



Link-Up (Qld)

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION®

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Still Bringing Them Home

Chairperson - Sam Watson



Sam Watson

COMMUNITY CALL OUT – The Brisbane City Council had a meeting with our Elders and senior people this past week to talk about the relationship between Council and our community. The Council mob wanted to know if that relationship was working and what they could do to improve things.

One thing that our people were very concerned about was the fact that there are many places in the Brisbane area that had very real significance to our people; but these places are not very well known. Most of these places are very well kept secrets. People going around Sydney, Melbourne and Darwin can buy guide books that document Aboriginal history and special sites. In Sydney they have an amazing web site that was designed and set up by an Aboriginal group that presents an incredible history of the land on which Sydney was built, with a really comprehensive Aboriginal component.

There are millions of tourists coming into Brisbane every year and most of these people are asking for an Indigenous cultural experience. But there is nothing out there to help people engage with our people or our history.

Our mob know our country and we know the stories. We all know about Boundary Street, Musgrave Park and other places. In recent years we have honored and celebrated places like the Queens Street Post Office where the colonial invaders executed our great resistance leader Dundallie. But there are hundreds of other sites that the broader community is not aware of. The Tower Mill up at Wickham Terrace dates back to those very early days. Two senior Aboriginal men were

accused of killing a white fullah survey party. These two men were formally charged and then hung from the Tower Mill in 1871. When I was a student our people would hold an annual vigil at that Mill to remember those men and that terrible injustice. I remember that there used to be a metal plaque on the side of the Mill that recorded that event. But in recent years that plaque has been removed. Just because that plaque was taken away does not cancel out that colonial crime.

I would ask our readers to please share your memories of sites around Brisbane and other places with us so that we can make sure that our true history is written down. For too long white fullah historians have been in charge of writing down the history and they have done everything they could to clean up the records and sanitise the accounts of what happened out there on the frontiers. When the ALP finally won government in 1989, truck-loads of documents and records were systematically destroyed so that the conservative governments could not be held to account.

Our people who are fighting for stolen wages and on behalf of the stolen generations, have real problems trying to track down documents and records to help them in their battles.

There are a million stories out there that tell of just what happened here in Queensland and we need to record those stories and share them. So many of our Stolen Generation people are taking that journey of rediscovery and finding out the real truth of what was done to them and to their families. This week at a community meeting I was told about one heroic old woman who challenged the troopers when they came to remove her grandchildren. She was gunned down in cold blood. No-one was ever charged or held to account for that. That is another story that should be told and there should be a plaque there to honor that very brave and fearless old lady. We have to take back the right to write our own stories and own our own history.



Front Cover:
Josephine Murray at the beach
in Weipa, during her Reunion to
Mapoon.

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.



CEO - Patricia Thompson



Patricia Thompson

Welcome to this edition of Link-Up (Qld) magazine. In this edition we provide the full speech by the Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison tabled in Parliament on Monday 22nd, October 2018 to the victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.

The Royal Commission into sexual abuse of children in institutions finalised its report in December 2017. The Prime Minister stated that the Australian government has not rejected a single recommendation of the royal commission. He went on to say that government is actively working on 104 of the 122 recommendations that were addressed to the Commonwealth and the 18 remaining recommendations are being closely examined, in consultation with the states and territories.

The Prime Minister gave a commitment that from December 2018, the government will report through parliament the progress being made on the recommendations over the next five years and beyond, shining a spotlight on all parts of government to ensure they are held accountable.

He went on to say *“and the institutions which perpetrated this abuse, covered it up and refused to be held accountable, must be kept on the hook”*.

Many of those organisations have made their own apologies and have signed up to be part of the National Redress Scheme.

The Healing Foundation on the same day as the National Apology released a report, titled **Looking Where the Light Is: creating and restoring safety and healing**, to coincide with Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s apology to victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.

The report details a cultural framework that aims to address the inaction that follow the 1997 Bringing Them Home Report, which outlined 54 recommendations to redress the impact of removal policies and tackle ongoing trauma – most remain unresolved.

With more than 14 per cent of respondents to the Royal Commission coming from Aboriginal and



Prime Minister Scott Morrison

Torres Strait Islander communities, the effects of institutional child sexual abuse are overwhelming. While an apology is welcome and seen as a good first step, the inaction from the Bringing Them Home Report necessitates a direct response.

The Royal Commission made a number of recommendations in relation to advocacy, support and treatment services for survivors, including providing access to tailored treatment and support services for as long as necessary, along with funding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing approaches as an ongoing, integral part of therapeutic responses.

The way forward is clear. However it requires long term commitment from governments, the broader Australian community and mainstream organisations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations.

We also acknowledge and commend former Prime Minister Julia Gillard for initiating the Royal Commission into sexual abuse of children in Institutions.

We now look forward to ACTION by the Australian Government.



