

Volume 19 March - April 2016



Link-Up (Qld)

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION®



Still Bringing Them Home

Chairperson - Sam Watson



Sam Watson

There has been a number of funerals in the greater Brisbane area over the past few weeks and we have been involved as many of these loved ones were either friends, colleagues or extended family.

There has also been close family members and those have been particu-

larly hard. Funerals are always difficult to cope with and when you have to go to a number over a short period, you never really get any breathing space to absorb the hurt, the pain and the loss.

But then you pause for a moment and you think about our Stolen Generation mob and you get a far deeper and sharper sense of that big, terrible gap in their lives. Because they were so brutally taken away from family and community they have been robbed of that connection to family and community.

They have been denied that closeness with their own people and the building and nurturing that only happens within. Our people build their relationships month by month, year by year. They construct a treasury of sharing, of intimate and secret experiences. They build complete walls made up of loving memories and forgotten smiles and there are always tears there to mark the journey.

So very many of our mob who were taken away have never had the privilege to be at a family funeral, to mourn the passing of a loved one. And that lack must certainly compound the greater mysteries of life and death.

At Link-Up (Qld) we have been able to bring families back together and we will continue to do so. We will also conduct reunions at cemeteries to honour those who have passed. But we will always share that intense sense of emptiness for many of our mob who are still walking that journey and still searching for their loved ones. Life is so incredible and we will always embrace it with every inch of our spirits; but at the end of the day it will always be the death of a family member that really defines and measures us. For it is the love of family that is at the critical heart of who we are and what we do.

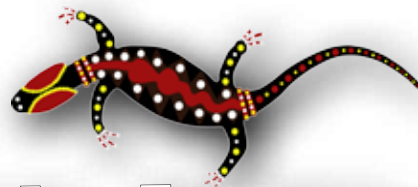
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DISCLAIMER: Whilst every effort has been made to respect cultural traditions, Indigenous readers are advised that this publication may contain images of people who are deceased.



Front Cover:
Ailsa Walsh on the beach at Mornington Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria.



Link-Up (Qld)

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CERTIFICATION

CEO - Patricia Conlon



Patricia Conlon

Staff at Link-Up (Qld) continue to strive for excellence in their work. We recently had a staff planning retreat – this was an opportunity to work together on re-viewing our operational plan, participate in team building activities and a chance to relax and reflect on our own journeys – not only professionally but also on personal level.

It was also an opportunity to welcome new staff into Link-Up (Qld). Toni Janke – Service Delivery Manager, William Conlon, Kerry Charlton and Robyn AH-Wong – SEWB Counsellors and Dwayne Pierce – Caseworker. Toni, William and Kerry demonstrated their skills, experience and strengths with confidence by facilitating sessions at the planning retreat, for Toni it was her first day on the job. We welcome them and look forward to building a strong and competitive organisation.

Link-Up (Qld) supports our staff to obtain higher qualifications and training to enhance their skills to support their work. Staff are currently undertaking a variety of relevant training and higher education learning, including Certificate IV in Stolen Generation Family Research and Case Management.

I want to also acknowledge the very important work that our Multi media Unit do – Donna, Jason and Sam – an excellent job in ensuring that our Magazines are produced every two months without fail. The stories and pictures of our client's journeys are part of the healing process for them and we support and appreciate their willingness to share their stories with others. Our Multi media Unit also captures oral histories from our Elders. These stories are for future generations to be able to see, hear and learn about their family and cultural connection to country.

Our Multi media Team also coordinate many other important activities such as connective art workshops and our Apology and Sorry Day events.

Sorry Day Breakfast this year is being held on Friday 27th May at Orleigh Park, West End. This is the site of Cranbook Place – an Aboriginal Girls Home which acted as a receiving depot for Aboriginal domestic servants from all over Queensland. Under the Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897, the Aboriginal Girls Home was classified as a 'reserve' in 1904 and was therefore governed by the provisions of the Act.

