

National Link-Up News

National Link Up News Edition 31

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South Australia

Letter from Link-Up SA

Hello to national Link-Ups and our readership! Welcome to the 31st edition of the Link-Up national newsletter – an archive of stories and photographs that give a snapshot into the fantastic work of Link-Ups nationwide over the last six months.

As another Sorry Day passes, we are reminded of how important it is to take the journey of healing together. Just yesterday, an SBS article captured this beautifully, it said –

“In order to achieve reconciliation we must heal together – reconciliation is everyone’s responsibility”.

These last months at Link-Up, we have certainly embodied togetherness. Together, we sat and remembered Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s momentous apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Together, we have organised reunions, seen family’s reunited, honoured relatives who have passed and learned more about culture and history. Together, we are slowly putting puzzle pieces back where they belong.

We feel very honoured by the opportunity we have had to collate and edit the individual stories you will find in this edition and thank all of you for your contributions. We want to remind the Link-Ups involved of the critical importance of the work they do, not only for our clients, but for Australia. We are in a process of reconciliation and that process is made possible by the work of Link-Ups across our nation. And to our clients, thank you for trusting us with your stories. Your strength and courage in seeking reconnection with family is what makes our work possible.

If you have any questions, complaints or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us on the details below. Please enjoy this issue of Link-Up in June, 2019.

All the best,

The Link-Up SA team
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(08) 8169 7285



The Link-Up team - From right - Rick (Manager), Joel (Case Worker), Karen (Historian) and Cherie (Case Worker)



Apology Day, February, 2019

A candlelight vigil to honour survivors of the Stolen Generations, at the Apology Day Breakfast, February 2019

THE APOLOGY DAY BREAKFAST

On 13 February, the 11th Anniversary to Kevin Rudd's Apology to Stolen Generations Survivors was marked on Kurna Country in South Australia by two powerful events. The first was a breakfast held at the Adelaide Convention Centre. Swathes of people braved the rain and cold to attend, with roughly 10,000 people filling the Adelaide Convention Centre event space, one of the largest turnouts in the country.

The breakfast began with a welcome to Country by Kurna Elder, Suzanne Russell, and a very moving candlelight vigil to honour survivors of the Stolen Generations, during which Vonda Last from the Ngaantjatjara nation played a beautiful piano piece called Remembrance. "The thing that got me was seeing the candles", said Second Stolen Generation Survivor Ron Miller. "It still hurts", he said.

The overarching theme of this year's Apology Day commemorations spoke to us - forced us to question, what does Remembrance really mean? How can we action it in our daily lives and to those around us? How can Remembrance bring change where it is needed most?

Keynote speakers included the Honourable John Hill and Doctor Jenni Caruso, who discussed the Stolen Generation's Individual Reparation Scheme, and some of the harrowing stories they had heard. But despite the suffering, the enduring survival, hope and forgiveness these stories featured were truly a testament to the strength of Stolen Generations Survivors. "There is much for government and society, in general, to reflect on and learn in relation to the policies and practices that produced the Stolen Generations - the Apology, the Bringing Them Home Report and the establishment of the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme were all important steps; but they are but small steps on the road to Reconciliation", said the Hon John Hill.



Uncle Jack Charles is interviewed by Professor Peter Buckskin at the The Apology Day Breakfast

South Australia



The Apology Day Breakfast at the Adelaide Convention Centre

A presentation by the Honourable Steven Marshall, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, also paid his respects. "The apology to the Stolen Generations eleven years ago was a long overdue recognition that some past policies and past actions of governments and other institutions were very destructive and damaging to many Aboriginal families and people across Australia. At the same time, the apology symbolised a willingness of government and Australians to listen to Aboriginal people who had for so many years tried to speak out and share their own and their families' stories", he said.

To end the breakfast, Uncle Jack Charles, a renowned musician, actor and speaker, was interviewed by Professor Peter Buckskin. Uncle Jack's story is bittersweet – he was removed from his mother at Cummeragunja Mission on the Murray River when he was still an infant, and raised in the Salvation Army Boys' home, where he suffered sexual abuse. Despite this, Uncle Jack eventually left the home and became a successful dramaturg, starting the first Aboriginal theatre troupe in Melbourne. Later in life, the pain of his past resurged and he found himself a homeless heroin addict, who stole to support his habit. His self-directed documentary, *Bastardy*, tracks his life on the streets, his experiences in prison and his road to redemption. Today, Uncle Jack is clean and has become a mentor for many young Aboriginal men who are incarcerated. "When the boys I visit are close to being released from prison, I ask them 'Who are you now and what are you going to become? What road are you going to choose boy?'" says Uncle Jack.

THE APOLOGY DAY COMMUNITY EVENT

Following the Apology Day Breakfast, attendees were invited to a community event at Veale Gardens. Stalls from different Aboriginal organisations had a presence at the event, including the well-known Tauondi coffee and tea truck, the Link Up and Tobacco Teams of Nunkuwarrin Yunti, local Aboriginal artists, including Auntie Alice's jewellery, and performances by a variety of local Aboriginal

musicians. A smoking ceremony to begin the event also welcomed visitors to walk through the cleansing smoke before entering the event. They were also invited to place a stone in some water, to symbolise leaving their mark on earth and Country.

The event was primarily a chance for Aboriginal community members to learn about, and get in contact, with some of the services available to them. Many meaningful discussions were had between staff and community members, especially between Link-Up SA staff.

"Apology Day was a very special day, where I could go back and reflect... Tell dad I'm sorry he had to go through all that", says Mr. Miller. "I'm still writing my story but you'd be proud dad... I've found your brother and sisters and your mother".

Thank you to Bryce Cawte and Patrick Ferguson for their photographs



Daniel Sumner, Oscar Abdulla (Tobacco Team) and Joel Stewart (Link-Up SA Case Worker) at the Apology Day community event in Veale Gardens



Link-Up SA Stall at the Apology Day community event in Veale Gardens

Australia Gatekeepers:

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE FOR RESTRICTIVE PRIVATE RECORDS HOLDERS

In June 2018 the Healing Foundation held a Knowledge Circle in Canberra to discuss records access for survivors of the Stolen Generations. The Knowledge Circle brought together representatives from Link-Ups nationwide and from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra. These representatives were joined by staff from a number of record-holding organisations and service providers. The group discussed the challenges to engaging with private record holders and brainstormed different strategies for improving access. A number of these ideas are currently being pursued.

There remain overarching questions in relation to the issue of restricting records. What motivates gatekeepers to keep the gates so firmly closed? What risk assessment are they responding to? How can we encourage and inspire them to try a new way, to write a different story?

By way of case study, the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) was founded in 1895 in New South Wales. It operated at least 20 missions across three states; South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales. Thousands of Aboriginal children over many decades lived under the control of UAM missionaries.

This following disclaimer comes from the current 'Request for details of personal information held by United Aborigines Mission' form used by the organisation's archival department.

The UAM agrees to search its records for this information at no cost to you subject to your agreement to the following provisions:

1. That UAM has no obligation to ensure that any information which it has in its records is found;
2. That you release UAM from any action, suit, claim or demand in respect of any act or omission of UAM and its servants and agents in respect of the subject of your inquiry.

