

Issue 3 | JANUARY 2022 - MARCH 2022



LINK-UP [NSW]
Aboriginal Corporation



**LINK-UP (NSW) ABORIGINAL
CORPORATION NEWSLETTER**



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Hi, I would like to welcome you to another edition of Link-Up NSW Newsletter. I want to start by acknowledging our Mob up in the North Coast who have had to deal with heart breaking loss through the floods. In particular Lismore and its surrounding area. My thoughts are with our Clients, Members, Board of Directors, funding providers and staff that have been impacted directly or through family members.

It has been a hectic start to the year. We had Survival Day where a lot of our clients, Board of Directors, members and staff were able to express themselves right across the state. It is a Day that brings with it so many emotions.

We held our first Healing Weekend of the year at Kangaroo Valley where 18 clients were able to work with our professional team on the Social and Emotional Wellbeing aspect of their journey. I have heard such great feedback from the staff and we are looking forward to planning our next Healing Weekend.

Our Chair of the Board, Lizzie May, Mary-Anne Frail, Jo Bird and I presented to the Male Indigenous All Stars at Olympic Park. It was such a moving presentation and allowed the players and coaching staff to understand the Stolen Generation and what has come before us. I want to thank Dean Widders and the NRL for allowing us to present to the players and coaches.



We have conducted reunions in Nowra, Armidale, Gulargambone and Forbes. Many other clients are working extensively with our staff to ensure that we are able to conduct more reunions and return our families home.

Mary-Anne Frail attended the Coota Girls walk. Mary has provided excellent feedback and I want to personally thank her for being a support to many of our clients before, during and post the walk.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

CONTINUED

Lizzie and I had a very productive meeting with Minister Franklin Aboriginal Affairs, Arts and Regional Youth. We were strong advocates for the Stolen Generation and also being part of Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (CAPO) and Closing the Gap. We found Mr Franklin to be very supportive of the Stolen Generation and what Link-Up NSW does. HE has committed to come to our COOEE Event on April 9.

I want to thank Justin Hodges, Lynda Coe, Jodie Matthews, Luke R and Tania for their work on the recent CAPO Route. We worked with the CAPO Secretariat and other CAPO members to find out what our grassroots community members are saying. Link-Up NSW staff travelled to Dubbo, Cobar, Bourke and Lightning Ridge.

Our staff celebrated International Womens Day by attending at BOD and staff photos etc

Finally I want to invite everyone to our COOEE event in Mount Druitt on April 9. Jo Bird and Kylie Norman have been work around the clock to ensure that this celebratory event is amazing for our communities. Our line up of ... is a massive drawcard but we also have ...

If you, a family member or friend believe that you have linkages to the stolen generation, please contact us on ... to speak to one of our trained staff who will support you on your journey

Stay Deadly



Jamie Sampson, Link-Up (NSW) CEO engaging with Aboriginal Community at Dubbo RSL around partnerships, languages, culture, education and training.

CAPO UPDATE

NSW CAPO with Link – Up (NSW) as the lead organisation has engaged and consulted with Dubbo, Cobar, Bourke and Lightning Ridge in regard to stage two Community Engagement Consultations. These sessions are being held all over NSW and will be held from 28 February – 31 March 2022.

The Community Consultations are an opportunity for Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal Organisations to drive the development of the Closing the Gap NSW Implementation Plan for 2022-2024, which will lay out what NSW is doing to Close the Gap for the next two years.

The Consultations will detail how feedback from previous consultations have shaped a range of initiatives across the Closing the Gap Priority Reform areas and Socio-Economic Outcome targets to address the needs previously identified by communities. In NSW, the 5 Priority Reforms and 17 Socio-Economic Targets have been gathered into 13 focus areas that include education, employment, health, justice, housing, land and water.

REUNIFICATION

This year the reunification team has started out strong, even though we lost a few team members we are now back on track. We have been able to complete a lot of family history research and the capacity to assist in the Healing Weekend held at Kangaroo Valley. The team were also able to attend the Cootamundra Girls Home event. The team have supported clients through three (3) reunions so far this year, with many more to come. We are excited to continue providing our service to the Stolen Generations and their families and ensuring we can reunite as many kin as possible. The team have attended some internal training and are looking forward to completing more, internal, and external.