Nilisa Allen Reunion - Doomadgee



Nilisa, Lloyd, Lloyd's grandson, Cynthia and Natalie at the station where Nilisa's Grandmother was born.

My name is Nilisa Allen, I was born in Mt Isa and spent my early years in Cloncurry living between our cattle station and town house. When I was 9 years old, my family and I moved to Toowoomba, where I completed high school and went on to study Primary teaching and then Social Work. I currently am an Aged Care Advocate with ADA Australia and still live in Toowoomba where my husband and I raise our 2 daughters.

I had heard of Link-Up (Qld) via work events and expos and I had always wanted to trace my heritage and cultural background. My maternal grandmother passed away when I was 10 years old and I never got the opportunity to speak with her about where we came from. I also wanted to find out more about my grandmother as unfortunately she didn't share much with the family regarding her childhood, culture and family history. My mother and I always wanted to find my uncle (my mother's brother) and we asked Link-Up (Qld) to assist with this due to the difficulty of this task and emotional toll it may have taken on all involved.



Link-Up (Qld) Brisbane staff Natalie and Sloane with Cynthia and Nilisa

Leading up to the reunion I was feeling nervous and excited but held no expectations on what was to come. I wanted to achieve a sense of belonging and to know who I truly am and where I am from.

To have a connection to my culture, my land and learn more about my beautiful, courageous and inspiring grandmother.

We flew from Brisbane to Cairns then to on to Burketown, where we travelled by bus to Doomadgee. I still felt slightly nervous but more so excited by every twist and turn in the discovery of who we are and where we come from. On arrival at Doomadgee we met with Lloyd who took us out to the station where my grandmother was born. Here we spent 2 hours exploring the place where my grandmother would have played, laughed and cried. In Doomadgee we met cousin David Jnr, his grandfather and my grandmother where siblings. David showed us the old oven that my grandmother used to cook with to help feed the community.



Arriving in Doomadgee

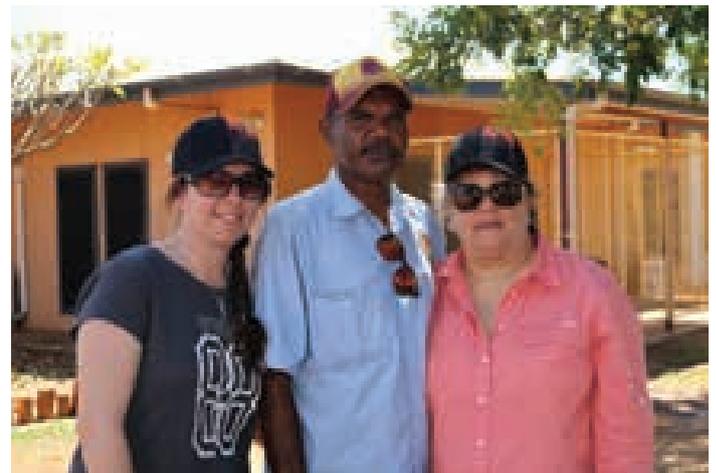


Exploring the station.

Mum and I would like to thank Link-Up (Qld) for giving us this amazing opportunity and to Sloane and Natalie for making the trip enjoyable. We would also like to thank the community of Doomadgee for being so welcoming and of course Lloyd who allowed us to explore my grandmother's birthplace and for David Jnr and family for accepting us so easily and helping link pieces together about our family, our history and culture. Now that we have connected with family we don't want to lose that connection, there is still so much to learn.



Once the reunion was finished I felt a huge sense of relief, I finally connected with my land, my family and my culture. Whilst growing up I always knew I was of Aboriginal decent but having "white" skin and not knowing where I was from meant I had a sense of not knowing where I fit in. But now it's like a huge weight has been lifted and I finally belong, and I can pass on my pride and culture to my children.



Meeting David Jnr was a highlight of the reunion.



In front of the oven that Nilisa's Grandmother use to cook with.

Tarni Williams Reunion - Brisbane



Fiona and Tarni

Sometimes, your gut instinct is so strong, it can't be ignored and that was very true for me. I always admired my gran's love of the bush and all its critters, especially magpies.

Gran never spoke of her family and it was just accepted. I couldn't ignore my desire to find out about gran's family any longer, so the journey began. Like the blind leading the blind, I initially went to Cairns City Library (with help) to search on the computer. I didn't get far at all, but the librarian suggested "Link-Up (Qld)".

Once I plucked up the courage, I quick paced (bright and early) November 2016, to Link-Up (Qld)'s Scott Street office and met with Kathleen and Robyn. I explained my situation and gave what little information

I knew to them. Unfortunately, there was a huge hurdle, my mother. You see, gran's eldest living child, would have to give permission for such a search. Lucky (and unfortunately) for me, because we haven't spoken for over 20 years, my Auntie Jenny could and did give blessed permission.

