



FEBRUARY 2018

FrontierNews

Serving those in the Outback

In this issue

Sunny side of Cunnamulla

A commitment to serve

Support during a time of grief

Frontier Flashback: Kennedy Remote Area



Frontier Services
serving remote Australia

From the Director

The lessons we've learnt

As I approach my first anniversary with Frontier Services, I reflect on the communities we've visited, the people we've helped, and the lessons we've learned.

From the hot and rugged Pilbara in Western Australian to the rolling hills of the Midlands in Tasmania, we travelled thousands of kilometres to some of the remotest parts of Australia.

When I was in Cobar in central western New South Wales as part of an Outback Links placement, I was fortunate to meet Marcia. She shared her love for country life with us and demonstrated the strength of people in the bush. Living in extreme isolation – she's widowed with her nearest neighbour many kilometres away – she was grateful for our visit and highlighted the power of just being there to show that you care.

Love was felt out in the bush as well as close to home, as I visited many of our congregations. They feel just like family. Our congregations have shown us so much love and warmth, and reinforced the importance of community and belonging. Meeting them has strengthened my resolve to ensure those living in remote Australia receive support when they need it the most.

However, seeing all these communities I learned that the gap between metropolitan and remote areas is much wider than I previously thought. The differences in poverty, health outcomes and access to vital services that we think only exist in developing countries are right here too. This gap is vast in seeing our First Peoples on their homelands.

Australians living in remote areas die from suicide at a rate greater than twice that of city people¹, yet government spending on mental health care services in remote areas can be 10 times less².

We believe that everyone deserves a fair go and access to

support, irrespective of where they call home.

Our bush chaplains fulfil a role that most people would struggle to do. Visiting people on properties for a cuppa and a chat they are often on the frontline for identifying issues. They lend a sympathetic ear and can refer people to other service providers as appropriate. They provide spiritual guidance in their communities, sharing in both their joys and sorrows. Their faith and belief in their calling go beyond our understanding. I know we need to support them more.

In all this travelling, I'm so proud of the impact our volunteers have on these



FrontierNews



www.facebook.com/FrontierServices

FEBRUARY 2018 VOL 120 NO 1
REGISTERED BY PRINT POST – PP255 003/01721
ISSN 1033 – 2235

EDITOR **Felipe Beltran**
DESIGN AND LAYOUT **Jody Green Design**
PRINTING **Oxford Printing**

PUBLISHED BY
Frontier Services
Level 10, 222 Pitt St Sydney
GPO Box 2527 Sydney NSW 2001
Tel 1300 787 247
Fax 02 8270 1313
Email enquiries@frontierservices.org
Web www.frontierservices.org

people's lives through our Outback Links program.

They provide our farmers with relief from financial stresses by donating their skills to do repairs and maintenance on equipment, the home and around the property, which can include fixing tractors, gardening, repainting and mending fences. Many of them also give up their time during December to look after properties so farmers can visit

loved ones over Christmas.

I'm ever so grateful for our valued donors who recently made contributions in support of Outback Links and our bush chaplains. I thank you. You enable us to continue our vital services to keep more farmers on their land as well as build resilience in remote communities.

Jannine Jackson
National Director

¹<http://www.aihw.gov.au/deaths/mort/>

²<https://mhsa.aihw.gov.au/resources/workforce>

You can help us grow

- Help us:**
- Raise more funds to bring our vital services to more communities in remote Australia
 - Support those in need by volunteering on an Outback Links trip

If you know someone who would like to support or be involved with us, please ask them to call us at Frontier Services on 1300 787 247.

CIRCULATION 36,000

FRONT COVER Jenny MacKay, Hereward

COPYRIGHT NOTICE: *Frontier News* is the quarterly newsletter of the Uniting Church Frontier Services. Copyright in this publication is owned by Frontier Services. Congregations or fellowships wishing to reproduce material contained in *Frontier News*, may do so without permission providing that material is attributed to Frontier Services.

3 **FrontierNews** February 2018



ABOUT FRONTIER SERVICES

Frontier Services is a national agency of the Uniting Church in Australia, established to continue the unified work of the Australian Inland Mission, the Methodist Inland Mission, and the inland mission of the Congregational Union, and works with people across 85% of the continent, including Aboriginal communities and isolated properties.