These conditions mean that anyone requesting a search for records must agree that the UAM is under no obligation to find anything for them.

The Find & Connect web resource outlines some of the many records held by the organisation. These records include children's details, health cards, admission and discharge registers, correspondence records, child endowment listings and photographs. The surviving records from all missions were consolidated many years ago and stored under the control of a single archives officer.

The UAM is an independent religious organisation and does not sit under a larger religious order. There is no umbrella organisation through which to approach UAM, no phone number for the archives or the organisation. The organisation appears to still exist as a charity called the United Aborigines' Mission (identified from an ABN name search). It previously had a one-page website under the name United Aboriginal Ministries but that site has since been removed. The only way to contact them is via email. These various "locks on the gate" make accessing records near impossible.

In the past, the UAM was more open and collaborative, allowing South Australian records to be surveyed and listed for the Finding Your Own Way Guide to Records of Children's Homes in South Australia (Nunkuwarrin Yunti of SA Inc. 2005). They also complied with a request for access by the South Australian Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry, also known as the Mullighan Inquiry, which ran from 2004 to 2008.

Over the last decade, records access has become much more restricted. Occasionally, a researcher is provided with very minimal information, such as dates of admission and discharge, whereas the Gerard Mission dormitory in South Australia, for example, has 10 folders of detailed correspondence and reports sent between the mission and the Secretary of the UAM. These documents provide insights into the operation of the home over many years, often mentioning children, families and staff members by name.

When the UAM opened up their records to the researcher who wrote the Finding your own way guide, and for historians from the Mullighan Inquiry, to our knowledge there were no adverse consequences for the UAM. This has also been the case when members of the Stolen Generations have been provided with information about themselves or their family members. Each time a record holder searches and finds records, helps, shares and supports applicants or apologises in cases where records have not survived, good things happen. Stolen Generation survivors are assisted to find out about themselves and their family. They begin to understand what happened, to find some form of closure. Although distressed by the language and content of records, survivors are often thankful that things were written down, that the photographs were taken and that records were not destroyed because without them, there would be no answers.

How does Link-Up and other organisations that support survivors of the Stolen Generations let these gatekeepers know that there is a more positive way to operate? Resisting access and holding the gates shut can be exhausting. Another private custodian of independent mission records recently stated that she was tired of feeling guilty when she turned people away and refused to search records, but felt she had no other choice because of pressures from others.

We invite gate keepers to engage collaboratively. Expert assistance, resources and sources of funding are always available to preserve, store, list and index records. Opening the gates and allowing access can be achieved while retaining control of the institution's records. Listing and indexing takes pressure off organisations with limited staff by making searches quicker and easier. Link Up SA has been proactive in negotiating Memorandums of Understanding with a range of records holding institutions and has finalised renewal of several MOUs during 2019. The signing of such MOUs can be a celebration of collaboration, good will and partnership in facilitating the healing process for members of the Stolen Generations and their descendants. The UAM, and peer agencies, are invited to join in this partnership.

An aspirational suggestion for a new application form might then read something like this:

The UAM agrees to search its records for this information at no cost to you because it understands how important this information is for you. The UAM will use the indexes and other finding aids it has developed to locate and copy all relevant information which it has in its records for you. You are also welcome to contact the archivist or visit the repository for further assistance.

With this kind of approach, survivors of the Stolen Generations and researchers who work on their behalf, could redefine the UAM and other restrictive private record holders as their valued colleagues and these record holders could set an example to others of how openness, transparency and generosity can change lives.

Karen George
Historian Researcher, Link-Up SA

South Australia

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIA MUSEUM'S LAUNCH OF THE ABORIGINAL FAMILY HISTORY DATABASE

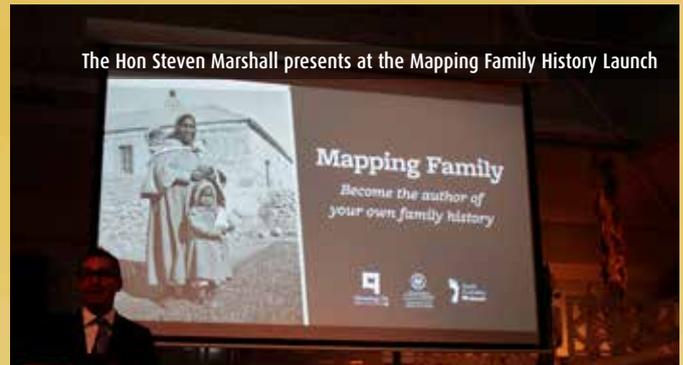
On February 19, a mixed crowd of historians, academics, archiving specialists, politicians and representatives from various government bodies and, most importantly, survivors of the Stolen Generations, walked through the cleansing smoke of Elder Uncle Moogy and into the iconic South Australia Museum's Aboriginal Family History Unit.

The event launched the museum's new electronic database, whereby Aboriginal people can access their own family history. The launch of such a programme signified the importance of records and genealogy access for Aboriginal people, especially where family breakdown or removal has occurred. "The Family History Unit works with Aboriginal people including many members of the Stolen Generation, with the aim of furthering their connections to family, country and culture," said Kurna, Ngarrindjeri man and Family and Community History Consultant, Mr Abdullah-Highfold.

Unlike previous record-keeping techniques, the Family History Unit's new database is more user-friendly and accessible, especially for those who are unfamiliar with research techniques, record-tracing or do not know the full names of those family members they are trying to trace.

The database is also available via a free Smartphone App, making it more accessible than ever. "Prior to the release of this new resource, community members had to spend many hours with us, researching handwritten family genealogies... Now, by using this resource, people can find the name of a family member and contact us, we can then help people explore their genealogies and family history more readily," said Mr Abdullah-Highfold.

The Family History Unit has a wonderful collection of photographs, genealogies, drawings, cultural information and individual stories that can be accessed through the database. These records enclose poignant memories and powerful histories that are significant to living Aboriginal community members today. "Imagine holding a crayon drawing that your great-grandmother created when she was a child or seeing a photo of her for the first time" said Mr Abdullah-Highfold. "With the launch of this new resource we not only aim to make it easier for Aboriginal people to engage with family and community, we also see it as a way for Aboriginal people to document and build on their own family genealogies for generations to come," said Mr Abdullah-Highfold.





NUNKUWARRIN YUNTI COMMUNITY-BASED REDRESS SUPPORT SERVICE

The National Redress Scheme was created to support survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, implemented through the Royal Commission findings into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Nunkuwarrin Yunti are proud to announce that we have specific Social Health Specialist case workers to support individuals choosing to engage in the Redress Scheme. We provide culturally competent support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across South Australia through the National Redress Scheme.

How can we assist you?

To ensure your Cultural Wellbeing and Connectedness through National Redress scheme is a safe pathway we aim to provide:

- Holistic case management
- Help drafting Redress Scheme applications
- Information and advocacy as requested

- Access to informed Legal Advice services relating to National Redress Scheme
- Record request services (child file, from Freedom of Information, if need be)
- Access to narrative counsellors
- Access to culturally informed psychologists
- Access to Ngankaḏi at request
- Access to Redress support groups
- Connection to community events
- Financial counselling services

If you think that Redress applies to you, or you would like to know more, please contact Nunkuwarrin Yunti on (08) 8406 1600 or 8254 5300 and ask to speak to a Redress worker.