Not only did aunty give her blessed permission, but, she had a load of information, through what she knew and her own research. Thanks to aunty's info, Link-Up (Qld)'s Research Unit began their research. I was warned that sometimes the search can take many years and sometimes it can go so far and just end. Luckily for me, this was not the case.

My gran was 1 of 9 or 10 children, that Great Grandma Minnie Sheppard had. They even traced Great Grandma Minnie Sheppard's parents, Bob Sheppard and Nellie Pott (Kangulu Nation Tribe).

Great Grandma Minnie, along with my gran Doreen (then 2 years old) and her siblings Cossie, Rene and Kathleen, were removed from Baralaba to Woorabinda in 1930.

In 1938, Anthropologist Norman Tindale visited Woorabinda (and other missions) and recorded Great Grandma Minnie's family tree. Much information was found, because of this, and Link-Up (Qld) Research Manager Ruth Loli's exhaustive search.

I have spoken to my cousin Bindi, she lives in Sydney and her gran (Florence) is my gran's older sister. I have spoken to and met my cousin Fiona, also Florence's grand-daughter, she lives in Cooktown. It was with Fiona by my side that I'm about to have my "Reunion"



With Cousin Paul and his wife Dimity at Ipswich.



Meeting up with more family at the Family Reunion Dinner

very sweet and welcoming. After lunch and a further catch-up we headed back to our hotel to get ready for our family reunion dinner.

At the dinner I met Great Aunty Dulcie, Great Uncle Terry, cousin Paul's younger sister Heidi, and her daughter Tayla. What a truly beautiful bunch of people. During dinner, there were so many questions and answers flying, with several conversations going at once.

I've been asked by family to stay in touch, which I plan to do. Makes me feel much loved and accepted and although I have yearned for them, they have also yearned for me. Fiona and I are hoping to do a road-trip together to Rocky soon for the big family reunion, 100s will be attending.

My message to others looking for family is don't delay and take your first step to finding them. After all, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. The feeling of family and belonging is priceless, and every piece of the puzzle makes you uniquely you. Thanks to my gran's words of wisdom "Always trust your gut instincts, no matter how strange it seems", and she was right.

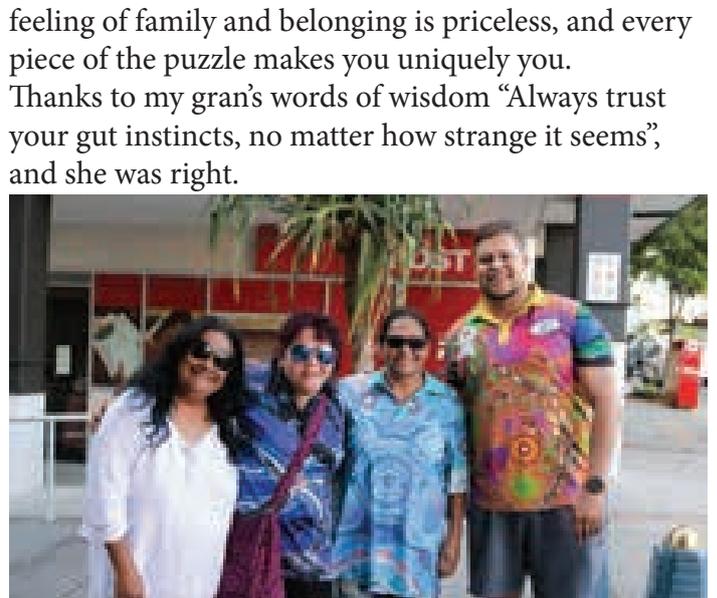


with my cousin Paul and other family members in Brisbane.

Saturday 15/9/18 Brisbane. Big day today. I hardly slept, yet I have energy to burn. Fiona and I were driven by Link-Up (Qld) staff Josh and Natalie to cousin Paul and his wife Dimity's home in Ipswich. I was happy to see them, and Paul hadn't changed since high school. Oddly we knew each other from then and had hung in the same crowd. His wife Dimity was



My cousin and support person Fiona.



Link-Up (Qld) staff Natalie and Josh, Tarni and Fiona.

Josephine Murray Reunion - Mapoon



Josephine Murray with Link-Up (Qld) staff Sylvia Wright and Kathleen Bobongie.

My name is Josephine Barbara Murray, I was born on the 9th January 1966 on Dunbar Station along the banks of the Mitchell River. My father, George Joseph Murray was born around 1927 on the Mitchell River Mission and my mother, Lucy Geraldine Footscray was born in 1932 at Mapoon Mission.

I first heard of Link-Up (Qld) when I was working at a remote community as a Community Support Worker. I was aware that there was family who lived there who possibly knew more about my childhood than I did at the time. I contacted Link-Up (Qld) to find out more about my family and to bring closure to many years of family arguments and disagreements of being taken away and being raised differently from other family members – and not being given a place of belonging and true sense of identity.

