



# Link-Up (Qld)

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

STILL BRINGING THEM HOME



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## Acknowledgement of Country

Link-Up (Qld) would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we all work, live and play. We would also like to pay respect to the elders past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reading this magazine.

### Disclaimer:

Whilst every effort has been made to respect cultural traditions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this publication may contain images of and references to people who are deceased.

### Cover image:

Uncle John Stanley with family members during his Link-Up reunion trip on Kabi Kabi country, Buderim Queensland.

### Inside cover image:

Link-Up (Qld) Board Director Len Utz with SEWB Counsellor Tahj Minniecon on Quandamooka country, Wynnum Queensland (PHOTO: FARLEY WARD SHUTTERSTORM PHOTOGRAPHY)

# Link-Up (Qld) Magazine

We invite submissions from community, clients, partners and associates. Do you have a story about your reunion and healing journey?

Email our friendly team at [communications@link-upqld.org.au](mailto:communications@link-upqld.org.au) with your story ideas, special updates and events.

View our past volumes online at [www.link-upqld.org.au](http://www.link-upqld.org.au)



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# Welcome

Welcome to Volume 55 of the Link-Up (Qld) Magazine. As we reflect on 40 years of dedication to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, I am filled with pride in the work that continues to promote healing and unity. Our team remains committed to providing vital services and creating opportunities for reconnection, whilst honouring the strength and resilience of our communities.

I'm also excited to invite you to join us at our 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner on 28 November at Brisbane City Hall. This will be a significant moment to reflect on the progress we've made and celebrate the incredible contributions of everyone involved in our journey so far. Tickets to this event are available on our website.

Please enjoy reading this new edition, featuring a collection of yarns from across Queensland. From personal stories of reunification to updates on our services and community events, this magazine showcases the dedication and efforts that continue to shape our future, grounded in culture and healing.

Thank you for your support.



*Kenny*

**Ken Murphy**  
Chairperson  
Link-Up (Qld)

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## CEO's Message

As we celebrate Link-Up (Qld)'s 40th anniversary, I feel immense pride in reflecting on the milestones we've achieved through our unwavering commitment to community and continuous improvement. With ongoing challenges and the effects of intergenerational trauma, our work remains as vital today as it was four decades ago.

In recent months, our team has strengthened connections and engaged with the broader community to achieve better outcomes. From attending key events like the Queensland Murri Carnival, The Gathering, Clancestry, and NAIDOC celebrations, to welcoming members of the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to our Brisbane office, these opportunities have allowed us to raise awareness of our services and collaborate on important issues.

Last month, the National Link-Up Leadership Group was recognised at the International Evaluation Conference for its pioneering work in monitoring and evaluation systems. This recognition reflects our continuous efforts to improve how we support Stolen Generations survivors and their families. It was an honour to accept the award alongside my fellow Link-Up leaders in Melbourne.

As we move into the final quarter of 2024, I warmly invite you to join us at our 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner in November. It will be a chance to reflect on our shared journey, honour those who have shaped it, and look ahead to a brighter future for all. Visit our website to purchase tickets before they sell out.

Thank you for your continued trust and support of Link-Up (Qld). Together, we are making a lasting difference.



Pat

**Patricia Thompson AM**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Link-Up (Qld)



## About us

Link-Up (Qld) provides vital services to reunite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their families due to past government policies and practices. Our dedicated team not only conducts thorough research to trace family histories but also assists in helping you return to your traditional country. This journey of reconnection fosters healing, personal growth, and a stronger sense of belonging.

People come to Link-Up (Qld) for many reasons: to rediscover their identity, to ensure their children and grandchildren understand their cultural roots, or simply to gain peace and closure after years of uncertainty. Some may have already begun searching for their families, while others are just beginning the process. Regardless of your situation, we're here to welcome and guide you, offering unwavering support along the way.

Our services are delivered with the utmost respect, sensitivity, and care. We understand that every journey of healing and reunion is deeply personal, and our experienced team is committed to walking alongside you throughout this process. Our caseworkers will maintain regular contact, ensuring you feel supported at every stage, and our counsellors are available to provide emotional support whenever you feel the need to have a yarn.

## Celebrating 40 years

Link-Up (Qld) has been offering family history tracing and reunification services for 40 years, and in 2024, our ongoing commitment to "bringing them home" remains stronger than ever.

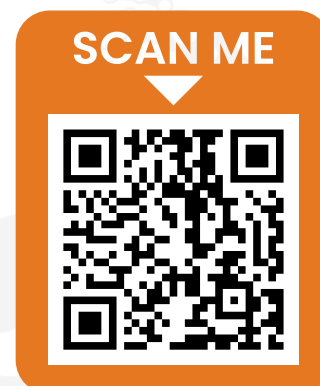
In 1984, we began our work to address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who felt they were victims of a society that dominated them, leaving them with no control and attempting to erase their identity.

Increased attention was brought to these issues following the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which found that many of the deaths investigated were of people who had been separated from their families and communities due to the actions of past government policies and practices.

The 1997 Bringing Them Home report confirmed the devastating effects that the removal of children has had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, communities, and cultures.

Backed by the findings of these reports, Link-Up (Qld) has continued – and will continue – to reunite families and communities so that healing can take place.

**Scan the QR code below to learn more about our work.**





# Kabi Kabi Homecoming

*80 years in the making*

## Uncle Warry John Stanley's reunion story.

Our Stanley families would like to thank the Link Up (Qld) team – Pat Thompson, Latia Schefe, Tahj Minnecon and Ruth Loli for their hard work and direction through the research of Government documents, family history and mission records which has led to putting together our true line and connections for our family tree line, 80 years in the making.

