

National Link-Up News

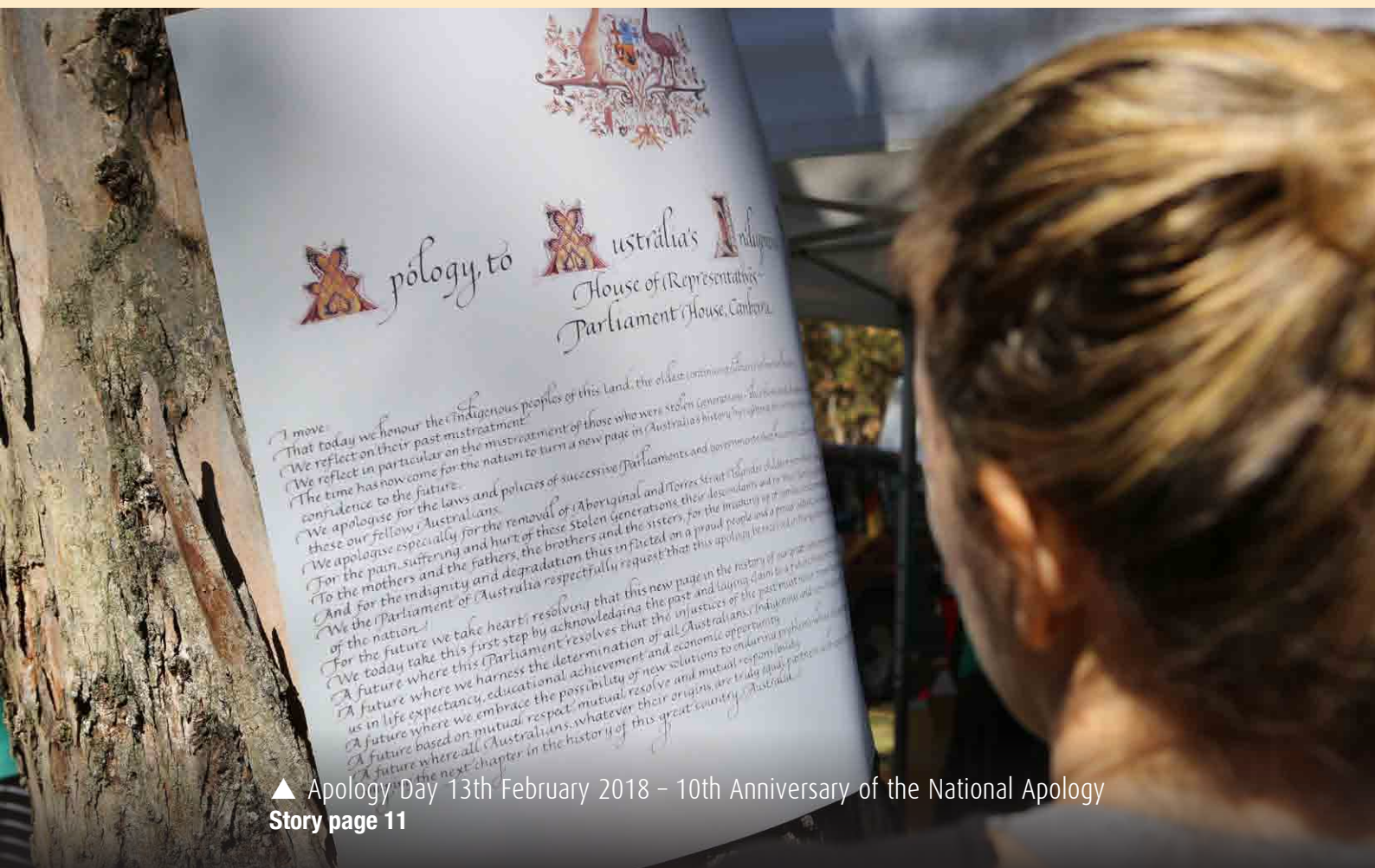
National Link Up News Edition 29

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New South Wales

Return to Country Reunion for NLUW

We recently had the pleasure returning our clients (2 sisters and their mother's brother) to Gundungurra Country in the Blue Mountains. Our client's mother and sister were removed to an institution and after a few years both girls were sent to live with a family member and from the stories they kindly shared with us, their time was not so pleasant.

The Link-Up (NSW) researcher traced the clients family/Country back to King Billy, William Lynch of the Gundungurra Nation and Maria Locke, daughter of Yarramundi of the Darug Nation. In the Greater Western Sydney and Blue Mountains both Aboriginal families are highly respected and very well documented.

We discussed the family lineage with the clients and they were shocked and at times a little speechless. It was a lot to take in because both sisters had never heard this information from their mother. Their Uncle remembered hearing some of the names, as a child, but had never known who they really were.

The clients journey back to Country began with a beautiful Welcome to Country in the Blue Mountains National Park, Glenbrook. It was a very misty and rainy afternoon, but this did not dampen anyone's spirits.

Aunty Carol Cooper who provided the Welcome to Country was invited to share the journey on both days with the clients. The clients really wanted to meet community while returning to Country and Aunty Carol Cooper was a very integral part of this experience.

The next day we took the clients to the Gully in Katoomba and to Megalong Valley. Both places hold great significance to the family as King Billy, William Lynch lived in the Gully and on his passing was returned to Megalong Valley where he was buried traditionally. His wife Fanny Lynch was laid to rest in Megalong Valley at the Megalong Valley Cemetery.

The drive down to Megalong Valley was beautiful, the winding road was boarded with huge ferns that could nearly be something out of a prehistoric time. We reached the Megalong Valley Cemetery which was off the road on the Sixfoot Track. The rain and mist stayed with us for most of the morning, so we put on our rain ponchos and made the best of it.

Aunty Carol Cooper brought lots of information with her about the Gully and the Gundungurra Nation to share with the clients. This was unexpected, and we wanted the clients to spend time and gain as much information as they could about their people and country.



So, we stopped for a very early lunch and let this situation develop and flow on its own.

After much talking, laughing and singing we moved back to the cars and drove up to the Gully in Katoomba.

The entrance to the Gully is sign posted with a map of where the families lived, the clients were so overwhelmed to see the names of their family. It was lovely to watch their faces and have Aunty Carol explain to them the layout of the families in the Gully.