Alternatively, you can contact us via email:

emmas@nunku.org.au, elizah@nunku.org.au
or nicolec@nunku.org.au

Or pop in for a yarn at Nunkuwarrin Yunti at our Wakefield Street and Brady Street locations: 182-190 Wakefield Street, Adelaide SA 5000 or 28-30 Brady Street, Elizabeth Downs, Adelaide SA, 5113.

1 to 5 - Family History Workshop, Nunkuwarrin Yunti SA

6 - Crowds begin filing in for the official launch, South Australia Museum

7 - Cherie Rolfe, a longtime Link-Up SA Case Worker, points to Yuin Country where her father is from

8 - Karen George, Link-Up SA Researcher and Historian leading the class

New South Wales

Healing Weekend PORT STEPHENS



Elder Uncle Leigh Ridgeway on Worimi Country

Link-Up NSW hosted a Healing Weekend at beautiful Port Stephens on Worimi Country from February 15 - 18. The Retreat at the Port Stephens venue allowed our clients to connect with those with similar experiences, those who we have assisted on their journeys home and those still on the journey home.

The weekend away also gave people an opportunity to have a cultural experience with Elder Uncle Leigh Ridgeway and his family. They welcomed us on to their Country and performed a smoking ceremony. Several activities were on offer for our clients to experience, both on and off site, including a dolphin watch cruise, fishing, water sports, bingo, trivia, beading, cultural arts and a healing circle.

Link-up were fortunate to have been able to provide an opportunity for the clients to attend a cruise on the waters of Port Stephens in search for dolphins. It was an opportunity for our clients to enjoy the beautiful Worimi Nation, to relax and enjoy old and new friendships at a lovely venue with great food. "It was the best weekend ever", said one client.

THERE IS HELP

To my brothers and sisters who have lived through the trauma and pain of being stolen from family -

*did you ever wonder if we would survive?
Or where we would end up?*

Those who did not survive will be in our hearts and minds forever. We are living another nightmare and learning to adapt once again. We are learning how to interact and show our true emotions and feelings to those people we once belonged to.

We are trying to connect and understand our young ones who in turn are trying to understand us.

We have lost so much - our culture, language, knowledge and belonging.

*The one thing that is not broken is our spirit,
which keeps us alive.*

*The unfortunate part is that the pain will always be there,
it will never go away.*

*But we can make sure it will not happen to our children
and future generations to come.*

*We are a proud race of unique people, our land is our
mother, a place where we belong. Now, we must move
forward.*

**- For the Stolen Generation, by Uncle Dennis Dunn
Former Stolen Generation Reunification Counsellor for
Link-Up NSW**

Wales

Kerrison Reunion

On Wednesday 13 March, Link-Up NSW reunited Melanie with her two sisters Debbie and Joanne, accompanied by Link-Up Caseworker Jo-Ann Bird, Counsellor Mary-Ann Frail, Disability Link Caseworker Viviann and Melanie's Foster mother Maxine.

It was a very special day for Melanie, she met her sisters for the first time in over 40 years and the fact that it was her 47th Birthday made the day very significant. They all met up at the Digger's Club in Newcastle NSW and celebrated

Melanie's birthday with a lunch, followed by a very special birthday cake which the sisters, Debbie and Joanne, took part in decorating.

After lunch they all gathered around and laughed as they took photos. "This is the best birthday ever!" Melanie stated. "I am going to miss my sisters when I leave, now we are connected we can stay in contact".



Elder Uncle Leigh Ridgeway and his family perform a smoking ceremony to welcome us on to Worimi Country

Queensland

Kerry Bodle Reunion



From left - Lindsey Bligh, Jessie Cobbo, Kylee Fitzpatrick and Kerry Bodle at the cemetery

My Grandmother, Merle (Moola) Conbar, was born at Thargomindah in 1898. Her parents are recorded as unknown on departmental records. This is her story.

From the age of two, my Grandmother lived with a man named William Geddes and his family. Geddes had a special permit that allowed him to employ Moola as a ward. As her guardian, Geddes had the authority to move Moola with his own family to any part of the colony he wanted to. No records could be found to show why Moola was removed from her family and why she was allowed to be William Geddes' ward.

In 1929, when she became pregnant with my mother Margaret (Maggie) Milkin nee Conbar, Moola was sent to Cherbourg, where she would spend the rest of her years. In 1932, Moola married James Fisher at Murgon. She passed away in 1934, her gravesite is labelled unknown in the old cemetery. It is not clear if Moola and James Fisher had any children together.

At four-years-old, my mother Maggie was taken from Moola in Cherbourg and sent to the Salvation Army Home in Yeronga. She left when she was sixteen years of age. My mother had a child when she was about twenty and then married my father and had another four

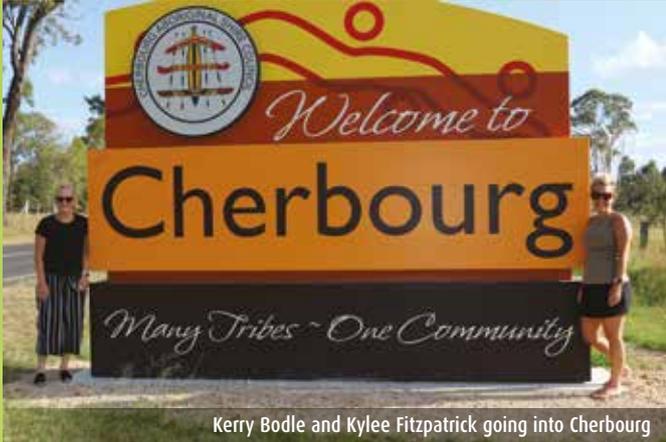
children. When I was five, whilst living at Smithfield NSW, my mother left us. I was sent to a Salvation Army Home in Canowindra NSW. My mother came to visit me at the home when I was eight. I left the home at age sixteen and I saw my mother more regularly after that.

At the age of sixteen, I fell pregnant. I have been married twice and now have three more children. I started studying at Griffith University when my twin boys were two. I have been working at the university for twenty years and now have a PhD.



Kerry Bodle leaving a note and flowers at the Cherbourg Ration Shed Museum

Link-Up



Kerry Bodle and Kylee Fitzpatrick going into Cherbourg



Kerry Bodle at Cherbourg Cemetery

In 1997, my mother sent an intake request to Link-Up Qld to find her family. I made a similar request in 2004 while working at Gumurrii Student Support Unit at Griffith University. The journey has been long and life circumstances have taken precedence at certain times. When I heard about the death of my mother, I decided to complete this journey for her.

When I first received my research from Link-Up Qld, I felt like a missing piece of the puzzle was finally found. The reunion took me back to a place of significance. I felt a mixture of feeling, I was quite anxious heading off to Cherbourg and I did not know if anyone would remember my Grandmother, Moola Conbar or James Fisher.

