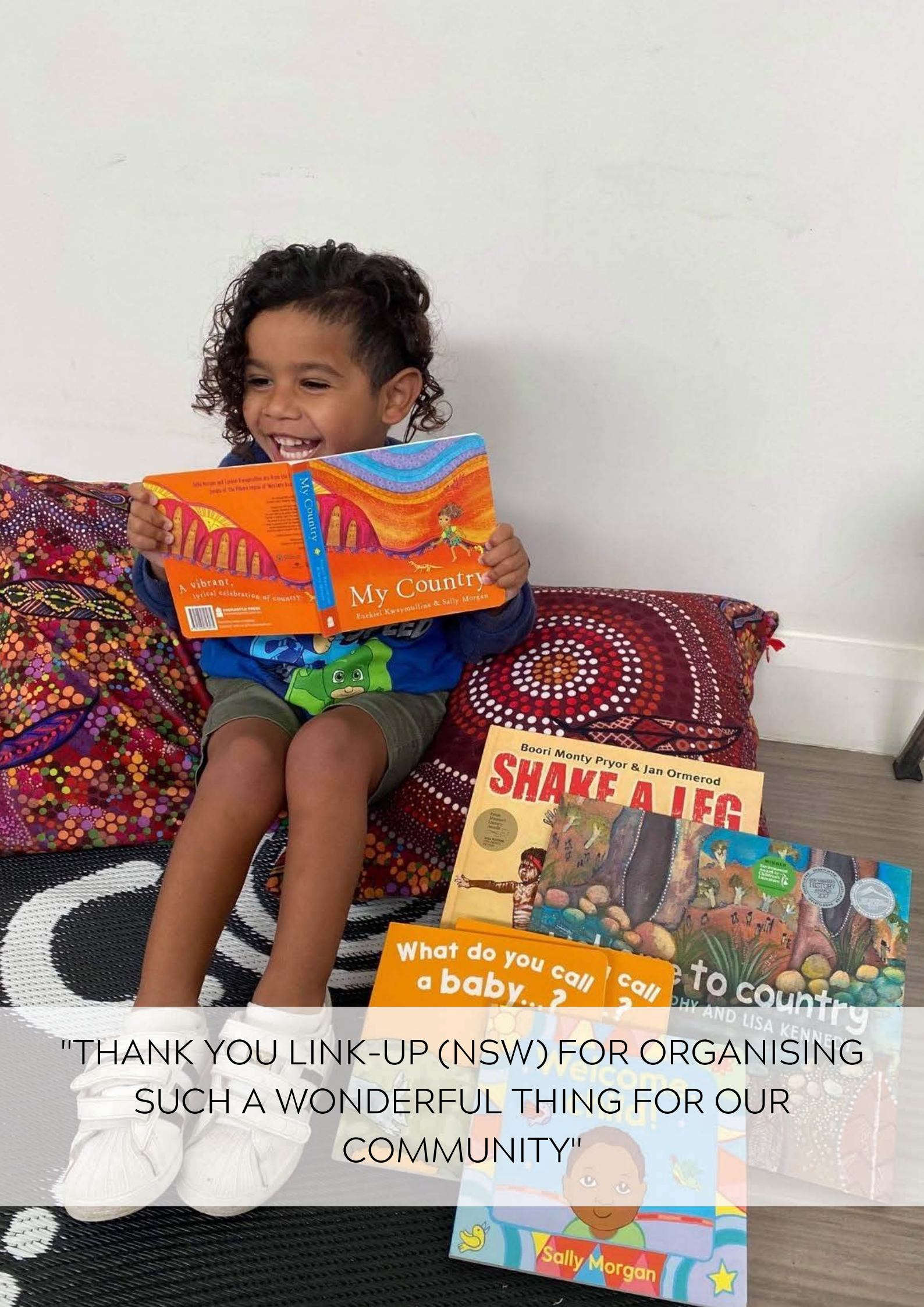


and received a clean opinion
(free of financial misrepresentation)

.....



