

FAMILY RESEARCH GUIDE



LINK-UP [NSW]
Aboriginal Corporation



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

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

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

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



STARTING YOUR RESEARCH

Family history research is often a long journey filled with dead-ends and road-blocks, especially for Aboriginal people. This is a brief guide to get you started and find the answer to the question you've been asking yourself "who am I?". Although you may not be eligible to become a Link-Up (NSW) client, remember there are many organisations that can offer support to you and your family. Please refer to the contacts list at the end.

The first step is to understand why you want to research your family history, This answer will be different for everyone but can help you keep on track when hitting roadblocks and lead you in the right direction of services. You may be:

- **Looking for your own records as a removed person.**
- **Trying to reconnect with your culture and identity.**
- **Putting together your family story for future generations.**

First steps: starting with yourself and your immediate family, put as much information as you have into the family tree template included in this guide. This will be your starting point to work backwards into history.

Once you have this basic information, you can start searching for records to give further details. For example, you could begin by researching your grandparents or parents names. Records relating to births, marriages and deaths are often helpful but remember, they only represent the knowledge of the informant at that time so some details may be different to what family members have told you. When you are searching for records, it is important to check every known name, nickname and every possible spelling variation you can imagine.

Always remember that uncovering history can be painful and to ask for support whenever you need it. Please be mindful that some history documents may be incorrect, damaged or lost. They could also include offensive content, false information and accusations. These situations are very common for Aboriginal people and could be upsetting. It is important to remember that older documents were written in an era of discrimination, racism and genocide. Therefore, statements on government documents could potentially be untrue to negatively portray family members and Aboriginal people. Access professional support by appropriate services or an Aboriginal counselling service if you find yourself struggling to cope with upsetting findings.





TIPS

TIP 1 - Be mindful and respectful of family members who may not want to talk about some of their history as it may be traumatic. In this situation, express your understanding and request they share any information they are comfortable with sharing.

TIP 2 - Names can be misspelled on official records and people may be known by names other than those listed. For example, "Mary Elizabeth" at birth may have been known as "Bessie" throughout her life or "Penelope" could be known as "Penny".