From memory, when I was about 5 years old, my brother and sister and I were taken from our parents at Koolatah Station and flown to Weipa Airport where we were met by an Anglican priest who took us in a 4WD truck to Coen Inland Mission to be educated. I thought that we would go home regularly to Koolatah Station for the school holidays but that didn't happen very often due to my mother falling very ill after my birth. When I was 9 years old, we were taken back to Normanton to be close to our mother before her death in 1975. It was really difficult for both my mother and I. I was the youngest child and the separation and time away from each other meant that we hardly knew each other. My siblings and I were living in a hostel in Normanton and were cared for by two nuns.

I wasn't allowed to grieve for my mother and my emotions were buried inside me.

I was excited when caseworker, Sylvia Wright from Link-Up (Qld) organised a meeting to deliver my research. A reunion was later organised for me to visit Mapoon where my grandparents Frank Footscray and Lois Curry had lived and where my dear mother, Lucy Footscray was born.

Sylvia and Kathleen from Link-Up (Qld) and I travelled to Weipa on the 20th September and met up with Ricky Guivarra who escorted us to his home community of Mapoon the following day. One of the biggest highlights of the trip was when Ricky gave me some significant information about my mother's family and then showed me a photo of my mother when she was 18.

I was stunned as I don't have any photos of my mother and kept staring at my mother's face – I couldn't get over how much I looked like her. I felt very emotional.



Josephine's mother Lucy seated.



Ricky showed us around Mapoon and sprung another great surprise on me, he took me to the block of land where my grandparent's had lived and where my mother was born. The homestead was long gone and the only thing left standing was an old dunny. I walked on the land, I felt that I was returning, her baby, the only difference was that I was an adult with children of my own. I rubbed my feet in the hot red dirt and walked through ashes where fire had been. I felt at peace with myself. The butterflies that greeted me were memories of Coen Inland Mission days where we would find chrysalises and watch them develop into butterflies. This gave me an interest in butterflies and helped keep my mind off waiting to return home to my parents. Another important creature also appeared, a Torres Strait pigeon sitting up in the trees and letting me know that it was there.

I felt emotional again, so many memories of my mother swirled in my mind. I felt a sense of belonging, a connection to my mother. It was a place for me to start healing, years of tears and sadness for a woman who died with a broken heart searching for her stolen children.



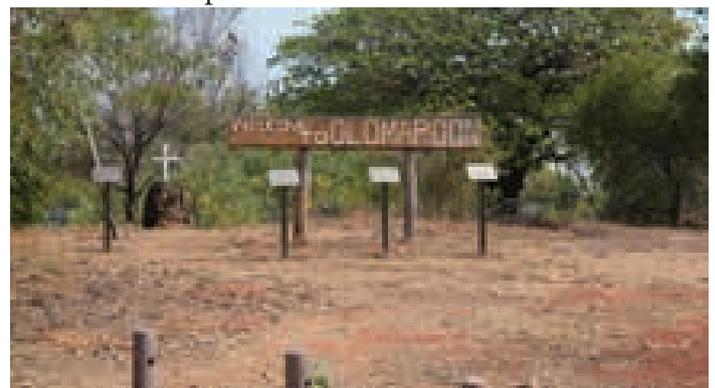
Getting a guided tour by Ricky



We also visited the site of the Old Mapoon Mission and walked in the sand of some of the most beautiful beaches. I washed my hands in the sparkling blue ocean as a sign of respect for the people of the land.

I had mixed emotions during the reunion trip, sometimes moments of great sadness, other times feelings of happiness to be back walking on the country where my mother was born. I couldn't stop some of the grief that was bottled up for so long from coming out of me. I still haven't washed the special dress I wore when I visited my mother's birth place. Somehow I feel that if I wash it, it will erase those special memories of my mother. I still have a lot of questions and need some more answers but the research and the reunion trip has helped my healing journey. I am a strong believer in moving forward as, however painful, the past cannot be changed. I would like to have a family gathering next year and share some of the information and photos that I have from the trip.

Thank you Link-Up (Qld) and to Ricky Guivarra who enriched my life with the photo of my mother and took me to the place she was born.



Malcom Mitchell Reunion - Normanton



Geraldine, Malcom, Kathleen and Joyce in Normanton

My name is Malcom Mitchell, known as John-John, I am a Kooma man from my mother's side and a Kunja man on my father's side. I was born at Cunnamulla, a little town in western Queensland. I grew up on the town reserve, known as the Yumba, with my mum, June Mitchell also known as Chook and with my grandparents James and Kate Mitchell. We all lived together with my mum's 9 brothers and sisters at the Yumba. Whilst it was a hard life as a young boy living at the Yumba, we were happy as children.

My granny Kate reared me up, and my mum's sister Kath treated me like I was her son, so as a small boy I had my mum and my Auntie Kath who I knew as my mothers. I felt lucky as a small boy having 2 mums. As I got older though, because granny reared me up, I regarded my mother's siblings as my brothers and sisters. Our family was just like other murri's with large extended families, all living together.

