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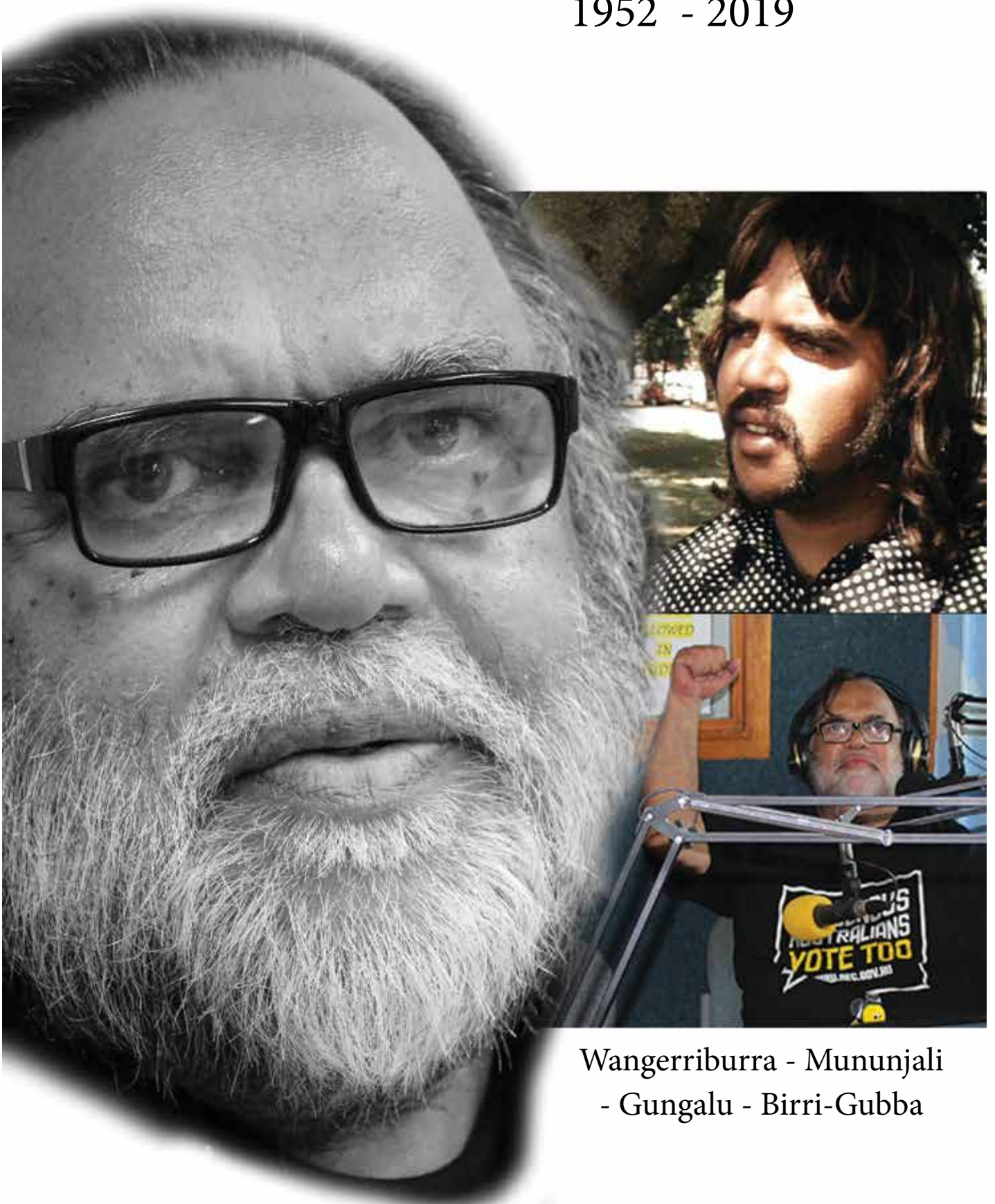
Link-Up (Qld)
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION®



Still Bringing Them Home

Samuel William Watson

1952 - 2019



Wangerriburra - Mununjali
- Gungalu - Birri-Gubba

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

CEO - Patricia Thompson



Patricia Thompson

2019 has been a very tragic year for us at Link-Up (Qld), the sad and sudden passing of our esteemed Chairman Sam Watson on the 27th November 2019 shocked us all to the core. Throughout the year we have had many challenging times,

several staff have lost loved ones which has impacted on all of us.

