

LINK-UP (NSW)

Aboriginal Corporation

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LINK-UP [NSW]
Aboriginal Corporation



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



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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.

GET TO KNOW OUR CEO

Who's your mob and where you from?

I am a proud Kamilaroi man from Coonamble with strong family ties to Moree and Gulargambone

What was your first job?

Cotton picking at 14 years old

What are your hobbies/talents?

Watching sports, spending time with my kids, Netflix or Stan & telling horrible dad jokes!



CAPO UPDATE

Update Proposed Face to Face Engagement Session planned for early 2022

Engagements will be focussed on the 17 Socio-economic outcomes and informed by the outcomes of engagements conducted on the five Priority Reforms for NSW (the Priority Reforms in the National Agreement and the NSW specific priority on Employment, Business growth and Economic prosperity). Engagement sessions are currently planned for March 2022, pending health concerns due to COVID-19.

Face to face engagements to be led by NSWCAPO and co-hosted by CAPO organisations and are planned to be delivered across 24-30 locations across NSW. Registrations will again be hosted via Eventbrite, set up by CAPO secretariate, available on the NSWALC/CAPO website.

CLOSE THE GAP



**Coalition
of Peaks**

The 12th annual Close the Gap Campaign report entitled, **Leadership and Legacy Through Crises: Keeping our Mob Safe** is a wakeup call to Australian Governments that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the solutions to health inequality in their grasp.

#CloseTheGapDay
#LeadershipAndLegacy
#StrengthInCrises



Annual General Meeting

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation Annual General Meeting was held on Friday 10 December 2021 at our Ropes Crossing office. Aside from assuring we are compliant in Governance, the meeting highlighted the achievements of the organisation over the past 12 months while addressing the Corporations strong financial position.

While the Directors were voted in last year on 3 year term, their positions on the Board were re-elected. We are pleased to announce for the following executives on the Board of Directors:

Chairperson - Lizzie May
Vice Chairperson - Rebekah Curtis
Treasurer - Janet Smith
Secretary - Jean Bartley



Training

This year our staff attended the LETS WALK TOGETHER, LETS TALK TOGETHER two-day symposium where they shared a culturally safe space for open discussion on suicide and the ripple effect experienced by Aboriginal communities.

The event covered suicide prevention, intervention and postvention strategies. Staff got the opportunity to hear from Aboriginal people who have been affected by suicide, as well as be part of a community forum and collective artwork, where the participants got to share knowledge and connect with others who are working in the sector.

“Amazing 3 days with amazing people, talking about something we are all passionate about which is helping people feel ok and learning new tools from each other. I don’t know about others, but I get so inspired when I get to go to these things, the only time I’m greedy is when it comes to learning from others. Thank you AH&MRC for yet another awesome conference. Brian Dowd, Joe Williams and Ryan Field, your presentations, they were out of this world and touched my heart. I became emotional and I got inspired...Thank you all”. Mary-Anne Frail, Reunification Counsellor.



Redress

Territories Stolen Generations Redress Scheme

The Australian Government is investing \$378.6 million over five years for a financial and wellbeing package for Stolen Generations survivors who were removed as children from their families in the Northern Territory or the Australian Capital Territory prior to their respective self-government, or the Jervis Bay Territory (collectively known as the territories). The package, known as the **Territories Stolen Generations Redress Scheme**, will be administered by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

The Scheme, operating from 1 March 2022 to 30 June 2026, will:

- Make payments in recognition of the harm caused by forced removal from family for Stolen Generations survivors.
- Assist with the healing of this trauma for the Stolen Generations survivors who were forcibly removed in the territories.
- Help survivors gain access to counselling and support services and a face-to-face or written direct personal response.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the Scheme, potential applicants must be:

- an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- under the age of 18 years at the time they were removed from their family by government bodies (including the police), churches/missions and/or welfare bodies, and in circumstances where their indigeneity was a factor in their removal, and
- removed whilst living in the Northern Territory or the Australian Capital Territory prior to their respective self-government, or the Jervis Bay Territory.

If an eligible Stolen Generations member passes away between 5 August 2021 and 1 March 2022, their family will be able to submit an application on their behalf.

Redress

The Scheme will enable eligible applicants to access:

- A one-off payment of **\$75,000** in recognition of the harm caused by the forced removal.
- A one-off healing assistance payment of **\$7,000** in recognition that the action to facilitate healing is specific to each individual.
- The opportunity for each survivor to confidentially tell their story about the impact of their removal to a senior official within government, have their story acknowledged and receive a face-to-face or written direct personal response.

