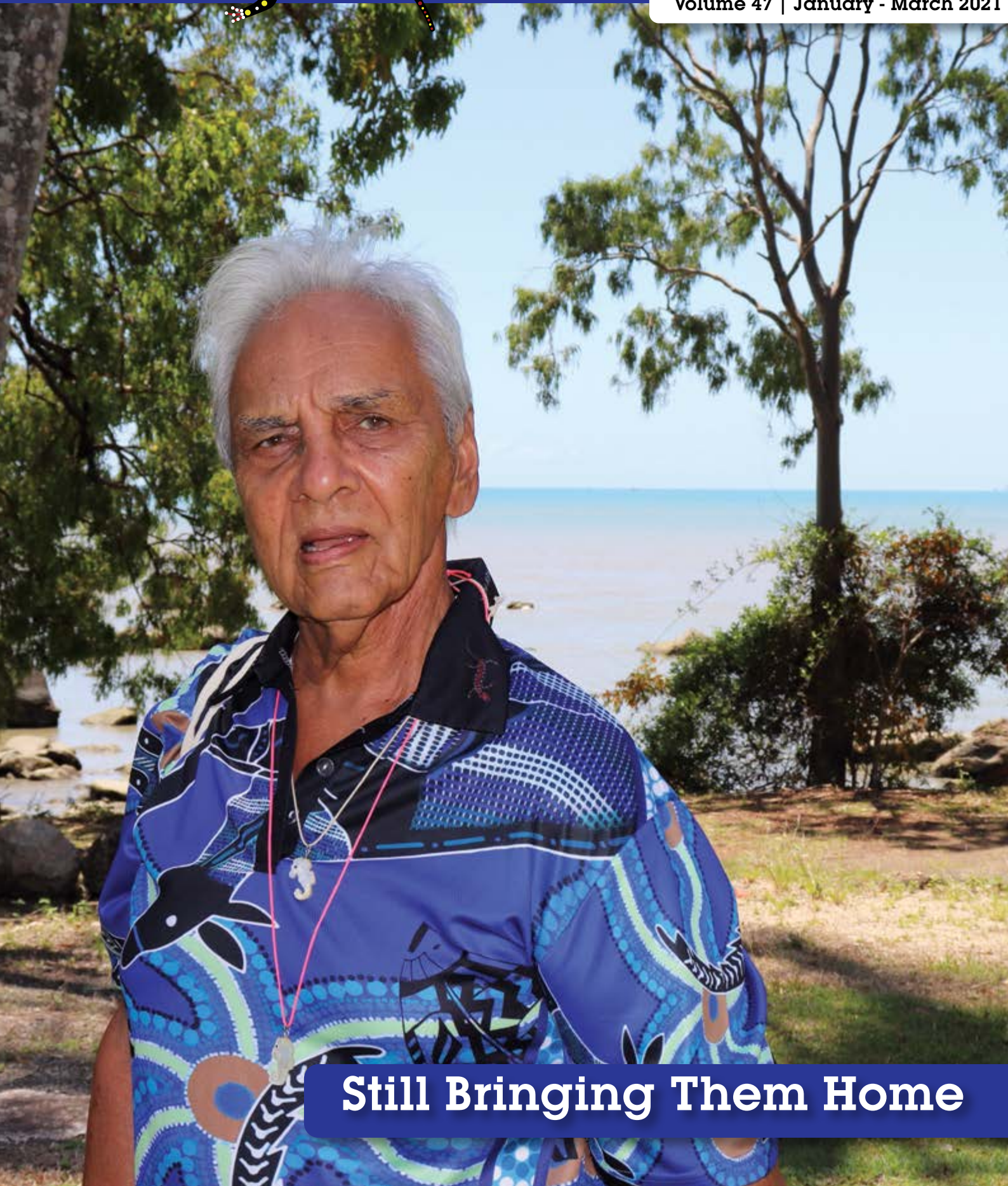




# Link-Up (Qld)

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Volume 47 | January - March 2021



**Still Bringing Them Home**

## Chairperson - Ken Murphy



Ken Murphy

Apology 2021 was held at QPAC Playhouse Theatre on 12th February. Each year our staff pull together a deadly program to honour our Stolen Generations and to share our rich culture. It is always a privilege to have our Elders as special guest speakers to share their lived experiences and for us to listen and respect their wisdom and knowledge. Auntie Lorraine Peeters and Uncle Robert West were our special guest speakers at this event.

Auntie Lorraine shares her story, like many other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, she suffered forcible removal from her family and was placed in an institution - the Cootamundra Girls Home in New South Wales. The Home, like many others established around the country was fundamental to the process of removing Aboriginal girls to train them as domestic servants and farm hands in wealthy non-Aboriginal households. They had to carry out duties from scrubbing floors, washing

and looking after children, they were not protected in these work environments, they were subjected to harsh conditions and their wages were paid to Board Trust accounts.

The girls also experienced systematic racial discrimination to remove their Aboriginal identity and alienate them from their families.

Uncle Robert West, is a Wakka Wakka man raised on Auburn Station near Eidsvold in central Queensland. He shares a similar story as a young boy being removed from his family and placed in the Boys Dormitory at Cherbourg. He reflects on how it was for him and other young boys in the dormitory having to follow very strict and regimented procedures. "It was really tough, we weren't allowed to visit our relatives in the camps, we had to stay confined in the dormitory. There was no love or affection shown to us in the dormitory." He wasn't even allowed to speak to his mother through the fence.

### Auntie Lorraine and Uncle Robert really are Elder Stateswomen and Statesmen.

They have both suffered trauma because of removal and institutionalisation, like so many of our people who were removed. They are resilient and strong, they are role models for others.

Auntie Lorraine shared how when in her fifties, she suffered a 'triggering event' at a reunion at Cootamundra Girls Home. She was flooded with memories and emotions, she thought she was going insane. This event empowered her to observe, study and seek to understand her own healing journey in order to help others. Auntie Lorraine has developed a unique healing model for dealing with the prolonged trauma associated with removal of children from their families and communities. Helping others to heal has become her life work.

Uncle Robert has worked since he was 15, his first job was on the farm at Cherbourg. Milking cows, he gives a little laugh. He reflects on how they didn't get a good education in the dormitory, however he didn't let that deter him in any way. He spent most of his life working as a labourer, whatever job he had he did it well and with pride, he was a hard worker. Later in life he has done community work helping people in need. A positive from his time in the dormitory was the lifelong friends he made, other boys who he grew up with from all over Queensland because they were sent to the mission.

