



LINK-UP [NSW]
Aboriginal Corporation



LINK-UP (NSW) NEWSLETTER

Issue 08 | April 2024 - June 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation acknowledge that our work is conducted on the traditional lands of the Aboriginal nations across New South Wales.

We pay our respects to Elders both past and present, and to those emerging leaders who will guide us into the future.

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to Link-Up (NSW) and our communities.

We also acknowledge members of the Stolen Generations whose connection to their country was interrupted and search for belonging and identity has been long and difficult. We stand by them in their struggle.

WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that this document may contain images of deceased persons



WHALAN REUNION



In February 2024, Link-Up (NSW) staff walked alongside client, Christine Whalan, at a graveside reunion and connected her to her Mothers and Grandmothers Wiradjuri cultural ancestry in Forbes, NSW.

Christine was especially grateful for the opportunity to attend and it was clear that for Christine, this reunion was the beginning of healing for not only herself, but for her children and grandchildren as well.

As the Link-Up (NSW) staff and client drove in to the small country town of Forbes, they made a short stop so that Christine could take her shoes off to ground herself on country and have her picture taken at the entrance sign in Forbes.

On the second day of the reunion, the clients and staff met Uncle David at the Wiradjuri Dreaming Centre in Forbes where he performed a Welcome to Country. Uncle David provided an enormous amount of knowledge and handed Christine some small gifts. Part of the gifts was a journal about the local community and the history of the traditional Wiradjuri people of Forbes.

Following the Welcome to Country, Uncle David invited Christine and the others to view the large Goanna sculpture which was located near the creek.

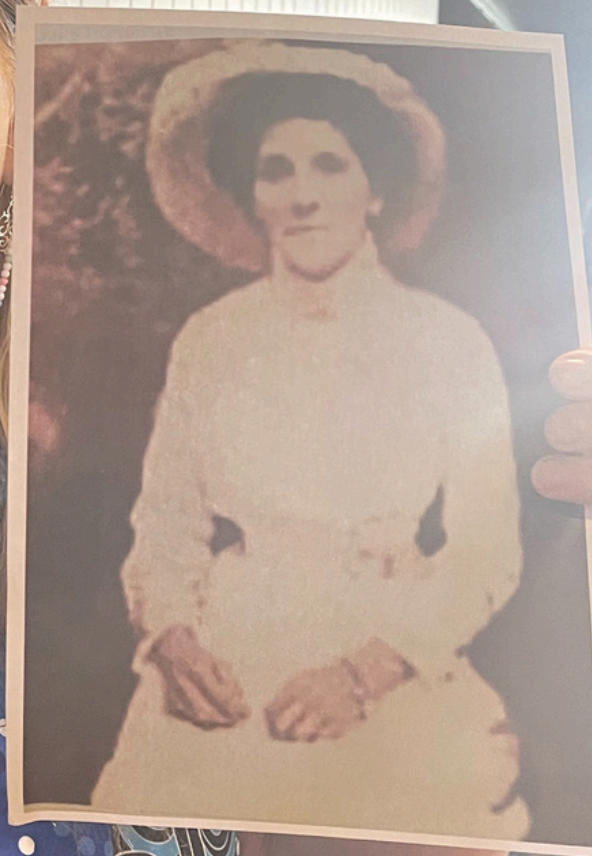
After having a break for lunch, Christine and the Link-Up (NSW) staff headed to the crematorium for a graveside reunion. On the way, they stopped to take photos of Christine standing on one of the streets where her mother would have lived and travelled down often during her time.

During the visit to the gravesite, Christine expressed beautiful words of love and forgiveness, as well as understanding towards her mother.

Christine is looking forward to continuing her journey of healing.



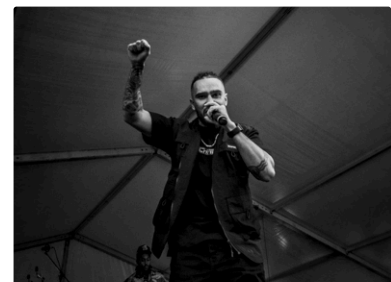






COOEE FESTIVAL 2024

On the 25th of May, 2024, Link-Up (NSW) held the annual COOEE Festival 2024 at Peter Van Hasselt Park, Shalvey. The staff are beyond proud to share that COOEE 2024 was a huge success! We have received so much positive feedback from the community and are grateful to all you mob who turned up to support the event!