Link-Up (Qld) has identified some of the girls at the Aboriginal Girls Home – Hannah Hamilton, Clara Wheeler, Mary Combo, Lucy Gracemere, Nellie Mather, Kitty Stott, Ettie Walsh, Minnie Mackay, Fanny Logan, Lucy Wheeler, Mary (or Mary-Anne) Thorpe, Mabel McCullough, Lizzie Smith, Jessie Thompson, Sarah Stott, Cissie Fraser, Alice Bennett. Descendants are invited to attend our Sorry Day Breakfast.

Link-Up (Qld) invites you to attend our Sorry Day proceedings

Sorry Day

When: Friday - 27th May, 2016
Breakfast in the Park: 8am
Program: 9am to 10:30am

Where: Orleigh Park, West End
Cnr Forbes Street and Riverside Terrace, Hill End.

Link-Up (Qld) Ph: (07) 30348444 or 1800 200 855 Email: contact@link-upqld.org.au

Funded by Queensland Government

Healing Foundation
Strong Spirit • Strong Culture • Strong People

National Stolen Generations Alliance
Australians for Truth, Justice and Healing

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Victor Thomas Reunion - Warangesda Mission



Victor Thomas at Warangesda Mission

In January, Link-Up (Qld) had its first reunion with Uncle Victor Thomas. This would be a “Back to Country Reunion” visiting the ancestral home of Uncle Victor’s mother. Caseworker Rob Frescon and SEWB Counsellor William Conlon felt very privileged and extremely excited to be a part of a very special reunification with Uncle Victor and his wife Aunty Gloria back to Warangesda Mission in NSW.

The group spent the better part of the day travelling to Wagga Wagga, they left Brisbane and flew to Sydney, then got on a much smaller aircraft from Sydney to Wagga Wagga arriving in the middle of the afternoon. After a quick shower and a nice dinner the group settled in to plan the drive to Warangesda Mission located outside of Darlington Point NSW the next day.

Bright and early they set off on the 1½ hour drive to the Mission. This was a very quiet time as Uncle Victor spent the time reflecting, while the rest hoped for the best possible outcome for him and his journey. Arriving at the Mission they were met by the care taker, who gave directions to some of the remaining buildings still standing.

Driving along the dusty dirt roads when out of nowhere Uncle Victor shouts “Stop. Stop the car”. Surrounded by nothing but trees and grass, he gets out of the car and starts walking off in a direction that leads to nowhere when all of a sudden a huge river appears. He stood on the bank for many minutes lost in his thoughts. Imagining his family spending countless hours swimming and laughing in this same spot. Uncle Victor proclaimed that “his Ancestors were here with us now, and that he feels safe and at home”. Truly inspiring to hear that he felt overwhelmed and at ease in his journey.





The group then explored the surrounding bush land, in awe of the large trees surrounding the river, as well as looking through the old dormitory buildings that were partially standing. During this time Uncle Victor didn't say much but preferring to just take it all in.

The drive back to Wagga Wagga was also quiet allowing Uncle Victor to let all these new feelings wash over him, and a great time for reflection. Auntie Gloria said afterwards that she had noticed a big change in Uncle Victor, he seemed more at ease and had also returned to part time employment.



This reunion was a great success with Uncle Victor attending our Client morning teas, practically every month. He now shares his story with others in the group, and has become a mentor to others who are just starting on their journey to re-connectedness.



Ailsa Walsh Reunion - Mornington Island



Ailsa Walsh on the beach at Mornington Island.

On the 27th March Ailsa Walsh, her father Earl along with Link-Up (Qld) Caseworker Rob Frescon started Ailsa's "Back to Country Reunion" on Mornington Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Mornington Island being Earl's mothers ancestral home.

The next day was spent meeting relatives and site seeing around the Island, ending in an impromptu get together on the beach that night with plenty of singing and dancing and also time for Ailsa to reflect and take in the beauty of sunset on Mornington Island.