When I was about 11 years old, I remember the coppers came in an army jeep to the Yumba, it was late at night, I was handcuffed as an 11 year old child and taken away from my mob and home. I was placed in Westbrook home for boys near Toowoomba. I don't

know why I was taken from my family, but the impact of being taken away was I lost my identity and connection to my family.

Whilst I was in youth detention, my mum started a new life. Kath who I now consider as my big sister had moved away as well. When I was of age to leave the youth detention centre and returned home to Cunnamulla, I felt disconnected to my mum who had started a new life and with Kath having moved, I felt disconnected to my family. I returned to Cunnamulla and lived with my granny, but my removal years earlier as a child had left me scarred and feeling isolated and my connection to my family as I knew it as a small boy was lost.

At Westbrook, I was not given an education, I was treated poorly and very cruelly, as were others who were placed there. This was so different to living with my family at the Yumba. Not having been given an education, I ended up working as a ring barker and shed worker in the south west area and lived in Cunnamulla all my life, it is where I was born and bred. I am now 63 years old and not in good health. I felt the need to reconnect with Kath, as she is the only living



Malcom and Geraldine at Brisbane Airport



Natalie, Geraldine, Malcom, Kathleen and Joyce

member of my mum's siblings, the others, including my mum have all passed on and with Kath the only living child of granny's left, it was really important for me to find her. She is in her 70's now and lives in Normanton in north-west Queensland.

In 2016, I contacted Link-Up (Qld) to assist me to find Kath to reunite with her. I needed to see her, given our ages and my health condition, I wanted to feel that connection to her that I had as a child. I am really glad I went to Link-Up (Qld), they did my family research and provided me with a family tree. Sloane Stallan, my Caseworker, made contact with Kath and organised a reunion for us.

When time came for the reunion, SEWB Worker Allen Wharton from the Cunnamulla Primary Health Care Centre made arrangements with Link-Up (Qld) to drive my wife Geraldine and I to the airport in Charleville, 2 hours away and picked us up on return. My wife Geraldine and I were very worried and nervous about flying, given this was the first time on an airplane to Brisbane then on to Normanton, so from one end of the state to the other, it was a long trip!

We arrived on the Tuesday to a cold and windy night in Brisbane. Link-Up (Qld) Caseworker Sloane Stallan met us and checked us into the hotel to rest after the trip from Cunnamulla. The next morning, we were up early and ready, meeting Sloane and SEWB Counsellor Natalie Harrison at the airport for the flight to Cairns for a stopover, then on to Normanton.

On arrival at Normanton, it was dry and windy, but I knew it was finally time to see my big sister Kath. After booking into our accommodation we arrived at Kath's place, there was a lot of emotions, I was happy to see her and spend some quality time together. After about hour of catching up time and going over stories and photos, Joyce, Kath's daughter cooked a BBQ



and we settled in with some old-time county music as we sat reminiscing about growing up in Cunnamulla in the old days. The next day I was up early, Joyce took me out to visit the gravesite of Kath's husband John Burton, I also saw a bit of Normanton and Chris the Big Crocodile.

Come lunch time it was sad that I had to say my goodbyes to Kath and Joyce. Sitting at the airport I had a smile on my face, even though I was sad, I was also happy that I was able to travel such a long way to see my big sister Kath. On the flight back to Cairns the plane hit turbulence that shook me up a bit, it was good to land. The next morning we were up at 4am to catch the 8am flight back to Brisbane for a 2 hour stop over for the connecting flight to Charleville which was another 2 hours, then finally a 2 hour drive home to Cunnamulla. It was well worth it, being able to reconnect with family.

I would like to thank Link-Up (Qld) for their tireless efforts for making this reunion a very memorable one, also Cunnamulla Primary Health Care Centre team, Allen for their background work and transport to Charleville and back. I am so grateful that I was able to reconnect with my big sister Kath. Even though she is now in her 70's she will be coming home to Cunnamulla for the 150 years celebration in November. I will be so happy to see her again, to take her to the cemetery to visit and to also catch up with people she has not seen for many, many years. It will be a great celebration for us.



Reminiscing about the old days in Cunnamulla



Malcom and Kathleen

National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse - Canberra



The Great Hall, Parliament House

PRIME MINISTER: Mr Speaker, let me first welcome all those who have come here today.

Whether you sit here in this Chamber, the Great Hall, outside elsewhere in the nation's capital. Your living room. In your bed, unable to rise today or speak to another soul. Your journey to where you are today has been a long and painful one, and we acknowledge that and we welcome you today wherever you are.

Mr Speaker, silenced voices. Muffled cries in the darkness.

Unacknowledged tears. The tyranny of invisible suffering.

The never heard pleas of tortured souls bewildered by an indifference to the unthinkable theft of their innocence.

Today, Australia confronts a trauma – an abomination – hiding in plain sight for far too long.