On the other hand, I was really excited to see the country where my mother was born. My daughter Kylee Fitzpatrick accompanied me on this journey as well.



From left - Christine Reeves, Jessie Cobbo, Kerry Bodle and Kylee Fitzpatrick

Queensland



Kerry Bodle, Aunty Ada Simpson and Kylee Fitzpatrick at the Kerry Bodle Reunion



Kylee Fitzpatrick and Kerry Bodle at the Frank 'Bigshot' Fisher Bridge plaque

The first few days were spent visiting the landmarks – the old and new cemetery, the hospital where my mother was born, the Ration Shed and other Cherbourg sites. We did not meet any family from the Fisher clan until the last day. We had decided to leave flowers with a message on the card at the Ration Shed, instead of the old Cemetery, because we wanted to see if we could possibly trigger someone's memory about Moola Conbar or James Fisher. We met with two Elders at the Ration Shed that morning. When I met Aunty Lilian Gray, I felt like I had another piece of the puzzle. I have yet to meet again with Aunty Lilian Gray, but I hope that we can see each other again, so she can help me complete the story of my Grandmother's life in Cherbourg.

I had mixed feelings after the reunion. Knowing what my Grandmother and Mother had to endure made me feel very emotional and sad, but as time went on I felt more peaceful. I want to go back to Cherbourg after I make connections with Aunty Lilian Gray and see it all from a new perspective.

I want to thank Christine Reeves and Jessie Cobbo from Link-Up Qld for taking time to make the reunion possible and thanks to Link-Up Qld for the great work that they do. I want to thank Lindsay Bligh for taking us around the cemetery.

11th National Apology Day at The Edge, State Library of Queensland

Link-Up QLD held National Apology Day at The Edge Auditorium, State Library of Queensland. Many Elders were amongst the 180 guests, who enjoyed the varied program. Link-Up QLD showcased two films, Remembering the Apology, featuring Stolen Generation clients, and Jennifer and Steven Hart's story, Searching for Sasha: Access Denied. A film about the challenges and barriers faced by the Research Unit and their over eight years of searching for Sasha.

Link-Up

Deirdre Slater Reunion - Currawillinghi

Link-Up QLD recently organised a reunion so I could meet my last remaining living cousin, Sandra Leonard... or so I thought. It turned out that Sandra's brothers were still very much alive. Although they were briefly mentioned in earlier information I'd been given, their names didn't appear on any copies of the family tree I was working with. Needless to say, I was happy to know that I had more living cousins than I thought!

The reunion was a memorable experience, filled with surprises. Along the way, I learned much about our family and its long history.

During our childhood, my two siblings and I were told that our father was Spanish, but for some unknown reason we intuitively knew otherwise. We had often wondered but it wasn't until I was 35 that the long journey to find my father's true heritage began.

Almost twenty years passed. Then, with the help of Find and Connect, a government initiative to help Forgotten Australians reconnect with their family, the necessary searches began.

These searches were followed up with long hours of hard work by the Link-Up QLD research team, who provided far greater details of my closest relatives. Thus, my family tree is now complete – all ten generations. Starting with my great-grandson, right up to my Great Grandmother Jeannie, four generations back.

Unfortunately, my father passed away nine years ago. He preferred to keep his true heritage hidden, right up to the very end. He would have had his reasons and though it was disappointing for us not to know why, since his passing we can only wonder what those reasons might have been. The irony of all this? It wasn't until after my father, Harley Smith/Morris had passed away that certain information from official files was then able to be released.

On the first day of the reunion, we commenced the first part of our long journey, stopping overnight in Goondiwindi. It had been a very hot day, and the evenings weren't that much cooler.

The next day we began the second leg of our journey, stopping overnight at Dirranbandi.

We decided that late afternoon would be the best time to visit the Dirranbandi cemetery, to pay our respects. It's not a large cemetery, so it didn't take long to find our family. While standing at my Great Grandmother Jeannie's graveside, I spoke few words. What I felt in my heart said all that I needed to. I know so very little of Sandra's life journey, but what I do know is that it would have taken a very courageous person to have survived the terribly harsh times that far too many Indigenous men, women, and children had to live through.

On the third day, we headed straight for our destination – Currawillinghi Station. It was here that a huge thank you went to Michael Eckford, and to his good friend Ray Tubby, for having taken the time to share their extensive knowledge of the history of so many past families at Currawillinghi Station, and elsewhere. Between them they have so much knowledge, it was impossible for us to take it all in. After showing us around the land, its historical buildings and other significant structures, we had morning tea in the huge shearing shed.

Thank you to all the Link-Up staff who helped organise our reunion and, once again, thank you to all of those hardworking researchers. After all of their crosschecking had been done, nobody could have been more surprised than I was. There were so many names on our family tree! From my Grandmother, Ruby May Smith/Leonard – her mother, Eva Chapman/Smith – her mother, Sarah Eckford/White – her mother, Louisa Nicholls, and last (but by no means least), her mother – my Great Grandmother Jeannie, who would have been born well before those two words 'Botany Bay' came into existence.

Finally, a special thank you must go to Jessie Cobbo and Christine Reeves. They looked after Sandra and myself so well. In fact, the only thing that Sandra and I had to be concerned about, was all of those very sharp, thong-loving, hard to remove, on country deadly prickles..!

Western Australia - KSGAC

Buddy Morrison Reunion



Verna Ishiguchi and Buddy Morrison at the Buddy Morrison Gravesite Reunion

The Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation recently assisted member Mr Errol Buddy Morrison, with a week-long journey of healing activities, including back to Country, community, mission, graveside and face-to-face family reunions, which stretched from the Kimberley and across to the South West of Western Australia.

Mr. Morrison, known by his middle name Buddy, grew up with family around Woodnelling, Narrogin and Albany. His mother was Wadjuri from Carnarvon and his father, Noongar from Katanning. At the age of 10-years-old, Buddy was sent to the Roelands Mission in the hills near the Collie River.

Buddy said he felt mixed emotions about the reunions. "I felt a bit of happiness and sadness. It was very good to go down to the mission where I spent most of my childhood. When we went to Roelands, I could still hear the children's voices echoing".

"On the trip I met up with my oldest sister-in-law, Maisy Western. Maisy is 92-years-old, and she has a lot of knowledge. Maisy was talking about the good old days. She was married to my older brother and watched us kids grow up. There were a lot of things she knew about the Morrison family. I also met up with my brother, sister and family at Tomato Lake. It was a very good day and I met with family in other places too".

KSGAC staff saw Mr Morrison gaining strength from these healing experiences. KSGAC Senior Counsellor David Cox said Buddy's reunions occurred in many places with family and friends, which was very important. "We travelled to a number of destinations to meet with family and friends. We also went to Roelands Mission where he had grown up with friends. One of his old friends was Carlton Legend, Syd Jackson. This meeting was so meaningful because of the stories they shared during the reunion. Shared experiences and coming together is a way of mending. It was really good listening to everyone sharing their stories. Buddy's journey continues and we are here for him", said Cox.



