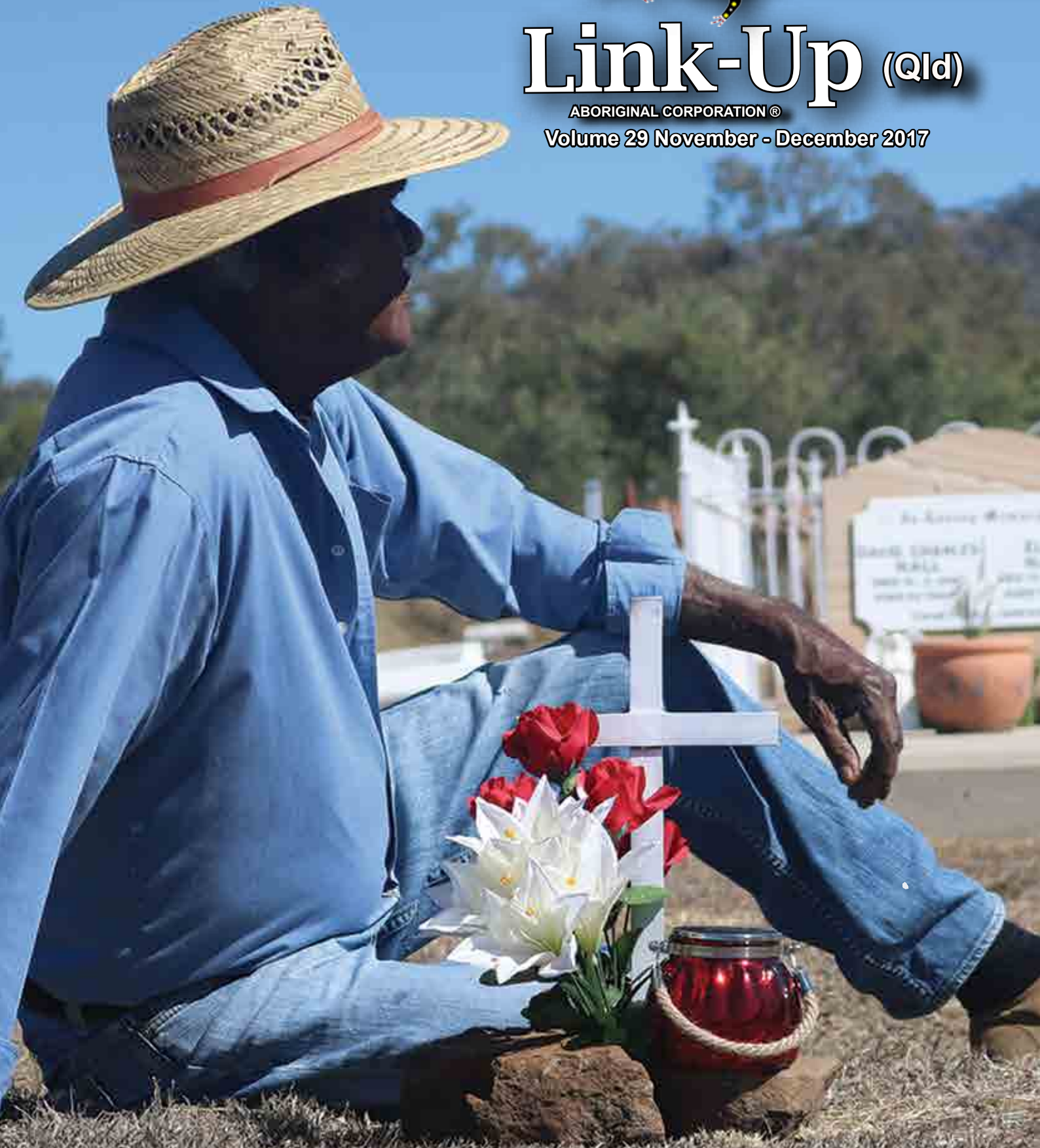




Link-Up (Qld)

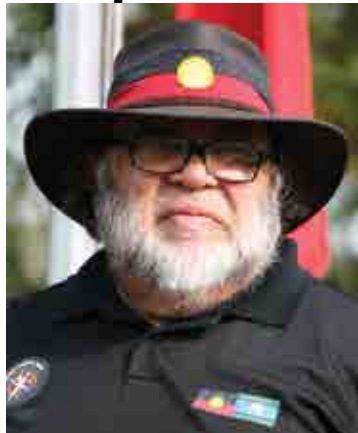
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION®