We commemorate Apology Day each year to hear these life stories, to empower and support others to overcome their trauma and to keep our culture alive through stories and dance. Thank you to the artists for their performances and of course our Federal Member, Ms Terri Butler and State Minister, Mr Craig Crawford.



### This issue's Cover Story

Uncle Roy Gray outside his home in Yarrabah. The full story of Uncle Roy's reunion which was 25 years in the making is on pages 4-7.

### 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.



Patricia Thompson

Welcome to this edition of our magazine. What a beautiful cover, Uncle Roy Gray from Yarrabah. Our life is a journey and it is intertwined with many others we meet on our journey through life. I had the pleasure of working with Uncle Roy in the 1980's when he was on the Council at Yarrabah and I was employed as the Council Clerk. In 1984 community councils were created through the enactment by the Queensland Government of the Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984 and Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984 to own and administer former Aboriginal reserves or missions under a Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT), the name for a system of community-level land trust.

The trusts were governed by local representatives who were elected every three years to councils called Incorporated Aboriginal Councils. These councils had the power to pass by-laws, appoint police for the community, and were responsible for maintaining housing and infrastructure, running the Community Development Employment Program and issuing hunting, fishing and camping permits. As such, they worked much like a local government, but were different in character as they

owned the land they administered on behalf of the community.

The first Aboriginal Council at Yarrabah was established in the mid 1960's, principally as an advisory body. Yarrabah is now an Aboriginal Shire Council under the Local Government Act 2009.

Uncle Roy was born in 1944 in Yarrabah mission. He proudly shares his journey and his search for answers to the missing pieces of his family history. It has been a privilege for us at Link-Up (Qld) to find those missing pieces and more along the way. Our Research Manager, Ruth Loli is persistent in her research work, she leaves no stone unturned to support our people in search for records and information.

Also in this edition is the David Wragge reunion, Casey Family reunion and Douglas Family reunion – each sharing their experience with the same questions – why were our people taken so far away from their family and country? Link-Up (Qld) staff are committed to the very important work we do supporting our clients to complete their family history research and ultimately reunite with either family, gravesites or country as part of their healing.

Ongoing professional development is also important for our staff.

Just prior to the Christmas break, our staff visited the Cherbourg Ration Shed. The work that has been put into relocating and displaying the original Ration Shed by the community is amazing, the exhibitions presented by Aunty Jeanette, Aunty Sandra and Uncle Frank Malone with extensive knowledge on the history of the Ration Shed and dormitory life of the Barambah Aboriginal Settlement touched each and every one of our staff. You can read their heartfelt comments further on in the magazine. It is also great to see host Garth Simpson of the younger generation and a future leader showing pride and passion in the community's history ensuring our Elders stories will continue to be heard.

Apology 2021 was held at QPAC Playhouse Theatre, a wonderful line-up of speakers and performances. Our Chairman Ken Murphy was so proud to see the Wakka Wakka dancers performing, his connection to them goes back over 20 years and he was pleased to see they were still keeping our culture strong.



## Roy Gray Reunion - Brisbane

My name is Roy Gray and I was born in 1944 at Yarrabah Mission Community. I went to school at Yarrabah until Grade 6 when I was sent out by the superintendent to work in a couple of sheep stations, one was at Winton and another at Julia Creek for a year each. In about 1962 or 1963, I applied for my exemption from the Act and when the documentation came through I left Yarrabah and came to Cairns where I met my wife Colleen. We have been together since - I've been married for 54 years to the same girl.

When Colleen and I got married we lived a short time in Sydney where Colleen did her nursing training at Liverpool hospital and I worked in an iron factory. At times I was working two jobs, in the factory at night and then working during the day doing fencing. When we came back to Cairns in the late 1970's Colleen got a job as a matron at Yarrabah Hospital. We managed to raise 3 kids and adopted another 3-4 kids; our daughter is now a solicitor over in England and our 2 boys Roy and Colin are working in the mines.

After moving back to Yarrabah I got involved with politics and at that time it was Micky Miller and Joe McGuinness and that crew. We were trying to get equal rights for the Aboriginal people, fighting for award wages for our people and we managed to win some arguments there.

After that I settled down in Yarrabah and worked for the council, including as the museum caretaker, encouraging people to do artwork and stuff like that. I was instrumental in getting the dedicated trust for our community and other Queensland Aboriginal communities. The Arts Museum at Yarrabah is still operating, though I've been retired since 2013.

My education was limited as it was just a mission school, but I have learnt a lot since leaving Yarrabah and joining in with Link-Up (Qld) and other Aboriginal organisations and just learning from other people.

I was still interested in finding out who I really was, so I first contacted Link-Up (Qld) some time ago. They researched the background of my mother's family and I got a complete record. As I didn't know who dad's family was, I approached Link-Up (Qld) again to do some background searches but there wasn't a lot of information other than that he was in an orphanage as a child, living in Brisbane as a young man and coming up to wartime, then marrying mum up here in the 1940s.

Today I'm happy that I joined up with Link-Up (Qld) because they have proven some information about my father's family and his ancestry. During the research they were able to locate information about dad's mother, Agnes Gray. She's from Dubbo but died in Brisbane in 1932. Link-Up (Qld) were able to locate the unmarked paupers grave where she was buried in Toowong Cemetery,



*Agnes and Ada Gray at Yarrabah. This photo was taken in the 1920's.*

Brisbane. Cemetery staff marked the exact location for us and during my reunion we cemented in a cross to mark the site where dad's mother Agnes was buried. That was my highlight of the research about dad's family.

His ancestors come from the Dubbo area but before that I think the original Gray was a descendant from Scotland so that's a little bit about my people.

Leading up to the reunion I was feeling confident that Link-Up (Qld) were helping me with the fact of who I was and who my family were. During November when the reunion happened, Link-Up (Qld) staff were so encouraging, so helpful and so respectful in what they were doing for me. They were assisting me with travel and to record the reunion so it could be there for future reference for my kids.

**The records are there now forever and ever for my children to look at and I say it's a good thing to have these records. They are also there now for Link-Up (Qld) to use to help other people.**

I took my younger brother Alfred on my reunion with me. He was a good support, and because he is a family member it was important that he was a part of this reunion. The support was there anyway from the staff of Link-Up (Qld), there was nothing but support from everybody involved.

My reunion turned out to be not only a graveside reunion but it was also about discovering that there was more family to find in the future. We found another family that we didn't know about.

The graveside reunion benefited dad's side of family - myself and my family and then another part of the Gray clan that joined us in the reunion, the family of my grandmother's sister Ada. It was a big discovery as we didn't even know that they existed, but now we are in contact with them for good.

