



LINK-UP STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 – 2012



MESSAGE FROM CHAIRPERSON

I am pleased to present the *Link-Up (Qld) Strategic Plan 2009-2012*, a considered and carefully crafted response to the challenges confronting our organisation as it continues its long and proud history of reuniting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples separated from their families as a result of past governments' forced removal policies and practices.

This strategic plan updates the *Link-Up Triennial Strategic Plan 2006-2009*, taking into account the tectonic shifts that have occurred in the landscape of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs since the election of the Rudd Labor Government in November 2007. In particular, the Prime Minister's apology on behalf of the Australian Parliament to the Stolen Generations of February 2008 which now stands as a milestone in the history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. Notwithstanding the significance of these words and their reach within our communities, it is critical that actions follow should we wish to avoid, as cautioned by Prime Minister Rudd in his address to Parliament, this milestone becoming a ..."moment of mere sentimental reflection".

This strategic plan represents a three (3) year vision for Link-Up (Qld) and the key outcomes areas in which activity of the organisation will be focussed to 2012.

Continuing to assist Stolen Generations to research their personal histories and reunite with their families and communities remains the priority for Link-Up (Qld). Extending our reach, with a focus on First Generation Stolen Generation Members, is a key priority for the next three (3) years. In particular, increasing our presence within regional and remote communities throughout Queensland within existing resource constraints presents a significant challenge.

Expanding the range of counselling and other support available to Stolen Generations has been identified as a key priority also to 2012. With the majority of counselling resources available to address the needs of Stolen Generations in Queensland being vested in Community Controlled

Health Services it is critical that we work more effectively with the Queensland Aboriginal & Islander Health Council (QAIHC) to promote access and utilisation of these important services by our clients. Link-Up (Qld) will also seek to expand that range and scope of support we currently provide to Stolen Generations such as through facilitating Healing Camps.

The *Link-Up (Qld) Strategic Plan 2009-2012* recognises that realization of our Vision is dependent on the combined determination and efforts of Link-Up and its partners to effectively support those individuals and families separated as a result of past Government policy. Link-Up (Qld) will therefore strengthen those partnerships essential to the realization of our Vision.

Link-Up (Qld) has experienced significant growth over the past three years and it is likely that this growth will continue to 2012. To ensure our growth is effectively managed, the Plan incorporates strategies for continued strengthening of the internal operations and management systems. In particular, it will be critical that Link-Up (Qld) develop its governance and business capacities to ensure that we are in a position to deliver on the promises we make to Stolen Generations, our communities, partners and other stakeholders in this strategic plan.

I strongly encourage those committed to addressing the needs of the Stolen Generations to embrace this plan and support Link-Up (Qld) and its critical role in supporting those separated from their families on their journey home. As we renew our commitment to the Stolen Generations and our communities, I wish to thank our clients, communities and partners for their continued support. I also wish to thank the Board and staff of Link-Up (Qld) for their continued dedication and service to our communities.

Sam Watson
Chairperson

OUR VISION

Reuniting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have endured forced separation from their families and supporting and counselling them on their journey home.

OUR MISSION

To deliver professional, confidential and culturally sensitive research, reunion and counselling services to adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland who have been separated from their families and communities through adoption, fostering, removal or institutionalization.

OUR VALUES

Community Control – we are committed to the principles and philosophies of community control as the best practice model for improving health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (*National Aboriginal Health Strategy, 1989*).

Holistic Approach – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is not just the physical well-being of an individual but the social and emotional and cultural well-being of the whole community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential thereby bring about the total well-being of their community (*National Aboriginal Health Strategy, 1989*).

Accountability – we take full responsibility for our behaviour, decisions and performance.

Client Focus – to achieve our Mission we must be committed to those who use our services. Delivery of quality services to Stolen Generations and their families is our uncompromising aim.

Empowerment – we create a culture that encourages people to exercise their judgement and initiative in pursuit of organisational goals.

Teamwork – we encourage active collaboration to solve problems, make decisions and achieve goals.

Confidentiality – we respect the individual and families rights to absolute confidentiality with all dealings with clients.