They first flew from Brisbane to Mt Isa where they stayed the night then started the 6 hour flight to Mornington that included stops in Doomadgee and Normanton. This part of the trip was also a highlight as the view from the plane proved to be very spectacular as they got to witness the beauty of the Gulf country. Landing on Mornington Island which is the largest of the islands in the Wellesley group, they were met with beautiful views, mango forests and waterways.

Link-Up (Qld) would like to thank Farrah Linden from Mission Australia on Mornington Island for all the assistance she gave to the group on their arrival.





Ann Brunton Reunion - Darwin



Ann Brunton and her siblings in Darwin

My journey to connect to family started in Feb 2015 I filled out all the forms and met my case worker Jessie Cobbo.

After all the research and home visits I was advised my blood mother had passed in June 2015 so had missed the opportunity to connect by a couple of months. This was a very sad moment for me however the offer of connecting with my two older sisters and little brother began.

The communication started off very slowly with phone calls and text messages, it was a gradual process getting to know my family.

Jo and Numa live in Darwin and Carol in Melbourne we were scattered all over the country but we are family and Link Up were able to help with a family and graveside reunion in March 2016.

My time in Darwin was a surreal and life changing event, I now know who my family are and have learnt although we all grew up very differently we are family and belong to each other. My 9 year old daughter came along so she could meet her blood family too we were welcomed with open arms and truly felt loved and wanted, words cannot explain after so many years how that feels.





If it wasn't for Link-Up (Qld) this would not of happened or would have been so much harder to make them connections, I cannot thank Link-Up (Qld) enough or the Link-Up mob in NT for all their wonderful support and care.

Kindest regards

Ann Brunton



Delores Prior Reunion - Yacamunda Station



Delores Prior at her Father's gravesite

Delores Prior was born in Babinda Queensland (Qld). At two years of age with her Mother Alice Graham and siblings they were ordered from Townsville to Palm Island during the late 1950s. At the same time Delores Father, Martin Angus, went searching for work around the Mt Isa area. That was the last time Delores was with her Father as a family. Delores remembers meeting briefly with her Father twice during her lifetime. Prior to those two meetings Delores believed her Father had died. Not long after the second visit at 15 years of age Delores Father passed away.

In 1969 Delores along with 4 other sisters and 2 brothers was placed in the Palm Island dormitories, although the children lived separately from their mother Alice Graham, the child of Joseph Barlow and Nellie Kerr, the children maintained the relationship. However, Delores had little information about her father's family and where he was from.

The Cairns Link-Up (Qld) Staff re-established contact with Delores in 2012 to search for information about her Father Martin Angus. Following on from that the Link-Up (Qld) Research Team found department records which acknowledged that Mt Coolon Qld is the birthplace of Martin Angus in November 1916 and



the burial site of Delores Grandmother Katie Wallis/Miller. Katie Wallis/Miller was employed at Yacamunda Station Qld and the father of Angus was a non-Indigenous station manager on that Station. Martin had three siblings; Paddy, Lorna and Henry. Researchers were unable to locate further mention of Martin's siblings. Records state Martin Angus was relocated from Mt Coolon and was also known as William James Silas he was baptised under that name in Yarrabah at the age of 12.

Further information from the Yacamunda Station owner Mrs Coral Scott revealed that Kate Wallis/Miller and her children, plus other Aboriginal people in the area at that time were known to gather at and socialise with the owners of Gleneva Station several miles south of Yacamunda Station. At that time Gleneva Station was owned by an Aboriginal family known as McLennan.

The Link-Up (Qld) Research Team found departmental records that identified the grave site of Delores Prior's Father Martin Angus in a Townsville Cemetery. Which was unknown to the Client and her siblings. A further joy to the Client and her Children on the visit to Martin Angus grave site the family re-discovered the grave site of Delores brother in-law and the children's Uncle Butch.





Link-Up (Qld) were able to take Delores on a 'Back to Country Reunion' to Yacamunda Station where her Father was raised and where her Grand Parents worked.