Whilst the year has been very challenging, staff have continued to work hard to achieve good outcomes, particularly given this year is our 35th Year Anniversary. We celebrated with a Gala Dinner at the City Hall in Brisbane in May 2019. A wonderful occasion, with over 300 people attending this event to celebrate this significant milestone. It was an opportunity to pause and reflect on 35 years of serving our community, reaching out and forming bonds with thousands of lives, reconnecting people to their country, reconnecting families and rebuilding communities.

A highlight of the night was The Healing Camp Choir performing a song which they produced over a couple of days, working with Music Therapist Getano Bann and Toni Allayalis. It was a wonderful way to start our celebrations with our Stolen Generations front and centre.

Our dedicated team also spent months of committed work to complete our wonderful publication *35 Years 35 Stories* which is a culmination of a large project, months of committed work, identifying and locating clients back to Link-Up (Qld)'s beginnings in 1984, conducting interviews, writing stories, collating photographs and coordinating the book design.

35 Years 35 Stories is a celebration of Link-Up (Qld)'s important work and the important milestone we have reached in our 35th anniversary. But more importantly, it is a celebration of the tenacity, power and resilience of our Stolen Generations people.

The book launch was held on 27th November 2019 at the State Library of Queensland with a wonderful turnout of our Stolen Generations and their families and friends to celebrate this important publication which highlights just a glimpse of our clients journeys,

an opportunity for us all to pause and reflect on the pain and suffering endured by our Stolen Generations, their families and to honour their survival, strength and resilience.

We thank and acknowledge the clients in our book who have courageously shared their stories. The depth and authenticity of their narratives will move you. They are snapshot stories – windows only – but with a power to fill your heart with warmth and yet leave your heart broken. Our clients open a truth to what is the lived realities for our Stolen Generations.

Our late Chairman Sam Watson, was on this journey right up to the day of the book launch. He was very proud of his Link-Up (Qld) family, he was extremely proud on the night of the 35th Anniversary Gala Dinner, *"we took back the heart of Brisbane City and partied all night"*, he wrote in a recent report. And on the upcoming book launch, he wrote, *"This year is still not over yet and we still have to launch our latest publication next week that marks our 35 years with 35 of the most powerful stories I have ever read"*.

Sam Watson Snr has been Chairman of Link-Up (Qld) for over 12 years, his work over those years supporting and advocating for our Stolen Generations has been significant and invaluable. And the highlights over the past year demonstrates his leadership and vision.

Sam has been involved in the political movement and advocating for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since he was a young man, a teenager in fact. Skipping school to hand out how to vote cards in the 1967 Referendum, so he would have been 14 or 15 years old.

So for over 50 years he has been at the forefront and leading the way, taking up the fight for justice for our people. In those very early days, he was involved the establishment of the legal, housing and medical services.

Anything to do with our people he was always there, advocating loud and strong. So, for those organisations today, that are thriving, let's not forget Sam Watson's significant contribution to the establishment of those very important services.

He was and remained right up to the end a true Leader in our community, not just here in Brisbane, but on a state and national level.

Paying Tribute to an Honourable Ancestor



Tribute by Nicole Watson

Our beloved Uncle Sam, as Dad was known, was the second child of Eunice and Sam Watson. He cherished his sisters, Karen, Roslyn and Ruby, and his younger brothers, Jon and Stephen. Uncle Sam was also a beloved member of the Clay family. A proud Brisbane Murri, Uncle Sam's Country from both sides of his family extended from the southern fringe of Greater Brisbane to Central Queensland.

As a school boy, he was a talented athlete who played tennis, boxed and had a passion for rugby league. As he grew into adulthood, Uncle Sam became a trail-blazer. He was one of the first of our people to study law at the University of Queensland in the 1970s. Eventually, however, Uncle Sam left his university studies in order to join the flowering Black political movement. For over a decade, Uncle Sam marched and organised. Together with other foot soldiers of the movement, he helped to build the foundations for community survival programs in law, health and housing.



Uncle Sam attended Mount Gravatt State High where he met his life partner, Catherine de Gunst. Uncle Sam was father to Samuel Wagan and myself. He was a second father to Robbie and Bevan, and grandfather to their beautiful children. Uncle Sam was also 'Pop' to Samuel Woripa, Jesse, Harry, Corey and Paprika.