My name is Warry John Stanley (SNR I), I was born in Cherbourg on 7th March 1944. I am the fourth child of James (Jim) Stanley and Dorothy Stanley (nee Warnes). I am from a large family, including my siblings Rachel Bundle (nee Ross), Arthur (and his twin who died at birth), Nellie, Peter, Eunice, James, Ezra, Waverley and Aileen and their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. My family also includes Dad's second family – James Stanley and Dolly Stanley (nee Creed) – Joseph, Carmel, Filacitas, Oriel, Teresa, Elwyn, Lorretta, Priscilla, Aquilla, Cephas, Berice and their children, grandchildren, great grandchildren.

My story begins in Cherbourg (formerly known as Barambah), a place where our people were brought as a part of Governmental policy from statewide areas and in the care of government management. My grandfather and grandmother, Peter and Nellie Stanley (nee Grey), along with

his brother Laurence Stanley and her sister Elizabeth (Lizzie) Gyemore were sent from Winton and Barcaldine district. They walked from Woodford over land to Barambah with about 90 others, through much hardship, pain, and will power to keep going. My mother was Dorothy Warnes and she walked to Barambah from Taroom, while others were sent to Woorabinda.

In 1912, Gran Nellie and Grandfather Peter were sent to Rewan as a domestic and a black tracker and, whilst there, a mother asked Gran to take care of her baby if anything happened to her. The mother's name was Hilda Butler, and she passed away giving birth to the boy. So Gran and Grandfather brought the baby back to Cherbourg and raised him as their own. This baby was my Dad – James Stanley. My Dad went to school, grew up, went to work, played sport and then got married to my Mum - Dorothy Warnes. From their marriage they had ten children, and my other sibling Rachel Ross also spent time with us growing up.

Our Mum passed away in 1948, aged 35 years, leaving behind five children under the age of six. My father was sent to Palm Island. Gran and Granddad looked after us and then we went to the girls and boys dormitory. When we were growing up, my grandmother told us about our bloodline so that we wouldn't intermarry, and

she told us that the Warners were our bloodline and the Swains, Mate Mates. All our siblings except for James were sent to Palm Island. I was about 13 years old when I went to Palm Island. Waverley and Aileen both passed away and are buried at Cherbourg Cemetery. I always thought that our cultural ties were with Barragam around Chinchilla because of what Gran told us. In 2013, I applied and received a report from Family History. I read the report, but the information didn't align with what my Gran told us about our bloodline. Recently, I applied to Link-Up (Qld) and the team presented the report to me at my house in Murgon. This report outlined the research that was done for both sides of my family – my mother Dorothy Stanley (nee Warnes) and my father James Stanley. My daughter and granddaughter have done their DNA test and the family name that is mentioned in the report aligned with the names of close relatives living on the Sunshine Coast. This then began our journey to our reunion.

From 27-29th August, myself, my daughters Judith and Mary and son Neil were very fortunate to be a part of the reunion organised by Link-Up (Qld). My family travelled to Gympie Cemetery where we were able to locate the grave of my Grandmother Sarah Warnes (non-Indigenous) and two of her children – Adeline and Arthur (non-Indigenous). This was emotional for us as this was the first time we were able to connect and find out about my Mum's Mother – my grandmother. I remember playing golf on the Gympie Golf Course and never knew that I was not too far from my grandmother's resting place.

We then travelled to the Sunshine Coast and met with Tahj and Latia briefly and they outlined the next two days for us. On Wednesday 28th August, we met Tahj, Latia and Andy outside the front of the accommodation. We then saw two more cars arrive and were introduced to Lyndon Davis, his wife Nicky, their niece Jackie and her son Jarli. This was the first time meeting him in person, however I had spoken to him on several occasions over the phone. The first phone call was very moving as we both broke down and cried as we have now found our family line. He was trying to find my grandfather Alfred Chilly's line for over 20 years and I have been trying to find my true bloodline for 80 years and to find out that we are a part of the Kabi Kabi/Gubbi Gubbi nation.

Over the next two days, Lyndon took us around country to a variety of cultural significant areas where our people lived, worked, travelled, danced and fished, including lookouts near Mount Buderim, Mudjimba (where we walked on the beach and Lyndon told us the story of Old Woman Island and listened to stories of the land), Muller Park on the Maroochy River near Bli Bli and we saw Lyndon's artwork of the shields. We visited the area where my great-grandmother Susan Andy planted 10 Bunya Pine trees at Yandina and Rocky Creek, which is an Aboriginal registered site by the Queensland Government. At the Rocky Creek riverbed, there are over 100 axe grinding grooves near the walking path for our people. We also visited the old Nambour cemetery where family members have laid to rest and finally visited the Glasshouse Mountains lookout which gave us a spectacular view of Kabi Kabi/Gubbi Gubbi land.

Uncle Warry John Stanley and family, visiting the grave of his Grandmother Sarah Warnes at Gympie Cemetery.



Uncle Warry John Stanley with family members on his recent reunion trip.





Judy and I travelled with Lyndon as we went around the different sites and he explained how our people lived and shared their culture through art, dance and language, bringing it altogether for our information about our cultural ties to the land and our ancestors. Lyndon explained his work which includes cultural tours and activities and dance. His knowledge gave me insight to our people and their traditions. At the end of the reunion, I called him an *“Aboriginal Dictionary”* because of this vast cultural knowledge of the Kabi Kabi/Gubbi Gubbi nation.

“After the reunion, I feel at peace within myself, knowing that the search for my family tree line is now complete on my mother Dorothy Stanley’s (nee Warnes) side.”