Then to Gleneva Station where Grand-Mother Katie and her children would have socialised. On the way back to Cairns the Client was able to locate her Father's resting place and with her child, Raymond Prior Jnr, participate in a 'Grave side Reunion'.

Special thanks to Coral Scott and her husband at Yacamunda Station and to Coral Scott's son the current owner of Gleneva Station and also the Station Manager for allowing access to their properties.

"With great work and assistance from Link-Up (Qld) I would like to personally thank Wayne and Desley for their support. I was able to make the journey back to the country of my father's birthplace and also my Grandmother's birthplace." - Delores Prior



Kaylene Gee-Hoy Reunion - Darwin



Kaylene Gee-Hoy and her son Chase.

Kaylene Gee-Hoy from Townsville attended a “Graveside Reunion” to re-unite her with her mother, Annie Gee-Hoy in Darwin in December 2015.

Kaylene with her son Chase Connolly who was her support person, travelled with Link-Up (Qld) Caseworker Vicki Darr from Townsville to Darwin. The “Graveside Reunion” proved to be a very emotional time for Kaylene, who was very happy to spend some time with her mother.

Kaylene would like to thank the Link-Up (Qld) team for their assistance and support throughout this emotional journey.



Link-Up (Qld) Caseworker Vicki Darr and Kaylene Gee-Hoy

Cherbourg Deadly Day Out - William Conlon



With an invitation from the local Aboriginal Medical Service, Cherbourg Regional Aboriginal and Islander Community Controlled Health Service (C.R.A.I.C.C.H.S), Jason Ives, Sam Watson (Jnr), and myself made the trip to Cherbourg to connect with the locals, take part in a suicide awareness campaign, promote Link-Up (QLD), and undertake some service delivery work which is much needed in Cherbourg.

The event organised and funded by the Wesley Mission in conjunction with the health service proved to a great success. With Preston Campbell and ex-Principal Dr Chris Sarra in attendance for this event, the audience was set for some great stories.

Preston focused his talk around “suicide” in indigenous communities, speaking about the difficulties in obtaining services to support the needs of the community. He also spoke about his time whilst playing football and the pressures that he came through in relation to his own personal dealings with suicide. And inspiration to all that attended on the day.



Dr Sarra spoke about what it takes to overcome disadvantages whilst being the principle at the local state school, and how during that time it was one of the better experiences he had in working with and for the community of Cherbourg.

The RU-OK campaign was organised and run by Toni, a worker from the Health service. Members of the community were invited to speak with or make appointments with any staff member, to talk about what it take to beat and or support a person who may be going through a mental health crisis.

The Link-Up (Qld) crew had a wonderful time interacting with the many community members who attended this event, and managed to leave with community and service providers contact details for the future reference.

We would also like to thank the four (4) Elders who provide their oral history. With these stories our future generation with be able to see, and hear, and learn about their own connection to family, and more importantly learn about their own cultural link to family.

I would urge our Elders to share their own personal stories with our Multi media team.

Royal Commission - Gordon Glenbar

In my role as Royal Commission Specialist Support Counsellor, outreach this year has included two trips to Rockhampton as well as several local information/awareness sessions at organisations such as Bargumar, Anglicare and Indigenous Business Australia. Bargumar which is situated in Caboolture hosted the local Murri Network Meeting where Link-Up (Qld) SEWB Counsellor Bill Conlon and I were able to meet with staff from many local organisations both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused and mainstream.



Anglicare Caboolture invited us to also share information about Link-Up (Qld)'s core business and the Royal Commission to enhance their capacity to provide a culturally appropriate service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait clients, and to support clients to engage with Link-Up (Qld) should they require.

Link-Up (Qld) Multimedia Officer Jason Ives and I travelled to Rockhampton to participate in the opening of the Neerkol Children's Memorial Garden. The garden was established in memory of the many lives lost at the orphanage. Many past residents and their relatives were in attendance. The event was an opportunity for them to come together under better circumstances and it was a privilege to witness such an emotional and positive activity that was clearly such a huge part of the healing process. We were able to record some of these stories for our Oral History Program.