Volume 29 November - December 2017



Still Bringing Them Home

Chairperson - Sam Watson



Sam Watson

This year is drawing to a close and we need to buckle down and get ready for the big Christmas break. Most of us do not have the money to go away on a big holiday, we seem to spend the summer in our own homes and watch a lot of sport. There is always a massive explosion of sport onto our TV screens and it is

always so easy to just sit back and crack a coldie and watch cricket or soccer or tennis or whatever. With cable there are a hundred different channels on offer.

But there is a darker side to the festive season and this year there are some early warning signs about the dangers that are out there to tempt our young people and we need to put in some strategies and exercise a bit of caution. Young lives are so precious and generally we only get one chance. There has already been two deaths in Townsville from "chroming." Most of our kids do not have the bungoo to go down to the Gold Coast and party on at the huge "Schoolies" events. Most of our kids stay at home and hang around the streets.

Two of our young people have died in the past few days and there are reports that more and more of our children and grandchildren are starting to get into this sort of stuff. As families and as communities we need to be more aware of what our youngsters are going through. We need to be talking to these kids and communicating with them. When these young people make that big leap from primary school into high school, they are also taking a big step from childhood into the adult world and they need us to be there to guide them through the harder times.



Front Cover:
William (Cheetah) Mi Mi
at the grave of his Grandfather
in Springsure.

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.

Across our community services we are constantly coming into contact with people who were raised in institutions and were never shown any love or compassion. Those "homes" were hard and cold places. These people then find it very difficult themselves to develop close and supportive relationships with their own children and grandchildren. No-one showed them any love and they were treated quite brutally. When these kids are looking for help, they have no-one to reach out to. They then turn to things like "chroming" to kill the pain. The problem is that when they mess with those powerful chemical substances, they do a lot of damage to their brains and most of them never come back.

As families and as a community, we need to get out there and spend some quality time with these youngsters. You do not need a huge amount of money to do this, we just need to talk to them and to listen to them. We need to tell them about who they are and where they come from. When I was a kid my gran took me for long walks in the bush. Those walks never cost a cent; but the things that I learnt from my gran were worth a million dollars.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those families who have already been impacted by these tragic events and we must now rally and stand strong for all our youngsters. They are the future of our people and they are the ones who will carry our stories and our truth into the years ahead.

Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year !!



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CEO - Patricia Conlon



Patricia Conlon

Welcome to the final edition of our magazine for 2017. This calendar year has been extremely busy – staff are all looking forward to having a very well deserved break. As one staff member said to me recently, “I am looking forward to having a rest and putting my feet up”.

Staff have worked extremely hard, throughout the calendar year reuniting clients directly with family, gravesites or to country, no matter the type of reunion, they are all equally an important part of our client’s healing journey.

The removal of our people from family and / or country has had a very profound effect on individuals and families, the transgenerational trauma cannot be underestimated or understated. Our reunion stories shared in this magazine reflects in our client’s own words the trauma suffered by individuals and their families and how finding family or a gravesite or visiting country helps on their healing journey.

I am always pleased with the positive feedback from clients about the support provided to them by Link-Up (Qld) staff on their journey from the initial intake application through to the final reunion outcome.

During this calendar year we have supported 19 clients on their reunions, connecting them to family and gravesites or visiting country from where their old people were removed. These are very emotional journeys and we are proud to be able to share in this journey.

There have been some changes within Link-Up (Qld) over the past 12 months. Cairns is a regional office effectively servicing the northern half of the state. 5

staff including a Regional Manager work out of this office. 3 new staff have commenced since July 2017, the office has relocated to new premises, so even with the disruption of relocating, induction and training of new staff, 9 reunions have been completed between July to December.

In the Brisbane office which services the state from Rockhampton south, we have a new structure with a Team Leader responsible for managing service delivery and whilst there has been some disruptions with staff turnover due to a number of factors, our Brisbane team has successfully completed 6 reunions with 2 planned reunions being postponed at our clients request.