As we walked around the Gully, Aunty Carol told stories of her childhood and a time when the Gully was full of laughter. Along the way Aunty Carol pointed out where the families lived. The clients were in awe and hung onto every word that was spoken. The birds came out as we made our way around the Gully and one of the caseworkers found a very interesting animal print in the mud. The clients felt they were being welcomed home.

The bond that formed between the clients and Aunty Carol Cooper was lovely to see. Aunty Carol Cooper invited all of us to watch the children of Katoomba Public school sing their school Totem song the following morning before going home. The children were fantastic and sang their song with much pride and enthusiasm. The School Principal welcomed the clients to the school and acknowledge they were on a very special journey, Returning to Country.

New South Wales

Supporting Our Youth & Community

It's been yet another busy 6 months for the Youth and Community stream with Family-Link working hard to develop our fee for service contingent and keep up with the on-going demand from Out of Home Care agencies for family history information.

As the programme grows, so too does the demand. The team recently participated in training run by AbSec and were praised for the amazing work the organisation does. From this we have been approached by 3 organisations to support their children and young people in care by facilitating education groups, cultural talks and to support them engage with communities in Western Sydney more respectfully.

Delisa, who has been with Link-Up (NSW) for over 5 years started with Link-Up (NSW) as a receptionist, moving later into the Family-Link team as a Researcher, has now stepped into the role of Team Leader. Delisa has shown amazing dedication to Link-Up (NSW) and her community and we would like to congratulate her for continued growth.

Our Community Builder has spent the last 6 months busily working with clients across the district from Blacktown through to Lithgow. We have facilitated groups for clients with disabilities, with Carers NSW and we are currently in the planning stages to hold 3 events for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to gain information and access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

This year we lost a member of our Family Link family with the passing of a wonderful and powerful woman, Joanne. Joanne spent her life helping others from palliative care nursing, working with youth, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman experiencing domestic violence and supporting Aboriginal clients through the legal system.

We were so fortunate to have Joanne working with us and sharing her knowledge and experiences not to mention her playful sense of humour and her caring for others. Joanne will be missed greatly by her Link-Up (NSW) family and we hope to continue her legacy and her life long passion for young people and their connection to culture.

The Rising of New Leadership

Michelle's on leave for six weeks and has been supporting Rachel Rewiri to take on the role of Acting Team Leader in her absence.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Here is an interesting research case from Researcher Karen Kobier;

I was looking to establish Aboriginal heritage for a client. I discovered that the client's great-great grandfather, was born in St Helena which is part of the British Overseas Territory near southwestern Africa. He was described as having a dark skin and woolly hair, which could have suggested that there was African heritage. This great great-grandfather had emigrated to Australia and was living in a relationship with a woman who, at this stage I had no name for, but I did confirm that she was the great great-grandmother of my client.

While researching this particular ancestor, I started coming across prison records which were actually for his son, who had exactly the same name as his father – let's call him Junior. This son was not a direct ancestor of my client, but his sister was. Procedurally I may not have gone looking for records of a sibling of a great grandparent, so it was fortunate that he (Junior) had the same name as his father and that his records started coming up in my searches. Through these records, I found that Junior had been removed from his family at the age of 11 and sent to a reformatory school on a ship.

The Vernon and Sobraon (the reformatory ships) entrance records for Junior state that his mother was a 'half caste woman of this colony'. A little further research with the assistance of the NSW BDM Research Unit helped to confirm that Junior and my client's ancestor were indeed full siblings – children of the same father AND mother. So, I was able to confirm Aboriginal heritage in the family for the Client's Stage 1 Report.

Wales Toomey Reunion



Douglas Toomey of Wellington knew that he had a brother out there somewhere. His mother had spoken about him, and Doug wanted to find him to make the family whole again. He got in contact with Link-Up (NSW) and we began the journey of putting the pieces together with him.

This year Link-Up (NSW) located his brother 380km to the east in Narrabeen. A man called Lucian Douglas Freudenstein (who prefers to be called Douglas), had spent 55 years with no knowledge he had a sibling. We helped Douglas make the initial contact with his brother, and we knew we had to take it slow as there were also another four siblings who also wanted to meet their brother.

A reunion was planned with arrangements made to suit the family and take into consideration from regional NSW to Sydney. During two days from 28 February, the immediate and extended family were finally reunited in Narrabeen NSW. The reunion and family gathering were a huge success with many stories and milestones shared.

The family have stayed in touch and celebrated Easter together in Sydney. Douglas Freudenstein has also arranged to travel to Wellington later in the year and spend time with his brother Douglas and the family, with plans to spend quality time together fishing.

Following the reunion, sister Kerry also attended the Healing Weekend in Jervis Bay recently organised by Link Up NSW in April to be with other Stolen Generations People who have been recently reunited with their families.

Link-Up (NSW) are proud to be sharing yet another success story of reuniting our People so the healing can begin.

Western Australia - KSGAC

Kimberley Stolen Generation

Part of the KSGAC role is increasing awareness across the region. Our Link-Up Caseworkers recently received a great response at our Community Stall in one of Broome's Major Shopping Centres. Our Case Workers regularly travel to see clients and also meet with other Community based organisations covering an area of 26,000 kilometres, three times larger than Victoria. Our Link-Up Clients live in regional towns and in some very remote communities and it is always a rewarding experience for Case Workers to sit down and help people and share family finding information.

At the KSGAC Broome office we also have Australian and overseas visitors who ask about Australia's history, Government policies and the impact on Indigenous Peoples and the service's role. We are also redesigning our KSGAC website and look forward to sharing it soon as this is a great way of seeing our news.

Our next event will be for National Sorry Day May 26th with music, food and a film night to bring people together. The number of orders for the Sorry Day flowers has been phenomenal and we are gladdened that so many people in Australia are organising and joining in commemoration activities. We thank all of the Government, Community Controlled and individuals that have contacted us for the flowers. Proceeds of the flowers go back into supporting the KSGAC and its members.

We have a weekly Therapeutic Art Program which sees people yarnning together and producing some beautiful pieces.

The Art group turnout is always strong and for staff seeing our First Generation Stolen members laughing and sharing stories is a clear sign we are helping to make a positive difference in peoples' lives.

In addition, KSGAC staff have been updating their skills and qualifications through undertaking various training. Staff have now updated their First Aid Training with St John Ambulance. James Feehan, Paula Ellis and Pauline McKenzie attended the Marumali Training in Melbourne. Pauline McKenzie continues working with Annelie De Villiers from Melbourne University on the Data Base which is being put together by KSGAC.