I also travelled to Melbourne to attend the National Royal Commission Support Service Meeting. This was an opportunity for staff from organisations funded by the Commission to discuss pathways to support survivors and to share learnings from engagement strategies. The Healing Foundation gave a presentation on cultural programs and support for Indigenous clients.

I am striving to locate as many and varied cultural activities and supports as possible to assist survivors to strengthen their cultural identity and support network as they continue on their healing journey.

Link-Up (Qld) Staff Planning Retreat 2016 - Sam Watson Jnr



Link-Up (Qld) Staff at Cedar Creek Lodge

Last month Link-Up (Qld) staff attended our staff planning retreat at Cedar Creek Lodges at Mt Tamborine. It was a good chance for us to relax a little, away from the office and get to know each other better through some team building activities.

We spent the first part of the retreat doing staff planning and reviewing policy and procedure. Our SEWB Counsellor delivered a session on self-care for staff so that we don't get worn out or experience burn out in our work. This was vital to ensuring we continue delivering the best service we can.

Throughout the retreat the Cedar Creek Lodges staff pampered us. We were treated with very delicious food from breakfast to dinner and with plenty in between.

Some staff were also treated to massages from Cedar Creek Lodge's therapists, while others spent the time to relax in their rooms or with the other staff on scenic bush walks or just having a coffee.

Towards the end of the retreat, we played laser skirmish. We all got quite competitive, fighting for bragging rights. It was a good chance to get rid of some energy, bond with other staff and build on teamwork.

We came back to work feeling more relaxed, having had a little break and a chance to get to know new and old staff better.





Working in Partnership: Community and Personal Histories Unit (DATSIP) and Link-Up (Qld)



Ms Claire O'Connor, Director General DATSIP

Link-Up (Qld) was invited to attend the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships All Staff forum and 2016 Staff Excellence Awards recently.

CEO Patricia Conlon and Research Manager Ruth Loli attended the forum.

The forum also included other agencies and organisations who work in Partnership with the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships – putting the P into Partnership was the theme. Key Speakers were Mr Curtis Pitt – Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Ms Claire O'Connor – Director General, DATSIP, Ms Isabel Tarago – Director, Cultural Heritage Unit, DATSIP, Mr Neil Scales – Director General, Transport and Main Roads.



Ruth Loli and Kathy Frankland, Manager of Community & Personal Histories within the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships delivered a presentation about the longstanding partnership between Link-Up (Qld) and Community and Personal Histories to assist members of the Stolen Generations and their descendants.

The partnership involves Community and Personal Histories providing Link-Up (Qld) with direct access to records created by the Department during the Protection era. The records relate to many of our clients and/or our clients' families and are crucial to piecing together family histories. Link-Up (Qld) is also provided with access to Queensland births, deaths and marriages information and previous research undertaken by the Unit. Our Researchers make weekly visits to the Community and Personal Histories office to access information and undertake family history research for clients.



Link-Up (Qld) Research Manager Ruth Loli

Link-Up (Qld) and Community and Personal Histories also work collaboratively in other areas such as our recent project to identify and locate descendants of women who were in the Aboriginal Girls Home at West End; the site of our annual Sorry Day breakfast event.

Ruth Loli spoke to the benefits of working together including the ability to conduct targeted research to meet clients' specific needs, reducing the time it takes to progress client cases through the research stage to a reunion and eliminating the duplication of work between the two services.

Link-Up (Qld) would like to extend a big thank you to Kathy Frankland and the team at Community and Personal Histories and we look forward to continuing in our work together.

Presentations were also delivered by Ms Georgina Richters – PWC Indigenous Consulting, Britney Martyn, Thiess Sisters in Mining employee, and Ms Christine Crain from Queensland Treasury about how they partner with DATSIP.