My feeling during the reunion was satisfaction that we have come this far with the help of Link-Up (Qld) and staff. Now it's only the beginning... and we are finding out the rest and finding who we need to find that has the connection with dad. After the reunion I felt that we were helped and I also think that Alfred felt that we were helped.



*Warren, Alfred and Roy cementing in the cross to finally mark Agnes' resting place*

It was a good experience and we left with a good feeling. We now have more knowledge of who we are and who we are connected to.

I don't think we need to make any plans about going back or reconnecting again because the process has already started - we are already connecting up with members of the Gray family on dad's side. The other people that we are connecting to - we will find out who they are, we will connect up or they will connect up and it's a natural process. So there are no plans to concentrate on because that will be a distraction, you just got to let things happen.

Every single Link-Up (Qld) staff member that I came in contact with showed me not only respect, it was love. I felt I was loved by all of the Link-Up (Qld) staff, I can't say anything bad about any of the staff. When I got to meet the Brisbane staff, their hearts were all open to helping me in the journey.

I would like to thank all the staff at the Link-Up (Qld) office at Cairns, the two Joshes - Josh Williams and Josh Thompson with Sylvia and Tahnee, thank you very much Cairns office. In Brisbane we've got our fearless leader there Mrs Thompson and Ruth Loli and Michelle thank you for putting in your time on my behalf. All the other staff I just don't know their names but they are very supportive of me. I felt nothing but love.



*Graham Lockyer (grandson of Ada Gray) with Roy Gray (grandson of Agnes Gray) at their first meeting. Roy is holding the cross he made for his grandmothers grave.*



*Family: Patricia, Graham, Warren, Debra, Alfred, Danika, Roy and Leigh.*

# Roy Gray Reunion - Behind the Scenes

Every reunion is unique, but Uncle Roy Gray's graveside reunion which finally took place in November 2020 holds a special place in many of the Link-Up (Qld) staff's hearts and minds, as does Uncle Roy himself.

Roy Gray first became a Link-Up (Qld) client in 1995 in his search for information on his paternal grandmother, Agnes Gray. His father was separated as a child and Roy never met his grandmother, he did not know her story or heritage, and he didn't know if there were any more siblings or descendants from his grandmother's line. At that time, more than 25 years ago, the tools available to family researchers were more limited than they are today and accessibility to historical and government records has always been a challenge. Roy is an avid family researcher himself but had come to dead ends trying to find out information about his grandmother and where she came from.

Ruth Loli, Research Manager at LUQ, tells part of the story:

"In 2013, I took on Uncle Roy's case and conducted thorough research using a wide range of government and non-government sources however, I was also unable to uncover substantial information about Agnes Gray, in part due to being unable to establish

identifying information about her in the records such as birth date and parentage. The main information we established was that she was born at Dubbo and lived and worked in Brisbane in the years around the time her son Alfred (Roy Gray's father) was born.

This was not enough however and in 2016, Uncle Roy's case was closed due to all research avenues being exhausted. A reunion was not facilitated. In 2018, Uncle Roy contacted Link-Up (Qld) after completing an AncestryDNA test and matching to two extended family members. We explored this lead and determined that one family member was the descendant of Agnes Gray's father's second marriage. Uncle Roy met with this relative in person and together they visited myself and Pat at the Link-Up (Qld) office. Uncle Roy's relative shared her family history information, including oral history and birth death and marriage certificates that she procured. This information provided crucial identifying information about Uncle Roy's grandmother, opening new doors to conduct further research. This was a good example of where DNA can provide leads to compliment traditional genealogical research practices.

Consequently, Roy Gray's case was reopened and I conducted additional research resulting in a 22 page research report of family history information relating to Agnes Gray's life, heritage and ancestry. We determined Agnes Gray's parentage and family members, various life events and her resting place at Toowong cemetery, Brisbane. It appears that Agnes never had any other children other than Roy's father, Alfred. Uncle Roy's family was traced back five generations to his great great grandparents who were born at Burrawong near Cumnock NSW and of a well-known Wellington Wiradjuri family. We even located a photo of Uncle Roy's great great grandfather John Stanley taken in 1876 which was a special find."

In this case, DNA provided a vital 'pivot point' for Uncle Roy's family research.

In August 2020, Ruth Loli and Michelle Resuggan travelled to Cairns and met up with LUQ Cairns SEWB Counsellor Tahnee Rapson. Together, they visited Uncle Roy at his home near Yarrabah to deliver his research report. Uncle Roy asked to video the research delivery so that he could go back over the information with ease and share it with his children. With



*Link-Up (Qld) staff Tahnee and Ruth with Uncle Roy in Yarrabah*

such a comprehensive research report, and a family tree tracing back 5 generations, Uncle Roy was presented with a choice of reunions. His original wish to find and visit where his grandmother was buried could now become a reality. He could also go back to his great great grandparent's country Wiradjuri in country NSW, but as interstate travel was still uncertain at this time, that special trip will have to wait for another day.



*The happy faces of Uncle Roy with Ruth Loli, after the delivery of his extensive family research report*

While Uncle Roy was going through his own discovery, there was another family in Brisbane conducting their own family research who connected to him through his grandmother's sister, Ada Gray. They communicated online and this family were also hitting brick walls in their research. The family were excited to learn of their connection to Uncle Roy. Roy invited these new family members to come along to his reunion, and Graham (the grandson of Ada) and his immediate family were welcomed with open arms.

On the day of Uncle Roy's reunion, a crowd of people gathered at Link-Up (Qld)'s Brisbane office. Roy with his brother Alfred who had both come down from Yarrabah, Roy's niece Leigh with her daughter Danika, Graham with his wife Patricia, and their son Warren with his wife Debra, together with Cairns Link-Up (Qld) staff Josh and Tahnee, and Brisbane staff Ruth and Michelle.

Everyone poured over the research paperwork, linking family trees and finding out where each other fits in their family stories. It was very special to see new links and connections being made. We all then travelled to Toowong Cemetery to mark and honour Agnes Gray's final resting place. Uncle Roy chose two songs to play to commemorate the significance of the occasion.

This was the first reunion for Michelle and Tahnee, who had both joined Link-Up (Qld) earlier in 2020 but with Covid restrictions in place, many reunions were postponed.

All the LUQ staff involved in Uncle Roy's reunion feel very privileged to be a part of his journey and to be able to finally, give this dignified and gracious man some answers to where he comes from.



*SEWB Counsellor Joshua Williams arrives at Toowong Cemetery with Uncle Roy*

## David Wragge Reunion - Lawn Hill Station

In October 2020, my younger brother Michael and I departed Brisbane with Link-Up (Qld) Caseworker, Sloane Stellan and Service Delivery Manager Joshua Thompson (who was flying in from Cairns), to return to our Grandmother's Country, located at Lawn Hill Station.