OUR BUSH CHAPLAINS

The Sunny side of Cunnamulla

The Cunnamulla – Burke & Wills Patrol covers 450,000km² in southwest Queensland, with the eastern boundary from Mt Tabor to Bollon, extending west to Bedourie and south to Cameron Corner.

Since heading the patrol, Rev Sunil 'Sunny' Kadaparambil has been providing pastoral care to 330 properties as well as 23 communities and small country towns in the region. He also provided an informal chaplaincy service for police, school students and parents.

Being the only resident clergy, apart from a Catholic priest in Charleville, Sunny said the patrol is a vital connection to the wider church within this region of Queensland.

"Ecumenical cooperation is very important in this region, especially during times when other traditions are not able to appoint ministry agents," he said. "This patrol is well supported because people receive practical, moral and spiritual support, especially during drought and financial crises."



Providing support during a long drought

In March 2017, nearly 90 percent of Queensland was declared in drought. While this later eased to 70 percent in May, it has remained at this rate into the new year.

For the area Sunny's patrol covers, the long-term forecast for rain remains bleak. He understands that living in drought year on year is a heavy burden, especially for those in isolation.

"The area I cover is badly affected by severe drought, which impacts on people's mental health," Sunny said. "I really understand what people are going through because I come from a poor family; we also had a farm."

Sunny has been lending a sympathetic ear, assisting families and individuals to identify mental health issues, and

referring people on to appropriate agencies when required.

He also provided support by organising drought relief activities such as last year's Outback Links trip to Cunnamulla (story in the May 2017 edition of Frontier News). Robyn Russell, whose Charlotte Plains property received volunteers last year, knows Sunny very well and is grateful for all his hard work.

"I like Sunny because he knows it's better to be out there doing things for people," Robyn said. "It's great to have someone from Frontier Services who comes and listens to you – it's a release valve where you sit and chat through things, and they help out where they can."

Crossing the border

After more than 3 years serving Outback Queensland, Sunny is preparing for a new adventure in South Australia to take up the Parkin-Sturt Patrol, following Rev Paul Glazbrook's retirement.

Presbytery of the Downs Minister, Neil Thorpe thanked Sunny for his dedication and commitment during his patrol.

"There are many people within the patrol area, this Presbytery, and many others beyond its bounds in Queensland who have formed a special bond with Sunil as he has represented the ministry undertaken in the Cunnamulla – Burke & Wills areas,"

Neil said. "What will not be lost is Sunil's enthusiasm and deep commitment to ministry to people in the mission field of Outback Australia. His time with us will be remembered. Your prayers for him and his family as he settles into his new ministry in South Australia are sought."

To those living in remote Australia a helping hand is invaluable, but turning up and simply showing you care can make all the difference. The people of his patrol know Rev Sunil for his glowing smile and disposition – and that is why the community has come to know him as 'Sunny'.



Share your story

If you have a story with one of our bush chaplains that you would like to share, please call us on 1300 787 247 and ask to speak with Felipe or email your stories to felipeb@frontierservices.org.

You can help us go further

Our bush chaplains travel tens of thousands of kilometres and collectively visit thousands of families and individuals, but getting to remote locations is one of our biggest expenses. From just \$10 per month you can gift an extra tank of fuel for one of our bush chaplains. If you can help, please call us on 1300 787 247 and ask about our regular giving program.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Combining a passion for discovery with a commitment to serve



For the past eight years, Howard and Mary Jones have combined their love for discovering Australia with their commitment to helping and serving others by joining Outback Links. In that time, they have given hundreds of hours and travelled thousands of kilometres across the country to help families in need.

Brother and sister Peter and Jenny MacKay live on Hereward Station, about 71km northwest of Longreach. Both are in their late 70s and with their current state of health, day to day tasks had been piling up on them and becoming harder to do.

When they arrived, Peter, who has Parkinson's was in Longreach Hospital. At the same time, Jenny needed surgery on her ankle, but was reluctant to go to hospital in case anything happened to her brother.

Fortunately for them, they were referred to Outback Links by a member of the Longreach Uniting Church, where Howard and Mary recently spoke about the volunteer program.