The Buddy Morrison Reunion, 2019

Australia

KSGAC Link-Up Team Leader Pauline McKenzie said it was a privilege to assist. "Buddy has such a strong sense of belonging and his connections to his people and Country can't be broken. It was an honour for our team; to be with him, see his Country, meet his people and hear his stories".

KSGAC Link-Up Caseworker Pól Bannon was absolutely privileged and honoured to work alongside Mr Morrison. "To share in the story of his life has been undeniably one of the most amazing experiences. To see the happiness and joy unfold will forever be remembered".

KSGAC staff worked hard to organise the trip and would like to thank the Yorgum team, the Broome Aboriginal Medical Services and SEWB Worker, Patrick Cox, for supporting the reunion process.

For Mr Morrison, being reunited with family and friends, sharing old stories and creating new memories was very healing. "The stories we shared, the younger generations who came to be together gave me joy. To see the older and younger generation in my family come together was great".



The Whole Group at the Buddy Morrison Reunion



From left - Les Wallam, Syd Jackson and Buddy Morrison



Buddy Morrison and Maisy Western in Perth



The Morrison Family and KSGAC staff at the Buddy Morrison Reunion

Western Australia - KSGAC

Women's Retreat

During a recent KSGAC Women's Retreat, Stolen Generation survivors, Link-Up and Redress Clients and other women working in various support services, came together to participate in a host of healing activities. The Retreat brought together 17 Stolen Generation women and descendants and Redress Clients, offering Social and Emotional Wellbeing support. The Retreat included education sessions by local organisations such as Helping Minds, Kimberley Mental Health, Drug Service's Broome Recovery Centre, and BRAMS Social and Emotional Wellbeing Unit.

During the two day retreat, the women partook in activities for self-care, such as meditation, circles of praise, art and swim therapy, bush walking and story-telling. The natural setting provided an opportunity to get away from life's pressures and gave the ladies a safe, quiet space to recharge. Many of the women also shared their knowledge of bush plants and natural bush medicines.

Allowing the women to share their life stories was vital, they yarned well into the night and during a trauma trails session on inter-generational trauma. They shared stories about life together as young children who had been forcibly removed from their families and relocated to places like Moola Bulla Station and Beagle Bay Mission.

The incredible bond of the Kimberley women shows their strength and capacity to care for one another throughout life's trials. Each individual story shared helped the ladies and the staff to see the strengths and resilience of each individual woman, as well as their continued efforts to maintain culture and pass on knowledge to the next generation. These remarkable women's strengths was highlighted not just through their stories, but also in the way they held the space for each other and remembered their loved ones.



KSGAC Women's retreat Yarning Circles

Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation joins in National Closing the Gap activities

The National Closing the Gap event in Broome organized by Boab Health saw more than 60 people turn up at Broome's Sam Male Oval, many of whom visited the KSGAC stall to find out about the essential Link-Up Service and Redress Scheme.

Getting the team involved in significant events gives our community members more opportunities to approach the KSGAC staff and share their family stories including stories about the Stolen Generations and Stolen Generation Survivors.

"It was a humbling experience", says Team Leader Pauline McKenzie. "It shows the level of trust in our service".



KSGAC Link-Up staff at the Closing the Gap Event with Team Leader, Pauline McKenzie

Australia



KSGAC staff members Lena Cox, Maggie Taylor and Team Leader, Pauline Mckenzie at Closing the Gap



A Helping Minds arts activity at Closing the Gap

Fremantle Dockers visit the Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation

On a recent visit to Broome, the Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation staff, members and their families met with the Fremantle Dockers Indigenous and Multicultural Liaison Officer, Michael Johnson and Multicultural Liaison Officer, Graham Mills.

The Fremantle Dockers maintain a strong relationship with the KSGAC and help to promote awareness of the Kimberley Stolen Generation people. The National Sorry Day flower is often worn on the team's Guernsey. During the mid-year Indigenous round, the KSGAC's National Sorry Day flower will be prominently displayed on the front of the Guernsey.

KSGAC Chairperson, Dr Mark Bin Bakar said the club's relationship

with our members means a lot to those effected by the Stolen Generations.

"The relationship breaks through age, race and other barriers. It promotes strengths as Australian's come together as a whole community", said Dr Bin Bakar. "The visit by the Fremantle Dockers was well received and meant a lot to our members and their families. Part of healing is about support - forming and maintaining friendships and the Fremantle Dockers demonstrate that", he said.

"In turn, we show our support of their efforts on the field and beyond, in helping Indigenous people with opportunities to achieve. We were very happy they came to spend time supporting the schools and our talented Broome youth. The Fremantle Dockers, like all other AFL teams, do wonderful work in the community, especially with school based activities and working with youth... In turn, [The Fremantle Dockers] increase their presence in the community and spend more quality time working with young people and people at risk," said Dr Bin Bakar.



Fremantle Dockers, Michael Johnson and Graham Mills, visit KSGAC staff members

Western Australia - KSGAC

Kimberley Community Spirit on Apology Day

People from all walks of life attended the Kimberley Apology Day Event on 13 February.

An incredible turnout for the 11th Anniversary of the Apology to the Kimberley Stolen Generation saw 250 people attend the event in Broome, organised by the Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation.

During the event, people from throughout the community of the Kimberley showed their respect and understanding of the impact on Stolen Generation Survivors and families. Services came to offer their assistance, many of which work with people effected by inter-generational trauma.

Chairperson for the Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation, Dr Mark Bin Bakar, gave thanks for the Apology. He stated the importance of keeping justice for Stolen Generation survivors at the forefront of the national agenda in Australia.

"The [11 Anniversary of Apology Day] is an important date to acknowledge, because the effects of past policies on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families and communities has been profound and continues today".

Dr Bin Bakar said Australia needs to own its history in order to help Aboriginal people to heal. "We still have a way to go... but the change is coming, ever so slowly and probably not in my life time but we must continue our united front to ensure the crimes and criminal activity that built this nation are exposed, shared and future generations are educated, so they can have an informed opinion of this country as opposed to the old guard who are in denial about ancestral peoples' role... and past treatment of Aboriginal people. They just want to cover it all up, shove it under the carpet and tell us to move on, stop living in the past. Well that's all fine when one is not the victim".



Staff at the Mary Ross centre for the Apology Day Service

Western Australia

A Back to Country Ceremony at the Lionel Pearce Reunion



Christine Pip (left) at the Lionel Pearce Reunion

From 2-8 March, a family Reunion and Back to Country Ceremony was held for the Pearce family, which took them from Adelaide to Stuart Creek in the South Australian outback.

Christine Pip, who is a granddaughter to Ruby Pearce and a cousin to Lionel Pearce, was taken back to South Australia through a joint collaboration between Link-Up Western Australia and Link-Up South Australia. She was supported by her husband, Harry Bardwell, and Link-Up WA worker, Colleen Wheelock.

Lionel and Christine's grandmother was removed from Stuart Creek at an early age and sent to Edward Industrial School, an old receiving home for state children in Adelaide. Ruby was never to be reunited with her family.

Her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren were unaware of their grandmother's heritage until she passed away. This led the family to find out more about Ruby's early life.