Our Granny, Annie Shadforth/Shadford, was born at Lawn Hill Station in 1899 and was the daughter of Ida and Ernest H. Shadforth (a non-Indigenous man from Wangaratta in Victoria). When Granny was sixteen, she was detained and relocated from Bowen to Barambah Aboriginal Settlement, now called Cherbourg.

Our Granny married our Grandfather Nugent Wragge, a Wakka Wakka man, at Cherbourg. They had three children: our Uncle Henry Shadford (the eldest child), our Father, Leslie Morris Wragge and our Aunt, Emily Wragge.

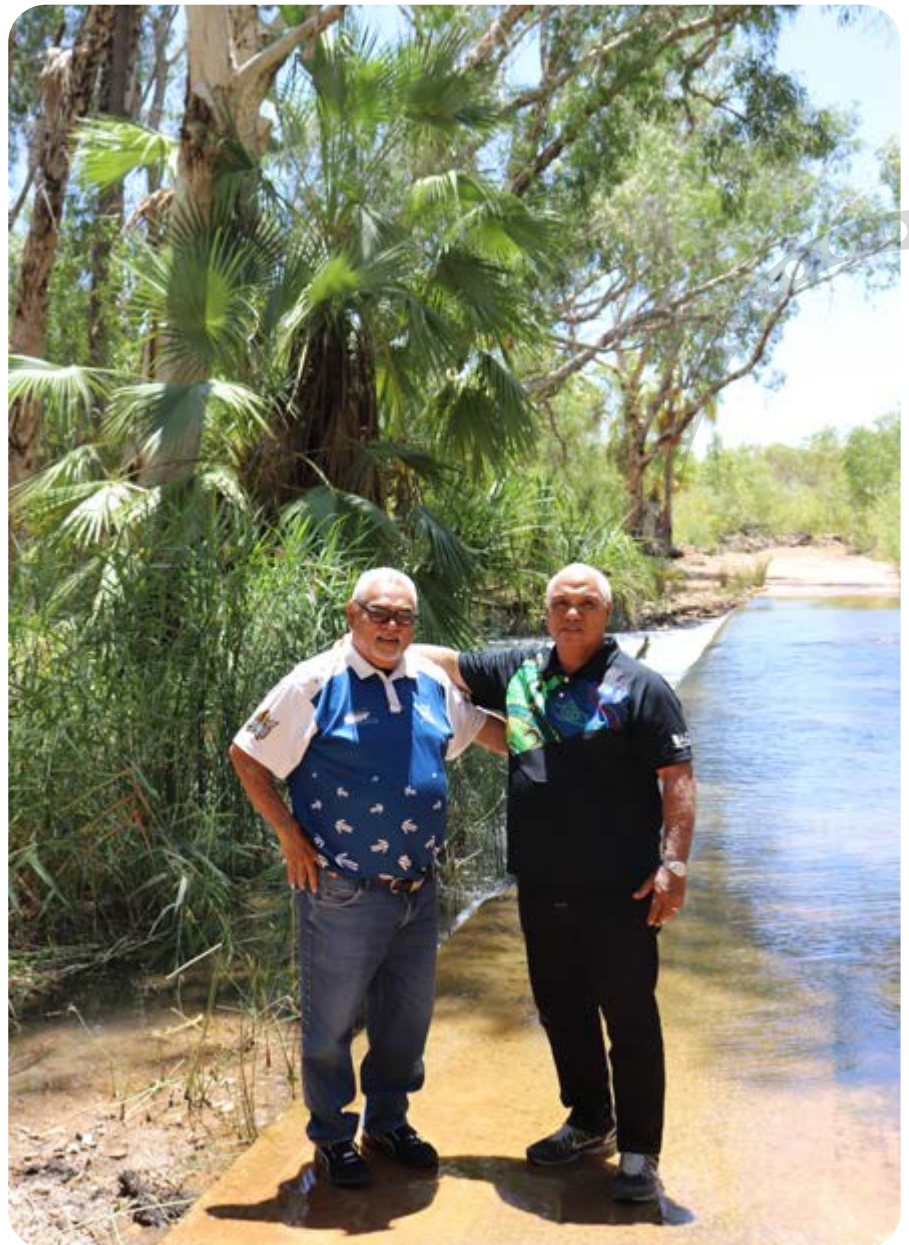
Our father always dreamed of travelling back to his mother's country but unfortunately, he never had the chance to do so before he passed in 2007.

For Michael and I, it was a special journey to take our father's spirit with us when we entered our Granny's country at Lawn Hill Station.

Before we departed from Mt Isa, we were fortunate enough to run into our baby sister, Anita Leedie, who had been sent to Mt Isa with her work with Aboriginal Hostels and we were able to brief her about our planned journey to Lawn Hill Station.



Michael (left) and David at the sign marking the entrance to Waanyi Country



David and Michael at Riversleigh Crossing

Upon our arrival at Gregory, we met with Gordon Douglas and Henry Barry from Doomadgee and we exchanged stories of our lives and relationship to Lawn Hill Station (through our Granny, Annie Shadford). Gordon and Henry agreed to meet us the next day at Adels Grove on our way to Lawn Hill Station.

After arriving at Adels Grove and enjoying the hospitality on offer, Gordon and Henry asked if we would like to visit two gravesites at Riversleigh, which was a part of the Shadforth's family history. Gordon and Henry showed us the two gravesites which were a short distance from the Gregory River. Michael and I walked to the edge of the crossing and reflected on the memories of our father and how special our trip had been for us and to think about our Granny and her connection to this special place.

**I had a calm and serene feeling as we paused and thought about our father's connection to this land.**

When we got back to our motel room, I spoke to Michael about our connection to Borroloola and our sister Anita, who had advised that our family connections at Borroloola, were waiting for my brothers and I to come and join them for ceremony there. We would like to thank the Link-Up (Qld) team, Sloane and Josh for their assistance and support with connecting us to family and country. The journey was certainly a memorable one and has only just started.



*Inside the shed at Lawn Hill Station*



*Michael and David outside the homestead at Lawn Hill Station*



*The Wragge brothers enjoying the view from the Lawns Hill lookout*

# Casey Family Reunion - Normanton

My name is Patrick Casey and I'm from Normanton QLD. I have four brothers and one sister, their names are Shane, Leeroy, Seon, Dexter and Roberta.

My oldest brother Shane who lives in New Zealand was taken away from our birth mother Carolyn at birth and she never knew what happened to him.