Maybe through this article, I may be able to find out more about my fathers’ family. My only piece of information is his mother’s name: Hilda Butler (nee Macalister).

I want to thank my two daughters, Mary and Judith, and my son Neil, who were a part of this journey to reality of finding our true connections to the Chilly family and being a part of the Kabi Kabi/Gubbi Gubbi nation.

Uncle Warry John Stanley and Lyndon Davis with Link-Up (Qld) staff Tahj Minniecon and Latia Scheffe.





# Aunty Beverley: The first link

*Left to right: Dame Quentin Bryce, Catherine Watson, the late Sam Watson, Beverley Johnson and Flo Watson, attending a community event in Brisbane.*

As Link-Up (Qld) celebrates its 40th anniversary, Aunty Beverley Johnson reflects on the early days...

In 1984, Aunty Beverley Johnson became the first coordinator of Link-Up (Qld), marking the beginning of a profound journey that would change the lives of countless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Reflecting on the moment she was offered the role, Aunty Beverley recalls her initial reaction: "I said, excuse my ignorance, but what is it?" Her response was understandable—there had never been an organisation like Link-Up before, one specifically dedicated to reuniting members of the Stolen Generations with their families. The responsibility ahead was immense, but it was a challenge she embraced wholeheartedly. As she reflects today, she says, "It was worth it. It was really worth it."

Aunty Beverley's path to coordinating Link-Up (Qld) was not an easy one. After two-weeks training with the Canberra-based Link-Up group, she returned to Brisbane with no funding and no team, but a clear mission. She began by distributing pamphlets to local Aboriginal communities, raising awareness about the service. Soon, calls began flooding in from families desperate to reconnect with their loved ones.

Working alone, with minimal financial support, Aunty Beverley often turned to local churches and community groups to help fund the reunifications. Despite the lack of resources, Aunty Beverley persisted, driven by the gratitude of the families she helped. "People were so grateful that this service had started," she says, though the demands were overwhelming. "I said, we need more people to help." Eventually, with the support of Link-Up NSW, she travelled back

back Canberra to secure funding, a milestone that allowed her to expand the team and the services offered.

For Aunty Beverley, the impact of Link-Up (Qld) goes beyond family reunifications. She believes that finding family and understanding one's heritage is crucial to healing. "The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that Link-Up assist know they belong to someone," she explains. "And the need to belong somewhere is an important part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society." This became especially clear when clients asked her if she was part of the Stolen Generations. She would tell them she was fortunate to have five generations of family still living, which often moved her to tears, realising how many of them had no one. "They don't have anybody," she recalls emotionally. "I was meant to have this job."

When asked to describe Link-Up (Qld) in one word, Aunty Beverley doesn't hesitate: "Family." It's a fitting tribute to the organisation she helped build from the ground up, an organisation that continues to play a vital role in healing the wounds of separation.

In 2024, as Link-Up (Qld) celebrates its 40th year, Aunty Beverley remains a cherished figure within the community, staying connected with staff and clients alike. As our organisation prepares for its 40th Anniversary Gala at Brisbane City Hall on 28 November, Aunty Beverley reflects on her legacy with a deep sense of pride:

"I look back at what we accomplished and the lives we've touched... It was all worth it."



FEATURING:



GLING & THE HUNTSMAN



SUGA CANE MAMAS



EDGAR CONLON



GUEST SPEAKER:  
SHANNAN DODSON

# 40TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER

6pm Thursday 28 November 2024  
**Brisbane City Hall**

Join us as we celebrate four decades of supporting  
Stolen Generations survivors and descendants.

*This is an alcohol-free event.*

Purchase tickets:  
**[www.link-upqld.org.au/40years](http://www.link-upqld.org.au/40years)**

Link-Up (Qld)'s 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner is proudly sponsored by:



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# DID YOU KNOW?

- Link-Up (Qld) is a free service.
- We offer support before, during and after your family history research and reunification.
- We respect your privacy and treat all information confidentially.
- We run a range of healing activities, camps, support groups, art, craft and music workshops.



*Scan here to  
learn more!*





# Yarning Together

**Cherbourg Boys and Girls Domo  
visits Kinchela Boys Home**

**Contributed by Cherbourg Boys and Girls Dormitory Ltd**

On a cold winter morning in July, members of the Cherbourg Boys and Girls Dormitory Ltd (Cherbourg Boys and Girls Domo) departed from Brisbane for Kempsey, NSW to visit the Kinchela Boys Home (KBH) and their families. **Continues on next page.**

Our members and supporters travelled from Adelaide, Canberra, Mackay, Rockhampton, Cherbourg and Brisbane for our planned visit to the Kinchela Boys Home and Kempsey.

This visit was organised after the Kinchela Boys Home and their families visited Cherbourg 18 months earlier. When they visited the Cherbourg Ration Shed Museum and the former Cherbourg Boys Dormitory to gain an understanding on the history of Cherbourg and the dormitory system.

On our visit to KBH, we had former boys and girls dormitory members, their families and support staff including two skilled counsellors from Link-Up (Qld), who kindly provided on hands support to our group. We also had our physio brother Anthony who was on hand to support us on this journey.

We were also lucky to have the support services of Willy Wagtail Productions, who was engaged to record and take photographs of our three days engagement with KBH and the Kempsey community.

Their photographs and video men and women comments would be collated and go towards our final report.

We arrived in Kempsey on Monday afternoon and later that evening was given a wonderful welcome from Traditional Owners and a smoking ceremony. This was then followed by a warm welcome from the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHAC) CEO and members of Kinchela Boys Home (KBH) on Tuesday 25th July, our group first met at the Kempsey Train Station to view the plaque that was established to honour the former boys and girls (Stolen Generations) children that were taken from their families and communities and sent to Kempsey and disbursed to homes like KBH and others.