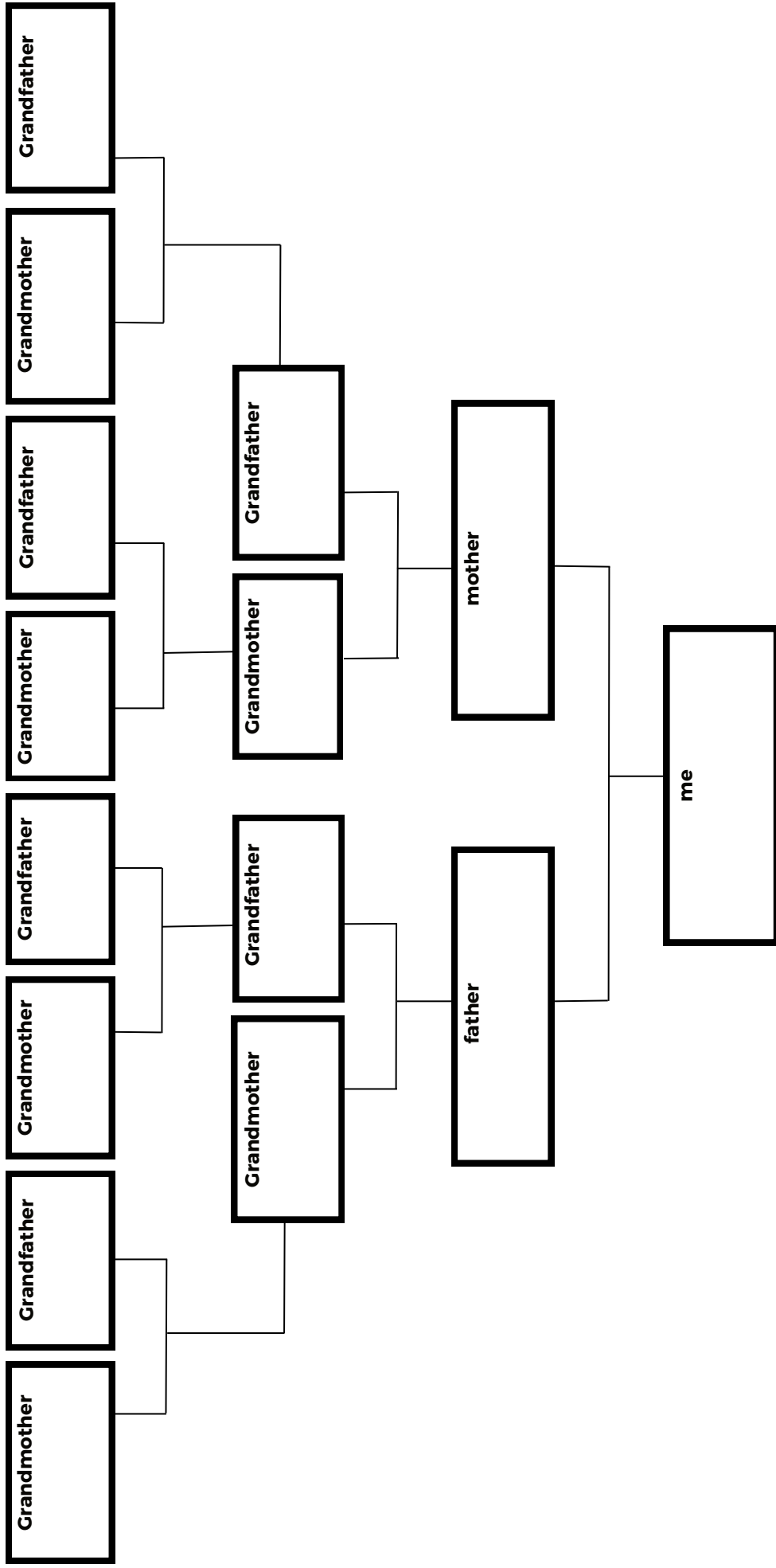
TIP 3 - Official records can contradict what you have been told about your family's history. Understanding why records were created will help you to decide how much significance you give each record that you find.

TIP 4 - You may find many different documents and records with the sources we've provided you with; organise a location to store all findings such as printing everything and storing it in a binder, saving to your desktop or computer, mobile files, USB, etc.

TIP 5 - Old family photographs are often helpful in triggering memories. Remember to take copies of them when you talk to family members. Ask them to identify people and places along with what was happening at the time. Please be aware of cultural protocols surrounding images of deceased Aboriginal persons and receive permission from individuals before sharing images or videos with them.



FAMILY-TREE TEMPLATE



FAMILY-TREE RESEARCH TOOLS

Here are some helpful family history tools to begin your researching journey. The below websites could have information about your family tree and history.

Ancestry.com

- Upon sign up, you receive 30 days free and then pay \$30.00 each month, cancel at any time.
- Ancestry is helpful if the person wants to do their own family tree. Ancestry's website will send you hints and "potential" family members.
- Ancestry helps you with links and hints when finding family history.
- DNA testing is available and this helps you link with family members on ancestry only.
- Census and vote roles, BDM registration numbers, public records, information on convicts, photos and immigration.
- Access to the public family trees although some are private.
- Most people cross reference findings to confirm information.

My heritage.com

- Sign up fee.
- DNA testing.
- Can provide BDM registration numbers.
- Most people cross reference findings to confirm information.
- Myheritage.com doesn't have as much information as ancestry.com.

Wikitree.com

- Free website.
- Website provides you with multiple family members on their trees.
- Website can provide overseas information if your ancestors migrated to Australia.
- Most people cross reference findings to confirm information.



DNA testing

If DNA testing is something you have thought about, please visit the companies guidelines before making the decision as the following is what to expect:

- You will be linked with other family members on Ancestry.com that have done the DNA testing.
- You may receive family history information that you were not informed about.
- Having a DNA test done does not define your culture.
- If you are testing your DNA for Aboriginality, results may vary and the percentage may return with a low percentage reading.
- Please note that some organisations may not accept DNA testing for proof of Aboriginality.
- DNA testing in the Aboriginal community is not common.