In 2011 Mum contacted Link-Up (Qld) who finally found her long lost son. She also found out that he has two kids of his own, their names were Leilani and Dion.

Mum, my brothers and sister and myself have never been able to meet Shane in person and have only had contact with him by phone calls, texts and Facebook.

A while back I found out that Shane's children had moved to Australia and lived in Brisbane with their mum and their stepfather. So, I contacted Link-Up (Qld) and applied to become a client so that they could help me find my niece and nephew and see if they would be able to come up to Normanton and meet their father's family.

In January 2021 Link-Up (Qld) brought our kids home to finally meet their biological family.

Many of us were at the airport to meet the plane when it arrived at Normanton airport and my mother Carolyn, and Grandmother were overwhelmed to meet their Grandchildren after all these years.

**It was a weekend of mixed emotions for the family as after all the lost years we had made a physical connection to our brother Shane through his children.**

We spent the whole weekend together with the kids, and our extended family celebrated the children's Great Grandmother Jen's 73rd birthday on the weekend. It brought her so much joy having Dion and Leilani spending the day with her.

We took the kids out fishing and cooking on the open fire, Auntie Roberta also made them Johnny cakes and we cooked rib bones and fish on the coals. Then we took them sightseeing around town.

Dion and Leilani spent their whole reunion with the family and on behalf of my whole family, I would love to thank Link-Up (Qld) for his lovely Reunion. We loved and enjoyed having Dion and Leilani here with us.

And now we miss them and look forward to seeing them again.

Thank You Sloane, Anne and our Link-Up (Qld) family.



*Leilani and Dion meeting their father's family for the first time at Normanton Airport. From left: Seon, Patrick, Leilani, Dion, Dexter, Grandma Carolyn and Great Grandma Jen with Dexter's children.*



*Leaving Normanton airport to fly back to Brisbane*

My name is Dion Troy and I was born and raised in Christchurch, NZ where my birth Dad was stolen by birth and adopted out to my granny Rayleene who then moved to New Zealand where my granny raised him.

I moved to Australia in 2012 and had little contact with my birth father. We started a new life with my mother, siblings and step father. Through my last years in schooling I attended Hymba Yumba where I began to learn of my culture, wanting to know of my family and how deep my roots grow. I was able to make action through my school connecting with Link-Up (Qld). This made the connection between me and my family possible.

In early January 2021, I began my journey to Normanton, Qld with my sister and Anne and Sloane from Link-Up (Qld) to meet my great family. In Normanton I felt pride and I was also grateful to be one with my family.

Those memories  
are the first of  
many to come.  
Thanks to Link-Up  
(Qld) I know my  
way back home.



*Dion with his great Grandma Jen*



*Family were even waiting for Leilani and Dion at Cairns airport*



*Dexter, Seon and Patrick Casey with Leilani and Dion*



*Leilani and Dion with their Uncle Dexter's children*



*With the family at Jen's Birthday BBQ*

# Douglas Family Reunion- Lawn Hill Station

## Uncle Lawrence's Story

My name is Lawrence Douglas, I was born in Cherbourg and I grew up with my mother, my father and my siblings. From a young age I was told that my father looked after my grandmother and grandfather till they passed away, and that my grandmother was taken from Waanyi country in 1912 and my grandfather was taken from Takalak country. I was told by my mother that my Nan Linda Douglas nursed me when I was a baby, unfortunately she passed away in 1959 and I never heard stories from her. The majority of what I know was told was through my Grandfather Nimrod Dawson as he grew up on country. Growing up in Cherbourg under the Act, we had to ask for permission to do simple things, and when we received permission, we were still monitored and restricted. So as a child hearing of how our people hunted, roamed, and gathered on our country until they got in trouble for killing cattle, I found both mesmerizing and humorous. It went on to be one of my fondest stories he told me. For me speaking to my Pop made me feel he was a great man of wisdom and knowledge of the area our family came from. I understood the importance behind his words, the feelings of being taken away from our home country and put so far away, and having our freedom taken in the process.

When I was 14, I started to lose track of myself and my self-direction. I fell into alcoholism and into trouble with the law. It was not until I was 29 years of age when I woke up and said no more. I have not drunk since. Overcoming these struggles so early in my years, I developed a strong resilience and a determination to get back home.

From 1995 until now I have been working towards going home to my grandmother's homeland. My son and I were discussing ways to get up to country and my grandson Jacob came into my life at the right time.

My Grandson Jacob and my son Koby are two individuals that I am thankful for and proud of. They worked together to get me up to country, something I have been striving to do for a long time. They are a big part of me, and I carry them in my heart.

Landing in Mt Isa I felt so positively overwhelmed and emotional, just being in the area and setting foot on soil in the far north.

I thought to myself, with my grandson next to me, about how thankful I am for this opportunity that I had been waiting for so long to achieve.

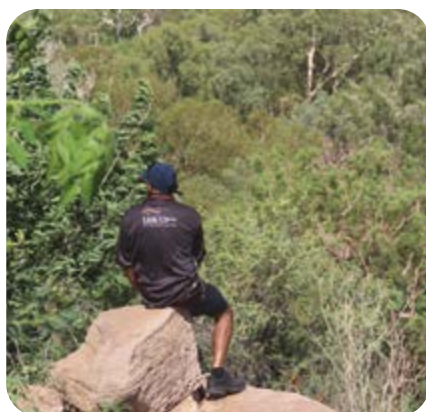
The first night in Mt Isa thoughts were running through my head, about Nan and Pop, about where they came from, and about me being so close to the place I was only told stories about. The next



Home: Jacob and Lawrence standing on Waanyi Country for the first time.



morning, we drove to Waanyi country. When we got to the sign location and opened the door, my grandson and I both took off our shoes to feel the hot soil burning our feet, the connection to the land was indescribable. It was a flourish of mixed emotions, good and bad, sorrow and happiness all mixed into one. I wish I born up in this country, it was beautiful. That night my thoughts were "not far now".



The next morning on our drive out to Lawn Hill station, I got to see the full landscape. It was barren and dry, the landscape had changed dramatically since my Pop and Nan were there. Arriving at the station, I was surprised to see it sitting on a hill overseeing an oasis. As I was sitting at the station with my grandson, thoughts of my grandmother being taken from this country, and never returned were running through my head. I felt my Nan and Pop were sitting next to me. I felt the need to go right down the creek, so I listened. Standing by the creek, I felt a rush of sadness and sorrow, a deep pain inside. One question was rushing through my head.