Today, we confront a question too horrible to ask, let alone answer.

Why weren't the children of our nation loved, nurtured and protected?

Why was their trust betrayed?

Why did those who know cover it up?

Why were the cries of children and parents ignored?

Why was our system of justice blind to injustice?

Why has it taken so long to act?

Why were other things more important than this, the care of innocent children?



Estelle Sandow, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten and Paul Sandow

Why didn't we believe?

Today we dare to ask these questions, and finally acknowledge and confront the lost screams of our children.

While we can't be so vain to pretend to answers, we must be so humble to fall before those who were forsaken and beg to them our apology.

A sorry that dare not ask for forgiveness.

A sorry that dare not try and make sense of the incomprehensible or think it could.

A sorry that does not insult with an incredible promise.

A sorry that speaks only of profound grief and loss.

A sorry from a nation that seeks to reach out in compassion into the darkness where you have lived for so long.

Nothing we can do now will right the wrongs inflicted on our nation's children.

Even after a comprehensive Royal Commission, which finally enabled the voices to be heard and the silence to be broken, we will all continue to struggle.

So today we gather in this Chamber in humility. Not just as Representatives of the people of this country, but as fathers, as mothers, as siblings, friends, workmates, and in some cases, indeed as victims and survivors.

Ngunnawal means 'meeting place'. And on this day of apology, we meet together.

We honour every survivor in this country, we love

you, we hear you and we honour you.

No matter if you are here at this meeting place or elsewhere, this apology is to you and for you.

Your presence and participation makes tangible our work today – and it gives strength to others who are yet to share what has happened in their world.

Elsewhere in this building and around Australia, there are others who are silently watching and listening to these proceedings, men and women who have never told a soul what has happened to them. To these men and women I say this apology is for you too.

And later when the speeches are over, we will stand in silence and remember the victims who are not with us anymore, many too sadly by their own hand.

As a nation, we failed them, we forsook them. That will always be our shame.

This apology is for them and their families too.

As one survivor recently said to me, “It wasn’t a foreign enemy who did this to us – this was done by Australians.” To Australians. Enemies in our midst.

Enemies. In. Our. Midst.

The enemies of innocence.

Look up at the galleries, look at the Great Hall, look outside this place and you will see men and women from every walk of life, from every generation, and every part of our land.

Crushed, abused, discarded and forgotten.

The crimes of ritual sexual abuse happened in schools, churches, youth groups, scout troops, orphanages, foster homes, sporting clubs, group homes, charities, and in family homes as well.

It happened anywhere a predator thought they could get away with it, and the systems within these organisations allowed it to happen and turned a blind eye.

It happened day after day, week after week, month after month, and decade after decade. Unrelenting torment.

When a child spoke up, they weren’t believed and the crimes continued with impunity.

One survivor told me that when he told a teacher of his abuse, that teacher then became his next abuser.

Trust broken.

Innocence betrayed.

Power and position exploited for evil dark crimes.

A survivor named Faye told the Royal Commission, “Nothing takes the memories away. It happened 53 years ago and it’s still affecting me.”

One survivor named Ann said, “My mother believed them rather than me”.

I also met with a mother whose two daughters were abused by a priest the family trusted. Suicide would claim one of her two beautiful girls and the other lives under the crushing weight of what was done to her.

As a father of two daughters, I can’t comprehend the magnitude of what she has faced.

Not just as a father but as Prime Minister, I am angry too at the calculating destruction of lives and abuse of trust, including those who have abused the shield of faith and religion to hide their crimes, a shield that is supposed to protect the innocent, not the guilty. And they stand condemned.

One survivor says it was like “becoming a stranger to your parents.”

Mental health illnesses, self-harm, and addictions followed.

The pain didn’t stop with adulthood.

Relationships with partners and children became strained as survivors struggled with the conflicting currents within them.

Parents and siblings felt guilt and sadness for what they had missed, for what and whom they chose to believe, and for what they did not see.

While survivors contemplated what could have been.

A survivor named Rodney asks the question so common to so many survivors, he wonders about “the person I may have become, or the person I could have become if I didn’t have all of this in my life.”

Death can take many forms. In this case the loss of a life never lived, a life denied.

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A survivor named Rodney asks the question so common to so many survivors, he wonders about “ the

person I may have become, or the person I could have become if I didn't have all of this in my life."

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Another survivor, Aiden spoke of not getting justice because his abuser had died. He said, "I was bereft because I was robbed. I was robbed of my day in court. I wanted to tell the world what he did. That was stolen. That was him again, taking control."

Mr Speaker, today, as a nation, we confront our failure to listen, to believe and to provide justice.

And again today, we say sorry.

To the children we failed, sorry.

To the parents whose trust was betrayed and who have struggled to pick up the pieces, sorry.

To the whistle-blowers who we did not listen to, sorry.

To the spouses, partners, wives, husbands and children who have dealt with the consequences of the abuse, cover-ups and obstruction, sorry.