**“Our group found this very confronting and moving, particularly when two of my grandchildren stood beside the plaque and stencil outline of a young boy and girl (representing the children that were taken). We felt the spirits of the brothers and sisters that were taken.”**

**- Uncle David Wragge**



We later departed for a tour of the Kinchela Boys Home (through the support of the KBH organisation). Our bus from Brisbane was offline for urgent mechanical work and we needed the support of KBH organisation and members for our transport to and from the Kinchela Boys Home.

Our ladies attended a weaving workshop with Gai from Manhuti Walkabout Jewellery and Weaving. This was a first for many of the ladies as they have never done weaving before, and most were hesitant however they found it to be therapeutic and enjoyed a space to catch up and yarn about the old times. Auntie Mabelle Hopkins had a great afternoon outing, after the weaving, she was gifted and walked away with a free painting from local Aboriginal artist Jason Ridgeway.

The week wrapped up with an excellent dinner at the Kempsey RSL with the Kinchela Boys, family and staff. Our group were kindly gifted painted walking sticks, you couldn't wipe the smiles off our faces when they gifted us the sticks. I know a lot of us will be relying on them to help us get around soon.

The visit to Kempsey, Kinchela Boys Home, the sharing of stories, the warmest welcome from KBHAC staff, members and their families will remain in our hearts forever.

# Supporting Survivors



## Healing through the National Redress Scheme

The National Redress Scheme provides support to people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse. Established in response to the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Scheme acknowledges the harm done to people as children and holds institutions accountable. The Scheme helps survivors gain access to counselling, a direct personal response, and a redress payment.

The Scheme began on 1 July 2018 and will run for 10 years, with applications open until 30 June 2027. It recognises that talking about your experiences can be difficult, but you don't have to go through the process alone.

At Link-Up (Qld), we're here to support you every step of the way. Our Redress Support Team is made up of qualified, trauma-sensitive counsellors who provide free and confidential support throughout the application process. We understand the challenges that come with applying to the National Redress Scheme, and we're committed to making the process as smooth as possible for you.

Our Redress Counsellors, Jai Sigley and Virginia Clarke, are experienced and compassionate professionals who provide practical and

emotional support. Virginia acknowledges the pain and difficulty many survivors face in retelling their stories.

Link-Up (Qld) acts as an independent service that helps applicants navigate the National Redress Scheme. If you choose, our team can also act as your nominee, advocating for you and liaising with the Scheme on your behalf. This allows us to support you before, during, and after the application, ensuring that your journey is handled with care and respect.

Last year, Link-Up (Qld) supported 50 clients through the redress process, with successful applicants receiving over \$1.4m in payments. However, the support we offer goes beyond financial compensation. We provide ongoing counselling and wellbeing services to help survivors heal from the trauma of abuse.

If you or someone you know has been affected by institutional child sexual abuse, please contact our Redress Support Team on 1800 200 855 or visit our website.

You can also contact the National Redress Scheme directly by calling 1800 737 377 or visit their website at [www.nationalredress.gov.au](http://www.nationalredress.gov.au).

**"Revisiting past trauma can be difficult – that's why our team is here to walk with you every step of the way. We'll do our best to ensure your voice is heard and institutions are held accountable, allowing you to move forward in your healing journey."**

*- Jai Sigley, Link-Up (Qld) Redress Counsellor*



PHOTOS BY TIFFANY PARKER

Representatives from Link-Up (Qld) participated in The Gathering, a national event held on Larrakia Country in Garramilla (Darwin) from 3–5 September, coordinated by The Healing Foundation. This significant event brought together organisations working with Stolen Generations survivors from across Australia to collectively focus on supporting ageing survivors and addressing the ongoing impacts of intergenerational trauma.

Link-Up (Qld)’s CEO, Patricia Thompson AM, Executive Assistant Ranelle Singh, Research Officer Leelana Fabila-Hicks, and Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counsellor Christine Kanofski attended the event, which provided a platform to share what’s working well in supporting survivors and gave participants the opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the country. The program also included a range of healing and wellbeing practices, reinforcing the importance of holistic support for survivors.

The event aimed to call attention to the unfinished business of the Bringing Them Home report recommendations, while providing a space for discussions on how to create the changes needed to support survivors and descendants.

The Healing Foundation’s Board, Youth Reference Group, and Stolen Generations Reference Group were also present to help facilitate these conversations and support the organisations in their efforts.

Reflecting on the success of the event, Link-Up (Qld) Research Officer Leelana Fabila-Hicks shared, “As a young Indigenous woman, it was an honour and privilege to listen to the voices and collective knowledge of those before me who have been advocating for our Stolen Generations. The event cultivated a space for listening and sharing between Stolen Generations survivors, their descendants, and organisations, and many raw, honest, and important conversations were held on how we continue to move forward.”

Link-Up (Qld)’s participation in The Gathering highlights our dedication to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particularly those affected by forced removal policies. Events like this reinforce the importance of unity and collaboration in healing and remind us that there is still much work to be done, especially in advocating for the ongoing needs of survivors.



# NOT JUST A DOMO BOY

**Darumbal/Wakka Wakka man, Paul Sandow's journey to becoming a Link-Up (Qld) Board Director reflects his perseverance and dedication to fostering a sense of belonging for all.**

Born and raised under the strict conditions of the Aboriginals Protection Act, Paul's early life was shaped by the dormitory system in Cherbourg, a place he called home for much of his childhood. His story is one of resilience and survival, and it is this lived experience that allows him to make a significant impact as a Board Director of Link-Up (Qld).