Cultural Respect – working with our communities to ensure a culturally respectful environment that promotes safety, comfort, tolerance and respect.

Link-Up (Qld) commits to ensuring our values are reflected in our practice.

OUR ROLE

Link-Up (Qld) was established in 1984 under the auspice of the Aboriginal & Islander Child Care Agency (AICCA). Link-Up services started in response to concerns by people of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Queensland regarding the poor outcomes for people who had been separated from their families and communities such as those identified in the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*. The *Bringing Them Home* report by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 1997 confirmed the devastating effects of the removal of children has had on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, community and culture. Link-Up (Qld) Aboriginal Corporation was incorporated as a separate body in 1989.

Similar to other Link-Up Services operating throughout Australia, Link-Up Queensland performs eleven core functions:

- Client contact, assessment, referral and support and guidance;
- Support and guidance – initial Family Contact;
- Researching client files and other relevant information;
- Secondary Link-Up service and negotiation and liaison;
- Reunion management:

Phase 1: Pre-reunion (preparation)

Phase 2: Reunion

Phase 3: Post Reunion

- Post Reunion Support;
- Cultural and Family Value Awareness;
- Public Awareness;
- Staff Training and Development;
- Representation on Government and Community Forums;
- Administrative Management, including development of Memorandums of Understanding.

The Board of Directors



Sam Watson



Lloyd Kyle



Kym Kilroy



Willie Prince



Dr. Norm Sheehan



Bernie Singleton

OUR BOARD

Link-Up (Qld) is governed by a Board comprising all Indigenous people:

Chairperson Sam Watson:

Sam's people are from the **Birigubba** tribe, in Bowen Basin country and like himself have been strong fighters against racism. In 1990 Penguin Books published Sam's first novel - *The Kadaitcha Sung* - to broad critical acclaim. The novel was the runner up in the 1991 Victorian Premier's literary award and in the same year Sam was honoured by the Fellowship of Australian Writers as the Indigenous Writer of the Year. In 1991 Sam returned to work at the Brisbane Aboriginal Legal Service and became an executive member of state and national legal aid bodies and was directly involved in implementing the findings of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. He has also stood for State and Federal elections on Aboriginal rights issues. In 1995 he stepped down from community work to write and produce his first film which was subsequently sold to SBS and the ABC. The film was an artistic exploration of a Death in Custody titled *Black Man Down*. It was one of the ground-breaking indigenous short films featured in the *Sand to Celluloid* collection. The film has been screened to audiences across the globe and is still being featured at various film festivals. Sam has also written two plays, "*Black Man Down*" (2007) and "*Oodgeroo*" (2009). In 1999 Sam accepted a casual posting at the University of Queensland and has since become Deputy Director. He teaches two courses in Black Australian Literature and is currently finalising his second novel and is writing his next film. Sam is a proud parent and a proud grandparent.

Director Lloyd Kyle:

Lloyd Michael Kyle is presently the Chief Executive Officer of the KASH Aboriginal Corporation which operates as a community-based residential rehabilitation service located in Mount Isa – Nth. West Queensland. The Program's catchment area in terms of its clients is approximately 206,000 sq. kms, or roughly the size of the state of Victoria. The KASH Program is unique as children form part of the healing process for their parents. Strangely enough, the children become 'role models' to their parents (*i.e.*; "*Mum & Dad, we like it here – we get to go to school every day, we don't feel hungry, and you're not fighting anymore like you used to when you got drunk*").

Lloyd 'cut his teeth' as a Field Officer with the Aboriginal Legal Service in Townsville in the early '90s where he and others implemented a range of Programs within Townsville Correctional Centre as part of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommendations. He was also a founding member of the Gurindal Cell Visitors Program which saw over 3000 cell visitations a year to the Townsville Police Watch-house. Aboriginal Deaths in custody were reduced to nil over the corresponding five years of the Program. He has been with KASH for ten years now, and he reckons that the problem of prolonged alcohol & substance abuse devastating Aboriginal Australians has gotten gradually worse over the corresponding time period. Lloyd has worked continuously within Aboriginal community-based Organizations since 1986, and says that he wouldn't stray from the Social Services Sector or from an NGO standpoint for 'quids'. The KASH Organization therefore continues to perform a 'delicate balancing act' – the juxtaposition between stringently enforced Corporate Governance regulations mandated by Governments as opposed to the delivery of effective culturally-appropriate Programs to its clients. He is presently a Director of Link-Up (Qld) and is totally committed to its objectives and the Corporations desire to be truly regionalized as representing the entire State of Queensland in 'Bringing our people home'.