Before going on the reunion, Christine said that she wanted to learn more about her grandmother and the life she led before and

after she was removed. Going back to her grandmother's Country gave Christine some understanding of what Ruby's life as a young child growing up on the station might have been like before she was taken away.

Christine was able to visit the station that her grandmother came from. She was able to strengthen her cultural understanding of the Kuyuni people and began to feel a connection to her grandmother's Country.

The journey itself was at times an emotional one, "it was a confrontation of the real impact of the devastation resulting from taking young children", says Christine. "Finding out where my grandmother was taken from Stuart Creek, I felt the peace of knowing that she would have had a happy, rich and embracing environment. The visit alleviated the pain and secrecy I felt after discovering my grandmother was stolen as a child. The trip allowed me to know more about her original family and how her resilience was built on her integrated life before being stolen".



The Lionel Pearce Reunion, the whole family



The Pearce Reunion, the family hold hands and has a minute silence to remember Ruby and feel connection to Country



The Ruby Pearce Reunion

Western Australia - Yorgum

Stolen Generation Morning Tea

To commemorate the Anniversary of the National Apology, Yorgum Link Up held a Morning Tea on 13 February 2019 for Stolen Generations Survivors at our East Perth and South Hedland Offices.

23 clients attended in total, along with nine staff and three visitors from the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC).

The informal, relaxed gathering was an opportunity for our Stolen Generations to gather, share stories, meet up with "Mission brothers and sisters" and remember those who have since passed.

For some clients, a long time has passed. Never the less, the smiles and greetings shared amongst one another was a pleasure for the Link Up Team members to watch.

Staff members from the ILSC and Link Up mingled and chatted with clients who shared their individual stories of healing, involving Reunions and Back To Country Events which have been supported by the Link Up team. In turn, one of the staff members from ILSC shared and provided information about their service, which generated discussion and questions from the Stolen Generations clients.

The morning tea event was a nice way of saying thank you to clients, to acknowledge them and their resilience.

In addition, this was an important time for the Link Up staff to reconnect with past Stolen Generations clients and for new staff to meet and share information with this group about their own personal connections.

Food and refreshments, including a delicious cake, were shared by everyone, whilst music played in the background. How amazing and important is the sharing of food in bringing people together!

Photographs and feedback were gathered by the Link Up workers and included the following:

"Enjoyed the morning tea. Good to bring people together to connect and build relationships"

"Thank you, I received a warm welcome from Link Up Staff"

"I would recommend this service to others in the Community"



Lindsay and Kim, Both Stolen Generation Survivors catching up and and reminiscing about old times



Marie and Clint, Stolen Generation Survivors and ILSC staff member, Marie shares her reunion story

Port Hedland Family History Day

On Wednesday 10 April, the Yorgum Link Up Research Team travelled to Port Hedland in the Pilbara Region of Western Australia to hold a Family History Day in the South Hedland office. Holding these events in regional and outer-metropolitan areas in Perth is an important part of community engagement. It informs the Aboriginal community of the services available to members of the Stolen Generation. Knowing and being aware of one's cultural connections to family and Country is so important in the healing process.

In attendance were 14 Elders of the community who expressed a desire to learn more about what information the family history service can provide and to talk about how Yorgum's Link Up program can help in their healing journey.

The day itself was full of yarning, making family connections and laughter. The Elders enjoyed the Research Team coming to visit and sharing their knowledge. In addition, the Elders expressed a need for further family history days as they feel that community members still wish to know more information about their family history.

Northern Territory - NTSGAC

Link-Up CEO Update

On Friday 22 February, Link-Up Northern Territory celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, language and history at our second Cultural Day held at the Italian Sports and Social Club, Marrara. This event is likely to become an annual one, due to its success and popularity within the community. The event was sponsored largely by the Northern Territory Government with support from Minister Eva Lawler, Minister Natasha Fyles and Member for Karama Ngaree Ah Kit. The event ensures that Australia Day is meaningfully acknowledged, recognized and celebrated in the context of Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal people's contribution to Australian national identity.

The event attracted Stolen Generation Survivors, Darwin school students and teachers, politicians, Government and non-Government organisations and the general community. The event featured traditional and local foods which attendees could taste, all while enjoying performances by Jennifer Baker, the Miligimbi ladies, Olley Davou and the Torres Strait Islander dancers, as well as entertainment provided by William Rotumah, Yvonne Bradley and Les Huddleston. The event showcased the best of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and craft, bush medicine, businesses and services.

Our heartfelt appreciation and thanks are extended to our sponsors and all the stallholders.

On International Women's Day, some of ladies enjoyed the Women's Network of the Northern Territory's breakfast at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel and listened to a very inspiring talk by the Northern Territory Children's Commissioner, Colleen Gwynne.

We held our first Elders Aged Care and Information session at Australian Red Cross' conference room on Tuesday 23 April, where speakers from Centrelink, Carers Northern Territory, Darwin Community Legal Services, Northern Territory Housing, and Concessions provided information to approximately 30 Northern Territory Stolen Generation Elders, followed by a light luncheon. We intend to hold further such sessions in the near future.

Thank you to our guest speakers and the Australian Red Cross.

Plans are underway for NAIDOC celebrations in July.



Aged Care Information Session



Mr Eatts, a survivor of the Stolen Generations with his wife, daughter and grandson, soaking up the atmosphere

Northern Territory - NTSGAC



Rosetta, a Link-Up
NT Counsellor



Joyce and Frances -
Stolen Generation Survivors



Steven Hayes, Evelyn Perkins, Raelene Rosas and Daira Croker



Tyron, Yvonne and Maisie



Charles Darwin University Medical talks

NTSGAC Update

We have started this year off with family tracing, reunions, training of staff and case reviews of our current clients. In the case review, some files needed to be closed. Overall, the case review is a great way to sort out the current case files and follow up on work carried out for each client.

Our Case Team are preparing for reunions both in the Northern Territory and interstate. These reunions include gravesite reunions for family members and Return-To-Country, which enables clients to reconnect and have some closure for themselves and other family members.

We are working with other Link-Up services to assist with family tracing and reunion management. We also have events coming up which staff members will attend, such as the Barunga Festival, Sorry Day and NAIDOC. Staff of Link-Up and NTSGAC attend these events to let the community know what our Link-Up service does and where the NTSGAC is at.

Our core role is to work with clients of the Stolen Generations who were forcibly removed under past government policies and practices. Our Link-Up Team, with the assistance of NTSGAC staff, strive to assist clients on their healing journey of reunification and to make it as stress-free as possible for all of the clients that participate in our reunions. We encourage the community and clients to give us feedback, both positive and negative, so we can improve our service in the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact our Link-Up Case Team at the NTSGAC office if we can be of assistance.

Territory

Congress Link Up Service

THOMPSON, SHANNON, WAUCHOPE FAMILY REUNION

Darwin 10–14 December, 2018

In December, the Congress Link-Up Service held a collaborative reunion with the Northern Territory Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation of Darwin. The reunion involved families from Central Australia and Darwin, with the reunion held at South Alligator River in the Kakadu National Park. Such a journey would not have been possible without the collaboration of the Link-Up team who coordinated logistics, made arrangements and developed relationships between staff and local families, thus bringing family members together from various locations for a successful reunion.