REDRESS

With Covid-19 restrictions being lifted we have been able to complete outreach to clients within and outside the Sydney area. We have also been able to travel to Queensland but had to wait until the borders were no longer restricted. Clients continue to contact Link-Up for assistance with their applications. We are busy completing applications with the assistance of Know more Legal, a free law firm which only assists with the National Redress Scheme. Link-Up (NSW) and Know more Legal work together to provide the best outcome for all our clients.



REUNIONS

BAXTOR REUNION:

Link-Up (NSW) client David was looking to meet his younger sister Deborah. It was our pleasure to be able to bring David, Deborah, their sister Donna, and father Donald together in Dubbo, NSW. This reunion had everything, not only did Deborah meet her family for the first time, her and Donna were able to visit their mothers grave, for the first time, in Gulargambone where they returned to country. Post reunion the family have had a lot of contact and are building on their relationship. Link-Up NSW wish this family all the best in their future together. Van De Putte Reunion:

REUNIONS

VAN DE PUTTE REUNION:

Ann came to Link-Up (NSW) as a stolen person, removed due to past government policies from her parents as a young child. Fostered out to a non-Aboriginal family, Ann did not have the experience of growing up with her culture or mob however, Ann always knew she had other family out there. By the time Ann came to Link-Up (NSW) she done some of her own family history research and found her siblings. Link-Up (NSW) then assisted Ann to find more family and returned to where her great grandmother raised the family in the south coast of NSW.



Link-Up (NSW) contacted Djiriba Waagura to perform a Welcome to Country and Smoking ceremony for Ann's reunion. Upon meeting mob started to talk about family names and connections, when Ann showed Uncle Sonny Simms? her family tree, he realised the two (2) families were related. Without planning, Ann had just found more of her mob. Ann was so emotional that she had found this family she mentioned of the possibility of moving back to the area to learn and be more connected to her kin, culture, and country.



COMMUNITY BUILDER CONTINUED

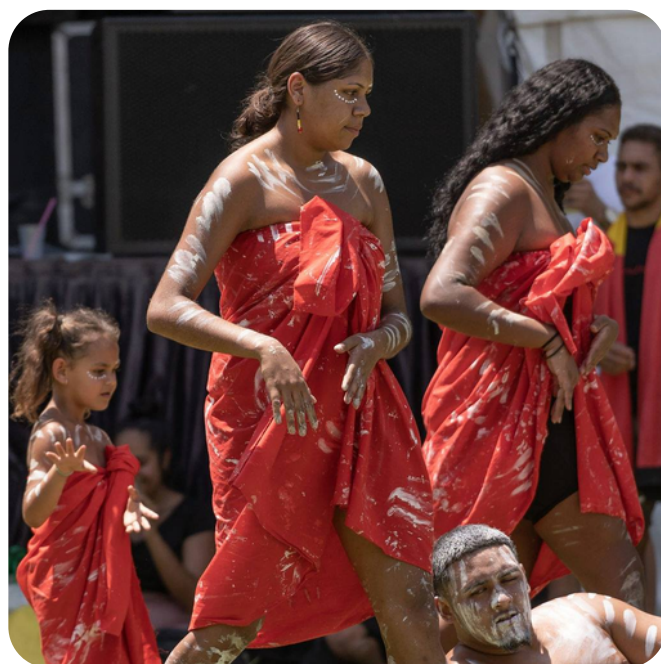
"This Year Covid-19 was a big hindrance on our Community Builder and TEI program, I am looking forward to the year ahead as we have just commenced our engagements and I am now able to get back out into community. I enjoyed providing support to our brothers and sisters at the healing retreat and thank everyone who has helped us overcome the challenges faced with reaching our community during Covid - Uncle Dennis Dunn

FAMILY LINK

The Family Link Program assist Aboriginal youth and children that are at risk of entering or already within Out-of-home-care (OOHC) statewide (NSW).

