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Link-Up (QId) ABORIGINAL CORPORATION ®

Still Bringing Them Home

Chairperson - Sam Watson



be a part of a panel of speakers at the Judith Wright Centre for the Arts in the Valley, to talk about my experiences at the original Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra in 1972. Local artist Richard Bell had been commissioned to construct an installation that he first set up in

I was recently invited to

Sam Watson

Sydney and then took to a number of other venues.

Richard bought an Army tent and used props to recapture a sense of the original Embassy. I went along because I thought that it would be interesting to revisit those long ago times and also to give proper honour and respect to those many people who had been there back in 1972; but have since passed on.

There were three other speakers in my panel and a number of other speakers on different panels. I was the only person there on the day who was a member of the original Embassy staff. I had been there at the beginning as a fresh faced kid of eighteen years. At the time I was a member of the Black Panther Party of Brisbane and I was there at the tents for the first six months.

There were others there at Richard Bell's event who had come down to Canberra after the local Police had moved on us in July, 1972 and had arrested a number of people and then removed the encampment. Hundreds of supporters from all over the country had come down and we had put the tents back up. There was a series of running clashes with the Police and

In this issue:

>	Chairman Sam Wattson	2
>	CEO Patricia Conlon	3
>	Neville Newman Reunion - Woorabinda	4
>	Shane Unthank Reunion - Mornington Isand	6
>	Greta Murray Reunion - Gordonvale	8
>	Cyril Fisher Reunion - Lawn Hill	10
>	Mabel Hopkins Reunion - St George	12
>	Donna Watterson Reunion - Brisbane	14
>	Gemel Hudson Reunion - Charters Towers	15
>	Mt Isa Update	16
>	National Link-Up Forum	18

a few of us were carted off to the local hospital with wounds from batons and boots. But the tents went back up.

The Embassy has been regarded as the most successful, sustained protest of the Aboriginal political movement and it was a direct response to the then prime minister Billie McMahon who made a stupid public statement on the 26th. January, 1972 – that his government would never endorse Aboriginal land rights. Four young Koorie men went straight up to Canberra the next morning to set up an Aboriginal Embassy on the lawns of federal parliament to remind mister McMahon that this land is Aboriginal land! Always was...always will be...

Hundreds of our mob descended on Canberra and worked at the tents. Many books and articles and even documentaries have been produced to tell the story of the first Embassy. It was an amazing moment in the black political struggle and it bought our people together in a common, unified front. We were determined to make a stand to remind the world that we have never surrendered our rights to our sovereign lands.

There is an Aboriginal Embassy still there in Canberra on the same site; but there are much younger people there now. They still have that fire in the gut and they will always be ready to stand and defend that place; but sadly – so many of the original patriots and warriors have since passed on. That panel discussion in the Valley was my way to salute all those people who were there in 1972. They were magnificent.





Front Cover: Neville Newman and his daughter Denise at Woorabinda.

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

CEO - Patricia Conlon



Patricia Conlon

Welcome to another edition of Link-Up (Qld) magazine as we work busily toward finalising as much as we can before the Xmas break.

Our Service Delivery staff have been very busy organising reunions for our clients. We have a very competent and com-

mitted Research Team who focus on ensuring that research is completed in a timely and efficient way, so that our Caseworkers and Counsellors can deliver sensitive research outcomes to our clients and ultimately organise reunions. Sadly there are cases where individuals have been removed from their families and due to a lack of records or detail in the records we are unable to establish Aboriginality or connection to a family or country. We are inspired though by the gratefulness and appreciation of our clients for listening to their story and the effort put into trying to connect them through research.

Such as this feedback from a client recently where we were unable to establish Aboriginality or connection: "Information left off birth certificates as in my case *my birth mother feared that I would not be adopted if they knew I had Indigenous blood running through my* veins. My father did know about the pregnancy and did know about my birth unfortunately his health, him being indigenous and my Grandfather's hatred of the *Aborigines doomed the relationship. I believe people* like me are part of the Stolen Generation The secret Stolen Generation...... our mothers forced into adoptionwe were taken Taken away from our country...... Our people our stories Our dreaming" and "thank you for your professional and supportive assistance during my emotional journey. *It was so appreciated that I was able to talk to someone* who understood and was prepared to listen. Thank you."