The day opened with the extremely funny Andy Saunders, who did an amazing job MC'ing the entire day, followed by a Welcome to Country by proud Dharug woman, Rhiannon Wright and beautiful smoking ceremony by local Mt DrUITT Elder, Uncle Wes Marne. Throughout the day there was live music on the mainstage by Buddy and Goori Knox, Montae, Jarrod Hickling, Kobie Dee and the incredible Jessica Mauboy as our headliner. Every single one of these deadly artists blew us away with their talent and interactions with the crowd from beginning to end. The event also included traditional dance groups, Yangkay Cultural Connect and Duurunu Miru Dancers, who did some beautiful performances on the corroboree sand pit.

We want to acknowledge every single person who was involved in making this festival a success. From the performers, guest speakers, service providers, suppliers, contractors, labourers, sponsors, donators, the Festival Hire crew, NES security, AAA Traffic Control, Blacktown City Council, Mt DrUITT Police, volunteers, stallholders, food trucks and all of the Link-Up (NSW) staff for their huge effort putting this event together for our Western Sydney community.

COOEE Festival will be back in 2025 and we cannot wait to deliver another significant event to the Western Sydney community!









LATERAL VIOLENCE TRAINING

In April 2024, a number of our new Link-Up (NSW) staff attended a two-day “Lateral Violence in the Workplace” workshop, which was led by Mel Brown from Spirit Dreaming Training and Education Solutions.

Lateral Violence is displaced violence which commonly occurs when individuals internalise their feelings. As a result, aggressors of lateral violence are often peers, relatives and can also be people in powerless positions who try to gain power through bullying and violence directed at people with their community.

Attending this workshop was so important for Link-Up (NSW) as an Aboriginal organisation. It allows us to educate our staff on how to recognise and understand these behaviours, and provide the appropriate tools to navigate them within the workplace.





NEPEAN POLICE AREA COMMAND ABORIGINAL FLAG RAISING CEREMONY

On Friday, April 12, Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation was honoured to be invited to the Nepean Police Area Command Aboriginal Flag Raising Ceremony.

It was held at Penrith Police Station on Darug Country. The morning began with a Welcome to Country by local Darug woman, Melissa Stubbings and a Smoking Ceremony by Shane Laws. Shortly after, Garabara Dance group performed traditional dances for everyone in attendance.

The symbolic gesture of raising the Aboriginal flag is an important step in identifying the true history of Australia and promotes conversations and education about Indigenous culture.

With the Aboriginal flag now holding a permanent place atop of the Nepean Police Station, Nepean Police Area Command are committed to a future whereby walking together with First Nations people can build and create stronger connections to each other and to the many lands on which we live in New South Wales.

PCYC COMMUNITY DAY

On Saturday, April 6, Link-Up (NSW) Senior Management Team Members, Kylie and Tania, attended the PCYC Community Day held at PCYC Mt DrUITT in Shalvey, NSW. Kylie and Tania gave out some free merchandise while engaging with the local Mt DrUITT and yarned about what we do at Link-Up (NSW) and all the different services that we provide.



KARI COMMUNITY UNITY DAY

On Wednesday, April 24, Link-Up (NSW) staff members Uncle Dennis and Luke attended the KARI Community Unity day at the Whitlam Leisure Centre in Liverpool, NSW. The event was hosted by KARI where members of the community were able to experience Aboriginal culture first hand, enjoy live performances and connect with local service providers.



RECONCILIATION WALK 2024

On Saturday, June 1, Link-Up (NSW) Senior Management Team members, Jessica and Tania attended the Reconciliation Walk at Dawson Mall in Mt DrUITT, NSW. They proudly represented our organisation and walked to emphasise building respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and provided information on our services.



TARGETED EARLY INTERVENTION

The Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) program is designed to provide early support to children, young people, families, and communities in New South Wales.

Link-Up (NSW) plays a crucial role in delivering the TEI program, particularly focusing on supporting Aboriginal communities. We provide a range of services that include support groups, educational workshops, and community events aimed at fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment.

Our TEI caseworker, Uncle Dennis Dunn, provides cultural workshops to primary and high school students. These workshops include descriptions of the historical artifacts that Aboriginal people use, art symbols and their meanings, cultural stories and more intense cultural and mentoring support to the young men of the Daramu Young Men's Group.