Later in life, Uncle Sam excelled in lawn bowls and he took advantage of every opportunity to play golf. Uncle Sam was also a writer, an artist and he made several contributions to the film industry. More recently, Uncle Sam was a passionate advocate for members of the Stolen Generations and their loved ones. Uncle Sam believed in the importance of solidarity between Murris and other communities that experienced marginalisation. In recent years, he became a staunch opponent of Australia's harsh refugee policies, and Uncle Sam believed passionately in our unions.



Uncle Sam had two great loves of his life, his community and his family. His heart would almost burst with pride at each Invasion Day rally, as he witnessed our young people assume the reigns of the glorious struggle. But Dad also cherished nothing more than spending time with his precious grandchildren.

On a personal note, I would like to say thank you to a wonderful father who made me the person that I am today.



Sam Watson Tribute from Parliament as mentioned in Hansard.

Hon. JA TRAD (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships): Queensland and Australia have lost a fearless, tireless fighter for the rights of Indigenous Australians. Sam Watson Snr was a proud member of the Munnenjarl and Biri Gubba Juru tribunal nations, with blood ties to the Yuggera, the Kalkadoon and the Noonuccal peoples. A lifelong activist, community leader, author, academic and filmmaker, Sam was a fearless, tireless, passionate advocate for his people.

Across more than half a century he made an indelible contribution to the advancement of the rights of First Nations peoples. In the 1960s Mr Watson campaigned against the White Australia Policy. He was involved in both the 1967 referendum campaign and the Gurindji land rights claim in the Northern Territory. He served at the Aboriginal embassy in Canberra from 1972, the year it was founded.

Through the 1970s Mr Watson worked with elders to establish community organisations and peak bodies in health, housing, education, employment and legal aid. Through his work with the Brisbane Aboriginal legal service in the 1990s, Mr Watson played a vital role in implementing the findings of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

In 2009, Mr Watson was appointed deputy director at the University of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit where he taught courses in black Australian literature. As an author and screen-writer, Mr Watson was named national Indigenous writer of the year in 1991 for his novel, the *Kadaitcha Sung*. He wrote and co-produced the 1994 film *Black*

Man Down, which was screened to global audiences as part of the Sand to Celluloid collection of Indigenous short films.

Sam famously tore down place names that were offensive to Indigenous Australians, but he also fought to preserve those that remind Queensland of the racial prejudice in our past, like Boundary Street in West End. Mr Watson is survived by his wife, Cathy, and his children Nicole Watson and Sam Wagan Watson. He is also survived by a legacy of impassioned activism and generations of Queenslanders who will carry on his fight against injustice. Vale Sam Watson.

Mr SPEAKER: May he rest in peace.

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) : Can I begin by associating myself with the comments of the Deputy Premier, as I know many members of this House wish to do, and express our collective condolence to Mr Sam Watson's family and the broader Indigenous and Queensland communities









Link-Up (Qld) Book Launch - 35 Years 35 Stories



On 27th November 2019 at the State Library of Queensland, we gathered on the Queensland Terrace with our Stolen Generations and their families to celebrate the launch of our *35 Years 35 Stories* book. The former Governor of Queensland and former Governor General of Australia, Dame Quentin Bryce proudly launched our book.

35 Years 35 Stories is a celebration of Link-Up (Qld)'s important work and the important milestone we have reached in our 35th anniversary. But more importantly, it is a celebration of the tenacity, power and resilience of our stolen generations people.

Link-Up (Qld) has journeyed alongside each client in the book to trace their histories, reunite them with families where possible, and provide ongoing healing support. Each story is representative of our mission and the sustained energy, passion and commitment of staff over the years. Our work is not easy, our clients'

experiences are confronting and raw, and there is a certain challenge to balancing the heart in our professionalism, and the subjectivity in our objectivity.

One of our most powerful speakers on the day, was Ricky Guivarra from Mapoon. In the book Ricky reflects on the story of his grandmother who was removed more than 100 years ago from Lawn Hill. Ricky commenced his speech by speaking fluently in 3 languages – Taepathiggi tribal language – Ricky's adoptive language of his grandfather, his mother's father who grew up at Mapoon. He also spoke fluently in Kala Lagau Ya and Meriam Mirr- the languages of his people from the Torres Straits.