Our important work rolls on, we have achieved more than half of the required reunions to meet our KPI’s over the past 6 months. We hope to exceed the required number, dependent upon the cost of those reunions given our budget.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of collaborative partners, particularly the Aboriginal Health Service in Cunnamulla and Charleville and Western Areas Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Community Health for the support provided to our Link-Up (Qld) staff and clients on reunion visits to those regional and remote areas.

There are many other organisations we work with throughout the year supporting us in our work – thank you for your support, we look forward to continuing those partnerships into the future.

Featured in this edition is our client Christmas Party – we invited Nulungu Elders to share lunch with our clients. It was a wonderful day, students and carers also attending to support the Elders. Our photo booth was a hit as you will see inside.

Link-Up (Qld) wishes all you all a very Merry Christmas and we look forward to linking up with you all in 2018.



Link-Up (Qld) Brisbane Office



Link-Up (Qld) Cairns Office

Brisbane Client Support Group Christmas Party





Photos from the Link-Up (Qld) Photo Booth



Cairns Client Support Group Christmas Party



26 clients and support people enjoyed the Xmas party at the Lantern Restaurant at Brother's League Club in Cairns on Friday, 24th November 2017.

Kathleen Bobongie, Sylvia Wright, Shane Wallace, Tegan Green and Joshua Thompson from Cairns Link-Up (Qld) mingled with the guests.

Some clients reflected on their reunions that were completed this year and that encouraged others who are still on their journey seeking information about their family history.

Clients travelled from the Cairns area as well as Mission Beach, Innisfail and Yarrabah for the party.





Rose Thaiday Reunion - Springsure



Rose Thaiday and her brother William Mi Mi

My name is Rose Thaiday (nee Mi Mi), I grew up in Woorabinda in a big family, I'm 1 of 10 brothers and sisters. Because my mum suffered post natal depression and back then with no understanding of it, she went under mental health, and I suppose that's why we were placed into the dormitory. My mum, Dulcie Mi Mi (nee Barnes) was a very soft-hearted person, if anyone wanted anything she would give it. When she would walk out with her groceries from the store, by the time she got home there would be nothing after everyone would ask her for something.

After leaving the dormitory I was reared up by my grandparents William (Snapper) Barnes and Alice Mimiger, me and my brother William (Cheetah) would go with them horseback riding, sometimes they would take us hunting, I think those old people spoilt us because we were the youngest out of mum's family and being part of the Barnes family. I don't know how much William remembers but we loved our grandparents dearly, even though they were old they taught me everything, it was through them that I grew up with strength... I got that from my grandparents.



William at the grave of his grandfather William Barnes



When I became a young adult I lost touch with my grandparents and didn't know where they were buried. I think because I was feeling the loss for them that I approached Link-Up (Qld) about becoming a client.



Rose Thaiday visiting her grandfather's grave for the 1st time



I knew about Link-Up (Qld) by reading the stories of other people's journey in the Magazines. I kept all the magazines that were sent to me and I built up a little collection that I took to the hospital here in Woorabinda for the clients, our people and people that worked there.

Every time I'd read a new edition it seemed Link-Up (Qld) had new clients from all over the place, I started to see and read stories about people that I knew. Seeing all these positive stories made me feel good about them to find my family history.

Leading up to the reunion there was excitement and a stirring of emotions within myself, I never thought it would happen, it seemed to come too quick. The drive out to Springsure where my grandfather Snapper is buried felt a bit surreal. I was excited to be going but wasn't sure what to expect and I said to myself "Well this is it, I am actually going". When we arrived at the cemetery that was a big stirring of the emotions, and seeing my young brother Cheetah sit down and cry, I was the eldest sister and to see him breakdown because he was younger than me, it just really touched the nerves.

I feel really happy that the reunion happened, this was the first time that I have been to see my grandfather. I always got the flashbacks of the where they use to live, I really want to say thank you to Rob Frescon and Chenoa Dowling from Link-Up (Qld) for the work they did for us while we were on our reunion, and all the staff at Link-Up (Qld), the service provided is the best for our people. I would recommend anyone looking for your people/connection to contact Link-Up (Qld), because if it could happen to us, it can happen to anyone.



Meeting with other family members



Back at Woorabinda

Cyril Couchy Reunion - Mount Morgan



The Cemetery at Mount Morgan



Cyril Couchy

My name is Cyril Couchy, I was born in Eidsvold in 1944, the youngest of 8 and I am the last living of my siblings. I have family members buried throughout the state. In my own family I have 3 children, a daughter and two sons. I currently live in Jericho which is 493km west of Rockhampton.