Applications can be made from 1 March 2022

- Online applications will be encouraged.
- Paper applications will be made available for those who don't have the means or ability to submit online.

Scheme funded support services will be available during and after the application process. They will provide free and confidential, practical and emotional support, free legal advice, and free financial counselling.

Further details will be announced closer to applications opening next year regarding other agencies.





Reunions

This year has been a difficult year for Link-Up (NSW) clients and the reunification team. The COVID-19 pandemic has seen Link-Up (NSW) postpone several reunions until 2022, however we have strategised and decided on bringing families together through virtual reunions conducted over Zoom. Virtual reunions were designed not to replace the physical reunions, but enhance the experience. It was designed to provide initial contact between clients and their families, and to also give those clients who are already in contact with their families the opportunity to have input into the awaiting reunion. In the last few months Link-Up (NSW) have been able to facilitate ten (10) virtual reunions, bringing together brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, and in-laws. It has allowed the families to start building relationships that will hopefully get stronger on the face-to-face reunions and ensure continued growth within those relationships. The Reunification team have been working hard on client reunion proposals and look forward to the physical reunions we have planned for the new year.



Research



On a recent trip to Moree, researcher Gill was able to obtain some of the last available copies of the now out-of-print Courthouse Death Records series by Lola Cormie. These books are extremely comprehensive. Entries in them include most of the fields that are normally listed on a NSW BDM Death Certificate - thus saving having to send to BDMs for details or certificates for deaths in the following three towns: (1) Moree (2) Narrabri and (3) Brewarrina. In some cases entries in the books actually include even more than what you would find on a BDM Death Certificate - being cross-referenced with details of other family members who have passed away in the same town and where they are buried.

Additionally, Gill visited local libraries and obtained resources from them that will add to Link-Up's reference collection. Inverell Shire Library was particularly generous and has donated a number of publications that are relevant to Nulcoorlima, Anaiwan and Gomeroi histories of the area. A digital copy of the rare book "Ingelba and the Five Black Matriarchs" by Patsy Cohen and Margaret Somerville was obtained for Link-Up (NSW) from Armidale Library by the librarians at Inverell Shire Library. Big thank you to Program Manager Jodie Matthews for sparking the curiosity to go out and track down these rare records and resources.





Community Builder

DCJ Permanency Support Programs Metro Districts Forum - Cultural Support

This year the Department of Communities and Justice invited Link-Up (NSW) to be a guest speaker at their Cultural Support Planning Forum. Uncle Dennis delivered an Acknowledgement to Country. Our Programs Manager Jodie Matthews spoke to caseworkers and stakeholders on the importance of cultural support planning. Our staff members Clayton and Lynda were also present providing extra support for discussion points around research, the importance of language and seeking family. The feedback thus far was very informative and a great learning experience for many people.

Link-Up (NSW) looks forward to further engagements like this in the future.

Virtual Link-Up (NSW) Trivia during lockdown

Our staff were keen to keep contact with our clients during lock down by bringing people together every Wednesday for some Link-Up Trivia. The engagement between staff and clients was great; some bonds were created, everyone felt welcome, included, and had an opportunity to showcase their trivia skills. We were especially impressed with one of our clients, Karenlee, who kept everyone on their toes with her skills and quick responses.



Healing Weekends

We have 2 Healing Weekends to deliver for 2022! We are in the planning stages of finding suitable locations and liaising with stakeholders willing to engage Link-Up (NSW).

Coming together like one big family is a magical moment we get to share with our clients; listening to their stories and experiences. Staff are always so humbled to be on this journey with our clients and members.

Noonaweena 2021

It was very enjoyable to see our clients relaxed around the fire and hear uncle Gavi sing in native language, tell stories of the dreamtime and connect with our ancestors. It allowed mob to feel like they were at home, and even though some were not on their own country, they were able to feel the strength of our people as we shared that moment together.



Presentation with All Stars Womens Training Squad

On the 12th of December, Link-Up (NSW) presented our organisation and services to the Women's Indigenous All Stars training squad. After their intense training, the women joined us for a yarn and lunch.

The presentation was filled with smiles, laughs and tears as the girls got a better understanding of our services and past government policies. We shared reunion stories, family research packs, information on how to become a client and answered many questions.