Director Kym Kilroy:

Kym's people are from the **Butchella** clan from the Hervey Bay region. Born in the area, Kym was removed when she was only two years old and sent to St Vincent's Orphanage in the Brisbane suburb of Nudgee. There she remained as a 'ward of the State' until she turned 18 years old. Kym is classified as a member of both the Stolen Generations and the Forgotten Generations. Kym is currently studying for her Masters of Philosophy in Public Health at the University of Queensland and looking forward to the commencement of her PhD in March 2010 with her studies revolving around the Stolen Generations.

Kym is an active volunteer throughout the community and with the NAIDOC and Dreaming Festivals. Kym is also the big sister of Broncos Rugby League legend, "Smokin' Joe Kilroy".

Director Willie Prince:

Willie, a **Wakka Wakka** and **Kalkadoon** man, is a member of the Stolen Generations and was removed from his family, community and culture for seventeen years because of his physical disability. He is passionate about advocating for the needs of people with a disability and focusing on building

recognition of people's abilities. Willie has showcased his own abilities in his professional, community and sporting life. He previously excelled in athletics at a national level, winning medals for shot-put and discus. He has been involved in a range of committees such as NAIDOC and convening the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network. Willie works as an Administrative Officer at the Kuril Dhagun Public Programs in the State Library of Queensland.

Director Dr Norm Sheehan:

A **Wiradjuri** man born in Mudgee NSW and brought up in the Catholic education system. Norm has taught in Aboriginal communities, TAFE and higher education in NSW, Tasmania and Queensland since 1979. He has completed an Australian Research Council Discovery project that investigated Indigenous Knowledge Research methodologies in human rights education and completed a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Social and Emotional Well Being with the School of Psychiatry at the University of Queensland. In 2009 he was awarded the SEQ NAIDOC award for his teaching and scholarship. He is currently Associate Professor at the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Design Anthropology (CIKADA) in the Faculty of Design at Swinburne University of Technology. Indigenous Knowledge is a relational understanding of the world that describes the meaning and import of cultural, social and environmental connections through design artifacts and design based communication processes. Embedded in this relational understanding is an ethics of care through which research is designed as a positive contribution to these fundamental interconnections.

Director Bernie Singleton:

Mr Bernie Singleton is passionate about the health and well being of his people. For over six years, Mr Bernie Singleton has been the chairman for Apunipima Cape York Health Council. He has also been a Board Member of the Queensland Aboriginal Islander Health Council (QAIHC) for more than two years, representing Cape York and the Torres Strait region. His engagement with Far North QLD communities and his understanding of their history, politics and culture, brings a wealth of experience to Link-Up (Qld). Mr Singleton grew up in Yarrabah and now resides in Weipa, Cape York with his wife Verna and is the father to Cleveland, Jason, Roydon, Louise, Bernie and Anna (deceased).

LINK-UP (QLD) STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2009-2012

The Link-Up (Qld) Strategic Plan 2009-2012 responds to the challenges and opportunities within the environments within which Link-Up (Qld) operates and is organised around five (5) strategic directions:

1. To directly assist all those Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people who, through destitution or helplessness, need assistance to obtain such information as may be available relating to their family history for the purpose of their gaining greater knowledge of their family and community and Aboriginal culture, values and beliefs, as an when requested by those individuals concerned

2. To relieve the continuing suffering and distress of any of those Aboriginal people who have been separated from their families, especially when young, by arranging to reunite them with their families.

3. To directly assist all reunited Aboriginal people to overcome trans-generation trauma brought about by separation, through access to counselling services and post reunion support groups.