The reunion was held over five days. There was much travel, a family BBQ gathering and solemn moments of reflection at the Kahlin Compound memorial and the site of the former Retta Dixon home. Strong emotions, tears and laughter amongst families and Link-Up staff were had. Family members also took time to reflect on the past and share their stories. The successful and joyous reunion reconnected families and developed relationships with families exchanging photos and maintaining ongoing contact.



The Thompson Family Reunion, Kakadu



The Thompson Family Reunion, South Alligator River, Kakadu National Park

Northern Territory

NATIONAL LINK UP LEADERSHIP GROUP MEETING

Alice Springs, 6–7 March, 2019

The Congress Link Up Service hosted the National Link Up Leadership Group Meeting on Mparntwe Country, Alice Springs, on 6 and 7 March, 2019. The meeting had a strong representation from Link Up Services. Congress staff were proud to host our fellow brothers and sisters on Mparntwe Country, home of the Arrernte people.

Aunty Doris Stuart Kngwarreye, senior Mparntwe Custodian, welcomed all visitors to Mparntwe Country and was very proud to showcase her Country through a cultural tour. She showed us significant sections of her Country that depicted a storyline of Mparntwe, sharing history of family that came before us and her struggles and determination to protect areas of significance including sacred sites belonging to her family and ancestors. Our visitors were given a rare and raw insight in to the plight of the Arrernte people over the last 150 years. Members of the leadership group shared that the cultural tour was the highlight of their visit to Mparntwe, they could relate to the feeling of connection Aunty has and the pain she continues to endure in her determined fight to protect her ancestral land.

The family of Stolen Generation Survivor, the late Mr F. Byrne, shared with the leadership group the struggle, pain and determination of their father and grandfather to reconnect with the Country he was removed from. This determination inspired Mr Byrne to write a memoir of his life, his personal trauma and his love for family. He passed away in 2017. Mr Byrne's granddaughter read an excerpt from his memoir and other family members spoke with pride about the man he had become, despite the significant injustice he experienced being a member of the Stolen Generations.

The meeting also included presentations from Kathleen Stacey and Associates, with discussions on the National Link Up Evaluation. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, updated the group on Link Up work that has been progressing since the last Leadership Group Meeting, and Northern Territory Archives shared details on a unique collection of medical history cards for Aboriginal people in Central Australia between the years 1952 and 1997. Congress took the opportunity to share our model of care that is embedded in our comprehensive primary health care service. The presentation explained how the Congress Link Up service is appropriately integrated in the Social and Emotional Wellbeing team and enables coordinated supports and services to optimise health and wellbeing outcomes for Stolen Generation Survivors and the families effected by past Government policies. This model also provides Link Up Staff with expanded peer support. Congress also shared the assessment tools used across the three streams of care in our Social and Emotional Wellbeing service. Link Up QLD also presented their impressive service model.

The March National Link Up Leadership Group meeting was another insightful and productive gathering. Congress acknowledges the diligent efforts and planning of Link Up Team Leader, Fiona Haddon and her team in enabling the Congress Link Up Service to host a successful gathering. We thank all our brothers and sisters that travelled from near and far to attend the meeting.

We look forward to the next Leadership Group Meeting later in the year in Adelaide.



the National Link Up Leadership Group Meeting on Mparntwe Country, Alice Springs

Victoria

Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations

In Victoria it is heartening to note the growing number of both community and mainstream events held across the state to mark the Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations. Link-Up Victoria once again partnered with the City of Darebin and Connecting Home to hold a very meaningful and caring event in the Town Hall where we heard from different speakers and listened to some very deadly performances. A special ceremony was held around the Stolen Generations marker located outside and the event was capped off with a very strong call for justice for Victorian Stolen Generations who have yet to be compensated for their grief, loss and trauma.



Eva Jo Edwards emceed our event



Stolen Generations marker



Lining up to place flowers at the Stolen Generations marker



Brian Moreley entertained the crowd with his song 'Its Not About the Money'



Our healing justice and reparation banner

Victoria

National Sorry Day

National Sorry Day continues to grow as an important day of commemoration for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike and each year the number of people who attend our event increases. This year the main event we co-organised was particularly special because it was held at the Stolen Generations marker in the Atherton Gardens, Fitzroy and the intention will be to hold it there every year now. Held in partnership with the City of Yarra and Connecting Home, there were Stolen Generations speakers and entertainment, a roaring fire pit that kept us warm throughout a very cold Melbourne day and lots of hot food and drink. A wreath of white flowers in the shape of a heart was laid at the base of the marker by Stolen Generations who were present at the event in memory of those who have passed onto the dreaming. Another event we co-organised for National Sorry Day was a special church service conducted by Pastor Esme Bamblett at the Aborigines Advancement League which we believe was very fitting given that National Sorry Day fell on a Sunday and some of our mob like to attend church services.



Laying the Wreath at the National Sorry Day church service at the Aborigines Advancement League



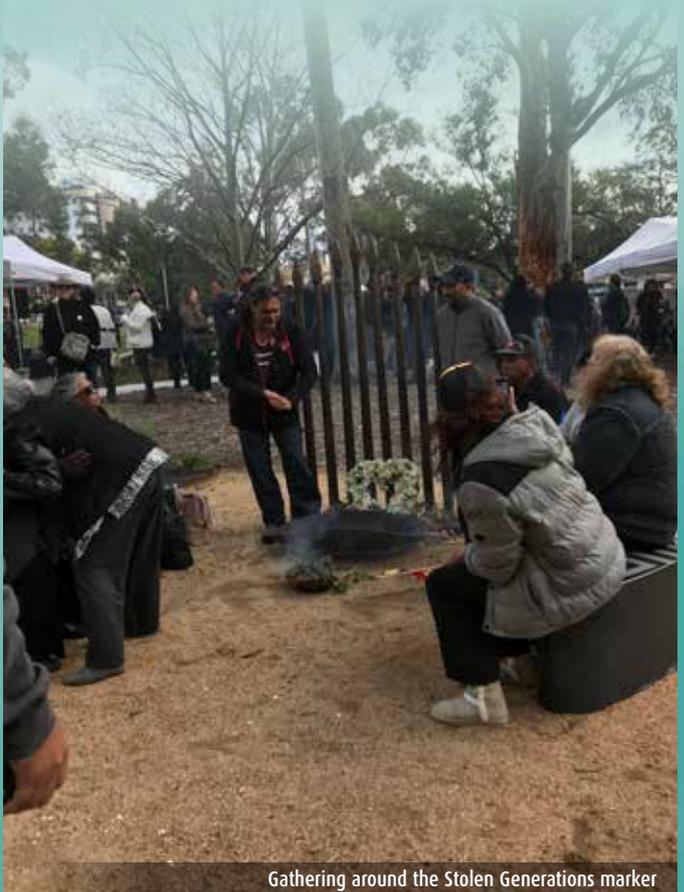
Kay, a Stolen Generation Survivor, emphasizes the need for healing



Kylie, Talgium and Kim



Welcome to Country performed by Colin Hunter, Wurundjeri Elder



Gathering around the Stolen Generations marker

Aboriginal Family Research Guide

The Family Research Guide was developed by Link-Up Victoria as a resource tool for anyone interested in undertaking their own research into their Aboriginal family history has now been finalized and it will shortly be printed for circulation. The Guide took more time to complete than originally envisaged and we wanted to ensure that it would be relevant to Aboriginal people who already know their connections and those people who know very little about their Aboriginal heritage. Link-Up Victoria receives several queries about Aboriginal family research every week and the Guide, which is written in a very easy to understand language and includes various research tips that are based on our collective research expertise, will be a very handy tool for anyone who decides they want to embark on their own Aboriginal family research journey.