Our team of dedicated researchers provide Kinship, Family Contact and Cultural information linking them to families, country, and community, ensuring a sense of social, emotional, and physical well-being.

The New Year has seen many urgent referrals received. The team have been busy liaising with agencies to ensure deadlines are met to provide the best possible outcomes for our youth.





Community Builder

Counsellor Luke Roseworne and Community builder Uncle Dennis Dunn attended Kimberwalli in regards to supporting our local community at community event run by Kimberwalli to provide school bags for primary and high school children with school equipment such as books, pens extra. It was great to see as a local to see two groups come together to create a positive path for our next generation.

"Luke and I were asked to attend Kimberwalli and help give out school bags one for the High school students and one for the Primary students. The bags contained educational items such as drinking bottles, exercise books,

calculator, colour pencils, pens, ruler, rubber, sharpener, and a bag of lollies with a choice of drinks. With all these items plus the bag it saved much money for the parents from buying their children's school stuff. There were many parents and children that came in, the smile on those young girls and boys lit up the room it was great to see the excitement within them knowing that they will go to school happy. I enjoyed the two days I was there, meeting a lot of the community parents, whilst enjoying and working with the company of the Kimberwalli team workers and other volunteers were great to work with." - Dennis Dunn



HEALING WEEKEND

KANGAROO VALLEY

Link-Up (NSW) organised our first healing retreat for the year at The Kangaroo Valley for our members and family of The Stolen Generations. A coach traveled in the morning to the Healing Weekend, arriving after lunch to a welcome and smoking by Dijiriba Waaruba, clients got to partake in Kayaking, Art Therapy, Walking on Country with the Local elder, cultural talks, bingo, weaving, relaxing massage and facials, local wildlife watching, and Counsellors were on site during the weekend, if anyone wanted to have a yarn. Link-Up (NSW) is looking forward to upcoming Healing Weekends this year, if you have had a reunion with us or are a member, RSVP asap to let us know you would like to attend. STAY TUNED!





MINISTER OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS VISIT

Link-Up (NSW) CEO, Jamie Sampson and Chairperson, Lizzie May visited the Parliament House to meet with The Hon. Benjamin Franklin, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Benjamin took the time and opportunity to get a better understanding of the services we provide to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and discussed our position within the National Coalition of Peak Aboriginal organisations, our relationship with the NSW government, challenges we face at Link-Up (NSW) and goals we would like to achieve.

We would like to thank The Hon. Benjamin Franklin for his time and dedication to influencing change in government, to support the social, cultural, and economic aspirations of Aboriginal people in NSW.





FEDERAL MP ED HUSIC VISIT

CEO Jamie Sampson met with the Federal MP for Chifley, Ed Husic on the 11th of March 2022. They discussed strategies to continue engaging with the local community and the complexities Link-Up faces with funding. Where we gifted him one of our Original COOEE Hoodies!

Ed Husic MP has been a long term advocate of Link-Up (NSW) and the services we provide to the indigenous community. He has kindly sponsored COOEE 2022 festival, which is designed to give mob a day to celebrate our culture, right in the heart of Mt Druitt.

NSW JOINT COUNCIL MEETING AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE

The peak Aboriginal organisations that form part of CAPO met with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Benjamin Franklin at the Parliament House for a joint Council meeting. Representing Link-Up (NSW) was our Chairperson Lizzie May and CEO Jamie Sampson.

We would like to thank Mr Franklin for his time and dedication to influencing change in the government to support Aboriginal peoples in NSW



INDIGENOUS ALL STARS

LINK-UP (NSW) CHAIRPERSON LIZZIE MAY, CEO JAMIE SAMPSON, MARY-ANNE & JO-ANN HAD THE INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO REPRESENT OUR ORGANISATION AT THE MEN'S NRL INDIGENOUS ALL STARS CAMP!



They had a yarn with the team about the vital services we offer to the community, shared special reunion stories, provided information on family history research & showcased the importance of cultural identity.

We would like to thank Dean Widders for inviting us along. We look forward to forming a strong partnership with the NRL to help some of our talented Indigenous players continue connecting with their culture, community and kin.



