



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Stolen Generations

Family tracing and reunion services are available to members of the Stolen Generations through the national Link-Up program. Link-Up was established in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the Bringing Them Home Report.

About the Stolen Generations

The Stolen Generations are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who, when they were children, were taken away from their families and communities as the result of past government policies. Children were removed by governments, churches and welfare bodies to be brought up in institutions, fostered out or adopted by white families.

The removal of Aboriginal children took place from the early days of British colonisation in Australia. It broke important cultural, spiritual and family ties and has left a lasting and intergenerational impact on the lives and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Government policies concerning Aboriginal people were implemented under different laws in the different states and territories of Australia. These laws meant that the lives of Indigenous people were controlled by government: marriages, work, wages, housing, children and access to health care.

Records about the Stolen Generations and their families were kept by governments, as well as by churches and missions. But many records have been lost: fires, floods, poor recordkeeping and changes to government departments can make it very difficult to trace family connections.

Link-Up

Link-Up organisations around Australia provide family tracing and reunion services to members of the Stolen Generations, their families, and foster and adoptive families. These services include:

- researching family and personal records
- emotional support when accessing family and personal records
- finding family members
- assistance and support at family reunions
- support and counselling before, during and after family reunion.



Link-Ups give priority to first generation members of the Stolen Generations who have directly experienced removal or separation from family and community, especially those who are elderly or have urgent health concerns.

Link-Ups also provide services to subsequent generations of family members who have been affected by intergenerational trauma related to removal, and to members of families and communities from whom children were removed.

Link-Up locations

There are Link-Up organisations in most states and territories.

- New South Wales: www.linkupnsw.org.au
- Northern Territory Stolen Generations: www.ntsgac.org.au
- Queensland: www.link-upqld.org.au
- South Australia – Nunkuwarrin Yunti: nunku.org.au/our-services/social-emotional/link-up/
- Tasmania – no Link-Up services operate in Tasmania
- Victoria: www.linkupvictoria.org.au
- Western Australia – Kimberley Stolen Generation: kimberleystolengeneration.com.au
- Western Australia – Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation: www.yorgum.org.au
- Australian Capital Territory – contact New South Wales

See: Where to get help – Link-Up services for all contact information.

History of Link-Up services

In 1997 the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) undertook the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. The Commission's findings, Bringing Them Home Report, made 54 recommendations.

Among those recommendations 30a, 30b and 33-35 which addressed the need to:

assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people separated from their families under past laws, practices and policies of Australian governments, to undertake family tracing and reunion initiatives.

As a result, the Australian Government funded a national network of family tracing and reunion services – the National Link-Up Program. A number of Link-Ups or other organisations provide reunion and family tracing services for members of the Stolen Generations before this program.

State or territory	Service	Established
New South Wales	Link-Up NSW	1980
Queensland	Link-Up QLD	1984
Northern Territory	Link-Up Services in the NT	1985
	Central Australian Aboriginal & Islander Child Care Agency	1992
Victoria	Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency	1993
Tasmania	Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre	1994
Western Australia	Yorganop Child Care Aboriginal Corp	1992–93
South Australia	Aboriginal Link-up Family Information Sect, Dept of Family and Community Services	1994–95

AIATSIS Family History Unit and Link-Ups

The AIATSIS Family History Unit works closely with Link-Ups to help members of the Stolen Generations to find their family and to find out about their family history.

- With Link-Ups, AIATSIS has developed a Cert IV in Stolen Generations Family History Research and Case Management
- AIATSIS also offers ongoing research support in family tracing.
- AIATSIS has memorandums of understanding with institutions located in Canberra and can assist Link-Ups to find and retrieve documents from the following institutions: ACT Heritage Library and ACT Territory Records, Australian War Memorial, National Archives of Australia, National Library of Australia, and the Noel Butlin Archives Centre.