On Wednesday, May 15, Uncle Dennis visited St Colomba's Catholic College in Springwood, NSW, where they hosted more than a dozen Catholic schools to learn, connect and celebrate Indigenous culture at the inaugural Parramatta Diocese Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior Students Forum. Uncle Dennis showcased artifacts that Aboriginal people used and explained the history and meaning behind them. One of the students exclaimed that "Talking with Uncle Dennis was probably my favourite bit. We talked about some of his stuff that he owns, like his emu egg, but we also talked about what it's like to be an Elder. I think days like this strengthen the community."

Our TEI program is continually evolving and we are so proud of the deadly work that Uncle Dennis is doing in the community.



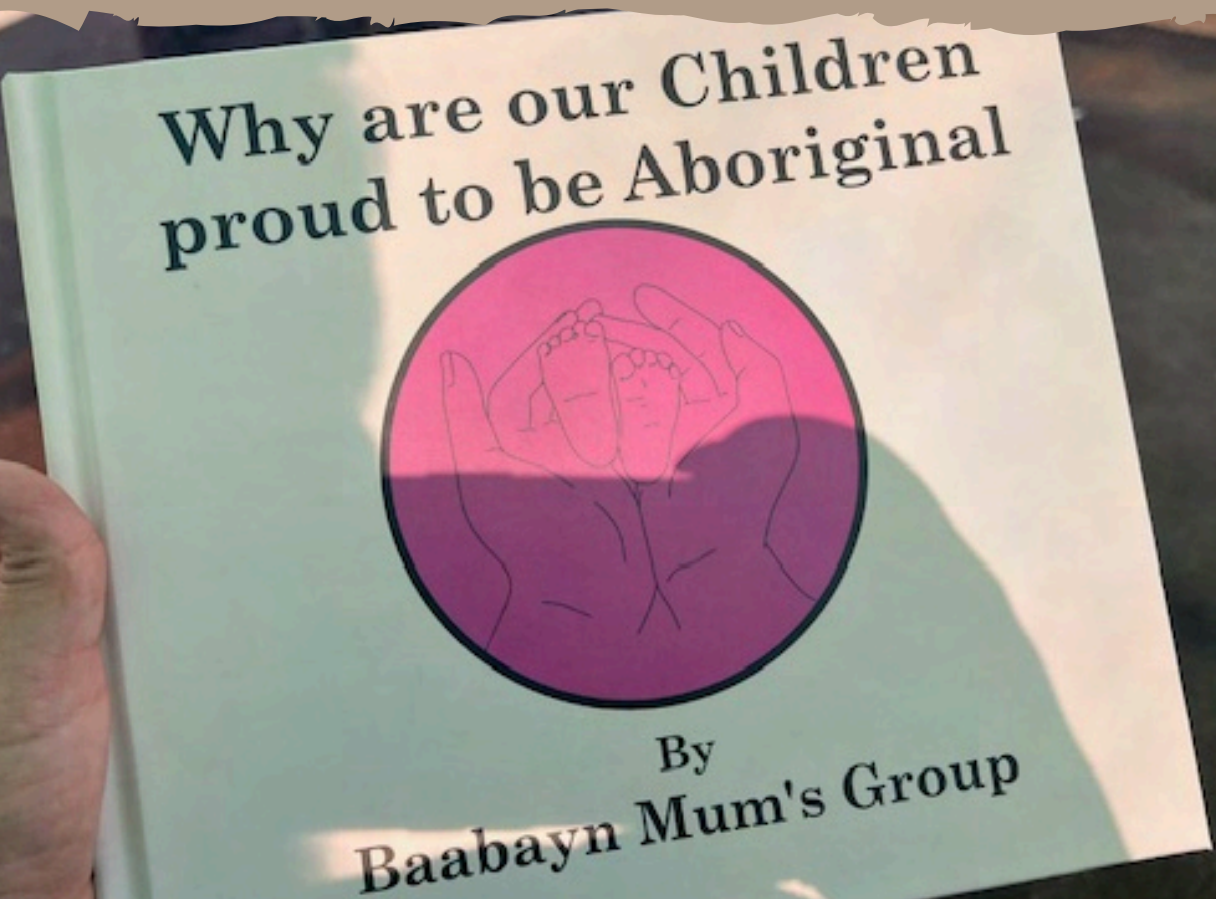
GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY PARTNERSHIPS UPDATE

In April 2024, the Greater Western Sydney (GWS) Partnerships welcomed Krystle Carroll-Elliott as the new Project Coordinator.