Living on 80,000 acres in a home built

some 100 years ago, Jenny and Peter really needed help to look after the animals, make some repairs and do some general maintenance and gardening around the property. Fortunately, Howard and Mary were still travelling in the area and were able to lend a hand.

"Peter 4: 10-11 is our inspiration to gracefully serve others using the gifts and strengths God has provided us."

Over the next two weeks, Mary cleaned the store room, tidied up the pantry and cooked meals for most days; while Howard went about general repairs and maintenance like fixing loose floorboards, door hinges and kitchen cupboards as well as painting and pruning.

Their placement could not have come at a better time. When Howard and Mary returned from a Sunday service in Longreach, on their second week, they discovered that Jenny had been taken to



Celebrated for 8 years of service

Howard and Mary's hard work and dedication were recently recognised by The Centre for Volunteering, which awarded them both the 2017 Senior Volunteer of the Year Award (Central Coast Region) and the overall Volunteer of the Year (Central Coast Region) for their work with Outback Links.

"When we retired, we spent a couple of years discovering the beauty around Australia in our caravan," Mary said. "Seeing an ad for Outback Links, we felt that volunteering was a way we could combine our love of travelling with our desire to help people, as well as gain an appreciation for why people live and work in such remote areas."

Every year, Howard and Mary dedicate between 3 and 5 months to community trips, spending an average 2 weeks at each property. They said they love using their

hospital with chest pains. Had they not been there, there would have been no one to look after and feed the animals.

Thankfully, the doctor deemed Jenny well enough to return home the next day. In a hopeful sign of things to come the skies opened up and delivered 80mm of rainfall, enough to fill the nearby creeks flowing into the dam. Towards the end of their placement, Jenny took Howard and Mary on a sunset trip to look at how the main dam was filling – and it was filling well.



skills to help people as well as being a listening ear to those who are going through a difficult time.

"It's wonderful being able to make, fix or repair things around the home which the owners haven't had the time to do as caring for their animals is their top priority," Howard said. "By helping people in the Outback we're showing that other people care for them."

Howard and Mary, we thank you for your commitment to helping those living in remote Australia. We could not do our work without people like you!



Volunteer with us

Volunteers like Howard and Mary help us to continue to bring hope and resources to those living in isolation. If you would like to change the lives of those doing it tough in remote Australia, why not take part in a life-changing experience by volunteering for Outback Links!

Visit outbacklinks.com.au for more information and to sign up.

Share your Outback Links stories with us

Do you have an Outback Links story you'd like to share?

We're always looking for stories to inspire others to support our program so we can help more people living in isolation. Call us on 1300 787 247 and ask to speak with Felipe or email your story to felipeb@frontierservices.org.

Providing support during a time of grief

Helen and her husband Rick have been involved with Outback Links for a number of years. In the past, our volunteers have helped them with

caretaking of their Sorrento property during hospital visits as well as repainting and general tidying around the home, sheds and garden.

In late November, Helen called out to us for help after the sudden death of her elderly father. Organising a funeral is something we would all dread; even if just across town it would be a struggle. It is hard to imagine organising one 600km away and not just leaving your house, but your station.

"We couldn't just leave the property," Helen said. "Who'd look after the animals?"

Thankfully, the stars aligned and one of our volunteers, David Brown, was able to lend a hand. He drove more than 700km one-way from Uralba, just west of Ballina to Helen and Rick's property, which lies west of Lightning Ridge on the northern New South Wales border.

Everyone was thankful for David's help.

"If no one had been able to help, Rick wouldn't have been able to come (to the funeral)," Helen said. "And I really needed him there with me."

David said the things he enjoyed the most from his recent Outback Links placement were appreciating the beauty and vastness of Sorrento while being able to help a family during a time of grief.

"The property was fascinating," he said. "It was 35 thousand acres with a garden that was unbelievable given it's sustained by bore water and featured some great plants and landscaping."

"I enjoyed the gardening, looking after the cattle and spending some valuable time with Rick, who returned a little early, chatting and driving around their property.

"I didn't get to meet Helen but we did have some good telephone conversations. I wish I had more time to help."



We need more volunteers

David said he signed up as a volunteer with Outback Links through a desire to help people in remote Australia.