In July of 2017, I became a client at Link-Up (Qld) hoping to locate where my oldest sibling,



Cyril's son Darren placing a cross in memory of his Aunt

Marjory Ellen Couchy, 18 months old was laid to rest. She was believed to be buried at the township of Mount Morgan. I know where the rest of my siblings are buried. My wish is to take my 3 children and their children to see all the family members graves before my time comes.

My father Jeffrey Couchy was born on a Station outside of Eidsvold, removed and placed on Cherbourg Mission and my mother Noela Couchy nee Nebo, was sent to Peel Island. Peel Island was used as a quarantine station during the mid-19th century, for the colony of Brisbane.

In August 2017 I received a phone call from Link-Up (Qld) Caseworker Sloane saying that my research had been completed. Through the work of the Research Unit it was confirmed that Marjory Ellen Couch was born in Gayndah, the first child of Jeffery and Noela Couchy. Marjory was buried on the 10th August, 1929 at Mount Morgan cemetery.





Cyril Couchy with his son Darren and his family



On October 2017, I travelled with my son Darren my support person and his family to Rockhampton, where we met up with Sloane and Rob from Link-Up (Qld) Brisbane. We then travelled on to Mt Morgan cemetery.

We had details of where her grave was, but we searched for hours to try and find her, her grave site was 'unmarked'. It was very sad.

Much later we placed a cross in Marjorie's memory at the cemetery's memorial wall and left ornaments to decorate it.

To help me come to terms with knowing my sister cannot be found, Link-Up (Qld) have provided a plaque to be permanently placed on the memorial wall at the Mt Morgan cemetery in Marjorie's memory.



Catherine Machherndl Reunion - Brisbane



Catherine Machherndl at her grandmother Josephine's grave

My name is Catherine Machherndl and I am 71 years of age. I grew up at Flying Fish Point in Innisfail. My reason for contacting Link-Up (Qld) was to find out why my mother, Ethel Dorothea Sore and her young children were removed from Innisfail and sent to Yarrabah on the 18th July 1938. I also had a yearning since I was 17 years old to find the final resting place of my grandmother, Josephine Teresa Gibson-Sore. Josephine was born between 1891-1894. And passed away on the 27th July 1970. She belonged to the Gugu Yimithurr people of Cooktown.

It didn't take Link-Up (Qld) long to organise the reunion and two weeks after the research was delivered, I was on a plane from Cairns to Coolangatta with Link-Up (Qld) staff members, Kathleen Bobongie and Tegan Green. I was so excited. My son drove me from Innisfail to Cairns in the early hours on Tuesday morning, 16th September for my flight. I felt emotional on the plane and couldn't believe that I was on my way to visit Gran. I met up with my niece Tanya Jacobsen in Currumbin Waters, she was my support person.



Catherine on her wedding day

I heard about Link-Up (Qld) and made contact last year. The Research Manager, Ruth Loli completed a comprehensive search for my family information and for that I am very grateful. The answers to a lot of my questions was contained in the research. Even more exciting was the information about where Josie Gibson Sore was buried.

My brother Bill, his daughter Tanya and I met family friend Tony Watego at the Mount Gravatt Cemetery in Brisbane on Wednesday, 17th September. Jack Egerton kindly offered to record footage of the graveside reunion on a camcorder so that we could send it to our family in North Queensland. Link-Up (Qld) helped us to set up our things for the reunion – it was a very overcast day. We set up the marquee in case it rained, brought our own engraved headstone along, hung up the Aboriginal flag and set up the beautiful flowers and matting over the grave.