Paul's early years were far from easy. Separated from his family at birth, he spent his childhood in the dormitory, where the boys he lived with



*Above: Paul Sandow (far left) with other children at Cherbourg.*

became his brothers. "The dorm was my home and the boys were my family, as far as I knew," Paul shared. Even though his sister Estelle was living in the girls' dormitory next door, he didn't learn she was his sister until the age of eleven. Growing up in such a rigid and isolating environment, Paul was often forced to suppress his connection to his Aboriginal culture and his family. He recalls the cold mornings and harsh punishments vividly: "We had to get up and work at 5am every morning, even in the middle of winter, walking around on the frost with only shorts and a little shirt. I still remember the feeling of the freezing cold wind hitting us. I was five or six years old."

While his time at the dormitory denied him a connection with his family, it was also the place where Paul felt a sense of belonging, although a fractured one. When he eventually left Cherbourg and reunited with his mother, he found it difficult to connect.

**"I still thought of the dormitory boys as my family, so I was a bit confused about how to connect with my mother."**

This disconnection is a reality many Stolen Generations survivors like Paul face, as the government policies and practices of the time tore apart families and prevented them from forming meaningful relationships.



*Above: Paul Sandow as a young boy at Cherbourg.*



*Link-Up (Qld) Board Director Paul Sandow with his granddaughters, Alyana and Kaliede Sandow-Lister.*

As Paul grew older, he struggled with the sense of displacement. Never truly feeling at home anywhere, he moved around frequently, constantly searching for a place to belong. “I was always on the move,” Paul explained. “People always say about me, ‘he’s never home.’ I wasn’t stable.” As a young man, his attempts to visit the only place he ever felt a sense of connection were met with resistance. “When I tried to go back and visit Cherbourg when I was about 17, the policeman said, ‘Hey Pauly, what are you doing here? You’re an outsider now.’” It was a moment that highlighted the deep-seated sense of loss and exclusion that many Stolen Generations survivors experienced. “He said, ‘If you’re not on a bus out of here by 5 o’clock, we’ll lock you up’. That’s where I was born and raised, you know, but I wasn’t welcome back.”

Despite the challenges, Paul continued to forge his own path and has slowly reclaimed his sense of self. He has settled in Brisbane, where he is a proud father and grandfather, and remains in close contact with his sisters Estelle, Melita and Pauline.

Today, as a Board Director, Paul’s lived experience gives him a unique perspective on the work Link-Up (Qld) does in reuniting Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants with family, country, and culture. “I like Link-Up (Qld) because the staff here walk alongside their clients

throughout the whole process of reconnecting. They help lots of Stolen Generations people all over Queensland and make sure everyone feels supported,” he says. For Paul, Link-Up (Qld) offers more than just services - it provides a sense of community and belonging that many survivors, including him and his sisters missed growing up. Paul takes pride in his role on the board, as it allows him to give back to a community that means so much to him. His involvement with Link-Up (Qld) is not just about governance - it’s about ensuring no one else feels the disconnection he once experienced.

**“The Link-Up (Qld)  
community of clients, staff,  
and friends has become the  
family I never had.”**

Paul’s involvement with Link-Up (Qld) is not just about governance - it’s about ensuring no one else feels the disconnection he once experienced.

# Brisbane Client Support Group Morning Tea

Our monthly Client Support Groups provide a great opportunity for Stolen Generations survivors and descendants to connect, share experiences, and chat with our support team. Our final morning tea for 2024 will be on Thursday, 31 October. If you're interested in joining us, get in touch with our team.

Here's a few happy snaps from some of our recent morning tea events...







# GUIDING LIGHT

Through compassion and understanding, Link-Up (Qld)'s Christine Kanofski is still bringing them home.

Link-Up (Qld) SEWB Counsellor Christine Kanofski  
(PHOTO BY FARLEY WARD/SHUTTERSTORM PHOTOGRAPHY)

Christine Kanofski has been a vital member of the Link-Up (Qld) team since 2019. With five years of experience as a Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) Counsellor, Christine's role is central to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients through their emotional journeys of reconnection and healing. Having started during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Christine has shown resilience and dedication to her work, and her passion stems from a deeply personal place.

Her connection to the Stolen Generations is both professional and personal. Christine's maternal grandfather was removed as a small child and placed in Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home before being transferred to Kinchela Boys Home in Kempsey, New South Wales. This family history gives Christine a profound understanding of the trauma faced by many of her clients. "I always had an understanding of what effect removals have had on our people," Christine reflects.

**"My grandfather died in 2002, so I hope he would be proud of the work I do in assisting Stolen Generations to reconnect with family."**

In her role, Christine supports clients before, during, and after reunions with their families. Her approach to social and emotional wellbeing is holistic, recognising that health extends beyond the physical and includes connections to land, culture, spirit, family, and community. "It's rewarding to assist clients to recognise their emotions, understand and manage their feelings, build self-esteem and resilience," she explains. For Christine, the work is about more than just counselling – it's about fostering lasting emotional and cultural connections.

One of the things Christine enjoys most is listening to the stories of Stolen Generations survivors and walking alongside them as they navigate their personal journeys. Helping clients reconnect with their roots and fostering a sense of belonging is a key part of her work at Link-Up (Qld). "I really enjoy listening to our clients' stories and supporting them on their journeys of discovery and healing," she shares, capturing the essence of her role.

Looking to the future, Christine remains passionate about the work she does. She is excited to continue building strong relationships with new clients and stakeholders, hoping that the ripple effect of her work will help transform lives and communities. With her compassion, dedication, and unique personal connection to the Stolen Generations, Christine is an invaluable member of the Link-Up (Qld) team.