Krystle has spent the last 3 months engaging with the Greater Western Sydney community and the current and prospective GWS Partnership organisations. The GWS Partnership is a functioning partnership which is represented by 11 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in Western Sydney; 6 of which are new to the GWS Partnership as of April.

Krystle has attended multiple community events, including the Baabayn Aboriginal Corporations Mums and Bubs Book Launch, the April and May Mt Druitt PACC meetings, the Penrith Flag Raising Ceremony at the Penrith Police Station, the Kooly Konnect interagency, and the Western Sydney Koori Interagency.

The GWS Partnership team has also welcomed Lachlan Jackson as the new Project Officer who will assist in continuing to engage with the Greater Western Sydney community and advocate on behalf of our people and our grassroots Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.



Why are our Children
proud to be Aboriginal

By
Baabayn Mum's Group

NATIONAL REDRESS UPDATE

Link-Up (NSW) are currently assisting over 66 clients throughout the Redress application process, with another 18 new applicants awaiting appointment as of June 2024.

This quarter alone has seen 3 clients receive advance payments with their NRS applications with another 20 awaiting outcomes.

Redress Counsellor, Donna and Redress Caseworker, Stephen, travelled to 5 different regional areas across New South Wales, to continue supporting our clients through the application process and ensure they receive their desired outcome.



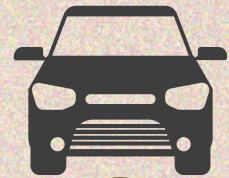
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Current Clients



18

New Applications



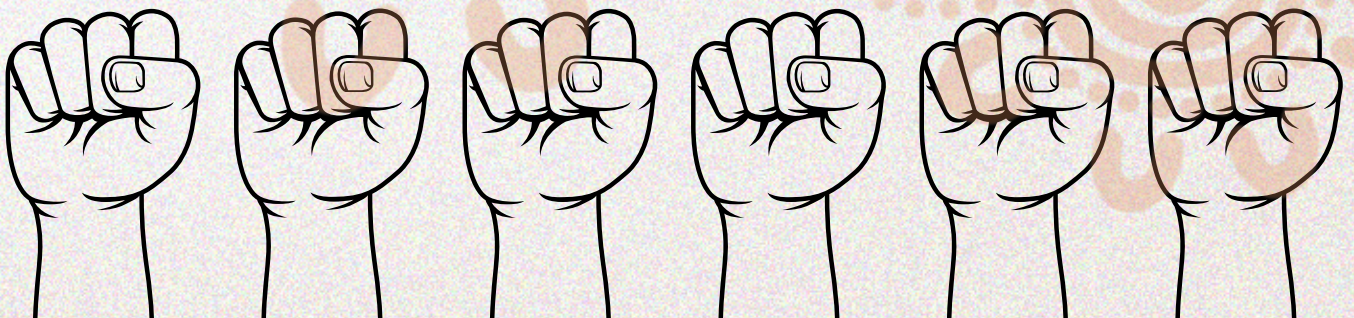
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Client Outreach Visits

FAMILY LINK UPDATE

The Family Link program at Link-Up (NSW) is a one of kind program and only available in NSW. Our dedicated team of Researchers provide evidence-based family history research to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) for young people in Out of Home Care (OOHC). The research provided is to assist DCJ in finding kinship placements, family connections and family cultural information to develop appropriate cultural care plans for these young people.

In June 2024, we have welcomed 2 new researchers to the role, which brings the team to 6 in total. With a steady flow of referrals, the Family Link team work diligently to provide the family history research as soon as possible so the young people in OOHC can form a cultural identity to the oldest living culture in the world.