The unmarked grave of Josephine Teresa Gibson-Sore



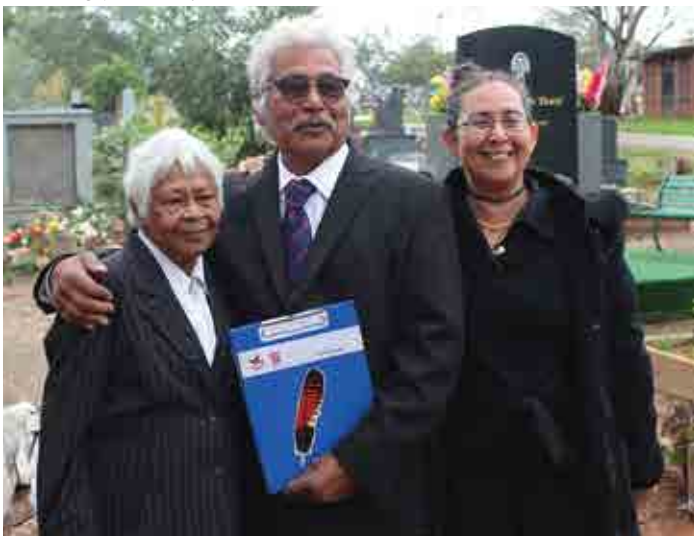
It was so special and I could feel my grandmother's presence. We talked to her, read out letters and dedications from other family members who couldn't be there and sang songs. We wept over her resting place in grief and loss because Grandma did not have the chance to say goodbye - she was sent to a mental hospital in Wacol in 1970. Two months after her admission, she passed away. We didn't know where she was buried. Finally, we had our answer after 47 long years. This visit has helped me so much with my healing journey.

After the reunion with Gran, I felt upset, I didn't want to leave her as her presence was overwhelming. I would like to take Grandma back home to Kings Plain so that her final resting place will be on Bulgun Land, home of the Gibson clan.



I would sincerely like to thank Kathleen and Tegan from the Link-Up (Qld) office in Cairns who looked after me and showed total respect for me as an elder. It was such a big thing for me to travel from Innisfail on my own. I would also like to thank Rob Frescon and Nuri Cummins for helping to set up for the reunion and for taking the photos.

I would like to extend a special thanks to my brother Bill and my niece Tanya for all their support.



Catherine, her brother Bill and his daughter Tanya



Jack Egerton, Tanya, Bill, Catherine and Tony Watego



Tegan Green, Tanya, Bill, Catherine and Kathy Bobongie - Link-Up (Qld)

Deidre Gordon Reunion - Mareeba



Link-Up (Qld) Staff Shane Wallace, Tegan Green, Joshua Thompson with Deidre Gordon, Uncle Gerald and his son Raymond

My name is Deidre Gordon and I come from the Ku-ku-Yalanji people of the Northern Rainforest coast of Queensland. I always knew of my Grandfather George Bamboo and his mother my Great Grandmother Ginny or Jinny Bamboo. It wasn't until I visited my Great Grandmother's grave I discovered there were two names on the plaque Roy and Mabel Bamboo who were unknown to me, so I decided to contact Link-Up (Qld) to see if they could help.

In 2009 I first heard about Link-Up to find information about family. So finally in 2016 I decided to become a client to help me find information about my Grandfather.

Once I was accepted as a client with Link-Up (Qld) I was contacted regularly by the staff. It was about eight months later that I received a call by Caseworker Joshua Thompson with the good news that my research was back. I set a date to come into the Cairns office with my partner Gregory to meet with Caseworker Joshua Thompson and Councilor Tegan Green who sat with us to read out my research.



Deidre Gordon in Mareeba



Great Aunt Mabel's son Uncle Gerald

In the research it stated Roy and Mabel was my Grandfather's siblings. Roy and Mabel had a different father, a non-indigenous man by the name of Robert Hislop who was a long-time resident of the district and reported to be the Camp Keeper at the 8 mile. Roy and Mabel were separated from their mother as infants and raised in the care of their father. Within further research, it was discovered that Mabel had 2 children named Gerald and Berenice.



I felt happy and relieved knowing that they found someone on my grandfather George's side. We took the research home to talk it over with the family. Link-Up (Qld) contacted me not long after the research and told me that they have found Mabel's son Gerald who is 84 and lives in Mareeba and asked if I would like to meet him.

So I agreed and we set a date to have a reunion in Mareeba. I felt really nervous on the day, I spoke with my partner Gregory that morning who was working out of town who gave me a lot of support and told me that I'll be alright and what a great day it will be.



Raymond, Deidre and Uncle Gerald



Link-Up (Qld) Staff Joshua Thompson, Shane Wallace and Deidre Gordon

Myself, Link-Up Caseworkers Joshua Thompson, Shane Wallace and Councilor Tegan Green travelled to Mareeba by car. I waited with Shane and Tegan at Centenary Park in Mareeba whilst Joshua met Uncle Gerald and his son Raymond. When they started walking towards me, I felt emotional inside even though I didn't cry.