Chairperson Mark Bin Bakar, Directors Elizabeth Cox and Merrillee Lands and our Senior Counsellor David Cox attended the 10th Anniversary of the Apology in Canberra on 13th February. This was a very successful trip, with the group meeting up with many other Stolen Generation members, Members of Parliament and Mr Kevin Rudd who was responsible for giving the now famous Apology. Following the 10th Anniversary of the Apology, Mark Bin Bakar and David Cox stayed on in Canberra to meet up with Kirk Coffin, Royal Commission Support Worker for a meeting and workshop regarding the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse beyond 30th June 2018.

We look forward to seeing the National Link-Up Newsletter as we know every Link-Up Team's work is pivotal in supporting Indigenous people.

Board Directors Merrillee Lands, Mark Bin Bakar and Elizabeth Cox with our Senior Counsellor David Cox outside Parliament House for the Anniversary of the Apology 2018



Trish Plewright our Project Officer, Kirk Coffin our DSS Royal Commission Support Officer and the Art Healing Group visiting the Derby Prison to yarn with the prisoners.

Merrilee Lands with Kevin Rudd



Pauline McKenzie and Annelie De Villiers from Melbourne University



Trish Plewright with members of the Fremantle Dockers. Fremantle Dockers wear the Stolen Generation Sorry Day Flower on the jumpers during the Reconciliation Game every year to honour the members of the Stolen Generation.



Surayah Bin Bakar and Paula Ellis our Link-Up Caseworker attending our stall at the local Shopping Centre in Broome.



Mark Bin Bakar, David Cox and Kirk Coffin in Canberra

Western Australia - Yorgum

Ray/Turner Family Reunion



Recently, Gillian King, Case Worker/Wildflower Therapist and Cheryl Augustsson, Counsellor accompanied Alec Turner and his support person, Tanya Phillips on an important Healing Journey, reconnecting with his sister in Alice Springs. The Reunion was initiated by Alice Springs Link Up, after Alec's sister, Christine Ray set out to find her brother Alec, who had been removed as a child. He was sent to Retta Dixon Home in Darwin, before being adopted by a family from Perth, Western Australia. The initial request had been made a few years ago, and because of funding cuts, was put on hold. Once the Alice Springs Office became functional again and funding had been reinstated, Gillian King from the Perth Link Up office worked tirelessly in conjunction with Tellisa Ferguson on the planning to ensure this Reunion came to fruition.

As a young man growing up in Perth, Alec was taken in by a Nyoongar Family and strong bonds were formed between him and members of this family. Alec spoke in warm and loving terms of the matriarch of this family, with who turned out to be a "surrogate mother" to him. He told Gillian and Cheryl, he hoped that this is how he would have hoped his own mother would have been like. Alec shared some of his memories of the times he spent with this family, both funny and sad.

Alice Springs client, Christine Ray lives at Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory and attends Renal Dialysis three times a week, so careful planning and regular phone calls happened between the

two Link Up Offices. Perth Link Up counsellor visited Alec at his home in Rockingham, to get to know him in preparation for this Journey. A Journal was provided to Alec and he was encouraged to record his thoughts and feelings about his Journey. Gillian and Cheryl were only able to visit him on set days due to his work commitments, and Alec was able to bring along a friend, who was his support person. During the Counsellors visit's Alec had many questions he wanted answers to regarding his removal and his family, which he was encouraged to record in his Journal. During this period leading up to the Reunion, important relationships were established between Alec, Gillian and Cheryl. During this time a grief and loss session was conducted at the Link Up office, whereby Alec and Tanya participated in making wreaths for his mother and two sisters. Although Alec never knew his mother, he was encouraged to express his feelings and talk about her during the session. It was at this time, Alec wrote a heartfelt message to his mum, which was placed, on the wreath once it was finished. Alec told Gillian and Cheryl he happy he was able to do this and was pleased after seeing the wreaths wrapped.

On the day of the flight from Perth, Alec was anxious, but at the same time happy, he was finally going to meet his sister. We reassured Alec; these feelings were normal and encouraged him to talk with us to let us know his thoughts. Alec told us, he had been in touch with Christine a few days earlier, and she was going to

Australia

Alice Springs



meet him at the airport. The meeting of Christine and Alec had been planned for the following day at a barbeque, but Christine could not wait.

The meeting at the airport between the Christine and Alec was poignant. Christine was standing quietly in the corner, and when Alec spotted her, he walked towards her, before embracing and a few tears were shed. This was the first time brother and sister had met face to face. It seemed like they had not been apart as they walked toward the vehicle with their arms around each other. Introductions were made before the group left the airport for the Alice Springs. Once the group arrived at the Alice Springs Congress Link-Up Office there were further introductions. Later arrangements were made for everyone to have lunch at a nearby Food Hall. Alec, Tanya and Christine were left to have lunch and yarn, as this was a special time for them both to connect. During lunch another brother, William, who was older than Alec happened to be walking through the food hall Christine called him over and introduced him to Alec.

The following day, in conjunction with Alice Springs Link-Up Staff, the group met with Christine and some more family members at the Telegraph Station upon arriving, we were met by a group of dingoes who watched on from a distance.

Alec was able to meet many Aunties, Grannies, and some male relatives. Christine introduced Alec and explained their connection

to him. Christine explained his Totem from his grandfather's side, being a flower which turned into a bush plum. Meeting so many relatives was little overwhelming for Alec, but never the less, his sat and yarned with everyone and photographs were taken by Staff. Initially Christine was upset and cried because she felt more family members should have attended this barbeque to meet Alec. As the morning progressed, it was evident to staff, this was a happy time for all, and there was plenty of smiling faces, laughter and yarning. A barbeque lunch followed to finish the day.

A family dinner in the evening was attended by some of Alec's relatives" including a cousin brother, Mick. Mick sat with Alec throughout the night and shared with him different stories including his totem, the Honey Ant on Alec's mother's side. Alec was pleased to hear this and shared this with Gillian and Cheryl later. Staff also attended this dinner. Spending time with Mick was important for Alec because Mick was able to speak to him from a male perspective. Alec said he was happy to have met and spent time with Mick. Mick said if there was more time he would have taken Alec out bush hunting.