It is truly a privilege to work with our people supporting them on their healing journeys. We strive for quality improvement in the way that we do our business. We achieved certification against AS/NZS ISO 9001:2008 (Quality Management System) Standard in 2015 and recently had a surveillance audit to assess continuing conformity against the standard. We are pleased that the audit team has recommended that Link-Up (Qld) remains certified against the Standard with a further surveillance audit to be conducted by August 2017.

The Audit Team in their report findings recognised that since the last audit, Link-Up (Qld) has benefited from committed leadership by a stable Board and very experience CEO, ably assisted by an Executive Assistant who is very knowledgeable of quality management systems.

Our Team at Link-Up (Qld) goes from strength to strength. I am pleased to welcome to our team, Kathleen Bobongi in our Cairns office. Kathy is engaged as a SEWB Counsellor. Kathy is a qualified Social Worker and brings with her a wealth of experience in the sector to support our clients. Carmel Schleger, SEWB Counsellor in our Brisbane office – Carmel too brings a wealth of experience and is qualified in Narrative Therapy and Holistic Counselling. Christopher Cole is a Caseworker in our Brisbane Office – Chris has many years of experience working in the sector and particularly with men's groups. We welcome all three and their combined experience to support our Team and more importantly our clients.

Our client Xmas lunch is on the 24th November 2016, the last Client Support gathering for 2016, so we look forward to enjoying lunch on that day.



Link-Up (Qld) Brisbane office has a new phone number (07) 3638 0411 Freecall to all offices 1800 200 855 from landlines

Neville Newman Reunion - Woorabinda



Neville Newman and his Daughter Denise at Woorabinda

My name is Neville Newman I am from Bamaga in the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) of Cape York. I am 72 years of age. In 1967 I joined the National Service and gathered skills that helped me with work opportunities. I started a family on Thursday Island and we moved to the mainland to Bamaga. Before I retired I was employed as a skilled electrician and skilled mechanic for the Bamaga Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

During 1990s I became very sick and I began searching for my Paternal Grand Father Newman's grave (DOD 1923) which I eventually found in Townsville. Because there was nothing to mark where he was laid to rest I put a plaque on his grave. Following that I felt the urge to search for my Aboriginal Grand Mother Maud Newman who had married Sydney Willis in 1927 and is now known as Maud Willis. The Willis family moved from Palm Island to Woorabinda not long after the wedding. I had heard about Link-Up so I went to them to help me with my search. Link-Up located Grand Mother Maud's unmarked grave in the Woorabinda Cemetery.



My daughter Denise Newman was my Client Support Person who accompanied me on this Reunion Closure. I felt safe because my daughter is a Health Worker who works throughout the NPA. Once the date for the Reunion Closure was set Tuesday 27 September 2016 "I began getting excited for the trip. I believe truth was in the Research Results". Once we got to the Neerkol Orphanage memorial site I knew "this was the truth" when my Grand Mother Maud died in 1939, my Uncles and Aunties were sent to and survived Neerkol Orphanage.



Neville and Dienise at The Childrens Memorial Garden Neerkol Ida Lammermoor Personal Assistant to the Woorabinda Mayor organised Woorabinda staff to help me during the day. When we got to Woorabinda the Staff; Mark Weasel, Bianca Tilberoo and Aunty Dianne Evans welcomed us in.



With Aunty Dianne at Woorabinda Cemetery Aunty Dianne gave us a tour of Woorabinda identifying the sites where my Grand Mother Maud would have lived and did her daily activities. Mark and Aunty Dianne took us to the cemetery and pointed out where my Grand Mother Maud would have been laid to rest among a number of the older unmarked graves. We gathered around then I spoke words for my Grand Mother Maud to say that I was happy I had come and found her resting place. My daughter Denise and I prayed a prayer. Then we scattered rose petals across the site of the unmarked graves where it was calculated that Grand Mother Maud was buried in that part of the cemetery.



Scattering rose petals at the unmarked graves

I was very happy and thankful to find Grand Mother Maud's resting place but I was sad that there was nothing to mark her grave site. I am seriously thinking about meeting with my children to discuss our plans about going back to Woorabinda Cemetery and placing a plaque somewhere near her calculated grave site.