I felt there is more closure now because I thought Granddad was all by himself. We sat down and asked each other questions, making connections, no one ever told him he had Yalanji family. I told him about the plaque that we visited because my sister told me that an old man put it there. He then looked at me and said that was me, I did that. After a while and many stories later we went to lunch at the Mareeba R.S.L club where I met Gerald's daughter Mari as she joined us.

At the end of the reunion we exchanged numbers and I look forward to taking my family back to meet Gerald and the rest of the family. I would like to thank Link-Up (Qld) for their help and support right throughout my journey and ongoing support especially Caseworker Joshua Thompson and Councilor Tegan Green for assisting me.



Having lunch at the Mareeba R.S.L



Uncle Gerald, Deidre, Mari and Raymond

Ricky Guivarra Reunion - Lawn Hill



Link-Up (Qld) client Ricky Guivarra

Ricky Guivarra was born in Cairns in 1958. He was the first in his immediate family to have completed Senior in 1976, attending Chanel Catholic College in Gladstone to Junior standard and then the Gladstone State High School.

He then went to Canberra to work with Aboriginal Hostels Ltd, returning to Cairns where he worked with the company as Assistant Regional Manager with Regional Managers Joe McGinness and Evelyn Scott.

His earlier years in Cairns involved marching and campaigning in the streets for indigenous rights for his people, in that pre-NAIDOC era marching with the Unionists on May Day.

Since then, Ricky performed a number of roles, being a National representative on the NAIDOC and FAT-SIL committees, State representative in State Housing Advisory, Language preservation, Justice and Family and Domestic Violence Legal Service committees.

He was the manager/co-ordinator of a Cairns based local Housing Society, Foster Group Home for children removed, a Youth Welfare Company and an Indigenous Men's Group, and a representative on the local Legal Service and Cultural Living History Centre among various other roles.

He now lives in Mapoon in western Cape York where he was the Chairperson and administrator of the local indigenous development organisation and a Mapoon Council representative on the localised Western Cape Communities Coexistence Agreement Trust.

He has performed many roles as an administrator, field officer, youth worker and elected Councillor. His hobbies include genealogical research, singing, language preservation and indigenous music.

It was 1911 at Lawn Hill station near what is now the indigenous community of Doomadgee that his maternal grandmother Mabel Clarke was removed with her two brothers Jack and Gregory from their tribal country. Children of the Waanyi nation, she was taken from the gulf country of Queensland to the Mapoon Aboriginal Mission station in western Cape York.

Mapoon is the oldest established mission in the state of Queensland, having been established as a Moravian mission in 1891 and declared an industrial school in 1901 where many of the half-caste 'waifs and strays' from the north and gulf country were removed. Mapoon was eventually converted to a Presbyterian mission.



Ricky Guivarra and his brother Peter



Granny Mabel Boota (nee Clarke)

Grandmother Mabel always related the story of her removal to them on numerous occasions, stating “We were playing around the stockyards when a trooper passed on a dray.

He asked us all if we wanted to go for a ride, so we threw our hands in the air and shouted yes, and when we climbed aboard he sped off. As we were departing he pointed over towards the camp and said that our mother Kitty had now died and we had to leave Lawn Hill.

My father was an Englishman named Jim Clarke. We went all the way to Burketown (some 300 klms) where it was the first time that we had seen the sea. There was a big object on the sea, and little did we know that we were going to be put aboard that ship.

When we were hauled aboard, it was the first time I recalled ever seeing the Samoan, Charles de Bosch (who is the patriarch of a large family group in Mapoon and Australia today).

My big sister Jessie was working up at the big house (station house) and was not with us when the trooper picked us up, and my big brother Joe was not taken at the time also (as he was deaf, dumb and crippled) and was in the camp still. Jessie came to Mapoon about two years later.”

Granny Mabel was about seven or eight years old when she was removed, and her two brothers were about five and three at the time. Her sister Jessie who married Jack Callope was about two years older than her, and Joe about three to five years older again.

In an interview with Granny Jessie at Holloways Beach in Cairns in 1983, she further revealed a new-born brother left in the camp called Morris who went by the surname of Aplin. Both Joe and Morris were eventually moved to Doomadgee Mission in the northwest Gulf country.