# Have you heard about the Territories Stolen Generations Redress Scheme?

The Territories Stolen Generations Redress Scheme provides support to Stolen Generations survivors who were removed from their families or communities, and whose removal took place in the Northern Territory (before 1 July 1978), Australian Capital Territory (before 11 May 1989) or Jervis Bay Territory.

The Scheme is a financial and wellbeing package that:

- Makes payments in recognition of the harm caused by removal from family or community.
- Assists with the healing of this trauma for the Stolen Generations survivors who were removed in the territories.
- Help survivors gain access to free support services.
- Gives survivors the choice to tell their story.



Australian Government

National Indigenous Australians Agency



**Territories Stolen  
Generations  
Redress Scheme**

Applications are open until 28 February 2026.

Learn more at [www.territoriesredress.gov.au](http://www.territoriesredress.gov.au) or contact Link-Up (Qld) for an application form.

## ABF 2024 Queensland Murri Carnival

Link-Up (Qld) had a great time at the 2024 Queensland Murri Carnival in Brendale, connecting with the community and sharing information about our services for Stolen Generations survivors and descendants. Big thanks to everyone who stopped by, and congratulations to the winning teams!



# Musgrave Park Family Fun Day

Link-Up (Qld) staff enjoyed attending the 30th Family Fun Day at Musgrave Park, a significant historical meeting place for Aboriginal people.

The event was a highlight of this year's NAIDOC Week celebrations, bringing the community together in a vibrant and meaningful way!



## TRUTH-TELLING AND HEALING INQUIRY UPDATE

# Government agencies acknowledge harm of past laws and policies during Truth-telling session

The leaders of seven government agencies acknowledged the significant harm that historical policies have had on Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples at a Truth-telling Session in Meanjin (Brisbane) on Tuesday 24 September 2024, as part of Queensland's Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry.

The following government agencies appeared before Inquiry Chair Joshua Creamer:

- Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts
- Department of Resources
- Queensland Police Service
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Queensland Health
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services

During the session, which was open to the public, each representative made a statement regarding the history of their agency as it related to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

In the first submission from Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts, DG Clare O'Connor acknowledged the significant harms caused by the Native Police, and the system of missions and reserves.

Queensland Police Service Commissioner Steve Gollschewski began his statement by stating a strong commitment to truth-telling and reframing the relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and a dedication to understanding Queensland Police history.

Other DGs acknowledged their commitment to reframing the relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to confronting history and assisting the Inquiry. Evidence was also tabled, including identification cards, marriage applications, exemption applications, exemption certificates and removal orders.

Queensland Health DG, Michael Walsh, acknowledged that some Closing the Gap targets would not be met, and if services don't reflect the communities needs, then they are failing the communities.

Inquiry Chair Joshua Creamer completed the Truth-telling session by stating the Inquiry must focus on current barriers and obstacles, and must delve more deeply into the issues and what isn't working.

**For more information and updates on the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry, visit [www.truth-telling-qld.com.au](http://www.truth-telling-qld.com.au).**



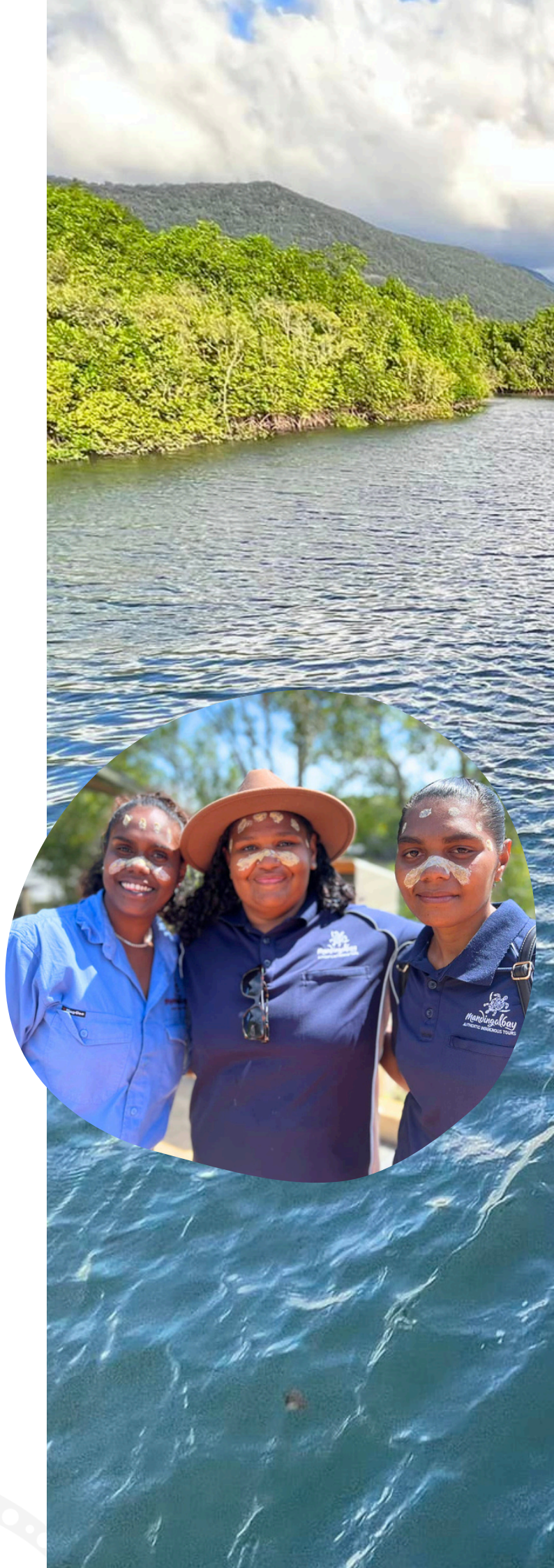
# Sharing the soul of Australia


Meet the Mandingalbay Yidinji women transforming the FNQ tourism scene.