To generations past and present, sorry.

Mr Speaker, as part of our work leading us to this day, I recently met with the National Apology Survivor's Reference Group, as did the Leader of the Opposition, who are with us here today.

I want to thank this wonderful group of people and brave people.

Many are survivors; they have all worked so hard to make today a reality.

They said to me that an apology without action is just a piece of paper and it is. And today they also wanted to hear about our actions.

It is a fair call.

In outlining our actions, I want to recognise the work of my predecessors, former Prime Minister Gillard, who is with us here today, and I thank you for your attendance. Former Prime Minister Rudd, the Member for Warringah, who continues to serve us here in this place, and the former Prime Minister, Mr Turnbull. I want to thank them for their compassion and leadership as they also confronted these terrible failings.

The foundations of our actions are the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission, initiated by Prime Minister Gillard.

The steady compassionate hand of the Commissioners and staff resulted in 17,000 survivors coming forward and nearly 8,000 of them recounting their abuse in private sessions of the Commission.

We are all grateful to the survivors who gave evidence to the Commission. It is because of your strength and your courage that we are gathered here today.

Many of the Commissioners and staff are also with us today and I thank them also.

Mr Speaker, acting on the recommendations of the Royal Commission with concrete action gives practical meaning to today's Apology.

The Commonwealth, as our national Government, must lead and coordinate our response.

The National Redress Scheme has commenced.

I thank the State and Territory Governments for their backing of the scheme.

The Scheme is about recognising and alleviating the impact of past abuse, and providing justice for survivors.

The Scheme will provide survivors with access to counselling and psychological services, monetary payments, and, for those who want one – and I stress for those who want one – a direct personal response from an institution where the abuse occurred.

It will mean – that after many years, often decades, of denials and cover-ups — the institutions responsible for ruining lives admit their wrongdoing and the terrible damage they caused.

The National Office of Child Safety is another big step forward to ensuring the prevention and detection of child abuse, wherever it occurs.

It was announced as part of our Government's response to the Royal Commission and was established from July 1 of this year within the Department of Social Services.

As Prime Minister, I will be changing these arrangements to ensure that the National Office of Child Safety will report to me. It will reside within the portfolio of Prime Minister and Cabinet, as it should.

The Minister for Social Services will assist me in this role, including reporting to me on the progress of Royal Commission recommendations and the activities of the Office of Child Safety.

The Office has already begun its work to raise awareness of child safety and to drive cultural change in institutions in the community – to ensure that the systemic failures and abuses of power that brought us here today are not repeated.

Importantly, children themselves are being empowered to participate in these initiatives – because our children must be heard, and when it comes to the work of safety, it must be approachable and child friendly. They must know who they can tell, and they must be believed, and they must know where they can go.

All Australian Governments are now working together to establish a national database, to ensure higher standards for working with children and that data about people's ability to work with children is shared nationally.

And our work does not stop at our borders.

We are ensuring children across the world are protected by stopping child sex offenders from travelling overseas without permission, which will disrupt, prevent and investigate the abuse of children globally.

And we recognise that as survivors age, those who were abused in or by an institution, have real fears about entering into aged care facilities.

It's an understandable fear given what happened during childhood, and we will work with survivor groups about what we can do alleviate those fears and indeed the work of the Royal Commission into aged care will be able to address this as well.

And to assist with lasting change we recognise that there are many more survivors who were abused in other settings such as their own homes and in their communities, who will not be covered by this redress scheme.

These survivors also need to be heard, and believed, and responded to with services to address their needs. So today, I commit to fund the establishment of a National Centre of Excellence, and I call on the states and territories to work as partners in this venture. This Centre will be the place to raise awareness and understanding of the impacts of child sexual abuse, to deal with the stigma, to support help seeking and guide best practice for training and other services.

All of this is just the start.

The Australian Government has not rejected a single

recommendation of the Royal Commission.

We are now actively working on 104 of the 122 recommendations that were addressed to the Commonwealth. The 18 remaining are being closely examined, in consultation with states and territories.

Today we commit that from December this year, we will report back to the Australian people, through the Parliament, to be held accountable each year, each year, on the progress we are making on the recommendations over the next five years and then beyond.

We will shine a spotlight on all parts of government to ensure we are held accountable.

And the institutions which perpetrated this abuse, covered it up and refused to be held accountable, must be kept on the hook.

Already, many of those organisations have made their own apologies and have signed up to be a part of the National Redress Scheme, as they should.

But there are others yet to join, and today I simply say that justice, decency and the beliefs and values we share as Australians, insists that they sign on.

Today I also commit to establishing a National Museum, a place of truth and commemoration, to raise awareness and understanding of the impacts of child sexual abuse.

We will work with survivor groups, to ensure your stories are recorded, that your truth is told, that our nation does not turn from our shame, and that our Nation will never forget the untold horrors you experienced.