The final day for Alec and Tanya was a trip to Ti Tree Community, which is two hours' drive from Alice Springs. As the group were about to enter the Anmatjere Lands, Christine explained to Alec, "This is your Country". The group stopped and photographs were taken with Christine, Alec and Christin's daughter in front of the signage. Upon arrival at the Community, another Aunty was introduced to Alec, before the group proceeded to the Cemetery. A few words were shared by Cheryl before three wreaths were laid on the graves of Alec's and Christine mother's and two sisters; graves. Alec read out a short piece he had written to his mother acknowledging her and paying his respects. These were beautiful, but simple words from a son to a mother. This was followed by a short quiet time and reflection by those who attended. This was an emotional time for Christine, Alec, Tanya, Gillian and Cheryl, and tears were shed by all.

Alec has now returned to Perth, he knows now he is an Anmatjere man, and his country is and around Ti Tree. He is aware he has many more relatives in surrounding Communities, which he did not have time to meet and he know his totems as a plant which evolves into a Bush Plum and a Honey Ant. Alec has maintained telephone contact with Christine and Mick and has many photographs and memories to keep of this Journey. Sand was collected from Alice Springs where he was born and from Ti Tree Community, his Country. As a follow up activity Cheryl and Gillian will provide a memory jar which will hold the sand and some photographs. Alec will also be encouraged to continue using his Journal as a continuing Healing Tool and to enable him to reflect later.

Western Australia - Yorgum

Women's Healing Activities, Carnarvon



In March 2018 eight (8) Elderly Women participated in Women's Activities in the Carnarvon region. Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation, Link Up organised ceramic Easter bunnies for ladies to paint, then supplied Easter eggs to be placed into the ceramic bunnies.

The group also completed some colouring activities, taken from a Mindfulness Booklet, which were laminated to be used for placemats. The majority of the Women we worked with during this Event were 1st Generation Stolen, and many of them were carers for their grandchildren.

These Yamatji women in this area are often overlooked, due to Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation covering a wide area of the Pilbara/Gascoyne, therefore it was important a special effort was made to make this event successful. It was also important to conduct this

event in Carnarvon, as we endeavour to establish stronger links with the local people and community groups. The town of Carnarvon is approximately an eight and a half hour drive, south of our office in Port Hedland.

A few of the Women used gophers to mobilise, one had to use oxygen tanks, which made it very difficult to take clients away from their homes for a night or two, so this is why we chose to stay in the Carnarvon town area and do activities with the group.

The local Women from the area let us know what area was good to have an evening BBQ, so this we done at the Fascine Beach area. Had a great meal and yarning with all. Evaluations were completed and all of the Women expressed their feelings about the activities and being able to meet together as a group.

We feel it is important to continue this connection with the Yamatji people of the Gascoyne Region and would like to would like Yorgum to organise a Family History Day in Carnarvon in the near future. Holding this Event in Carnarvon will inform the community how we conduct Family Research, Reunions, Back to country and Healing Days.

Jane Bin Saad, Counsellor/Team Leader Port Hedland Link Up
Dianne Walker, Case Worker Port Hedland Link Up

Family History Day Presentation, Port Hedland

On Tuesday the 10th April, 2018 Yorgum Link Up Researchers Patricia Ryder and Colleen Wheelock held a Family History Day at the Yorgum Link-Up Office in Port Hedland. The event was for clients to have an insight on how family research is done.

The presentation began with Patricia doing an acknowledgment to country before starting the presentation.

Clients were shown how to start researching their family history through using the internet, old Trove newspaper articles, books and the passing on of stories though oral history.

Patricia spoke about past policies that affected Aboriginal people and she gave a talk about the early years of colonization in Western Australia.

The presentation was well received and the ladies that attend were excited to go off with the understanding of how to start their family research.

Special acknowledgement goes to Jane Bin Saad Link-Up Team Leader and Dianne Walker Yorgum Link-Up Caseworker for their involvement in organizing the workshop.



South Australia

Apology Day 13th February - 10th Anniversary of the National Apology

February 13th 2018 marked the 10th Anniversary of the National Apology.

Link-Up SA and other teams from Nunkuwarrin Yunti of SA were involved in the Committee organising the Annual Apology Day Community Event alongside representatives from Uniting Communities' Aboriginal Community Connect service and Healing Foundation, Reconciliation SA, Relationships Australia SA, City of Adelaide, Tauondi College, Aboriginal Family Support Services, Journey of Healing Association and SA Baptist Care.

Apology Day is a very unique event that focuses on honouring and healing for Survivors. The event included ceremonies of song and dance, a traditional smoking ceremony, contemporary musical performances, art, Ngangkari healers, pampering stalls, a free BBQ and a wide range of activities for the whole community to enjoy. This year's event began with a peaceful walk from Tarntanyangga (Victoria Square) to Veale Gardens. The walk was led by Nunkuwarrin Yunti's Stolen Generation Women's and Men's groups, using clap sticks that were individually painted by the group members. The walk was followed by a smoking and welcome to country ceremony performed by elders and representatives from Kurna, Ngarrindjeri, Peramangk and Ngadjuri.



With a strong focus on healing, this coming together of the surrounding groups was a powerful moment and a spiritually cleansing way to open the event. With musical acts and dance performances, the day was filled with fun and entertainment. There was no surprise that with an event so heavily focused on healing the Ngangkari tent was a very popular spot, providing physical, emotional and spiritual healing on the day. It was a very special event and there was lots of positive feedback from the community.



South Australia

The Healing Coolamon

The Coolamon was used at the Apology Day event in a Healing Ceremony.

It was placed on display representing the cradle and so many Mother's arms that were left empty after children were removed. Members of the community were encouraged to place gum leaves (a symbol of Healing and cleansing) into the Coolamon. This acknowledged those removed and also symbolised the returning of the children back home to Country and Culture. The Healing Coolamon was taken from a four hundred year old red gum tree in the Campbelltown City Council area, after consultation between the City Green Coordinator (Mick Watkins) and Ivan- Tiwu Copley in October 2017.

The then two meter long piece of branch was cut from the huge bow on the ground and delivered to Ivan's house by the Council staff. Over the next two months, Ivan cut the hollow log to the required shape and length with a chainsaw and then clamped to a work bench for hand carving and chiselling. It was shaped by using a very small old tommy hawk and took about a hundred hours to chisel and hand scrape to a smooth finish using a sharp hand chipped flint stone. Following traditional methods, the Coolamon was treated with red ochre and oils from plants and trees.

The process included heating the wood using the sun and fire prior to rubbing the oils and ochre into it. This process was repeated about seven times to ensure the wood will be preserved for hundreds of years as was traditionally done for many thousands of years by Ivan's Kurna and Peramangk ancestors.