STAFF PROFILE

NATASHA HILLIER

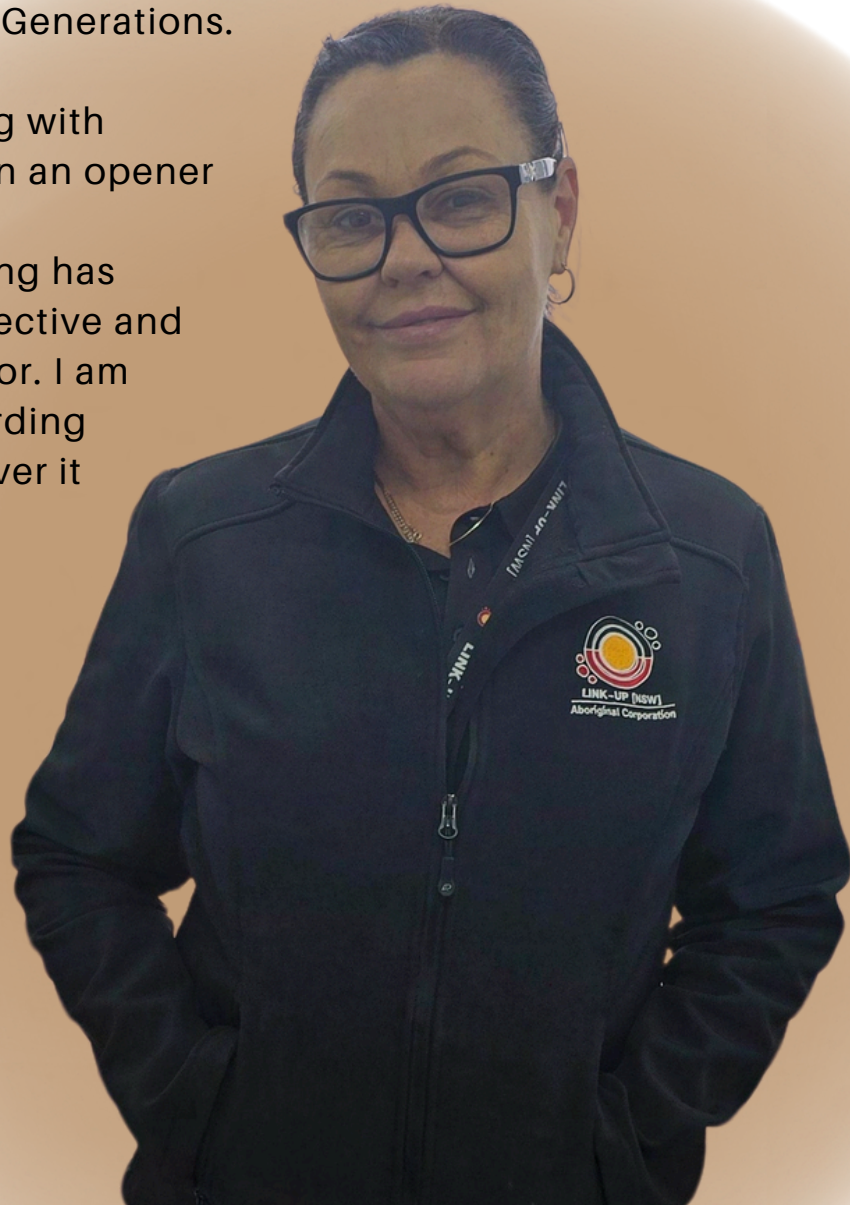


My name is Natasha and I am a proud Kamilaroi descendant. I spent majority of my childhood growing up in Marrickville, NSW with my Mum and 2 of my 9 siblings. I have my little fur baby Benji who is always keeping me on my toes when I'm not at work.

I started at Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation in February 2024 as one of the Reunification Caseworkers and it was my own maternal Grandmothers removal from Deepwater, NSW that ignited my passion to reunite families of the Stolen Generations.

Being a caseworker and working with our Stolen Generations has been an opener for me. Walking alongside our clients in their journeys of healing has given me an entirely new perspective and it is one that I am very grateful for. I am so lucky to work in such a rewarding position in all its aspects, however it is the initial phone call to our clients to let them know that we have found their family that is most rewarding for me.

I look forward to coming in to work every day and that is due to the best management and staff on the office floor who make walking through the front door every morning easy.





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About Link-Up (NSW)

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation has been reuniting Stolen Generations Members with family, community, culture and identity since 1980. Today, our services expand beyond reuniting clients; seeing us conducting family history research and identifying culture for our kids in out of home care to embed a sense of identity and belonging. Building strength in our communities, as well as counselling and addressing trauma in our people. We offer mentors, self-empowerment and always strive to prove that the Aboriginal community can do more than “just survive”!

Contact Us



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Thank you to our funders



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