Thank you Link-Up (Qld) for giving me the opportunity to find where my Grand Mothers grave is calculated to be. "I found my Grand Fathers grave and now I have found my Aboriginal Grand Mothers grave this has been the longest day".



Shane Unthank Reunion - Mornington Island



Shane Unthank at Mornington Island

I grew up in Springsure near Emerald until I was 16, then I moved to Emerald and starting working for Queensland Rail as a lad porter. At the age of 17 I moved to Brisbane to work for Telecom as a panel beater spray painter, Brisbane is where I settled and have now been here for 32 years.



I met a guy called Ivan through friends who is African American about 2 years ago, he told me about Link-Up (Qld) and the services provided, I did not know this place existed so it came to me as a shock that an American person knew of this place before I did.

I suffer from anxiety so my stress levels were a little high on the day of travel but there was definitely a level of excitement amongst all the emotions going through my head of returning home to my mother's land. However, I had these feelings several weeks prior to leaving Brisbane.

My expectations were not high or unrealistic of Link-Up (Qld), my main goal out of all of this, if anything at all, was to meet my mob that I never knew about. This was the biggest cause of my anxiety, the feeling of not knowing who or if anyone at all would be waiting for me at the end of my journey to Mornington Island.





After the reunion had taken place, I felt sorry that I had to leave so quickly after only just arriving. It felt like a whirlwind, from the moment we landed we were being taken around to meet my family members but I felt one more day on the Island would have given me enough time to yarn with them and learn more about who they are and more about mother.

I plan on making my way back to Mornington Island this time next year.



Shane with Staff from North West Remote Health Healing Centre - Helen, Christabell, Glenys and Ashley

Greta Murray Reunion - Gordonvale



I was born 27 December 1923 in Ingham Queensland. Thirteen years later, 1934 my adopted Mother was 'ordered' by the Government of the day to be moved from Halifax Qld to Yarrabah Community south of Cairns. My adopted Mother had her 'order' changed and she was moved to Fantome Island outside of Palm Island. Ten years later 1945 my adopted Mother passed away.

I first came to Link-Up (Qld) in December 2013. I heard about Link-Up (Qld) through Margaret, my daughter in-law, who was applying to Births, Deaths & Marriages for my birth certificate around 2012. Births, Deaths & Marriages and other community organisations then led us to Link-Up (Qld).



My journey has been: sad, angry, happy, slow, with gaps, full of questions and blank because of the move from Halifax to Yarrabah Dormitory. The difficulties and challenges that I faced was that my family was separated around Queensland through adoption. I had; three sisters on Thursday Island, one brother at Cordelia outside of Halifax, two brothers at Helens Hill near Ingham and one sister in the Gardens at Halifax. I was married in Yarrabah in 1940. I had two sons in Yarrabah. Then we left Yarrabah and went to live around the surrounding cane farms where my husband Donald cut cane. Altogether, my husband Donald and I had ten children and we lived at Fishery Falls.

My research request was for family history about myself, my Parents 1893 – 1928 my maternal Grand Parents 1850 – 1905 and my Adopted Parents 1885 -1940. When I collected my final Research Results I felt excited and happy. It was a great day for me. I know most of my family and I really wanted to go back to country which is Halifax Qld. I was around 9 years of



Aunty Greta Murray with Amanda Barrett, Merle Cassidy, Bethel Clubb, Michael Barret, Aunty Greta's Children Charles, Val and Daughter in Law Margarete and Link-Up (Qld) Caseworker Wayne Ah-Wong



age when I was ordered from Halifax to Yarrabah. My Mother lived and worked in the town of Halifax but my friends and relatives lived in the 'Gardens' on the outskirts of Halifax. I remember my friends the Cassidy, Payne, Nehow, Devow and Barrett families. I also remember Peter and Johnny Tanner. My older sister lived in the Gardens at Halifax and was raised by Peter Tanner and his family.

For health and age reasons my childhood friends from Halifax and I could not travel so I asked Link-Up (Qld) to bring my childhood friends' children who had lived in the Gardens in Halifax to meet with me and speak their oral history to me and show me any photographs they had collected of life and people living in the Gardens.

The most significant part of my Back to Country Reunion experience was: memories; the DVD supplied by Michael Barrett; the oral history spoken about the Gardens; my childhood friends' children Michael Barrett, Bethel Clubb, Merle Cassidy and Michael's wife Amanda all sharing their oral history with me.