**Why? Why were they taken from way out here? Why couldn't they leave them to be happy? This was such a faraway place from Cherbourg. I felt their sadness, I had been reunited with their spirits. They were home and I was there with them.**



*Jacob and Lawrence at Riversleigh and Adels Grove*



*At Boodjamulla National Park*



*Outside the Lawn Hill Station homestead*

While I was sad for them, I was happy I could be there as a representation for my family back in Cherbourg. Driving away from the station, part of me wanted to stay, but I knew I would be back. I am thankful to Josh and Sloane for taking the trip with my grandson and I, and while I could not take my son with me this time, I will be back with him next time.



# Douglas Family Reunion- Lawn Hill Station

## Jacob's Story

My name is Jacob George, born Jacob White, in Gladstone Queensland. I grew up in Ipswich Queensland with my mother, stepfather, and sisters. Through the means of the Aboriginal Protection Act, my three times great grandmother, Linda Douglas (Nee Piggot), was taken away from Waanyi country and was sent to Breakfast Creek mission. My Grandmother along with her siblings grew up in the Ipswich/Churchill area as fringe dwellers. My grandmother would

talk of stories of living in fear of being taken away for being mixed race Aboriginal, as well as her experiences of racism and institutionalisation. Hearing these stories made me feel sad, but also prideful knowing how she and her siblings found the strength to overcome and push forward in life. Throughout the generations all my family members have wanted to go back home, but many things have always stood in their way, whether this be law, age, trauma, or distance. Knowing this gives me the most motivation to go back home. As my Great Grandmother Josephine Conway did not

speaking much of her childhood or history, I learnt a lot of my knowledge through speaking to my Grandmother, Faith Basset (Nee White). I have always pushed hard to learn as much family history and culture through oral and written information.

I am proud to be the first of 5 generations to be going back to Waanyi country.



Clockwise from top left: LUQ Counsellor Joshua Williams with Lawrence and Jacob at Lawn Hill Station; outside the homestead; Lawn Hill Lookout; Riversleigh Crossing. Right: The beautiful oasis at Adels Grove

When my family got news that my Nan Josie was close to dying, my great grandfather, 1st cousin to my Nan Josephine Conway, reached out to me and came into my life. This brought light to a sorrowful moment. Pop Lawrie Douglas requested my help in escorting and assisting him back to country, and with the help of Koby we got the opportunity to go to Waanyi country together.

Flying to Mt Isa, I was feeling many emotions. Nervousness, excitement and happy all in one. Once landing it felt like we were one step closer to where we needed to go. That it was just the next step to our journey to Waanyi Country. Before going to Waanyi Country we met an especially important person to our people, Nan Cathy Willots, who told us the history and struggle that our people have had leading up the success of winning native title for Waanyi people. Hearing the stories gave me a sense of pride, that our people still to this day are so strong and prideful in what they are doing and what they have done shows the greatest amount of respect to all Waanyi people, ancestors and Country.

Driving towards Waanyi Country I became excited, as it was the closest I had been to home before. Once we got out at the Waanyi Country sign I felt a sense of relief, and realisation that where we were standing was tribal land.

Coming back to country I felt a huge weight off my shoulders that had been there for long time, getting heavier with each generation. I was proud, relieved and at peace.

This weight my family had been carrying through the generations had been lifted. I took in the scenery, the air, and the environment before me. It was beautiful. Heading from the sign towards Gregory Downs for the night, I was taking in the landscape of the country, how rough, beautiful, and rugged it was. I was in awe. The night at Gregory Downs was the best sleep I got the whole time. I had stood barefoot on the hot soil of our country, now I was sleeping the night here. I felt as if all my old people who had not been given the opportunity to return home had been put to rest.

Going to Lawn Hill Station, the first thing I noticed was the change of landscape, and how quickly it changed from hilly country to flat savannah. Arriving at Lawn

Hill Station I received a rush of emotions. Sitting on the edge of the cliff where the station stood, I was able to acknowledge the history of the station and the significance it held to our family. Pop and I took the time to sit, admire and commemorate the country that belongs to us, the Waanyi people.

Going down to the water and walking along the edge of Lawn Hill Creek took me back in time to how our people would have been living all along this river. Admiring how magical it was; the crystal-clear deep water, the tall overhanging Pandanus Palms, the red, damp and rich soil and the long standing and aged paper bark trees. Pop and I had many moments along the creek when we just stood or sat and stared at the landscape. For me it gave me a sense of pride and strength knowing that our family come from here.

Leaving the station, felt like I was leaving a piece of me there with the Country itself and with the emotions and thoughts of an assured return. I am thankful for everyone that went into helping Pop and I get back to Waanyi Country, we enjoyed and needed every moment.



# Cherbourg Ration Shed- Staff Cultural Activity

LUQ staff visited the Cherbourg Ration Shed at the end of December 2020 as part of staff Professional Development. The Cherbourg Ration Shed Tour delivers a great insight into dormitory life, with exhibitions not only covering what life was like under the Aboriginal Protection Act, but also other aspects of dormitory life like sports, arts and crafts, discipline, chores and rations. Many of our clients have connections to Cherbourg, and we were honoured to have Aunty Melita and Aunty Faye join us on our trip.

We cannot recommend the Cherbourg Ration Shed Tour highly enough. The tour recognises and acknowledges the immense sadness, unfairness and wrongness of the dormitory years, and the horrible and sadistic experiences the children had to go through.



*This map represents the diverse regions in Queensland that Aboriginal people came from before they were forcibly relocated to Cherbourg since the early 1900's. Even though they were all sent there from more than 50 different clans, they were able to form their own community, and then became fiercely proud that they were from Cherbourg and the strength, dignity and resilience this shows.*

Some of the stories will break your heart and be sure to take a tissue. Yet it is the absolute sheer strength and fierce resilience, the determination to survive and the unbreakable bonds that were formed there which stay with you long after the tour has ended.



*Aunty Melita, who was once one of the marching girls at Cherbourg, blows a kiss to the family tree and messages of love and support written by people who were raised at Cherbourg and the people that loved them.*



*Link-Up (Qld) staff are pictured with members of the Cherbourg Council, who came over to meet with us during their lunch break. It was great to hear about the positive initiatives going on in the town.*

If you can't get to Cherbourg, try looking at The Cherbourg Memory <http://cherbourgmemory.org/>. This is an interactive digital project that brings together the photos, videos, oral history recordings, documents and other artifacts of Cherbourg into a living archive.



*Cherbourg Mayor Elvie Sandow, with our CEO Pat Thompson*

# Cherbourg Ration Shed- Staff Feedback



*The place that once gave food, now gives food for thought*

"The best thing about our recent Link-Up (Qld) trip to Cherbourg was the context it provided the personal stories and records that I regularly encounter from the Cherbourg area. To learn about the lives and resilience of people who lived in the dormitories was a privilege."