Link-Up (Qld) was privileged to be part of the forum.

Link-Up (Qld) New Staff



Toni Janke

Toni Janke is a Wuthathi/Meriam woman, originally from Cairns, North Queensland.

Toni later grew up in Canberra and studied in Sydney. Toni is well known in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community nationally. Toni brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to Link Up (Qld). She has worked in the arts, media, government, and ministry.

Most recently, she was employed as Family & Community Practitioner with Centacare, Brisbane. She has professional qualifications in law and theology. She is also a singer/songwriter who has received national music awards and performed across Australia. She has 2 grown-up children. We welcome Toni to the role of Service Delivery Manager in our Brisbane office.



Kerry Charlton

Link-Up (Qld) has been an area of interest to me for many years. The opportunity to work here came at just the right time in my life and I am settling into my new role as SEWB Counsellor.

Through my Moreton family line I am Koenpal-Yuggera and Undanbi of Stradbroke Island, Moreton Bay and wider Brisbane. My maternal great grandmother was brought down from the Gulf and generations of our family were on Myora mission (Straddy), Deebing Creek / Purga, Barambah / Cherbourg and sent all over the State and beyond. From my British father comes my Celtic heritage of which I am also proud.

I grew up between coastal and inner Brisbane, Roma, Stradbroke Island and Inala and a big extended family. I have three wonderful adult children, fourteen gran-nies and three great grannies and they are my joy.

My interest in people, creative arts and sharing stories is reflected through my work in education, community building, social justice, 'Indigenous healing' and Reconciliation.



Robyn AH-Wong

My name is Robyn AH-Wong and I have the opportunity to be employed by Link-UP (Qld) Cairns Office as the SEWB Counsellor

I have been previously employed in Education Qld, Community and Public Health; Rural Health Training Unit; Recognised Entity and Red Cross. I count it a privilege to now be working with those who are travelling through their healing journey with Link-Up (Qld).

I was born and raised in Mossman Far North Qld and spent many weekends swimming at the Mossman Gorge. My mother and fathers family is historically from Mackay, however my great grandmother was also part of the Stolen Generation from the St George area.

I know the importance of being connected to family, friends, community and land not only for myself, but for my children, grandchildren and generations to come.

There has been many people that I have learned from and shared experiences with in my past. I look forward to forming new friendships and partnership along my journey with Link-Up (Qld) in my future.

Brisbane Client Support Group 2016 Morning Teas

Held on the last Thursday of every month at the Link-Up (Qld) Brisbane office from 10.00am. Contact Link-Up (Qld) on 07 3034 8444 for more information. Next meeting will be on:

26th May

30th June

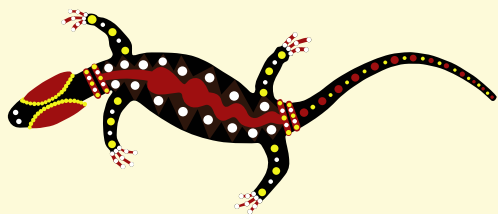
28th July

25th August

29th September

27th October

24th November



Link-Up (Qld)

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About Link-Up (Qld) -Our Mission-

Link-Up (Qld) Aboriginal Corporation supports the healing journeys of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people who have been separated from their families and cultures through forced removal, fostering, adoption and/or institutionalisation. We deliver professional, culturally sensitive and confidential research, reunion and cultural wellbeing services.

Link-Up (Qld) Aboriginal Corporation Caseworkers and Counsellors are experienced individuals who can assist in reuniting Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander families.

We also provide a referral service to the appropriate organisation or Government Department.

Quick Facts

- ▶ Link-Up (Qld) is a FREE service
- ▶ We offer support before, during and after your family reunion
- ▶ We respect your privacy and treat all information confidentially
- ▶ Link-Up (Qld) runs a range of healing activities; camps, support groups, art, craft and music workshops
- ▶ We offer cultural renewal activities and support return to country

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