4. Foster effective partnerships and strategic collaborations necessary to realise the vision and mission of Link-Up (Qld).

5. Operate an effective and efficient learning organisation that is committed to quality people management and excellence in corporate governance.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

To directly assist all those Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people who, through destitution or helplessness, need assistance to obtain such information as may be available relating to their family history for the purpose of their gaining greater knowledge of their family and community and Aboriginal culture, values and beliefs, as and when requested by those individuals concerned

Strategic Actions

- 1.1 Undertake investigative research for Stolen Generations focused on family, history and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.
- 1.2 Assist and advocate for Stolen Generations to access records held by various institutions in Queensland and other jurisdictions.
- 1.3 Ensure Stolen Generations are supported throughout the research process, particularly with emotional support when accessing family and personal records.
- 1.4 Develop, maintain and resource a directory of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community contacts throughout Queensland for investigative support and local knowledge of protocols and history.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

To relieve the continuing suffering and distress of any of those Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people who have been separated from their families, especially when young, by arranging to reunite them with their families

Strategic Actions

- 2.1 Assist Stolen Generations with reunification with their families and communities.
- 2.2 Support Stolen Generations and their families before, during and after family reunion.
- 2.3 Expand 'cultural mentorship' available to support Stolen Generations and their families.
- 2.4 Continue to convene 'Healing Camps' throughout Queensland, in partnership with Bringing Them Home (BTH) Counsellors.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

To directly assist all reunited Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people to overcome trans-generation trauma brought about by separation, through access to counselling services and post reunion support groups.

Strategic Actions

- 3.1 Expand social and emotional well-being, counselling and support services available to Stolen Generations throughout Queensland.
- 3.2 Establish and maintain arrangements for provision of clinical supervision and support, including cultural support, for Link-Up (Qld) Counselling staff.
- 3.3 Review existing Link-Up Counselling services to determine most appropriate location and/or model for future delivery of services to maximise access and utilisation by Stolen Generations.
- 3.4 Implement an integrated case management system within Link-Up (Qld) to effectively manage delivery of services and support to Stolen Generations across multiple providers.
- 3.5 Ensure counselling services delivered by Link-Up (Qld) are delivered in accordance with the BTH and Link-Up Services Counsellor Program Manual.
- 3.6 Develop and expand support networks for Stolen Generations, including investigating the feasibility of running healing camps and establishing 'drop-in'/healing Centres throughout Queensland.
- 3.7 Explore opportunities for utilizing new media and technology to expand support available for Stolen Generations.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4

Foster effective partnerships and strategic collaborations necessary to realise vision and mission of Link-Up (Qld).

Strategic Actions

- 4.1 Enhance partnerships with CCHSs and mainstream providers to improve access to counseling and support services to Stolen Generations.
- 4.2 Strengthen collaboration with QAIHC and other state-wide bodies and agencies to develop and implement a coordinated approach to planning, development and delivery of services to Stolen Generations.
- 4.3 Develop partnership with Workforce Support Units (WSUs) to enhance workforce development AND support for Link-Up (Qld) staff.
- 4.4 Establish partnership with leading research institutions to support development and implementation of a 'Link-Up (Qld) Research Agenda'.
- 4.5 Continue to enhance collaboration with Link-Up Services operating in other jurisdictions and regions throughout Australia.
- 4.6 Develop and/or review Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with key organisations and institutions necessary to achieving Link-Up (Qld)'s vision and mission.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5

Operate an effective and efficient learning organisation that is committed to quality people management and excellence in corporate governance.

Strategic Actions

- 5.1 Implement high quality people management strategies to maintain, support and expand a skilled workforce.
- 5.2 Promote and implement good corporate governance and business practices to enhance accountability, decision-making, resource management, and improved productivity.
- 5.3 Measure our performance through research, review, and evaluation AND implementation of continuous quality improvement practices.
- 5.4 Enhance marketing and communication strategies to promote services delivered by Link-Up throughout Queensland, with priority focus on First Generation Stolen Generation Members.
- 5.5 Based on identified priorities, actively interrogate opportunities to source additional resources and funding with a view to decreasing dependency of Government funding.



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Still Bringing Them Home