The image shows a screenshot of an AncestryDNA ethnicity results page. On the left is a map of Australia with the 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' region highlighted in cyan. To the right of the map, the text reads 'VANUATU', 'NEW CALEDONIA', and 'AUSTRALIA'. Further right, there is a small image of a landscape with trees and a blue circle icon. Below the image, the text reads 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples', 'Primarily located in: Australia', and 'Learn more about this map and ethnicity'. A progress bar shows '16%' with the text 'Your ethnicity estimate is 16%, but it can range from 14–19%'. Below the progress bar, there is a section titled 'Compare with matches' with a 'BE IA' badge and the text 'Which regions do you have in common—and which ones are unique?'. A blue button labeled 'Compare my DNA' is visible. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'About this Region' with the text 'The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples region spans across Australia's varied landscapes and surrounding'.

Finding proof of Aboriginality

- Aborigines Welfare Board List of names - only of family placed into missions and reserves.
- Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment list.
- Indigenous Servicemen – Australian War Memorial.
- Newspaper articles, Magazines may state “half-caste” and other offensive racial slurs.
- Dawn magazine.
- Aboriginal Land Councils.
- BDMs certificate can state an Aboriginal mission or “Aboriginal” on certificates.
- NSW Native Land Titles.
- Resources of Aboriginal communities/missions e.g. The Camp of Mercy Warangesda.

FamilySearch.com

- Free, no sign-up fee.
- Gives you links to other websites e.g. find a grave, ancestry.com.
- The website may already have your Family Tree listed.
- Gives you a blurb on their life story.
- Most people cross reference findings to confirm information.

APPLYING FOR RECORDS OF ADOPTION AND STATE CARE

Not every person who was removed will be able to find and access their records. In the past, records have been lost and even destroyed, meaning that vital and precious information is not available.

Adoptions - <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/adoption/finding-info>

An adopted person who is over 18 years and their birth parents (as recorded on their original birth certificate) are the only people who have a direct entitlement to apply for information about each other.

If you wish to obtain identifying information about a birth parent or adopted person, you'll first need to download and complete the **application to obtain adoption information form**. As of 1 July 2022, there is no fee to apply for your information.

Other people can apply in certain circumstances however, this first requires the approval of the Secretary of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

People who are not entitled but may be approved to receive adoption information under s140 (3) are:

- People who were previously under the care of the Minister of NSW and do not have a relationship with a birth parent with entitlement under the Act can apply for information on a sibling who was adopted.
- A biological sibling or birth relative of an adopted person who has the written consent of a birth parent who has an entitlement under the Act.
- Other people if they can demonstrate that it would be reasonable for them to be provided with adoption information.

State Wards and Children's Institutions –

If you were a state ward, there may be some form of wardship records about you held by the state government. If you were not a ward of the state, there may be records held by the non-government agency that holds the records from your 'care' provider.

NSW Government: The 'Care leaver records access application can be used by people who have been in out-of-home care in NSW.

<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/out-of-home-care>



RECORDS & DOCUMENTS

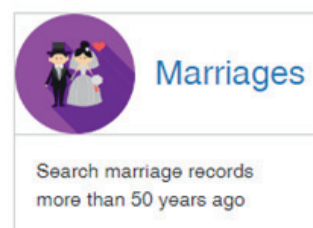
RESEARCH TOOLS

NSW Registry - <https://www.nsw.gov.au/family-and-relationships/family-history-search>

Free access to search Government records of births, marriages and deaths in NSW that date back to 1788.

Births, Deaths and Marriages search

Please select the type of event you want to search for



Australian Cemetery Index - <https://austcemindex.com/>

An extensive resource for family history researchers. Its emphasis is to provide quality images of all inscriptions in each cemetery rather than just transcript lists.

Find a Grave - <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial>

Over 226 million memorials created by the community since 1995. Find the graves of ancestors, create virtual memorials, add photos, virtual flowers and leave a note to a loved one's memorial. Search or browse cemeteries and grave records for every-day and famous people from around the world.