"I believe it offers a very worthwhile opportunity to show compassion and solidarity with the good people of Outback Australia who work so hard to survive economically and emotionally. I have met some amazing people through my experiences and the survival spirit they possess in just incredible."

You can make a real difference by volunteering with us and support people living in remote and rural Australia, like Helen and Rick, **please call Michelle McLeod on 1300 731 349, email outback.links@frontierservices.org or visit outbacklinks.com.au.**

FRONTIER FLASHBACK

Looking back on the Kennedy Remote Area

As Frontier Services looks to our future, it is important to remember our history. Frontier Flashback is a new section dedicated to linking our history with our work today.

In the previous issue of Frontier News (November 2017), we introduced Rev Karama Ioapo who recently commenced the renewed Kennedy Remote Area. In this issue's Frontier Flashback, we reflect on the patrol's origins...

The Australian Inland Mission's patrol of north Queensland began in 1933 when Rev P. J. Thomas, based on Thursday Island, commenced his pack horse patrols, south from Mapoon to the Mitchell River.

In 1940 he was equipped with a vehicle and made his regular patrols in the area until he enlisted in the Second Australian Imperial Force in 1942.

While some work was carried out in the intervening years in the southern area of the Peninsula by Rev Glasgow Denning, the patrol was not fully reconstituted until the appointment of Rev Colin Ford in 1951.

The main industry of the day was cattle raising but in the north the soil was thin,

scrub-covered and tick-infested. For those pioneering in the day the hardships were many and the conditions severe, with many homesteads being completely isolated during the wet season.

Once, the area covered by the patrol attracted thousands of prospectors, but many place names on the map would later become ghost towns exhausted of the tin, copper and what little gold created them.

The discovery of vast bauxite fields – almost doubling global reserves of metal-grade bauxite (the main source of aluminium) – on the west coast of the peninsula in the mid-1950s would later have a profound effect on the economic development of the region.

In 1958, the Australian Inland Mission completed construction of the new Coen Hospital. Materials were freighted by landing craft or overland, with Rev Ford working as a labourer on the project.

In addition to this major commitment, Rev Ford carried out patrols covering over 32,000 track kilometres in an area generally conceded, at the time, to contain the worst terrain in Australia. Of this work, he reported:

"The ministerial work carried out in recent years has been in true AIM tradition – the various ordinances and sacraments of the church have been conducted wherever and whenever possible, both in townships and homesteads.





AIM Coen Hospital in 1958



Official Opening AIM Hospital

"It should be remembered that it was arising out of this normal pastoral ministry that the need for an outpost such as Coen was recognised. I feel this is important because otherwise the impression can be given that medical and educational outposts emerge 'out of the blue' as it were, rather than as a direct result of regular patrol work by a padre.

"Undoubtedly, as a result of the patrol work during the last 6 years and of the established of our new Coen outpost, the AIM has established a witness in areas which had, for a number of reasons, been neglected either completely or for many years."

We are thankful to Rev Colin Ford for his passion and vision for Kennedy. We pray for Rev Karama Ioapo as he continues this legacy into the future.

Encompassing the Cape York Peninsula, the Eastern Gulf Savannah and the Northern Goldfield regions, the new Kennedy Remote Area covers 290,000km².

Already, Rev Ioapo has completed his first patrol trip north from his base of Atherton, building relationships with communities and organisations in Laura, Coen, Weipa and Mapoon. We wish him well and ask for your prayers as he embarks on his exciting new journey.

Send us your Frontier Flashback

These historic photos of the Coen Hospital and its official opening with Rev Ford were sent to us by Donald Sheehy, who helped with electrical work during the hospital's construction. Thank you, Donald, for sharing these photos and your story with us!

If you have a Frontier Flashback to share, please contact us on 1300 787 247 or email your story and photos to felipeb@frontierservices.org



AIM Sunday School Coen 1958

the gift of hope

You can change someone's life today

Each year, our bush chaplains and volunteers travel tens of thousands of kilometres to visit people in remote Australia, offering pastoral care and practical assistance. Together, they help us to continue bringing hope and resources to those in the Outback – but they need your help.