New Team Members

RICK HARTMAN & ROHAN CARMODY

Hi everyone. My name is Rick Hartman and I am the Team Leader for Link UP SA at Nunkuwarrin Yunti. I am a Ngarrindjeri Man from Murray Bridge and I started here in the role at the end of January 2018. My most recent employment history has had me doing project delivery and working in Aboriginal Health. I have also sat on a number of Boards recently within my local community and have gained valuable experience during this exposure. I am looking forward to building on some of the work previous Team Managers have achieved and delivering the best possible outcomes for our clients as they access our services. The Stolen Generation are an aging population and it is important to promote and provide this service now and support our clients on their journey to reconnect with country, culture and family.

Hello everyone. My name is Rohan Carmody and I am the new Community Engagement Worker for Link-Up SA at Nunkuwarrin Yunti. I am a Central/Eastern Arrernte man from Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and I started in the role in January 2018. I have a lot of experience in community engagement and working with remote communities. I hope to create more awareness about the service we provide at Link-Up SA within mainstream organisations, educational systems and other Aboriginal Health services. I have seen an increased interest in education around the Stolen Generation and I feel privileged to be in a position to provide education and awareness to communities, schools, universities and other health organisations. I hope the work I do can help support the journey to healing and reconnecting with country and culture for individuals and families.

Australia

Ronald Miller Reunion



Link-Up SA recently supported Ronald Miller to attend a gravesite reunion at the burial places of his father, grandmother and uncle and to reconnect with his Barngarla country. This journey assisted with significant healing for Ronald in relation to the separation of his father and his father's siblings from each other and from their Aboriginal cultural connections.

During the reunion, a local Barngarla cultural advisor provided valuable insight into Aboriginal cultural sites in Port Augusta and information about the Barngarla people in Port Augusta and Hawker, South Australia. We also travelled to the site of the former Mern Merna School (approximately 30 kms from Hawker, SA) where Ronald was able to walk among the ruins of the school his father attended as a child.

Mern Merna is also the area where Ronald's father and foster carers lived and worked. We visited the Hawker Library and School which Ronald's father and other family members attended. School staff were very helpful in locating and copying valuable school records for Ronald to help him to piece together his family's story. We also identified the location of a piece of land that Ronald's great grandfather leased and occupied in Hawker.



As Ronald took time to reflect on the past and to walk across the land on which his father and other relatives lived and worked, there was much emotion – tears and at times, laughter – for Ronald, his sister and for the Link-Up staff who were privileged to accompany him. Ronald said that the journey had exceeded his wildest dreams and had filled a void in his family's life. He expressed his heart felt gratitude to the staff of Link-Up SA. Ronald's commitment to honour his father was profoundly respected and achieved. The reunion was a great success with lasting memories.

Northern Territory - NTSGAC Link-Up

Reunions

Congress Link Up Service has been busy over the past few months working collaboratively with other Link Up Services to complete three Reunions.

The first of the three reunions was held in Dimboola Victoria, in collaboration with Link Up Victoria, and was a large gathering with an overall theme of 'Back to Country', 'Back to Community' and 'Back to Culture'. Family members came from all over Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory to attend the reunion, with a focus on the primary client going back to his country where his mother and grandmother were from before he was removed.

The reunion began with a 'Welcome to Country' by Wotjoboluk Traditional Owners, at a venue that held great significance to the local Aboriginal community because many families, including the clients' family members, lived on the property at one point many years ago. No-one lives there now, but community often use the location for functions and gathering. After the initial gathering and welcome, family members and staff moved on to the Dimboola Cemetery for a gravesite reunion as the next step in the family's journey to healing.

The following day's activities were planned at Ebenezer Mission, a 15km drive from Dimboola, where stories were shared about the Mission's history and the family's connection to it, and a salt plant was planted at the site by a family member, followed by a trip to

Horseshoe Bend where previous and current generations enjoyed fishing and swimming as children.

Family then travelled back to the Dimboola Community Hall where they were given a speech and presentation by the Koorie Family History Unit in the Koorie Heritage Trust who conducted a family history session and assisted the families to begin developing their own family trees. This was followed by a swim in the local river and a BBQ dinner. This was considered a successful family reunion, bringing over twenty family members for an enjoyable and healing time together.

The second reunion Congress Link Up Service has recently been involved in, in collaboration with Yorgum Link Up Service in Perth, involved bringing family members together from Western Australia and Central Australia for a Gravesite Reunion, with a primary focus of a family member returning to the land where his mother and grandmother belonged before he was removed, and for him to be reunited with his sisters and family members in Alice Springs, Ti Tree and Tenant Creek.

The first two days of the reunion were spent with family simply "gathering" together and spending time sharing stories and connecting with one another in Alice Springs. The following day all family members travelled a couple of hours north of Alice Springs to Anmatjere and Ti Tree Station, Northern Territory.

Family enjoying a BBQ dinner at Yeundumu, N.T.





Family with Foster Parents at their home



At Ti Tree Station the family members came together for an emotional Gravesite Reunion at their parents' unmarked graves. Wreaths and flowers were placed on the graves and further stories were shared. Following a lunch close to the site family and Link Up staff returned to Alice Springs. After an emotional farewell Western Australia family and Link Up staff left the Alice Springs airport to return to their respective homes.

The third family reunion Congress was involved in was in collaboration with Nunkuwarrin Yunti of South Australia Inc., Link-Up service and centred around family from South Australia coming to Central Australia, and involved bringing family from South Australia to Central Australia to connect with their father's country, and family members who still live on country. The reunion also included family connecting with foster parents who cared for their father/brother after he had been removed, and many more stories and photos were shared.

A few activities were planned for the first day, however the majority of these were cancelled due to family preferring to simply stay together and continue telling and hearing stories of their father/brother.

That evening family members and Link Up staff enjoyed a relaxing dinner together with more stories and memories being shared.

The following day both South Australian and Central Australian family members, and Link Up staff, travelled to Yuendumu Community approximately 300 km north-west of Alice Springs, the heart of their family's country. Along the way all staff and clients stopped at Tilmouth Well, Anmatjere N.T. for lunch and a break from driving. During this stop family were approached by several ladies who started a conversation, and it was discovered that the ladies were the S.A. Link-Up service clients' aunts from Yuendumu.

It was an emotional reunion and it was decided that the group would continue travelling the last leg of the journey to Yuendumu. At Yuendumu the travelling family were met by a large gathering of family members from the Community who had been anticipating their arrival. Family on both sides had waited many years for this day.