**"Visiting Cherbourg nourishes my soul and rejuvenates my spirit. It inspires me every day to know that I come from very resilient, strong and proud people and community."**

"The Ration Shed Museum is like a trove of pride – honouring individuals, families and the whole community from the past to the present, right up to the young ones. The lived stories in the film clips and exhibits are powerful, touching and engaging. Really enjoyed the Aunties' stories too, with humour, especially about our CEO as a baby and child growing up in Cherbourg. Cherbourg's history is harrowing but the Museum has done a good job of educating around those traumas and hardships while demonstrating the community's strength and ownership of those stories in their road to healing and the incredible resilience of its people. It was inspiring and educational. We bought a couple of books from the Ration Shed gift shop as additions to our internal library. I was also impressed by the pottery handcrafted by Cherbourg artists through the Refire program, supporting local artists through their creative work."

"The Cherbourg Ration shed tour was very insightful, moving and a true representation of the resilience and determination of the local community. I admired the work the community members and past residents of the dormitories have done to record and preserve their history, not only for future generations but as Story tellers and keepers of their own history."

"The tour to the Ration Shed in Cherbourg was amazing, to be able to walk into the original buildings with beds and furniture still in place, hearing some of our Elders talking their experience of the harsh Dormitory life on film and seeing our Elders joke and laugh with each other over their punishments, no matter how bad the circumstances. Humour still plays a big part in our Healing."

"This was a very touching & emotional experience. It really hits home on just how REAL Australia's Black History is! It also demonstrates the amount of damage caused to our mobs and Indigenous communities collectively, across the nation. It provides undeniable, factual evidence of Australia's bleak history for what it was – warts and all. Reading and listening to first hand experiences of some of our clients who were raised in such institutions, really hits home on just how raw these experiences still are for our people."

**"This is part of ALL Australians history - whether black, white or brindle. No matter what other cultural background from which you derive; if you consider yourself Australian, this is part of YOUR history! "**



*LUQ CEO Patricia Thompson points out her father Mick Conlon who was a dormitory boy.*

"The tour leaves you with a deeper understanding into where our people get their strength from, and how important it is that we have the ability to talk together, to share stories, to laugh, to cry, and to heal. Cherbourg is a strong dignified community that is not afraid to acknowledge their past."

"I deeply enjoyed our recent visit to the Cherbourg Ration Shed Museum. Although I have been there a couple of times before, I feel I always learn more each time I visit, and could still easily spend a whole day or more, poring over the exhibitions and other available information. The staff were very passionate, knowledgeable, and so generous with their stories and personal reflections of the mission days. I would definitely recommend this tour to anyone with a willingness to learn about Queensland's true history."

## Staff Graduation



*Congratulations to Cairns Link-Up (Qld) staff members Tahnee Rapson (left) and Joshua Thompson who recently graduated from Gallang Education and Training with a Diploma of Counselling.*



## Staff Gratitude



*Thank you to long-time LUQ friend and supporter Auntie Shell, who recently made and donated some deadly scarves and scrunchies to our staff in Brisbane.*

# Staff Spotlight - Joshua Williams

*In our latest employee spotlight interview, we meet Joshua from the Cairns office*

**Position: SEWB Counsellor**

**Team: LUQ Cairns - North**

**Tell us about your role at LUQ?**

I have been working for LUQ for over a year now. As a SEWB Counsellor, my role involves case managing clients, engaging in group and one on one therapeutic and educational, strength based counselling sessions and activities.

I highly enjoy supporting our clients during their visits to the Cairns LUQ office and on home visits. I also enjoy field trips to support our clients before, during and after reunion participations. And partaking in therapeutic programs to empower our clients, in overcoming traumatic experiences and to work alongside our clients in developing the mindset and skills needed to cope.

To best improve our clients healing journey, I create a safe place in an environment that is holistically connected to cultural wellness. I also ensure that I provide effective, ongoing social and emotional wellbeing support towards clients.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

I really enjoy meeting new people and being inspired by their personal journeys in life. Also being able to engage effectively and care for our people in need of greater support. Working with the LUQ staff in Cairns and Brisbane is enjoyable as well.

**What is a common question you get asked from clients?**

Who are you? What's your name? Where are you from? Who's your mob? These questions are commonly asked. I see these as ice breakers, key questions for our people to connect to one another.



*Aunty Faye Carr with Joshua Williams at a recent LUQ Board Meeting*

It's amazing how much knowledge is shared between the worker and client whilst asked these important questions.

**Do you have a favourite project, memory or highlight from work?**

During my current experience as a SEWB Counsellor for LUQ, I have really enjoyed participating in the Marumali Model of Healing Workshop held last year at the LUQ office in Brisbane.

The Marumali Model of Healing Workshop is one of many workshops I've always wanted to attend and now since employed by Link-Up (Qld) I've finally gotten to do it, thank you LUQ.

You can never learn enough, and I was able to incorporate skills from the training over my professional working years. This allowed me to deliver greater, effective ongoing therapeutic support approach when engaging with our clients.

**Three words to best describe you?**

Supportive, friendly, approachable

**What is a fun fact about you that people may not know?**

I have three brothers and three sisters, one child currently living at home with me. My Mother was born in Mossman and Father born on Thursday Island.

I am a descendant of the Kuku Yalanji Nation. My clan group from my Mother's country resides in Daintree (Julaymba) and China Camp (Buru) near Wujal Wujal Bloomfield River.

My Traditional Language name is Jiwurmal meaning Storm Bird.

Two of my many passions are Music and Art, this is therapeutic healing and I also apply it as my selfcare to as well. I am so grateful to being able to implement these skills in my SEWB Counselling role at LUQ Cairns office as an individual or group session.

**Favourite quote?**

"Nothing is impossible to a willing heart"



# Apology 2021 - QPAC Playhouse Theatre

Link-Up (Qld) commemorated the 13th anniversary of the Apology at the Playhouse Theatre, QPAC on 12 February. The event was live streamed and can be watched in full on the Link-Up (Qld) Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfDnl-pnCnY>. More photos of this special morning are also on our website gallery <https://www.link-upqld.org.au/media/photos/>

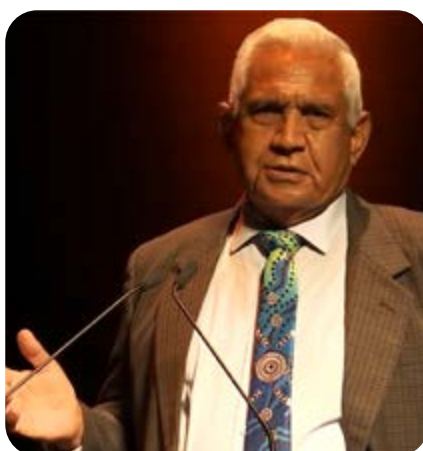
We would like to thank everyone who made this event so special.