My daughter in-law Margaret, my daughter Val and my son Charles also shared the experience with me on the same day.

The message I have for others about Link-Up (Qld) is to get in touch with the staff if you want to know about your family members who have been adopted, fostered or moved through Government Policy. This will help people find their families and get to know about their family history



Michael Barrett with Aunty Greta and her Daughter Val

Cyril Fisher (Uncle Blimpse) Reunion - Lawn Hill



Cyril Fisher and his Grandson Eric at Boodjamulla National Park

I wanted to say thank you very much to Link-Up (Qld) staff Jessie Cobbo and William Conlon for finally taking me back to my Grandmother Esme's country. Granny was removed from Lawn Hill and sent to Brandon near Townsville to work as a domestic. It was there that she met her husband, my grandfather Frank Fisher Snr, who was a Light Horseman.



Going back to Country brought tears to my eyes. My Dad never got to go there, my uncles and aunties never got to go there. I was so glad I was able to take my grandson, Eric to visit this beautiful Waanyi country. It is important for our kids to know where we come from, to know our history and to respect that history, to know how our old people were treated and moved off country, never to return.





I grew up in Cherbourg, working at the dairy farm, milking cows and doing a variety of other jobs, I travelled around a bit but always yearned to go to Granny's country. It was important having my grandson with me so that he can tell his kids and other members of our family, how beautiful Granny's country is and how she must have missed it.

In Mt Isa travelling up to country, Mt Isa staff and people knew my connection. It was a wonderful feeling – a sense of belonging.

I contacted Link-Up over 3 years ago, when I was reading a magazine article about getting connection to family – I knew then I had to make that journey for

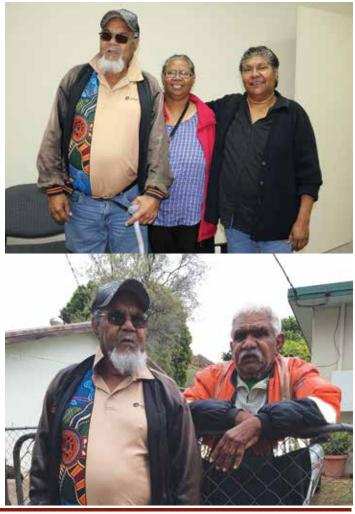




my Father who never got to see or feel his Mother's country. I felt sad, leaving, I tried not show the emotions that were swirling around, I wanted my grandson to feel our old people's spirits and enjoy country, I settled after that.

When I got home to Cherbourg and showed my family the film and photos, they were amazed at how beautiful Granny's country is.

Thank you Link-Up for helping me to connect back to Granny's country, it was important for me, like it was important for my Father, my uncles and my aunties who never got the opportunity to feel their Mother's country.



Mabel Hopkins Reunion - St George



Mabel Hopkins at St George Cemetery

I grew up in Cherbourg most of my life, leaving in 1976 for 6 years and returning to work at Cherbourg hospital before moving to Brisbane where I have been ever since.

Throughout my life I have always wondered what had happened to my Mother's Brother Charlie Blackman, we had known that he had passed on, but we did not know where he had been laid to rest.

Through community contacts and other family connections I was put into contact with Link-Up (Qld) to begin the task of helping to track down my Uncle Charlie's last resting place. Once I had become a client I was assigned a researcher who located his gravesite to St George cemetery in South West Queensland. My Caseworker Jessie Cobbo then organised a "Gravesite Reunion" for me. This was to take place from 12th to 14th September.

As the date got closer I started to feel nervous but also excited as I was able to take my sister Julia with me as my support person. Also on the trip was Jessie my caseworker and Carmel my counsellor who were there to support me on this journey. We flew from Brisbane to Roma and then drove from Roma to St George where we stayed for the 2 days.

The day of our visit was a beautiful sunny day, we located Uncle Charlie's unmarked gravesite and placed a wreath, flowers and burnt candles in a moving ceremony so that we could acknowledge Uncle Charlie and that we had finally found him.