Biographical Database Australia - <https://www.bda-online.org.au/BDA>

Is a new research tool for historians and genealogists comprising of transcripts & indexes of original records and published biographies of deceased individuals who arrived, or were born in Australia.

NSW State Archives - <https://mhsw.au/collections/state-archives-collection/>

The NSW State Archives Collection documents the daily work of the NSW Government and its agencies from 1788 to today. The largest collection of records relating to the history of NSW and the lives of its people.

Ryerson Index - <http://ryersonindex.org/index.htm>

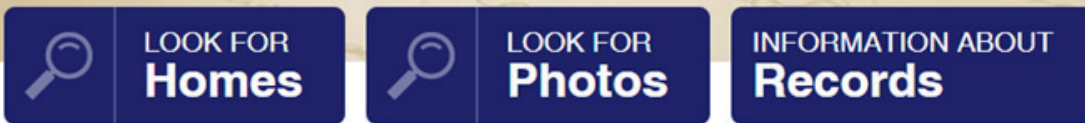
The Ryerson Index is a free index to death notices appearing in Australian newspapers. The date range covered extends from the Sydney Gazette of 1803, up to newspapers published within the last week or so. The Index also includes many funeral notices, and some probate notices and obituaries.

AIATSIS Dawn Magazine: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/dawn-names-index>

This is a list of the names of people who are mentioned in the Dawn and New Dawn magazines. The magazines were published by the NSW Aborigines Welfare Board between 1952-1975.

A resource for Forgotten Australians, Former Child Migrants and anyone interested in the **history of child welfare in Australia**.

Some people may find content on this website distressing. [Read more](#)



AIATSIS ABI - <https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history>

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI) is an index of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander names selected from generally available publications held at AIATSIS. These publications are books and articles created by, with, or about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Search the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index

You can search for a family name in the ABI using the search box below or via [Mura](#), the AIATSIS Collection catalogue.

Search results will be provided on a new screen in Mura.

All Fields 	<input type="text"/>	SEARCH 
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NSW State Archives - <https://mhns.w.au/archive/subjects/>

Browse the alphabetical list of research topics. This list includes guides, indexes and articles.

Convicts at NSW Archive - <https://mhns.w.au/indexes/undefined/convicts-index/>

A searchable database listing 140,000+ certificates of freedom, bank accounts, deaths, exemptions from Government Labor, pardons, tickets of leave.

British Convict Index - <https://onerech.s.lq.qld.gov.au>

Compiled from the British Home Office (HO) records. You can search for over 123,000 of the estimated 160,000 convicts transported to Australia in the 18th and 19th centuries - names, sentence details, transport ships and more.

INFOKOORI - <https://search.sl.nsw.gov.au/primo-explore/search?vid=KOORI>

INFOKOORI is an index to the Koori Mail a national fortnightly newspaper published in Lismore, NSW, that focuses on the Indigenous people of Australia, from May 1991 to July 2016. It is also an index to biographical information from various magazines including: Our Aim (1907-1961), Dawn (1952-1969), New Dawn (1970-1975) and Identity (1971-1982).

Bringing Them Home Index - <https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/first-australians/bringing-them-home-name-index>

The Bringing Them Home name index is a searchable list of names and places which we created from our files about First Australians. The index itself only contains names – not extra information. You will need to see the files to find further details about people and places. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can ask National Archives staff to search the index to see if their family name or a place name is mentioned. Staff will keep all the details of the request confidential.

Society of Australian Genealogists - <https://midas.sag.org.au/>

SAG Library contains resources for family historians and genealogists to learn from. The dedicated family history library collection contains the Society’s print and electronic items which cover both Australian and international material (especially England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland). Catalogue is searchable online.

BIOGRAPHIES and ARTICLES: BTH Oral History Project - <https://www.nla.gov.au/collections/what-we-collect/oral-history-and-folklore/bringing-them-home-oral-history-project>

From 1998 to 2002, the National Library of Australia recorded 340 interviews with members of the Stolen Generations and their families and carers, as well as with those who worked in the institutions to which children were removed or were otherwise involved in the policy or implementation forced removal.