Ricky's sharing of language was so fitting, given it was the International year of Indigenous Languages with exhibitions held at the State Library. His speech also had an emotional impact on all of us at the launch.

- Photos by Bradley Kanaris Photography





The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO



Ricky Guivarra from Mapoon



Ruth Loli, Research Manager, Link-Up (Qld)



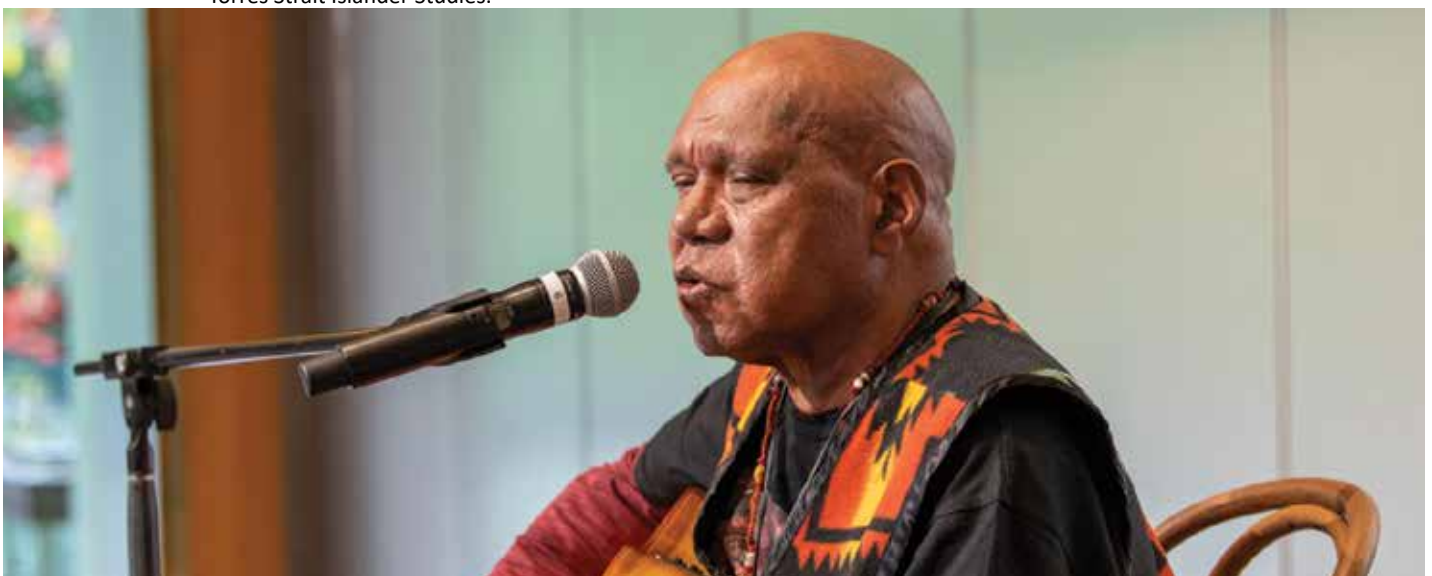
Kathy Frankland, Manager, Community & Personal Histories,
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships



Michael Ramalli, Acting CEO, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Studies.



Fiona Petersen, Deputy CEO, Healing Foundation.



Archie Roach AM, 2019 Victorian of the Year



Professor Gracelyn Smallwood



Eric Avery, Violinist and Composer



Strong partnership and shared stories support healing

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships has proudly celebrated its long-term partnership with Link-Up Qld providing easy access to information for First Nations Queenslanders to be reunited with their families.

Independent Link-Up researchers are embedded into the department's Community and Personal Histories team to enable access to State Government records created during the Protection era and Queensland births, deaths and marriages information, which is crucial to piecing together family histories.

Community and Personal Histories Manager Kathy Frankland said the partnership between Link-Up Qld and the department helped reunite many people with their families, communities and culture.

"I have worked with Link-Up Queensland since the early 1990s when Aunty Beverly Johnson was Manager," Ms Frankland said.

"In the mid-1990s, Link-Up Qld research staff started working a couple days a week in the Community and Personal Histories office and this has grown into a long and incredibly beneficial partnership.