Mabel Hopkins, Link-Up (Qld) Counsellor Carmel Schleger and Julia Hopkins



Mabel and Julia Hopkins at their Uncle Charlie's grave As our visit drew to a close I had mixed emotions, firstly feeling happy that we found Uncle Charlie and were able to visit him, but also sad that when I left St George we were leaving him behind. One day I plan to go back to not only visit Uncle Charlie's grave but also to place a cross and plaque there so we always know where he is.

I would like to thank Link-Up (Qld) for helping me on this journey.



Donna Watterson Reunion - Brisbane



Donna Watterson has been a client of Link-Up (Qld) for 18 years with the hope of finding her baby brother Jeffrey Alexander. Jeffrey was given up for adoption as a baby due to circumstances at the time. Donna still has vivid memories of Jeffrey as a baby in his cot. For many years Donna thought about her little brother and made several attempts to find him with no success, before coming to Link-Up (Qld) for assistance with her search.

Through research conducted by Link-Up (Qld), it was discovered that Jeffrey had been adopted into a loving family who changed his name to Edward Maurice Cox. This was obviously a factor which hindered Donna's search for her brother.





Sadly, it was also discovered that in 1989 Jeffrey had passed away as a young man from a long battle with a chronic health condition. Our research was also able to identify Jeffrey's final resting place at Beenleigh Lawn Cemetery. Finally, after many years of searching for her brother, wondering what happened to him and if she would ever meet him again, these questions had been answered for Donna.

Link-Up (Qld) were privileged to assist with preparation of the gravesite reunion for Donna which was very emotional. It was an opportunity for Donna to grieve for her brother and her family's loss.

It is unfortunate, the circumstances of Donna not finding her baby brother sooner - as research revealed that Jeffrey had lived for most of his life not very far from his big sister – he was so near yet so far away.



Yorgum/Gemel Hudson Reunion



Recently the Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation in Western Australia organised a reunion for Gemel Hudson from Perth to travel to Charters Towers in Northern Queensland to reunite with her Mother's brother Uncle Tommy. Uncle Tommy is the last living brother and he made it very clear he wanted to meet Gemel.

A full day of flying from Perth to Brisbane then onto Townsville, with the travel party consisting of Yorgum Workers Dennis Colbung, Cheryl Augustsson, Sucha Cameron and Gemel.

In Townsville the next day we met Gemel's cousins Kym and Jan and Link-Up (Qld) Caseworker Vicki Darr, before our drive out to Charters Towers.

Gemel said she was feeling excited and a little nervous and still couldn't believe this was all happening. The contact between Uncle Tommy, Gemel and other family members was amazing. The rest of the afternoon was spent comparing stories and a lot of catching up.

On our last day in Charters Towers we had a morning tea and Welcome to Country at a local art gallery. The newspaper also did a story on Gemel's journey. The next few hours Gemel spent time with Uncle Tommy and his family. She enjoyed the opportunity and felt at peace knowing that contact had been made and also stated a move back home was on the cards.

Leaving Charters Towers proved to be very emotional with many tears were shed, it also proved very hard to say goodbye.



Mt Isa Regional Office Update - Desley Ah Wing



Mount Isa commenced our Client Support Group on the 28th July 2016.

The morning teas have been empowering, with vibrant yarns happening across the table and sharing of family history. Everyone leaves feeling uplifted for this new activity in their lives. Ideas have been discussed to do a group activity to give back to community.

The clients that attended had always seen each other in the street but never had the opportunity to sit down for a yarn, new friendships have formed that will carry on through the years.



On the 28th July 2016, on behalf of CEO Patricia Conlon; I attended the Official Opening of the Queensland South Native Title Services (QSNTS) Refurbished Office in Mount Isa. A light lunch and refreshments were served after the official re-opening.



Royal Commission Update - Gordon Glenbar

Relationship Australia's Bevan Doyle and Link-Up (Qld) Royal Commission Specialist Support Gordon Glenbar at the Murri Football Carnival.

Over the past few months I have visited several Correctional Centres throughout the state and locally. Centres such as Lotus Glen at Mareeba, Stuart Creek at Townsville, Wolston Correctional Centre at Wacol and Woodford Correctional Centre north of Brisbane. At all of these centres I was well received by the workers and the inmates.

The inmates were engaging around their issues and appreciated being able to express themselves in a culturally safe environment. They were receptive of the support for their journey of self-healing and of trying to make sense of their life story.

