



HEALING SERVICES

# LINK-UP NEWSLETTER EDITION 2

## ***Flowering Jarrah Gum***

*Jarrahd is known for its strong timber and is widely distributed in the south west of Western Australia. Aboriginal people used jarrah wood to make objects such as spears and digging sticks.*



# Kaya



Kalgoorlie Link-Up have moved into new premises and are now located within Lotteries House, which is better suited for staff and Stolen Generation clients. Our South Hedland office is working from 3 Brand Street, which is owned by a local traditional owner group, IBN.

Whilst COVID-19 continues to impact our lives, we look forward to delivering more community events, undertaking travel and facilitating more reunions and healing camps for clients in 2021. In closing, I would like to pay tribute to Yorgum Healing Services longest serving employee, Casey Petersen. Casey was our Senior Research Officer and left to take up a similar role with the Department of Local Government, Sports, and Culture. She worked with Yorgum for 10 years. Casey's contribution to healing the intergenerational trauma suffered by members of the Stolen Generations has been enormous. Her dedication, research knowledge, commitment and quality of work will be missed enormously by all at Yorgum. I wish Casey all the best in her new job.

by Augustsson

Cheryl Augustsson

## Link-Up Manager

The COVID-19 pandemic has at times challenged our delivery of services to members of our Stolen Generations and the wider Aboriginal community. Since the COVID-19 government restrictions have eased, we have continued to deliver our core work and delivery of reunions, Mission Reunions, women's healing circles, Family History Days and healing groups across our metropolitan and regional locations.

The National Link-Up Meeting, held in different locations around Australia, was cancelled, due to COVID-19 controlled border restrictions. It is envisaged, once these restrictions are lifted, these meetings will recommence and Link-Up services around the country will be able to share their experiences and lessons learnt.

Yorgum completed an assessment against the QIC Health and Community Services Standards in October 2020. The Link-Up Service was one of three service areas within Yorgum to receive a commendation.

## Events

*NAIDOC 2020 - Always Was, Always Will Be*

Whilst COVID-19 impacted NAIDOC 2020, it didn't prevent celebrations from happening. Perth Link-Up staff attended a NAIDOC event in Medina. An inspiring Welcome to Country was delivered by Uncle Barry Winmar and a smoking ceremony was held by Elder, Uncle Lindsay Calyun. Local school students entertained attendees with songs and dance. Link-Up staff provided information and promotional bags to attendees and answered questions about the Link-Up service. A tasty, hearty feed of kangaroo stew and

damper was shared and enjoyed by all for lunch.

An art board with pictures of significant places such as Lake Monger, Heirisson Island, Kings Park, the Derbarl Yerrigan (Swan River) and Wave Rock was made available for members of the public to record their comments and thoughts about the week upon.

Some of the comments from attendees collected on the day can be read below...



## Events

### **30th Annual Silent Domestic Violence Memorial March at Supreme Court Gardens**

Yorgum staff attended the 30th Annual Silent Domestic Violence Memorial March. The event was opened by the Hon. Simone McGurk MLA, who gave a moving tribute to Angela Hartwig who recently retired from the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services. Madijitil Moorna, a group of indigenous and non-indigenous people, sung in Noongar language and performed a couple of very moving songs. There was a very touching, personal story from Leah Atkinson who shared her journey of living with and overcoming her domestic violence situation. This was followed by the laying of a rose on symbolic coffins for the 15 victims killed since this time last year.



### **Wadjuk Northside Aboriginal Community Centre**



We visited the Wadjuk Northside Community Resource Centre to promote Link-Up services, including family history research to their Elders group. We were welcomed by Len and Denise Yarran. Len opened with a Welcome to Country spoken in both Noongar and English. Casey Petersen, our Senior

Research Officer, spoke about how family history research for the Stolen Generations is undertaken. The Elders were very interested in what we do at Link-Up and the important role we play in helping others heal. They particularly enjoyed looking through the information, which included many family trees. They pored over the family trees we had brought looking for names from their families and connecting those they found with others. Being able to share stories and family links and connections is important to Aboriginal people. We need to ensure family history information is passed on, so that younger generations know where they come from. The staff at Wadjuk Northside made us feel very welcome and prepared a delicious homemade soup which was amazing on a cool, winters day.

## Events

### **Wandoor Women's Rehabilitation Prison Expo**

Yorgum attended the Wandoor Women's Rehabilitation Prison Expo. The expo showcased a variety of services and providers that assist women with transitioning back into the community, helping to secure employment and obtain counselling if required, post their release. The Yorgum booth was attended by staff from across the service including Link-Up, Clinical, Disability and the Family Support Services. A lovely morning tea was provided by the residents.



### **Men's Healing Day - Kalgoorlie**

Kalgoorlie Link-Up worked in collaboration with Hope Community Services to facilitate a Men's Healing Day with a group of Stolen Generations clients. The healing day provided a safe space for Stolen Generations members to yarn and share stories.

The group visited Rowles Lagoon, Ora Banda, the State Battery and Broad Arrow. During the gold rush days, Ora Banda was one of a number of established towns which provided employment for many people. The old State Battery is a significant place, as it was where many of our old people were employed. Visits to these places generated discussion and an exchange of stories, both good and bad, on how life was for Aboriginal people.

### **Women's Healing Circle - South Hedland**

Link-Up South Hedland continues to deliver a Women's Healing Circle on a Wednesday morning from 10am-2pm. On any given week, there are between 9-16 elders who attend and engage in art and craft activities and yarning, with many stories of the Mission times being shared. Our Elders are very active and respected in their communities.