Through this we will endeavour to bring some healing to our nation and to learn from our past horrors.

We can never promise a world where there are no abusers. But we can promise a country where we commit to hear and believe our children.

To work together to keep children safe, to trust them and most of all respect their innocence.

Mr Speaker, I present the formal apology to be tabled in this Parliament today, which will be handed to those in the Great Hall shortly. It reflects all of the sentiments that I have expressed on behalf of the Australian people, this Parliament and our Government.

And as I table that and, as I do, I simply say: I believe you. We believe you. Your country believes you.

National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse - Brisbane



Link-Up (Qld) hosted a morning tea for clients to watch the National Apology in a safe and comforting environment. We acknowledge the Department of Attorney General for supporting representatives from Link-Up (Qld) to attend the National Apology at Parliament House.

This was an opportunity for our people to be present, to hear directly the Apology and the promise from both the Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten, action following the Apology.



National Redress Scheme

The National Redress Scheme is in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

National Redress Scheme Line - 1800 737 377

The Queensland Government has passed legislation, joining the National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse.

The Queensland Government acknowledges that redress will not undo the mistakes of the past, however hopes it will offer people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse recognition and acknowledgement, and contribute to their healing and recovery.

The National Redress Scheme will provide redress to people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse and will run for 10 years. There are rules about who can apply.

The Queensland Government participation in the National Scheme is expected to begin towards the end of 2018, will mean that people who have experienced child sexual abuse while in the care of the Queensland Government may be eligible for redress.

Institutions must agree to join the National Redress Scheme so that they can provide redress to people who experienced child sexual abuse in that particular institution where abuse occurred.

Many institutions have already agreed to join the scheme. This includes the Commonwealth, and all state and territory governments and many of the major churches and charities, including the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Uniting Church, the Salvation Army, the YMCA and Scouts Australia.

There are a number of steps institutions must take to join the scheme and these are different depending on the type of type of institution that is joining. For instance;

- state governments need to pass laws through their state parliament in order to participate in the scheme. These laws, when they are passed, allow non-government institution in that particular state to join the scheme.
- for non-government institutions as well as having relevant laws in place in their state to allow them to join the scheme, they must take a number of administrative steps to formally join the scheme.

This means that there may be a delay between the time that an institution announces it will join the

scheme and the time that applications relating to those institutions can be processed.

Applications for redress can be made at any time, however applications cannot be assessed until the responsible institution, or institutions have fully joined the scheme – they need to have completed all the necessary steps.

What constitutes an Institution?

There are 4 types of institutions identified in the scheme:

- Commonwealth institutions (such as Commonwealth departments and bodies established under Commonwealth law, for example, the Department of Defence, Qantas Airlines before privatisation);
- State institutions (such as state departments and certain bodies established under individual state laws);
- Territory institutions (such as territory departments and certain bodies established under individual laws);
- non-government institutions (such as churches, sporting groups and charities).

While ALL Commonwealth institutions are participating institutions, State, Territory and non-government institutions are only participating in the scheme if they agree to join the scheme and if the Minister for Social Services has declared that they are a participating institution.

Institutions that participate in the Scheme may also join as part of a group and appoint a representative institution to interact with the scheme on its behalf. For groups of participating non-government institutions, the Minister must be satisfied of the connections between each institution in the group before declaring the group and then the representative institution (which may or may not be an institution participating in the scheme).

Institutions that no longer exist (are defunct) are also included under the scheme where a person declared they will be the representative for the former institution.

A list of the participating Institutions can be found on the National Redress Website

www.nationalredress.gov.au

Link-Up (Qld) Board of Directors visit - Yarrabah



The Board recently met in Cairns and took the opportunity to visit Yarrabah. Board members were really pleased with the visit and how welcoming each of the services were. Thanks very much to Mayor Ross Andrews and Councillor Patterson for taking time to meet with them. It was great to have a discussion about the excellent work the Council is progressing with for their community.



Thelma Richards and staff at Gindaja Treatment and Indigenous Healing Corporation gave the Board a tour of the centre.



It was great meeting with residents at the Centre. What a beautiful setting for a treatment and healing place. The Board were impressed with the programs being run at the centre.





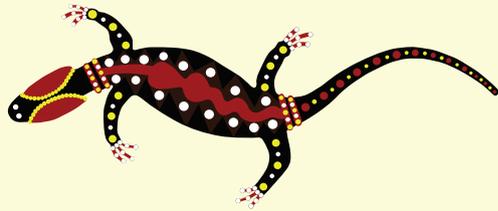
Thanks very much to CEO Sue Andrews and Melanie Walsh of Gurriny Yealmucka Health Service. Again the Board were impressed with this service.



It was pleasing to know that all of the services were aware of the Link-Up (Qld) program and the good collaboration between those services and our local Link-Up (Qld) office in Cairns.

It was a beautiful day spent in paradise.





Link-Up (Qld)

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION ®

Still Bringing Them Home



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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