Joe was referred to as Joe “Dummy” due to his medical afflictions. Jack and Gregory were further removed from Mapoon as young adults to the Palm Island community with their wives and families, Gran stated with a wry smile “because they were accused of hanging around the Mapoon girls’ dormitory”.

She stated that they were not half-caste like her as their father was a big Waanyi tribal man called Albert, so they were full blooded children upon removal.



Ricky's grandfather Sam Kingdoy Boota at a May Day protest march in Cairns 1962, in the 2nd line with the black suit on holding sign “Mapoon Mission for the Aboriginals not Mining Company”

Gran stated that they went to Thursday Island first but they were not put off the ship. They then travelled back down to Mapoon where they were put into the Mapoon dormitory, and due to the meagre rations provided by the mission station, the local tribal people sponsored their care and protection. Gran said her sponsor father was a Tjungungji tribal man called Skin, who passed kangaroo meat on bone through the K-wire to supplement her diet.

Old Mabel eventually became a teachers' assistant in Mapoon, where many different modes of educating were engaged to teach the children, including having a stern and strict character. She married a part Solomon Islander, part Mabuiag Islander called Sam Kingdoy Boota who came as a young child with his parents and three siblings to Mapoon around the same time as the formation of the Saint Paul Mission on Moa Island in the Torres Strait, after all mixed blood islanders were required to vacate the islands as the government was introducing the protection act. Sam's other younger siblings were then born in Mapoon also.

The old lady Mabel parted from his grandfather after leaving Mapoon and ran a laundry for some years in the Tully township in North Queensland. She moved to Cairns where she also operated the local Konkan gambling school.

She was the mother of five children, Malcolm, Donny, Gloria (Ricky's mother), Henry and Bobby. Ricky is the fourth eldest of ten children to her daughter Gloria and a Filipino half-caste Torres Strait Islander called Pedro who came from Darnley (Erub) Island and was of Mer and Yam Islander extraction.

Granny Mabel died in Cairns in 1996, having outlived Ricky's mother by six years, her sister Jessie dying three years before her little sister Mabel. They both were admitted to the same nursing home in Cairns.



Fred O'Keefe - Manager of Lawn Hill Station, Peter and Ricky



Peter and Ricky on their grandmother Mabel's country



Meeting with Alec Doomadgee at Adel's Grove

Ricky's journey to Lawn Hill through the sponsorship of Link-Up (Qld) commenced on 6th November, 2017 where he travelled with his carer, eldest brother Peter and Link-Up (Qld) officers Sylvia Wright and Joshua Thompson.

It was an emotional re-union to grandmothers' country and they were fortunate to have four aunts and an uncle travel down from Doomadgee to meet them, they being the children of Morris Aplin. Lawn Hill station took their breath away and all the localities were just as his Granny Mabel had described. They felt fortunate to have this opportunity, as many Mapoon people are descended from persons removed from that district, which people in Mapoon generally refer to as "Sundown", as that is where the sun went down. Many inter-married with the local Mapoon tribal people, Torres Strait Islanders and South Sea Islanders (Kanakas), who make up the diverse population in Mapoon today.

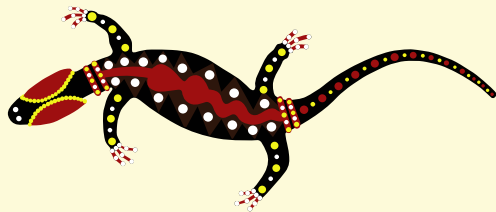
On the last day of the visit to country they met with Alec Doomadgee at the Adel's Grove accommodation area, who further acknowledged their kinship to country and welcomed them, they outlined to him the numerous descendants of the Mapoon people who claim kinship to the sundown district.

It was fortunate that Granny Mabel was old enough to know where she was taken from, who her siblings and both her parents were and the name of her tribe. They, her grandchildren are most appreciative of the opportunity they have had through Link-Up (Qld) to visit her country and expound to extended family members the stories that she told them. It has opened the gate for the rest of their families to visit the Waanyi country of their grandmother.

They remain forever grateful to have maintained their traditional links.



With Aunts and a Uncle that travelled from Doomadgee



Link-Up (Qld)

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION ®

Still Bringing Them Home



About Link-Up (Qld) -Our Mission-

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

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

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

Quick Facts

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

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