# Reunions

## **Graveside Reunion**

Our Link-Up Team Leader Colleen and Jan, one of Link-Up's counsellors supported Helen and her daughter Natasha on two graveside reunions. Before the graveside visits, Helen and Natasha attended a wreath making session at Yorgum.

The first graveside visit was for Helen's grandfather at Karrakatta Cemetery. His grave, along with others, had been made into a peaceful reflective garden. Helen and Natasha took some time in this space, to talk about stories they knew about him and reflected on his life.

The second graveside visit was to Guildford Cemetery, where Helen's grandmother was buried. Helen was curious about who was buried with her grandmother, so Colleen phoned the Cemetery Board to see if

### **Katanning Missions Reunion**

The Katanning Missions Reunion was held at the Katanning Noongar Community Centre in Katanning, an event for Stolen Generations members that resided on missions located in the South West such as Wandering, Gnowangerup, Carrollup, Marribank and Roelands.

The day began with Clive Hayden performing a Welcome to Country and a minute silence to pay respect to those in the community who had recently passed. Following on from this, several community members shared their stories of resilience, courage and survival. These stories brought the group together in a powerful way by acknowledging the many challenges and adversities that had been experienced during their time on the missions and continue to impact on the emotional wellbeing of our Stolen Generations members.

The story telling brought healing and a sense of solidarity. Attendees stated that the day was

they had any information. Helen and Natasha took some time to rake and tidy the gravesite. Helen also decided to search for the graves of her two aunts who were buried when she was five. When Colleen returned with the names of who Helen's grandmother was buried with, everyone present was astounded to find out that these were Helen's 2 aunts. This was a goosebumps moment!

Helen and Natasha reported that tending the graves and laying down the wreaths was a healing experience. As Helen now knows where her grandmother and two aunts are buried, Helen will bring family to visit and share family history and stories.

Supporting clients in their healing journey is a very rewarding experience.



important to acknowledge what being removed from family meant and the deep grief and sadness felt for the people whom they had lost on the way. As one Stolen Generations brother put it "To tell the story is good healing". The strength which was evident in the relationships with one another were built because of their shared suffering. Tales of fun times were also told. Garry Ryder talked about swimming excursions and games the children played such as marbles, elastics and the infamous steam rollers which brought happy memories and smiles to faces.

# Meet Our Mob

Hi everyone,

My name is Angela Moncada and I started working as a counsellor with Yorgum Link-Up in September 2020.

I recently decided to change my career from education to holistic healing and wellbeing. I have a passion for helping all people, specifically those who live with trauma, so I decided to study a degree in Counselling. I am also trained in Core Evolution which is a mind/body/spirit integrative healing approach and enjoy working from a body-centered perspective.

Listening to the Stolen Generations client's stories and learning about the history of Aboriginal people has been enlightening for me. I feel privileged to be part of this journey as a Link-Up Counsellor with the Stolen Generations.

I am very excited to be part of the Yorgum Link-Up Team and look forward to meeting you for a yarn on the path to healing.



of Noongar places throughout the Perth CBD, I suggested that the research team visit the Art Gallery to have a look at the map. I also had a vested interest as the map was a project my daughter worked on.

This map is available for viewing online **Gnarla Boodja Mili Mili (Our Country on Paper)**.

My name is Rebecca Bairnsfather-Scott. I am a proud Noongar woman with connections to the Southwest and Wheatbelt regions; Gnaala Karla Boodja, South West Boojarah and Wagyl Kaip from my maternal grandmother and Ballardong from my maternal grandfather.

I commenced working with Link-Up in February 2019 as a Research Officer and I now hold the position of Senior Research Officer. In my previous role, I spent over 18 years as a Heritage Assessment Officer within the Heritage branch of the former Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

I am very passionate about my heritage. When I heard that the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSCI) were launching an interactive map called Gnarla Boodja Mili Mili (Our Country on Paper) that included the names

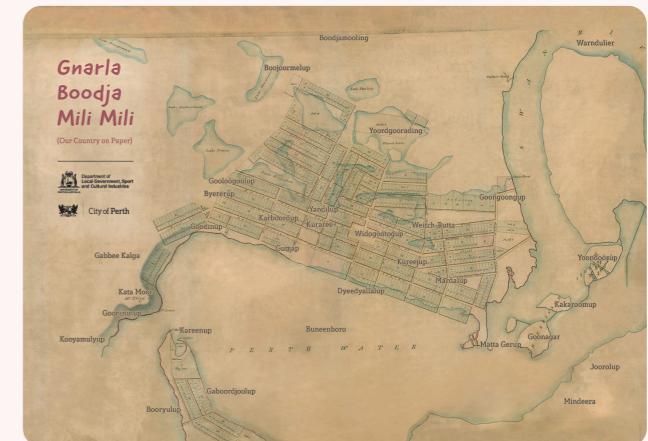


Image Source / Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries



My name is Casey Petersen and I will be leaving Yorgum Link-Up as the Senior Researcher after 10 years of service.

I have been very fortunate in my career, to work in an area that I am passionate about and to work for an organisation that supports and empowers the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. During my time at Yorgum, I have seen the organisation grow and expand into the regions of the Pilbara, the Goldfields and into the Great Southern. It is truly amazing to see how far reaching Yorgum is in Western Australia.

I am very lucky to have witnessed so many successful reunions, to have met so many strong and amazing

community members as well as to have had the privilege of hearing so many of our Elders and community stories. I am very proud to have been a part of the Link-Up program.

The past and present workers of the Yorgum Healing Services and Link-Up program that I have worked with have shown me a true understanding of team work and unity and I am blown away by the comradeship and solidarity that everyone shows in working to service our people and community.

I have never been a part of something so huge and life changing before and to have been a small part of it is an honour.

So I will not say goodbye; but that I will see you all soon.



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