Board transitioning to virtual meetings due to covid (saving costs and teaching them to be tech savvy)



"THANK YOU LINK-UP (NSW) FOR ORGANISING
SUCH A WONDERFUL THING FOR OUR
COMMUNITY"



FINANCE

5.1 Treasurers Report

5.2 Abridged Financials

MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER



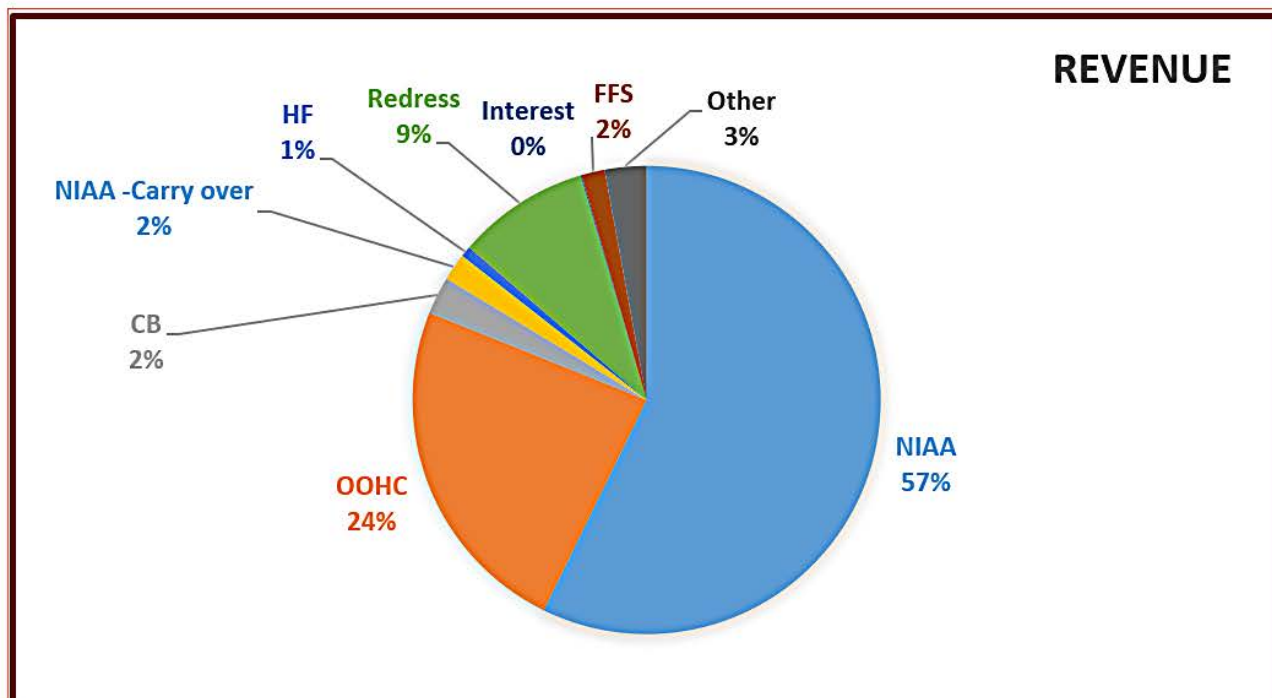
Link-Up (NSW) financial statements covering the Period July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 have been independently audited by a certified auditing firm contracted by the Board of Directors; PKF (NS) Audit and Assurance. The financial Statements for 2021 have been prepared on an accrual basis, in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006.

The 2020-2021 financial year was one of continual change for Link-Up (NSW). We are in a strong and stable position poised for growth and stability in 2021-2022. The year was closed in accordance with Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation's procedures and audited in August 2021. The majority of Link-Up (NSW) accounting and financial management is maintained digitally, thus allowing for such reviews. The Auditors, PKF (NS) Audit and Assurance, carried out controls on the income and expenditures, as well as on internal controls and compliance of Link-Up (NSW) systems. Link-Up (NSW)'s procedures were found to be sufficient and meeting financial management standards. The auditors concluded that all costs were appropriately verified and approved, and operations were carried out in a cost-effective way. Link-Up (NSW) received a clean unqualified Audit Report and received no Audit Management Letter criticisms for 2020-2021 which is a great result that reflects the ongoing improvements in the finance department.

The board have overseen a year of a strong and viable Corporation; however, the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic globally continues to present new challenges and 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 associated with its nature and duration. Link-Up (NSW) continues to monitor the situation closely and shall take actions as appropriate based on any material changes to future economic conditions.

I am pleased to present the financial position of Link-Up [NSW] Aboriginal Corporation for our members. In line with the audit report, Link-Up [NSW] recorded Grant Income of \$3.89M and total Revenue of \$4.09M. Total assets valued at over \$4.2M and equity of \$3.4M.

CONTINUED...