The screenshot shows the National Library of Australia website. At the top left is the logo for the National Library of Australia. A navigation menu includes 'Collections', 'Using the Library', 'Stories', 'What's on', 'Visit', 'About us', and 'Support us'. Below the menu is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home / Collections / What we collect / Oral history and folklore / Bringing Them Home Oral History project'. The main heading is 'Bringing Them Home Oral History project'. The page content includes a paragraph: 'Listen as they tell us in their own words about the impacts caused by the removal of Indigenous children from their families.' Another paragraph: 'Between 1998 and 2002, people from all over Australia told us their stories as part of the Bringing Them Home Oral History project.' A third paragraph: 'This collection shares with us 340 intimate stories, in over 600 hours of recordings.' A fourth paragraph: 'These are people directly affected by the laws and policies which created the Stolen Generations. These are the voices of:' followed by a bulleted list: 'Indigenous people taken away from their families', 'Indigenous people whose children were removed', and 'administrators, police officers, carers, missionaries and welfare workers.' On the right side, there is a sidebar with a red header 'ORAL HISTORY AND FOLKLORE' and a dark blue header 'Bringing Them Home Oral History project'. Below these are links: 'Browse the Oral History Collection', 'Using the Oral History Collection', and 'Australian Centre for Paralympic Studies Oral History Project'.

NSW Aboriginal Trackers - <https://pathfindersnsw.org.au/nsw-aboriginal-trackers/>

This website explores the history of Aboriginal trackers in NSW from 1862 when the current NSW Police Force was established through to 1973 when the last tracker, Norman Walford, retired. You can read about the lives of individual trackers and some of the incredible tracking feats they performed. There is also information about the police stations where they worked and lived and the traditional language groups to which some of the trackers belonged.

ANU Australian Dictionary of Biography - <https://adb.anu.edu.au/>

The Australian Dictionary of Biography is Australia's pre-eminent dictionary of national biography. In it you will find concise, informative and fascinating descriptions of the lives of over 13,000 significant and representative persons in Australian history. The subjects come from all walks of life — from prime ministers, governors-general and premiers, generals and bishops, artists, actors and authors, engineers and school teachers, to prostitutes, thieves and murderers — providing a cross-section of Australian society.

ANU Indigenous Dictionary of Biography - <https://ia.anu.edu.au/biographies/name/>

The National Centre of Biography launched this project to develop an Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography. The ADB's Indigenous Working Party which was established in 2015 and is made up of leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars from each state and territory. The working party advises and guides the project, ensuring that it maintains strong links with Indigenous communities


TROVE - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>


Search Trove to explore amazing collections from Australian libraries, universities, museums, galleries and archives. It's free and available online all day, every day. Search for digital copies of newspapers, Government Gazettes, maps, magazines, newsletters, books, pictures, photographs, archived websites, music and interviews. Even information about famous Australians, including copies of letters, diaries and personal archives.

TROVE ABOUT HELP NEWS

Explore Categories Community Research First Australians

Discover her-story

Search Trove... All categories  Advanced Search ▼

 NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

Trove is a collaboration between the National Library of Australia and hundreds of Partner organisations around Australia. [See our Partners](#)

TROVE Partners

CONTACTS



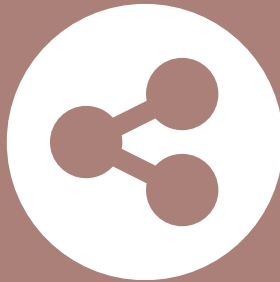
ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

TELEPHONE:

(02) 9219 0700

FAX: (02) 9219 0790

ADDRESS: Level 6, 201
Coward Street, Mascot
NSW 2020



AUSTRALIAN ELECTROAL COMISSION

TELEPHONE:

13 23 26

WWW.AEC.GOV.AU



SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIAN GENEALOGISTS

TELEPHONE:

(02) 9247 3953

FAX: (02) 9241 4872

EMAIL:

INFO@SAG.ORG.AU



NSW ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

TELEPHONE:

(02) 9219 0700

ADDRESS: Level 6, 201
Coward Street,
Mascot NSW 2020



WATTLE PLACE

TELEPHONE:

1800 663 844

ADDRESS: 67 High
Street, Harris Park,
NSW, 2150, Australia




NATIVE TITLE SERVICE PROVIDER

TELEPHONE:

(02) 9310 3188

FAX: (02) 9310 4177



	Research Tools	Content	Comments
	AIATSIS	Download FH Kit Online searches: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mura Catalogue• ABI Index• Digitized Collections	
	AANSW	Findin' your mob application	
	NSW State Archives & Records	Access to the Reading Rooms and Non-digital materials	
	Aboriginal Lands Council	Metropolitan & Country Contact Lists	
	NTS Corp.	Personal FH request	
	Australian War Memorial	Indigenous Serviceman List	
	SAGS	Access to Forums & Webinars	
	NSW State Library	Microfiche Special Collections	
	Trove	Online index of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newspapers, books, magazines, maps	



CONNECTING TO CULTURE & COMMUNITY

Our culture is about connections, not blood quantity or your physical appearance. After finding more information about your family history and Aboriginal heritage, we recommend learning, embracing and connecting to culture and community.

Connecting to culture and community can be achieved by meeting with local elders, participating in cultural programs, connecting with knowledge holders, contacting local Aboriginal organisations and attending Aboriginal events such as:

- Yabun (Survival Day event)
- The COOEE Festival
- NAIDOC Week events
- Other community events

Key topics to study to understand history, culture and Aboriginal perspectives:

- The Stolen Generations
- The 1967 Referendum & Tent Embassy
- The Stolen Wages
- Aboriginal lifestyles pre-colonisation
- Traditional Art, Language, Dance and Song
- Totems and Tribes
- ATSIP Statistics

Significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dates:

Invasion/Survival Day - **January 26**

Anniversary of the Apology - **February 13**

National Close the Gap Day - **March 15**

National Sorry Day - **May 26**

Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum - **27 May**

Reconciliation Week - **27 May – 3 June**

Mabo Day - **3 June**

NAIDOC Week - **3 - 10 July**

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day - **4 August**

Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - **13 September**

NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout - **29 September - 1 October**

CONFIRMATION OF ABORIGINALITY (COA)

The COA (Confirmation Of Aboriginality) is a certificate that acknowledges you as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in your community.

How do I confirm my Aboriginal Heritage?

- Being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
- Identifying as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- Being connected to your community

You do not need a COA to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. However, you may be asked to provide proof of your Aboriginal heritage when applying for Aboriginal services or programs such as employment (Indigenous identified positions), Indigenous health services, school programs and scholarships, university courses, Centrelink and Aboriginal housing assistance. These programs and services are designed to help address the disadvantages and inequalities Indigenous people face as a result of racism and discrimination, inadequate health care, past government policies and lack of educational/employment opportunities. Requiring Confirmation of Aboriginality honours this intention and ensures that these services are benefitting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities.

If you would like to obtain a Confirmation Of Aboriginality, you must gather all your findings and supporting evidence such as a Family Lineage Chart (family tree), birth certificates and other documents about your family history and heritage to establish that you are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent and contact your Local Land Council or other services that provide COA's where you and/or your family are recognised as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. For example, if you find that your family originated from the South-Coast (Tharawal country), you would have to contact the Tharawal NSW Aboriginal Land Council with all your evidential documents.

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation strictly issues COA's to our Stolen Generations clients after the research and reunification process. Therefore, they have to be reunited with their families before they can apply for a COA. We do not supply COA's to community members who are not eligible to become clients as we are distinctively funded to support The Stolen Generations.

To be eligible for Link-Up (NSW) services, you must be:

- A resident of NSW or ACT (unless referred by an interstate Link-Up)
- Over the age of 18 years
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Descent
- Experienced (or be a descendant of someone who has experienced) separation from family and community due to forcible removal; evidence of adoption, fostering or institutionalisation due to past government policies or practices prior to 1976.





LINK-UP [NSW]
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



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Social Media

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**Family &
Community
Services**



Australian Government

Department of Social Services