After meeting as many as sixty family members, travelling family took an opportunity to checked into the Yuendumu Council accommodation for a rest. In the late afternoon all family reunited, and were joined by even more family members who travelled from all around Yuendumu to enjoy a BBQ under the stars.

Later in the evening after everyone had eaten the women gathered on the ground and began arranging dried flowers into floral tributes, to be used at the graveside reunion the following day.

The next morning saw a large number of family members at the Yuendumu Cemetery for a Graveside Reunion where family had an opportunity to spend time at the graves of their Aunts, Uncles, Cousins and family. It was a moving time facilitated by the Link Up Caseworkers and Counsellors who were privileged to share in a part of the family's journey to healing.

Younger members of the family from South Australia shared that they were deeply affected as it was very sad for them as they always yearned for their family. They sat at each of their family's graves and finally felt the connection to family that they had missed since childhood. It was a very special experience to be involved in assisting family to building a bridge to unite disconnected family and community.

Family at Illparpa Camp



Time for farewells at Yuendumu Community education Centre



Northern Territory - NTSGAC Link-Up

TiTree Reunion



In April 2018, Alec Turner along with his partner Tanya travelled from Perth, Western Australia to attend a 'Back to Country' and Grave Side reunion in Central Australia. Caseworkers Tellisa Ferguson and Craig Eibeck and Counsellor Gerard Waterford from Congress Link-Up service in Alice Springs, conducted the family reunion together with Caseworker Gillian and Counsellor Cheryl from Yorgum Link-Up service Perth, Western Australia. The premise of this reunion was for the client Alec to return to the land where his mother and grandmother belong before he was removed and for Alec to be reunited with his sisters and family members in Alice Springs, TiTree and Tenant Creek.

Members of the family travelled to Alice Springs and gathered at the Telegraph Station for a BBQ luncheon on the first day. The family enjoyed the scenery at the Telegraph station with visits from the local dingos. The following day family members visited extended family in Alice Springs, before enjoying a delicious dinner at Tali restaurant, Lasseters Hotel. On the final day, all family members travelled (two) 2 hours north of Alice Springs to Anmatjere and TiTree Station, Northern Territory. In TiTree Station the family members experienced an emotional Grave Side reunion at their parents' unmarked graves. Wreaths and flowers were placed on the graves and stories were told, followed by a luncheon. A very impassioned farewell at Alice Springs airport saw the Yorgum Link-Up service staff and client Alec leave the following day to return to Perth.



territory

Reunion at Dimboola, Vic



A large 'Back to Country', 'Back to Community' and 'Back to Culture' Family reunion was held at Dimboola, Victoria in March, 2018. Clients and family members come from all over Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory to attend. Reunions Officer Angela North and Team-leader Angela Swindle from Victoria Link-Up organised the reunion and Caseworker Craig Eibeck and Counsellor Sue Whitfield attended from Congress Link-Up service in Alice Springs. The premise of this reunion was for the client Warren Nelson to go back to the land where his mother and grandmother was from before being removed and taken to a country that was not his by birthright.

The reunion began with a 'Welcome to Country' by Wotjoboluk Traditional Owners, Ron Marks and Auntie Nancy Harrison who embraced all with their welcoming words. The venue, 'The Ranch' couldn't have been a better fit, a place of significance to the local Aboriginal community

because many families, including the clients' family members, lived on the property at one point many years ago. No-one lives there now, but community often use the location for functions and gathering. Clients and staff then went to the Dimboola Cemetery for an emotional Grave Side reunion.

The following day activities were planned at Ebenezer Mission a 15km drive from Dimboola. Auntie Nancy Harrison gave a story providing information about its history. Local family members shared the story of their family's connection to Ebenezer Mission. The morning included opportunities for family photos and walking around the site. A salt plant was planted at the site by Warren Nelson the client of Victoria Link-Up service.



After leaving Ebenezer mission everyone drove to Horseshoe Bend for a visit of the local area and picnic lunch. Horseshoe Bend is country for the Nelson/ Sultan family and a place where they enjoyed swimming and fishing as children. Everyone then travelled to Dimboola Community Hall for a speech and presentation by Koorie Family History Unit, Koorie Heritage Trust who conducted a family history session and assisted the families to begin developing their own family trees. After the presentation by the

Koorie Family History Unit, all clients went to the local river to swim and have a BBQ dinner, finishing at 07:00pm. It was a very successful family reunion, bringing over twenty family members for an enjoyable and healing time together.

Northern Territory - NTSGAC Link-Up

From the CEO and Chairperson

Hello all,

2018 started at a hectic pace starting with our successful Cultural Day on Tuesday 6th February with a grant from NT Government and other sponsors – Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation, Relationships Australia, Fred Hollows Foundation, Intract Pty. Ltd. – where we were able to showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and businesses and provide everyone with a taste of some of our traditional and local dishes, didgeridoo welcome by Les Huddleston, Welcome to Country by Jeanneen McLennan and entertainment by Jennifer Baker and the Milingimbi dancers and the Upai Puri Puri group. We were also honoured to have Her Honour The Administrator of the Northern Territory, Mrs Vicki O'Halloran attend. We send a big thank you to everyone involved, including our stall holders, cooks and volunteers.

This was followed up the following week when we combined with Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation to successfully commemorate the 10th anniversary of the National Apology Day, held at the premises of Larrakia Nation. Funding was provided by the Healing Foundation and in-kind support from Larrakia Nation and Pam Clarke Catering Service.

That afternoon, some of our Stolen Generations ladies, together with our Chairperson and CEO attended an afternoon tea hosted by Prime Minister & Cabinet staff. We also hosted our first-ever International Women's Day luncheon with a grant from Minister for Territory Families and Member of Parliament Paul Kirby. This was attended by 80 wonderful and talented ladies, some of whom had exhibits and spoke of their services. Member of Parliament Ngaree Ah Kit was our guest speaker and she was joined by other successful speakers.

We are busy with plans for the commemoration of our 20th Anniversary to be held on Friday 18th May at DoubleTree by Hilton. This will be a 2-course formal gala dinner, with Welcome to Country, entertainers, music by The Mystics and dancing.