The Australian Government, through the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), contributed \$2.33M for Link-Up (NSW)'s Social and Emotional Wellbeing Reunification program and other activities. The NSW Government contributed \$1.07M for Family and Community Services Out of Home Care and Community Builder (OOHC + CB) 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 (Redress)

Additional Income amounting to \$223K is also reflected in the Profit and Loss Statement for the year under review. This comprises of bank interest received, dividends received, insurance recoveries, fee for service income, sponsorship, donations & other income detailed in the Financial Statements. Operating Expenditure (including depreciation) totalled \$4.274M (2019-2020 \$4.269M) resulting in an Operating Deficit for the year of \$157K (2019-2020 \$191K Deficit).

The COOEE Festival and COOEE Knockout were postponed due to Government direction and NSW COVID-19 Health orders, the income and expenses will be accounted and reported in the 2021-2022 Financial year.

Link-Up (NSW)'s assets at 30 June, 2021 amounted to \$4.202M and liabilities totalled \$796K resulting in total equity at 30 June, 2021 of \$3.406M.

CONTINUED...

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

Item	Amount (\$) 2020-2021	Amount (\$) 2019-2020
Sitting Fees	16,763	16,006
Travel Costs	29,601	33,841
Meeting Costs	4,897	353
Mobile Phone Costs	0	0
Teleconference Costs	0	0
Total Board Expenses	51,261	50,200

The Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2021 together with the Independent Audit Report are included in the Annual Report on pages 56 to 60.

I commend the 2020-2021 audited Financial Statements for Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation to the Membership.

Janet Smith

Treasurer

Proud Birripai/Dunghutti woman

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation

ABN: 99 731 805 429

Directors' Declaration

The directors of the Company declare that:

1. 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 2006 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 2021 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.
2. 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 - Chairperson

Director

Janet Smith - Treasurer

Dated: 28th October 2021

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation

ABN: 99 731 805 429

Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
Revenue	3	4,097,601	4,046,015
Other income	3	19,573	32,649
Legal and consulting expense		(124,570)	(439,479)
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment expense	4	(108,023)	(124,329)
Employee benefits expense	4	(2,779,030)	(2,688,839)
Finance costs	4	(379)	(330)
Motor vehicle expenses		(38,927)	(49,296)
Occupancy expenses		(207,915)	(153,181)
Printing and stationery		(21,728)	(19,735)
Repairs and maintenance		(137,467)	(72,176)
Reunion expenses	4	(324,700)	(523,629)
Travel expenses		(64,871)	(67,114)
Lease expenses		(6,170)	-
Other operating expenses		(460,398)	(131,688)
Deficit before income tax		(157,004)	(191,132)
Income tax expense	1(e)	-	-
Deficit for the year		(157,004)	(191,132)
Other comprehensive income			
Revaluation adjustment for land and buildings		210,272	(76,455)
Total comprehensive deficit for the year		53,268	(267,587)
Deficit attributable to:			
Members of the parent entity		(157,004)	(191,132)
Total comprehensive income/(loss) attributable to:			
Members of the parent entity		53,268	(267,587)

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation

ABN: 99 731 805 429

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As At 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	1,603,713	1,802,975
Trade and other receivables	6	92,914	29,268
Other assets	8	212,054	6,487
Total current assets		1,908,681	1,838,730
Non-current assets			
Financial assets	7	2,221	2,221
Property, plant and equipment	9	2,196,698	1,977,988
Right of Use Assets		95,146	-
Total non-current assets		2,294,065	1,980,209
TOTAL ASSETS		4,202,746	3,818,939
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	330,681	165,132
Financial liabilities	12	6,075	13,825
Short-term provisions	11	104,200	127,593
Lease liabilities		90,200	-
Contract liabilities	13	242,151	140,969
Total current liabilities		773,307	447,519
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities		6,969	-
Long-term provisions	11	16,212	18,430
Total non-current liabilities		23,181	18,430
TOTAL LIABILITIES		796,488	465,949
NET ASSETS		3,406,258	3,352,990
EQUITY			
Asset revaluation reserve		624,229	413,957
Retained surpluses		2,782,029	2,939,033
TOTAL EQUITY		3,406,258	3,352,990

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation
ABN: 99 731 805 429

Independent Audit 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 2021, the 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 2021 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 2006.

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.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

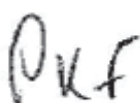
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that 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



KYM REILLY
PARTNER

28 OCTOBER 2021
SYDNEY, NSW



"LINK-UP (NSW) CHANGED MY LIFE"

FUNDERS

5.3 Our funding

To our funders **THANK YOU**

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



Australian Government
**National Indigenous
Australians Agency**



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



**Family &
Community
Services**



Social Media

@linkupNSW



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