Imagine a place where the ancient traditions of the Mandingalbay Yidinji people intertwine seamlessly with the breathtaking landscapes of Far North Queensland. This is the experience offered by Mandingalbay Authentic Indigenous Tours, a female-led, Indigenous-owned business located just 15 minutes from Cairns by boat. The business is deeply rooted in the cultural and environmental stewardship of the Mandingalbay Yidinji people, offering visitors an intimate view of their ancestral lands.

Led by knowledgeable and passionate Mandingalbay Yidinji women, these tours provide a rare opportunity to engage with traditional culture in a hands-on way. The tours offer glimpses into the Mandingalbay Yidinji way of life, where guests explore ancient walking trails, learn about bush tucker and medicinal plants, and visit culturally significant sites. One of the key experiences is the “Hands-on Country” tour, which guides visitors through an Indigenous Protected Area, the largest of its kind in the world. Here, the rainforest meets the reef, creating a unique and biodiverse environment that the Mandingalbay Yidinji people have preserved for generations.

In addition to exploring the land, visitors can participate in the “Deadly Dinner,” an evening experience where guests enjoy a traditionally inspired meal while taking in cultural performances, including traditional dances and storytelling. These experiences are not just about tourism - they’re about preserving and sharing the cultural heritage of the Mandingalbay Yidinji people while providing economic opportunities for the local community.



A group of people are seated on a boat, looking out at a mangrove forest and mountains in the distance. The boat has a canopy and is moving through the water. The people are dressed in casual summer clothing, including hats and sunglasses. The background shows a lush green mangrove forest and a range of mountains under a blue sky with white clouds.

The focus on environmental sustainability is woven into every aspect of Mandingalbay Authentic Indigenous Tours. By integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern conservation efforts, the tours highlight the deep connection between the Mandingalbay Yidinji people and their land. Every experience supports both cultural preservation and the protection of the natural environment, ensuring that future generations will benefit from these practices.

When you book a tour, you're not only gaining an insight into one of the world's oldest living cultures but also contributing to the empowerment of the women who run these tours. Their role as custodians of both culture and land is central to the mission of Mandingalbay Authentic Indigenous Tours, as they continue to share their stories with visitors from across the globe.

To join this extraordinary journey and learn more about the tours, visit [mandingalbay.com.au](http://mandingalbay.com.au)



# Celebrating culture and healing at Clancestry 2024

Clancestry 2024, hosted by Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC), was a weeklong celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture, featuring a vibrant mix of performances, workshops, and conversations. This annual event not only showcases the creative talent of First Nations communities but also offers a platform for discussions on cultural preservation, identity, and healing.

As part of the *Clancestry Conversations* series, Link-Up (Qld) participated in a session exploring the importance of reconnecting Stolen Generations survivors with their families, country, and culture. The conversation, led by Link-Up (Qld) CEO Patricia Thompson AM, Board Director Len Utz, and Research Officer Leelana Fabila-Hicks, highlighted the vital role the organisation plays in supporting survivors and their descendants through its free family history and reunification services. These services help individuals rediscover their roots and rebuild connections lost through forced removal.

“It was a fantastic opportunity to engage with the community and raise awareness about the support we offer to those affected by the Stolen Generations,” said Patricia Thompson.

**“Events like Clancestry bring people together and remind us of the importance of cultural identity and healing.”**



The session provided an opportunity for attendees to ask questions, share stories, and learn more about the impact of Link-Up (Qld)’s work. By participating in Clancestry, Link-Up (Qld) further emphasised its commitment to “bringing them home” and helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples reconnect with their heritage.

Other highlights of Clancestry 2024 included the Warriors concert, featuring powerhouse performances Andrew Gurruwiwi Band, J-MILLA, Jungaji, and Radical Son; and an incredible season of contemporary dance in Bangarra Dance Theatre’s groundbreaking cross-cultural collaboration, Horizon.

# Link-Up leaders earn national recognition

The National Link-Up Leadership Group, in collaboration with beyond... (Kathleen Stacey & Assoc), was honoured with an Evaluation System Award at the International Evaluation Conference in Naarm/Melbourne in September 2024 for their groundbreaking work on the National Link-Up Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy. This recognition celebrates the creation of culturally sensitive tools that help track and support the reconnection journeys of Stolen Generations survivors across Australia.

The strategy provides a unified framework for all eight Link-Up Services nationwide. These tools enable consistent data collection and allow the services to create a powerful national narrative about the difference they are making in the lives of their clients.

Patricia Thompson AM, CEO of Link-Up (Qld), remarked on the significance of the system: "This strategy offers a way to streamline our work while making sure we are honouring the deeply personal journeys of our clients. It ensures that their stories are properly captured and valued, and that we continue making a tangible impact in their lives."

In addition to receiving the award, the leadership group facilitated a presentation at the conference, sharing valuable insights into the co-design process and practical tips for developing culturally respectful evaluation systems. This session was particularly valuable for organisations looking to engage Indigenous communities with authenticity and care.

Reflecting on the collaboration, Kathleen Stacey said: "Personally, I'm immensely proud of the enthusiasm, resilience and persistence of the Link-Up Leadership Group throughout the journey in their desire to have the best possible strategy and inspiring our team to give our best to the process."

An Evaluation System Award was also presented to Australian Border Force and ARTD Consultants for their Australian Trusted Trader 10-year monitoring and evaluation strategy.