We have received funding from Lord Mayor, Kon Vatskalis, The Fred Hollows Foundation, Northern Territory Government, Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, INPEX, Territory Technology and Intract Australia Pty. Ltd to assist with this event. Unfortunately, the budget does not allow us to invite our 500 plus members, but we are hopeful of inviting as many of our first generation and second generation Top End Stolen Generations peoples as possible, free of charge (not including drinks). Otherwise, tickets will be for sale at \$80 with bar facilities available. Bookings can be made at our office.

Our CEO meets on a regular basis with Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet to ensure that our organisation continues to work within our budget.

Our Team Leader and Caseworkers have been busy with more client intakes and are currently arranging pre-reunions, reunions and outreach visits to Daly Waters, Elliott, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Tiwi Islands and Gove between now and July. They are also continuing with appropriate training courses to gain national accreditation and qualifications.

Our Family History Research Officers continue uploading data onto Foxtrot and closing clients' files, and continue to work closely with our Caseworkers tracing and researching families. We advertised for a Counsellor in December and received two applications. However, neither was suitable and the position will be re-advertised. Regular staff meetings are held, and our staff continues to assist families with funeral booklets and transport to events, as well as completing questionnaires for the solicitors assisting us with our push for compensation. We continue to advocate and write letters to the Prime Minister, Federal Opposition Leader and Senators regarding compensation for our NT Stolen Generations peoples. Three of our Board Directors – Maurie Ryan, Halpin Hart and Audrey Tilmouth – attended the 10th Anniversary of the National Apology in Canberra and met with other Stolen Generations peoples from across Australia and discussed our situation. There was unanimous support for us from them all and the document resulting from that forum has also been sent to the Prime Minister etc. Chairperson also continues to advocate in interviews with the media.



Maisie Austin,
CEO



Eileen Cummings,
Chairperson

NATIONAL WORKSHOPS, TRAINING, MEETINGS CONFERENCE OR FORUMS FOR LINK UP SERVICES

- Team Leader and one Caseworker will be attending the National Link Up meeting in Sydney.
- Our Family History Research Officers have attended an Elder Abuse Prevention Information workshop, and other workshops involving families and childrens.
- Caseworkers Raelene Rosas and Evelyn Perkins attend the regular Darwin Priority Working Group meetings hosted by Prime Minister & Cabinet
- Research Officer Miriam Cleary attends the regular Aboriginal Advisory Group meetings.
- Miriam attended the Advocate for change at 2018 Overcoming Indigenous Family Violence Forum in March.
- Steven Hayes attended the Darwin National Suicide Prevention Trial Steering Group Meeting on 10 Nov 2017 and will nominate for the working group.
- CEO attends the Steering Committee Darwin National Suicide Prevention meetings.
- Chairperson Eileen, Miriam Cleary and CEO have had meetings with Matthew Stephens from NT Archives regarding East Arm Leprosarium. Further meetings are scheduled.
- Evelyn Perkins, Donna Hunter and Miriam Cleary attended a meeting with Territory Families to see how our organisations can work together for our children in care.
- Chairperson continues to give talks on our Stolen Generations history.
- Trauma and Healing Community of Practice
- Organisations that attend are: (Larrakia Nation, Dept of Education, Sanderson Alliance, Transforming Training, Smith Family, Healing Foundation, Parenting Research Centre, Carers NT, Save the Children, Regional Youth Coordinator, Fast Program and Flinders University)

CLIENT ENGAGEMENT/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES/PROMOTION

Some of the activities we attended:

- Cultural Day at Juninga on 31 January.
- Chief Minister's 2018 – The Year Ahead at the Convention Centre on 12 February.
- Breakfast event at Charles Darwin University on Apology Day.
- First Circles Leadership Reception at Parliament House on 13 February.
- Reception to celebrate Chinese New Year of the Dog at Parliament House on 15 February.
- Reception to commemorate the 76th anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin on 19 February at Parliament House.
- We also endeavour to serve our members as best as we can within our funding agreement and continue to seek grants and other funding for events for their enjoyment. Sadly, we have lost more of our Stolen Generations peoples this year, and we extend our heartfelt condolences to all their families.



THE SPIRIT
LIVES
2014 - 2018

76th Anniversary of The Bombing of Darwin



Les Huddleston, Mr Peter Panquee, Shirley Collins

Northern Territory - NTSGAC Link-Up

CUTTING OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY APOLOGY DAY COMMEMORATION CAKE



RELATIONSHIPS AUSTRALIA – UNVEILING CEREMONY, NIGHTCLIFF BEACH FRONT'



NTSGAC CULTURE DAY – FEBRUARY 2018



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION – 21ST MARCH 2018 DOUBLE TREE HILTON



Young Torres Strait Islander dancers Upai-Puri-Puri group

Victoria

Link-Up Victoria

It has been a very hectic time for us here in Victoria, reunions continue to be the focus and are at the heart of all our work and with a growing current client list, increasing numbers of support requests from former clients and responding to a rising number of queries from others who are not eligible for our service or seek support some days it can be overwhelming for all of us here at Link-Up Victoria trying to assist and support everyone.

Partnerships are very important in our line of work because we know we cannot support everyone or do everything for our clients and community. Bringing relevant services together and sharing resources ensures that we can provide better outcomes for clients and community. In Victoria we enjoy a good working relationship with Connecting Home, the state funded Stolen Generations service and Bringing Them Home workers who we engage to provide additional support to clients on reunions.

STAFF

One of the hardest lessons we have learnt is that as a small program just one staff vacancy will affect our service delivery and there are no quick solutions to addressing vacancies especially given the unique nature of the work we do. We currently have a deadly group of dedicated workers and our team now includes:

Bev Murray – Program Manager

Angela Swindle – Team Leader

Angela North – Reunions Officer

Lillian Arnold Rendell – Acting Reunions Officer

Anita Singh – Reunions Officer

Jebrina Close – Records and Administration Officer

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL APOLOGY TO THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

Our event to mark the 10th Anniversary was well supported by community plus many other people from local government, mainstream organisations and elsewhere who joined us on this very historic day at Preston Town Hall. As in previous years, we partnered with the City of Darebin and the crowd of some 250 people intently listened to an array of speakers including our CEO Muriel Bamblett and the local Mayor Kim Le Cerf. The highlight of our event was our MC Eva Jo Edwards who spoke from the heart about her experiences and how they affected her as a parent today. The event included a presentation to the local Mayor for their leadership in defending the rights of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and for their commitment to the needs and aspirations of the Stolen Generations. A commemorative badge was created and circulated at our event and others held on the day.