Our Deadly Team

Since the beginning of 2019 we have recruited three new staff to our team – Narelle Carter, Ricky Baxter and Terence Creek. Our deadly team now comprises:

Program Manager	Bev Murray
Team Leader	Angela Swindle
Records and Administration Officer	Jebrina Close
Reunions Officer	Angela North
Reunions Officer	Anita Singh
Client Support Officer	Ricky Baxter
Client Support Officer	Narelle Carter
Client Support Officer	Terence Creek

Supporting the Voice of the Stolen Generations

At Link-Up Victoria we are always looking for ways to promote and support the voice of the Stolen Generations. We have produced our own film that contains the stories of four Stolen Generations, we created a booklet that includes interviews of Stolen Generations and for all our main events we always provide a commemorative booklet that details the history of the Stolen Generations. Each year we undertake a number of presentations to a variety of audiences and wherever possible we encourage and support the Stolen Generation Survivors to tell their story. In the last month we commenced our Stolen Generations Photograph Project, which is about organising photographs of Stolen Generations that we can use in different ways to share their story.

Our Reunions

For the 2018/19 year we organised 13 reunions with most being held interstate in city, country and remote areas. All our reunions are unique, with no two ever being the same and based on feedback provided by our clients and their family, they all provide powerful healing for the client and their family. We have noticed that there seems to be more reunions that are falling over due to the sudden illness, hospitalisation of the client or one of their family. We have also noticed that reunions can sometimes happen out of nowhere, for example, a clients brother finally decided that they wanted to meet with our client here in Melbourne and we were able to pull that reunion together in a couple of days!

Victoria

Healing Program

As part of our healing program we organised a number of events during May that included support for Stolen Generations to attend our National Sorry Day commemorations, the Dreamtime at the G football event, a performance of the musical "The Sapphires" that was followed by a meet up with the writer and original director Tony Briggs and a Back to Fitzroy lunch time celebration that brought back very fond memories for a lot of community and provided the opportunity for others to learn about this important part of the history of Aboriginal Melbourne. The Back to Fitzroy event was also about celebrating the achievements of Link-Up Victoria and to hear from three clients whose film about their journey with our service was screened on the day.



Muriel Bamblett CEO VACCA and Di Kerr Wurundjeri Elder who performed the Welcome to Country



Lorraine and Shirley lucky winners of the raffle



Connecting Home staff and clients

2019/20 Year

Our service is now located at a new VACCA office in Preston that has meeting rooms on the ground floor with offices on the second floor. Our new office will enable us to run client workshops and other activities in a more culturally friendly space that has easier accessibility and includes a lovely outdoor area. As we move into the final year of our current 3-year funding agreement we look forward to another 12 months of working with our partner organisations, achieving our goals and doing our best for our community.



Djirri Djirri Dance Group who welcomed guests to Country

An Update from the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Family History Unit in Canberra

The Family History Unit of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is on hand to provide support to all Link-Up services when they need assistance for research and getting access to archival material from national agencies or collections in Canberra, as part of their work for Stolen Generation Survivors and the families effected by past policies of the Australian Government.

We also provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people looking to do their own family history research. The Finding your Family website provides lots of help sheets to get people started on their journey.

AIATSIS also holds the world's largest collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. You can search the Mura catalogue to check if there is any material relating to your Country, language groups and family, by going to collection.aiatsis.gov.au/. If you do find something in the AIATSIS Mura catalogue, send a request through and the helpful Access staff members will help you with the process.

Check out the Finding your Family webpage at aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family for help sheets and check out the Mura catalogue at collection.aiatsis.gov.au/ for material IN AIATSIS' collection.

AIATSIS' COLLECTION ITEM UPDATE:

In 2017, AIATSIS received the Tardun School student records.

This school was located in Tardun in Western Australia and run by the Pallottine Mission. The school records range from 1948 to 2004. The collection contains student files relating to their time at the Pallottine Mission School which changed its name numerous times – Pallottine Mission School, Tardun Government Primary School, Tardun Catholic Primary School, Wandalgu Catholic Primary School and Wandalgu Hostel. There was also the Tardun Agriculture School at the mission which operated from 1968 to 1980.

AIATSIS has created an index to the records. However, to ensure the privacy of the persons concerned, access to an individual's personal record is restricted but is available to the person themselves, or their nominated delegate/family member.

If you remember being at the Tardun school during that time, you can check if your student record is available by sending a request to collectionenquiry@aiatsis.gov.au or if Link-Up is doing research on your behalf they will be able to check with the Family History Unit at AIATSIS.

The records may be of help for those who trying to find information of themselves or family members or who are seeking information under the National Redress Scheme.



Fiona Blackburn, our Manuscript Archivist, packing items for donation to AIATSIS

OUR TEAM

Our team is small but we are currently recruiting for another Research officer and once we fill the vacancy we will have a full team.

Linda Renehan - Manager

I am an Arrrente woman from Alice Springs and I have been working at AIATSIS for over three years. I have been in the family history unit for six months and am liking the change especially working with the Link Ups and meeting mob that come to AIATSIS looking for material on their family.

Sherilyn Dean - Research Coordinator

I am a proud Yamatji woman from the Pilbara/Gascoyne area of Western Australia. I have worked at AIATSIS for two years - working closely with the Collection and in the Family History Unit for the past 19 months. I love the variety and challenges my role brings in trying to find information and fill in the gaps for my people with their ancestral research.

PJ Williams - Research Officer

I am a proud Aboriginal man with ties to the Wiradjuri/Ngambri peoples. I have over 12 years' experience in family history research helping the community and Link-Up staff with research to reunite family members, and also helping my people when they visit AIATSIS by using our tools and worksheets when searching for family.

Jane Rankine - Indexer

I have been working as an indexer for 20 of my 30 years in libraries and I am grateful that my work helps people who are looking for their family. I have worked as the ABI indexer at AIATSIS for nearly three years. The work I do enables people to search for names in the Mura catalogue, which makes it easier and quicker to do family history research.

If you need help with your family history research, call us on telephone 1800 352 553 or email us at familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au.



AIATSIS Staff, from Left - Sherilyn Dean, PJ Williams, Jane Rankine and Linda Renehan

Contacts & Resources

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National

AIATSIS Link-Up Research Resource Unit

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National Archives of Australia

National Archives of Australia,
National Office, Canberra
Old Parliament House
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PO Box 4924, Kingston ACT 2604
Tel: (02) 6212 3600
Email: archives@naa.gov.au

National Library of Australia

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