As the partnership between the National Link-Up Leadership Group and beyond... (Kathleen Stacey & Assoc) continues through to 2026, National Link-Up Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy will further enhance the capacity of the Link-Up services, ensuring our work remains impactful, culturally respectful, and focused on helping survivors reconnect with their identities and histories.



Photo by Albie Colvin.

# Upcoming Events

See below for a list of upcoming events.

For more information, visit our website or call our team on 1800 200 855.

**31 OCTOBER  
2024**

**CLIENT MORNING TEA SUPPORT  
GROUP (BRISBANE)**

[Link-Up Brisbane Office](#)

*Call 1800 200 855 for more information.*

**28 NOVEMBER  
2024**

**40TH ANNIVERSARY  
GALA DINNER (BRISBANE)**

[Brisbane City Hall](#)

*Tickets: [www.link-upqld.org.au/40years](http://www.link-upqld.org.au/40years)*

**14 DECEMBER  
2024  
- 5 JANUARY  
2025**

**LINK-UP (QLD) OFFICES  
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY  
CLOSURE**

**13 FEBRUARY  
2025**

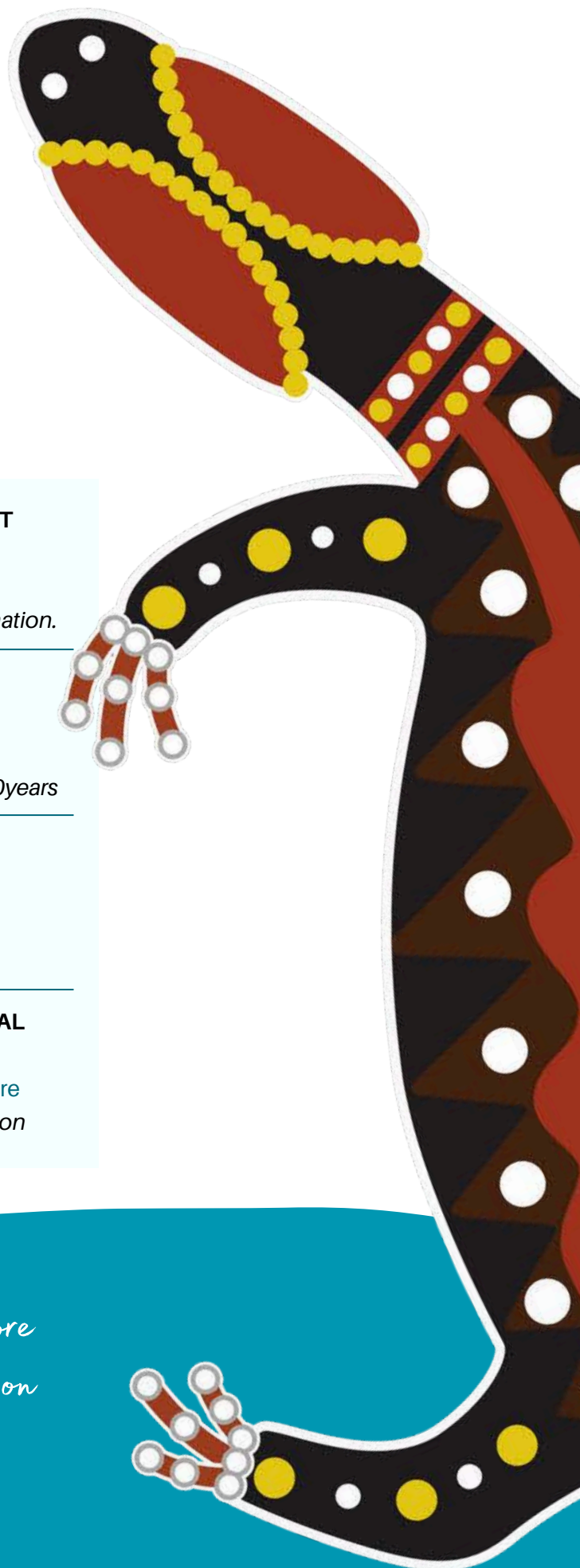
**ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL  
APOLOGY**

[Queensland Performing Arts Centre](#)

*More information will be available on  
our website soon.*



*Scan here for more  
news and events on  
our website!*





# Support our work

Interested in helping Link-Up (Qld) continue its work?

All donations, large and small, make a difference in supporting our organisation to continue the work we do to help members of the Stolen Generations still searching for their family.

We truly appreciate your generosity.

For more information, visit

[link-upqld.org.au/donation](http://link-upqld.org.au/donation)



**If you or someone you know needs urgent support at any time, please contact the following services.**

STOP VIOLENCE

1800 737 732

[respect.gov.au](http://respect.gov.au)

BEYOND BLUE

1300 224 636

[beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)

13 YARN

13 92 76

[13yarn.org.au](http://13yarn.org.au)

MENSLINE

1300 789 978

[mensline.org.au](http://mensline.org.au)

SUICIDE CALLBACK  
SERVICE

1300 659 467

[suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

Inside back cover image: Daintree Rainforest, Queensland (MATTHEW MERLIN NEWKIRK/GETTY IMAGES)

Back cover image: Pilungah Reserve, Queensland (JANELLE LUGGE/GETTY IMAGES)



# Link-Up (Qld)

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION  
STILL BRINGING THEM HOME



Link-Up (Qld) is funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the Australian Government Department of Social Services, the Queensland Government Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, and the Healing Foundation.



Australian Government  
National Indigenous  
Australians Agency



**NIAA**



Queensland  
Government



Healing Foundation  
Strong Spirit • Strong Culture • Strong People