Correctional Centres in SEQ are also being visited where inmates are taking advantage of my regular visitations to access supports and even to register with Link-Up (Qld) to find family and country.

On these trips I have been able to network and connect with organisations and individuals in delivering services in supporting survivors.

I was privileged to be on the Neville Newman Reunion to Woorabinda where Uncle Neville and his daughter Denice was able to visit the cemetery where his grandmother was buried. This proved to be a very emotional yet happy time as I got to know Uncle Neville and become part of his journey.

Recently myself and other Link-Up (Qld) workers attended the Murri Football Carnival held at Redcliff to promote Link-Up (Qld) and the services we provide.



Murri Carnival - Redcliffe

Link-Up (Qld) held a information stall at the Murri Rugby League Carnival held at Redcliffe in September.

It was a successful day with a lot of our promotional products such as caps, badges, stickers, tattoos and water being handed out and many inquiries about the services of Link-Up (Qld).

It was a very good opportunity to see what other organisations were offering at their stalls, one highlight was seeing all the deadly designed shirts proudly being worn by all the teams and their supporters.



National Link-Up Leadership Meeting – Perth – September 2016



Members of the National Link-Up Leadership Team

Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation hosted a 2 day National Link-Up Leadership meeting at their East Perth office on 29th – 30th September 2016. The meeting communique on the page opposite was developed detailing outcomes achieved.

Laurel and Kathy and their team were excellent hosts, providing a great venue at their office to meet in, secretariat support to the meeting and the opportunity for us to gather outside of the office for lunch provided by Yorgum staff at King's Park.



The opportunity to have a cultural tour of King's Park, one of the largest inner city parks in the world, with a traditional owner providing information about Nyoongar people's connection to the land within Kings Park was very interesting, particularly the native plants with informative plaques as well as the significant Aboriginal and European history.





Meeting Communique: State and Territory providers of Link-Up services

Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation hosted a 2-day meeting of State and Territory providers of the Australian Government's Link-Up program in East Perth on Thursday 29th and Friday 30th of September.

The meeting was attended by:

- Laurel Sellers, Kathy Mokaraka and Dion Storey representing Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation (WA)
- Chris Howland and Belinda Wilson representing Nunkuwarrin Yunti (SA)
- Tracey Brand and Gwen Troutman-Weir representing Congress Link-Up Alice Springs (NT)
- Patricia Conlon representing Link-Up (Qld)
- Terry Chenery and John Trikilis representing Link-Up (NSW)
- Evelyn Perkins and Raelene Rosas representing NTSGAC Link-Up (NT)

with apologies from representatives from Link-Up Victoria and Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation.

As well as valuable informal information sharing and a cultural tour of Kings Park, the group discussed a number of issues and resolved to further strengthen their collaboration, cooperation and representation.

Outcomes achieved at this meeting included:

- Creating a secretariat to better organise national events and coordinate local perspectives to provide unified advice to relevant Government Departments and Ministers
- Discussions regarding the consistency and adequacy of funding and opportunities for partnerships
- The development of a MOU to recognise and formalise partnerships between National Link-Up Services and provide greater transparency with service provision and cross agency collaboration and support improved social and emotional health and well-being outcomes
- Discussion regarding the use of client data software and its long term security and retention
- Sharing of information regarding State and Territory policies and procedures relating to fostered and adopted children
- An exploration of tools for family research and evaluation of SEWB healing programs
- Discussion regarding Stolen Generations Family Research and Case Management training

All participants agreed the meeting was a rare and valuable opportunity to take time away from the important client-facing work to discuss, analyse and develop plans regarding the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the service as a whole.

30 September 2016



Yorgum **Aboriginal Corporation**



Nunkuwarrin Yunti of South Australia Inc.



Central Australian Aboriginal Congress





ABORIGINAL CORPORATION





About Link-Up (Qld) -Our Mission-

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

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

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

$Link\text{-}Up_{(\mathsf{Qld})}$

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION ®

Still Bringing Them Home



Quick Facts

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

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Please be aware that Link-Up (Qld) Brisbane office has a new phone number (07) 3638 0411 Toll Free: 1800 200 855 from landlines

Link-Up (Qld) is funded by Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Department of Social Services, Attorney-General's Department | Ministry for the Arts, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.







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