Victoria

Reunions

All of our reunions continue to reinforce to us why our work is so important – we are still bringing our mob back home. There can be no greater longing than wanting to know who you are or where you came from. And for majority of our clients meeting family and walking on country provides such joy and peace that we earnestly hope will last their whole lifetime.

Here are some samples of feedback from some of our most recent reunions

"I hope now we are all going to move on together as sisters"

"Saying mum now has meaning"

"For the first time in my life I have not been locked up being in Tasmania"

"Being around my sisters is like we were never apart"

"I was feeling nervous and couldn't wait to meet my baby"

"It was lovely and it made my day. It also made me stronger"

"Nan looks so happy"

"Before I was thinking when I die I wanted to get cremated and my ashes spread out at sea, now I know who my father is and where he is I want to be buried next to him"

"It was fabulous getting my daughter and grandson to meet the family"

"It was great to learn about my mother's traditional country & history and meet many of my family"

"My mother now has a burial tree. She finally came back home"





HEALING PROGRAMS

There is an ongoing need for healing programs for the Stolen Generations here in Victoria and our intention has always been to provide activities, events and resources that ensure healing and/or provide a voice to the Stolen Generations. We also try to provide activities that meet specific needs within the Stolen Generations group i.e. men, women or family based activities based in either rural or city areas. Just recently we ran a Mens fishing event and an art and craft event at the Koorie Heritage Trust. We will be consulting with former and current clients via a survey to confirm whether there are other activities and events they prefer and how best we can support them to attend.

COMPENSATION FOR VICTORIAN STOLEN GENERATIONS

Whenever a compensation scheme for the Stolen Generations is announced in other states the cry for one here in Victoria becomes much more loud and last year following the announcements of schemes in South Australia followed by NSW our people were justifiably up in arms about none existing here in Victoria. Link-Up Victoria worked with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service to organise a community meeting to discuss the issues and how best to advocate to the State Government. A meeting was arranged with the State Aboriginal Affairs Minister Natalie Hutchins and we are awaiting a response to a letter that was sent seeking the State Government position.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

VACCA moved all of its programs out of the High Street, Preston building and we are now located in head office at 340 Bell Street, Preston. Not a far move but a very different space to our previous one. There may be a further move in the not too distant future and we will keep everyone posted if and when this happens.

PLANNING FOR 2018 NATIONAL SORRY DAY

National Sorry Day is fast approaching and this one is about the unveiling of the City of Yarra Stolen Generations marker to be located in Atherton Gardens, Fitzroy. Fitzroy is the birthplace of a number of Aboriginal organisations including VACCA and it is where our “parkies” congregated and where our people would go to find family. We are very proud to be one of the partners working with council over the last two years on this very important project. The marker which is called “Remember Me” by Kamilaroi/ Gamilaroi artist Reko Rennie, honours the struggles and resilience of the Stolen Generations and it will provide a space for reflection and respectful commemoration.

FUNDING

Our current three year funding cycle ends on 30 June 2018 and we are awaiting advice from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet about our ongoing funding. Once we know the details about our funding there will be a review of our service model for the purpose of looking at how we can better meet the needs of the Stolen Generations who have yet to receive a service from us.



Impression of what the Stolen Generations marker will look like at its location in Atherton Gardens, Fitzroy

Queensland

Brian Gray Reunion



My mother was born on a cattle station near Thargomindah, she was removed when she was 15 and taken to Woorabinda with 2 of her brothers. My Grandfather wrote letters to the Aboriginal Welfare Board and they eventually were allowed home.

I was born in Wanaaring near Bourke and when I was 3, we moved to Bogatunga. The police came to Bogatunga on a complaint that there was a kid that looked undernourished, which was me apparently. They flew me to Emerald, put me in hospital overnight, the next day I was in court and sent to an orphanage. That quick, one day!

I went to Birrilee Home, once they got me, they started hunting for my brothers and sisters, we all ended up in Birrilee Home.

Later they sent me and my brother to St George's Home in Rockhampton. It was a very cruel and abusive place, they punished us by flushing our heads in the toilet for talking at night. Held upside down by the legs in a bath tub. We were thrown in sewers up to our necks in waste for misbehaving.

When I was 8, they brought in Father Paul and Val Gribble who treated us well. I was 12 when Mrs Gribble told me my mother was in hospital very sick and wasn't going to live. As she was telling me, I was asking her "What's a mother?" She had to sit down and explain what a mother was, her and I both crying, I don't know what I was crying for. There was just something there that made me cry.

They wouldn't let me go and see her in the hospital or go to the funeral.

When the Orphanage shut down they sent me out bush on a station to work. I cried for weeks, I missed the kids from the home. I had a fight with the station owner and I sort of started going downhill from there.

I spent life after the Orphanage just living with Street Gangs, alcohol, drugs and just mixing with the wrong people. I started hanging around some park people in Rockhampton, they would ask, "Who's your mother?" I'd reply "I think her name was Mavis Gray". They would say "You Mavis' son. I know your mob".

Suddenly, I embarked on a journey of finding family. It was 20 years ago when I first contacted Lin-Up (Qld). I didn't even know where my mothers grave was till they found it for me. They found other information, but it was a bit too sensitive, I wasn't ready to face certain things, that I'm facing now.

When we were taken from our mother, we never saw her again. I don't know what she looks like, to this day I never seen a photo of her.

Link-Up (Qld) organised a "Graveside Reunion" for my mother in Rockhampton. This day proved to be very moving, emotional, exciting and scary for me and I was comforted by my wife Vicki.

Stepping out of the car I found my mother's unmarked grave was only a stone throw from where I played football throughout my junior years. All those years and my mother was just there.

Father Paul and Mrs Gribble attended, Father Paul did a small service. As I sat there with my thoughts, I realised that today was going to heal me of a lot of things I have carried around for the last 50 years.

Link-Up

Thaiday Reunion



My name is Rose Thaiday, 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 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.

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.

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 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 at that time and to see him breakdown because he was younger than me, it just really touched the nerves. I can never stop thanking Rob and Chenoa and I will all always remember them. 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 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.



Queensland

Guivarra Reunion



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 FATSIL 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.

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 klm) 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.

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 Mabuig 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 Konkani 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.

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.



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Parkes ACT 2600
PO Box 4924, Kingston ACT 2604
Tel: (02) 6212 3600
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National Library of Australia

Parkes Place, ACT 2600
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National Stolen Generations Alliance

Connecting Home (NSGA Head Office)
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