"This 25-year partnership supports a compassionate approach by removing 'red tape' barriers to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders trace their identities and family histories," she said.

To date, the department's Community and Personal Histories team has responded to more than 17,000 nationwide requests for information, indexed more than 18,000 records and digitised more than half-a-million records with support from volunteers.

Ms Frankland said client stories continued to motivate her and her team.

"I still remember many of our shared clients from the early days and how their stories deeply impacted me," she said.

"Client stories still spur me on to ensure we do everything we can to enable better access to the millions of records generated by successive government agencies.

"Link-Up Qld's 35th Anniversary is an opportunity to look back and reflect on our agencies' long history of working together to reunite families and provide family history information back to community."

If you are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person and you or your family were born in Queensland, the Queensland Government may be able to assist you in accessing records to research your family and personal history.

Contact the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships' Communities and Personal Histories team:

Phone: 1800 650 230

Email: enquiries@atsip.qld.gov.au

For more information visit www.atsip.qld.gov.au/cph

DATSIP was proud to support the launch of Link-Up Qld's 35 Years 35 stories in November.

This truth-telling collection published as part of Link-Up Qld's 35th Anniversary shares the stories of 35 Queenslanders and their journeys to retrace their family histories.

The launch at the State Library of Queensland included a performance by Australian music legend Archie Roach enjoyed by community members including Elders and former Governor-General, the Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO.



Link-Up (Qld) Yarning Circle



At the kuril dhagun centre, we held a Yarning Circle for Clients whose stories were published in our 35 Year 35 Stories book. This was held prior to the Book Launch. Professor Gracelyn Smallwood facilitated the Yarning Circle along with the support of Link-up (Qld) Councillors, Caseworkers and staff. Gallang Place supported the event by sending 3 Counsellors along as well.

The Yarning Circle was a culturally safe space for

everyone to meet, share and connect with each other. Approx. 70 people participated and Clients shared openly with each other, finding common ground and connections, by the time they attended the Book Launch, people were at ease.

We would like to thank the kuril dhagun centre, and the State Library for allowing us to hold the Yarning Circle in their beautiful and welcoming space, providing refreshments for those who attended.



Yarning Circle Facilitator Gracelyn Smallwood





- Photos by Bradley Kanaris Photography

2019 Brisbane Client Christmas Party

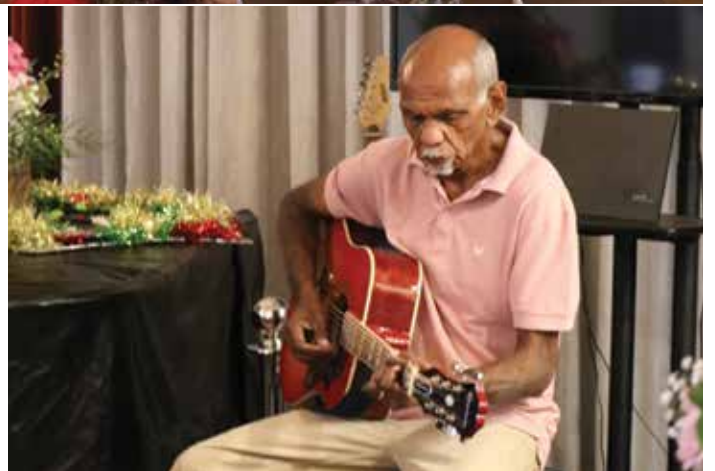


Link-Up (Qld) held our final monthly Client get-together with a Christmas Party at the Mixed Bar in Stanley Street, Woolloongabba.

Our regular clients from the Brisbane area were joined by clients from all over Queensland, some who had been Link-Up clients for over 20 years.

We were privileged to have Steven Hart and Greg Duffy sing for us while we all enjoyed our meal.

It has been a busy and emotional year for many of the Link-Up (Qld) clients and staff and it was great to be able to all come together to acknowledge the end of 2019, and look forward to many more client gatherings in 2020.









Link-Up (Qld) commemorates it's
35th anniversary with the book release

35 Years



Still Bringing
Them Home



35 Stories

35 Years

35 Stories

A reflection of
Link-Up (Qld)'s
heart work through
selected client
narratives.

\$29.99

(+10.00 postage &
handling)

To order contact: researchteam@link-upqld.org.au or (07) 3638 0411


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