*Wakka Wakka Dance Troupe*



*Aunty Lorraine Peeters backstage with Terri Butler MP*



*Uncle Robert West*



*Poet Teresa Creed with guitarist John*



*Musician Jungaji (left) with his family, including his nephew Trenay (right) who performed with him onstage, being photobombed by LUQ staff members Keiron and Rebecca*



*Craig Crawford MP*



*Murri Menu catering*

# Redress

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

## National Redress Scheme Line 1800 737 377

The Scheme, which started on 1 July 2018 and will run for 10 years,

- acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions.
- holds institutions accountable for this abuse, and
- helps people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response, and a Redress payment.

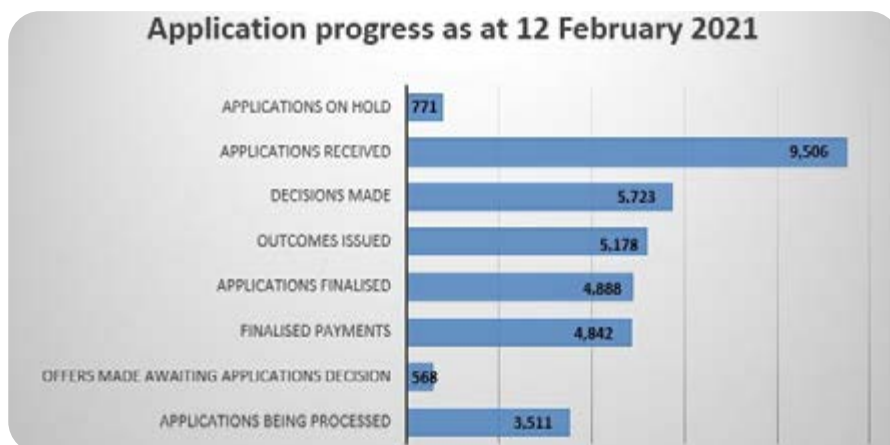
### Who will assess your application?

Your application will be considered by an Independent Decision Maker.

Independent Decision Makers are highly experienced people, with backgrounds including social welfare, case management and the law.

Independent Decision Makers will be assisted by staff from the Department of Human Services and the Department of Social Services, who will:

- Ask you for more information if this is needed. On your application you can tell us how you prefer to be contacted.
- Send some of the information you provided to the institution in your application. This includes your name, date of birth, and if you choose the description of the abuse and its impact.
- Ask the institution for more information, including their records of the time you were there (if they exist) or if you have received a prior payment.



- Contact the police or child protection authorities if they believe there is a risk of ongoing abuse. They will let you know if there is a need to report the abuse.

### How will a decision be made?

An Independent Decision Maker will consider all the information provided by you and the institution. They will require a lower level of proof than you would need in court. If they determine that the events are likely to have happened, then an offer of redress will be made.

### How long will an application take to be processed?

Applications may take between 3 and 12 months to process where the relevant institution/s have joined the Scheme. If the relevant institution has not yet joined the Scheme, applications cannot be processed. People can take as much time as they need to complete their application and they will have up to 6 months to consider the offer of redress.

**Please feel free to speak with the Redress team at Link-Up (Qld) Anne Struckett-Redress Manager and the Redress Counsellor's Victoria Reid and Keiron Brown; available 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday Ph: 07 3638 0411.**

As at 12 February 2021, the Scheme:

- had received 9,506 applications.
- had made 5,723 decisions.
- issued 5,178 outcomes.
- finalised 4,888 applications, including 4,842 payments totalling approximately \$405.4 million.
- had made 568 offers of redress, which are currently with applicants to consider.
- was processing 3,511 applications.
- 771 applications on hold.

For more information or to find support services, go to the National Redress Scheme website: <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/> or call 1800 737 377 Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm (local time), excluding public holidays.

If you are experiencing emotions you are not coping with, the following services can be contacted 24 hours a day and seven days a week:

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732

Men's Line Australia: 1300 789 978

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

## Client Christmas Party - Cairns



## Client Christmas Party - Cairns



## Coming Events



### Crafternoons at LUQ Brisbane Office

Afternoon workshops will be held every Thursday from April 8 to May 25, from 1-3pm.

All skill levels welcome and all supplies provided.

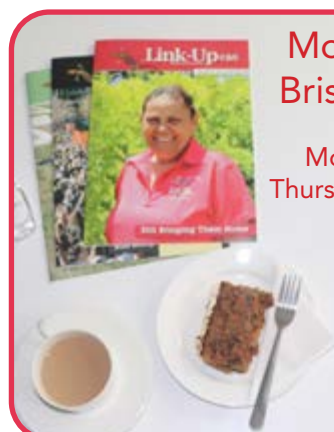
ph 3638 0411 for more information



### Morning Tea Dates Brisbane and Cairns

Morning tea is on the last Thursday of the month at 10am

April 29  
May 27  
June 24  
July 29  
August 26  
September 30  
October 28



Register your interest: ph 3638 0411

### ANCIENT FOOD TRADITIONAL WELLBEING TASTING TABLES

16 June 2021

Link-Up (Qld) clients are invited to learn about and explore bush food tastings with Indigenous chef Dale Chapman on the Sunshine Coast. There are limited spots available, bookings are essential.



# About Link-Up (Qld)

## Our Mission

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

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

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

## Quick Facts

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

## Link-Up (Qld) Offices

### BRISBANE:

5 Reid Street, Woolloongabba, Qld 4102  
PO Box 3229, South Brisbane, Qld 4101  
Tel: (07) 3638 0411 Fax: (07) 3217 3458  
Email: [contact@link-upqld.org.au](mailto:contact@link-upqld.org.au)

### CAIRNS:

2/128 Spence Street, Cairns, Qld 4870  
PO Box 298, Bungalow, Qld 4870  
Tel: (07) 4041 7403

Find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/linkupqueensland](http://www.facebook.com/linkupqueensland)  
or visit our website at [www.link-upqld.org.au](http://www.link-upqld.org.au)

**Toll Free: 1800 200 855 from landlines**

### Link-Up (Qld) is funded by

National Indigenous Australians Agency,  
Department of Social Services,  
Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