ALL STARS WOMEN WIN 18-8

Our very own superstar Shaylee Bent played in the Womens Indigenous all stars team and got the win! CONGRATULATIONS WOMEN'S INDIGENOUS ALL STARS, you all played deadly.

"WHEN WE RUN OUT ON THAT FIELD, WE CARRY OUR ANCESTORS, OUR PEOPLE AND OUR COMMUNITY" OR "THIS GAME IS NOT JUST ABOUT US, ITS ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE WALKED BEFORE US, THE COMMUNITIES WHO STAND BESIDE US." - SHAYLEE BENT

BATTLE OF THE COUNTRIES SPONSORSHIP

Deadly photo taken at Battle of the Countries showcasing our logo. We are proud to be apart of such an important campaign; using Rugby League as the vehicle to promote awareness around mental health & suicide prevention in Indigenous communities. Remember to always check in on loved ones you mob



SURVIVAL DAY - TENT EMBASSY



On 26 January 1972, four Aboriginal men, Michael Anderson, Billy Craigie, Tony Coorey and Bertie Williams, arrived in Canberra from Sydney, to establish an Aboriginal Embassy by planting a beach umbrella on the lawn

in front of Parliament House (now Old Parliament House). The embassy was established in response to the

McMahon Coalition Government's refusal to recognise Aboriginal land rights or native title in Australia, instead

offering 50-year general-purpose leases for Aboriginal people which would be conditional upon their "intention

and ability to make reasonable economic and social use of land", while reserving for the Crown rights to minerals and forestry.

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy is a permanent protest occupation site as a focus for representing the political

rights of Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islander people

Rebekah Curtis and Jean Bartley left for Canberra 4.30 am on the Tuesday the 25th January and arrived at the tent embassy around 9.30am. They set up camp, represented Link-Up NSW as board of directors and proudly hung the Aboriginal Flag in SOLIDARITY for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the tent Embassy and paid their respects to all 250 nations and their ongoing struggles since occupation.

Rebekah and Jean are both stolen generations members and know first hand what some of those struggles look like. They and our staff work hard to make a difference in the lives of other stolen generations that have not only lost family, but land, culture and language. the Board and staff stand in SOLIDARITY with you our stolen generations.



SURVIVAL DAY

Leading up to the 26th of January, we contacted Western Sydney community members and asked them if they would like to participate in a Survival Day project by taking a photo holding signs with statements on them. We then travelled to multiple houses to take the images, we finished with 24 photos!



**"IT WAS AN
OPPORTUNITY
FOR ME TO
SHARE MY VOICE
ON SURVIVAL
DAY"**

WOMENS DAY 2022

Female Link-Up Staff members and Jean Bartley from our Board had the great opportunity to attend and be part of a wonderful cause IWD for “First Nations Women” on Wednesday 2nd March where they discussed on how we can break down biases and discrimination to create a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive world with guest speakers Karla Grant, Dr Summer May Finlay and Nardi Simpson and reflected on cultural, political, socioeconomic achievements and strength of Indigenous Women.



LINK-UP (NSW) FEMALE STAFF & BOARD MEMBERS

STAFF MEMBER PROFILE

Aiesha Pettit-Young

Design & Media coordinator

Aiesha is a proud Wongaibon and Wiradjuri woman, she was raised in Western Sydney but her family are originally from Condobolin and Lake Cargelligo. She has been working here at Link-Up (NSW) for a year and she has a passion for supporting the stolen generations, as her Nan was forcibly removed and she understands the struggles those affected experience/d.

In a time frame of 4 years, Aiesha has been involved in every COOEE Festival. At The COOEE FESTIVAL 2019, Aiesha performed with Aboriginal dance group Gadi Birrong. In 2020, she won our COOEE Aboriginal Artwork competition. In 2021, we employed her as our Design & Media coordinator and she helped organise COOEE 2021 (before COVID-19 caused us to cancel the event) now in 2022, Aiesha is working beside our Events Coordinator and has a role in organising the event.





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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



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