Although we felt honoured being in the same room as these strong proud black women, they thanked us for our time and expressed their gratitude for our services and commitment to reuniting the stolen generations, calling our organisation 'amazing'.

We would like to thank Dean Widders for inviting us along. We look forward to forming an exciting partnership with the NRL in the near future to help some of our talented young Indigenous players reconnect with their culture, community and kin.

"Link-Up (NSW) is amazing"





COOEE 2021 MERCHANDISE

Our COOEE 2021 Merchandise is officially available to purchase on our COOEE website. Since the launch, we have received so much positive feedback from the community and customers.

"My new COOEE polos arrived today. So happy"

"The merch is beautiful, amazing and stunning"

"Woohoo. Mine came today. Thank you"

"I love the hoodie"



— Magical Moments —



About 3 years ago, Link-Up (SA) contacted Link-Up (NSW) in regards to supporting a woman that was in NSW so she was able to meet her son in South Australia. This woman had given birth to what she thought was a still born (as that was what the Dr's had told her) however, he was alive.

Link-Up (NSW) counsellor, Mary-Anne contacted the woman to introduce herself. The woman stated “I got a phone call from a man stating he was my child, and I am finding it hard to get my head around the situation”.

Emotionally, she was a mess; which was understandable due to the trauma she had encountered. Mary-Anne set up regular phone sessions for a few weeks so the client could unpack what she had been through, and come to terms with what had happened. This support was given so when it came time to meeting her birth son, she could potentially form a bond with him and have an ongoing relationship. After 2 months of counselling, it was time for the reunion.

Day 1 of meeting the birth son: The son had a good understanding about human behaviour and emotions, so when he finally met his mother, he knew to take his time and ask the right questions. The first moment he saw his Mother, he greeted her at the gate of the airport and asked if it was OK to hug her. He then allowed her to talk and waited for her to ask questions about him and his family. The son had not had the best upbringing with his adoptive parents, however it was too much to tell her on the first day of reuniting, so he told her the good things of his adulthood while they sat across from each other.

Day 2 was more sit downs and yarns again, with this time the birth son asking if it was OK to sit next to her. The Mother moved over and allowed her son to sit close by and talk. It was amazing witnessing the distance between the two slowly disappear.

MAGICAL MOMENTS CONTINUED



Day 3 the birth son asked his Mother if she was comfortable enough to allow the Link-Up (NSW) staff to leave so they could spend some time together on their own. The Mother agreed, so the staff left them alone for 2 hours.

When the staff eventually came back, the Mother gushed saying how amazing it was and that she feels as though her and her son have formed a bond, a strong one at that.

It was at this point the son turned to his Mother and said "for 57 years I wanted to meet you. For 57 years I wanted to give you a Mothers Day present" as he was saying this, he pulled out a gift. The Mother opened it in front of the staff. It was a tea set. She looked over to her son and said "how did you know I like tea?" to which he replied "Mum I have listened to every single word you have said. You told me you collect tea pots and cups on the day we first met and I remebered"

At this magical moment, there was not a dry eye in the room.

"Every reunion is amazing working at Link-Up (NSW), and every day I am grateful I get to witness these magical moments and provide support to our clients on their journey to healing"

Mary-Anne Frail, Counsellor.

Merry Christmas

... And a Happy New Year!

The Link-Up (NSW) office will be closed
from midday 22 December 2021
and returning 5 January 2022

24/7 SUPPORT SERVICES

BEYOND BLUE
1300 224 636

MENSLINE
1300 787 978

LIFELINE
13 11 14

SUICIDE CALL BACK
SERVICE
1300 659 467

TRIPLE ZERO
000



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Aboriginal Corporation

About Link-Up (NSW)

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation has been reuniting Stolen Generations Members with family, community, culture and identity since 1980. Today, our services expand beyond reuniting clients; seeing us conducting family history research and identifying culture for our kids in out of home care to embed a sense of identity and belonging. Building strength in our communities, as well as counselling and addressing trauma in our people. We offer mentors, self-empowerment and always strive to prove that the Aboriginal community can do more than “just survive”!

Contact Us



1800 624 332
(not free for mobile phones)



(02) 9421 4700



(02) 9673 4740



linkup@nsw.link-up.org.au



www.linkupnsw.org.au



4/2 Central Place, Ropes Crossing
NSW 2760



PO Box 185
St Marys NSW 2760

Social Media

@linkupNSW



Thank you to our funders



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