It's the gift that gives twice: Whether for a special occasion or in lieu of gifts, giving your loved ones a Frontier Services Gift Card will help us continue to send our bush chaplains and volunteers to be with people living in isolation. These gifts offer so much hope to those living in Outback Australia.

\$25



A cuppa and a chat



\$50



Mend a fence



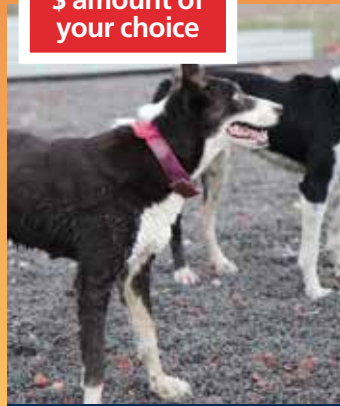
\$100



Fill a tank



\$ amount of your choice



The gift of mateship



YES, I/we would like to purchase Gift Cards and/or make a donation to Frontier Services

YOUR GIFT	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
A cuppa and a chat (\$25): Your gift will help a bush chaplain call on a person living in isolation.		\$25	\$
Mend a Fence (\$50): Your gift can go towards the purchase of materials utilized by our volunteers to complete repairs to farm infrastructure.		\$50	\$
Fill a tank (\$100): Getting there is one of our biggest expenses. Your gift can help fill the tank of a Patrol Minister on the road allowing them to travel hundreds of kilometres at a time.		\$100	\$
The gift of mateship (minimum \$10): A gift of the amount of your choosing will ensure that the people of remote Australia know they are not alone.		\$ Minimum \$10	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to include a donation to help the people of remote Australia. (Note: donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.)			\$
TOTAL \$			\$

NOTE: Please allow 2 weeks from the date we receive your order for your Gift Cards to reach you. They are blank on the inside so you can personalise them before gifting to family and friends.

Please complete this order form and send via:

Post

Frontier Services
GPO Box 2527,
Sydney, NSW 2001

Email

fsfundraising@frontierservices.org

Alternatively, please call us on
1300 787 247 to place an order
over the phone.



Frontier Services

serving remote Australia

13 FrontierNews February 2018

PLEASE ENSURE YOU COMPLETE YOUR ADDRESS DETAILS

Supporter Number (if known)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/
Dr/Rev PLEASE PRINT

Address

Postcode

Daytime Telephone

Date | |

I/WE WISH TO PAY BY

☐

Cheque/Money Order (payable to Frontier Services)

☐

Credit card – please fill in details below

Credit card – please debit ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Name on Card

Signature

Expiry Date |

Card number

FEB18



Please note: Ezidebit Australia will appear on your bank or credit card statement for all donations made via credit card.

REGULAR GIVING FORM

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO:
GPO BOX 2527 SYDNEY NSW 2001**

☐ **I/WE WISH TO BECOME A REGULAR SUPPORTER**

☐ Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Ms ☐ Dr ☐ Rev PLEASE TICK

Address (please print)

State

Postcode

Email

Daytime Telephone

Mobile Number

Date of birth (optional)

D	D	/	M	M	/	Y	Y
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

PLEASE NOMINATE YOUR MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION LEVEL:

☐ \$30 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other: \$

Please debit my: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Name on Card

Signature

Card number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Expiry Date

		/		
--	--	---	--	--

FEB18



Please note: Ezidebit Australia will appear on your bank or credit card statement for all donations made via credit card.



REGULAR GIVING

Life's beyond harsh in the Outback

Can you lend a hand to more people in remote Australia?

We are delighted so many people have already chosen to make a regular donation so our bush chaplains and volunteers can help more people and families who are socially isolated.

For as little as \$20 a month you can join our partners bringing loving kindness to people sooner when hardship strikes. Your regular donation ensures we can be there when we are needed most and it allows us to plan ahead. It is a visit to someone in crisis who needs a friend; food and essentials to a drought stricken property; help with repairs; or a trustworthy person to look after livestock so a grazier can get away for medical care.

It is easy to become a partner. You can start today by filling in the attached form and returning it to us.

Thank you from those in remote Australia you have already helped. Thank you from those who need us now.

What your monthly gift could give to an isolated family:



\$30 A cuppa and chat
with a bush chaplain
providing hope
through drought, loss,
sickness and hardship



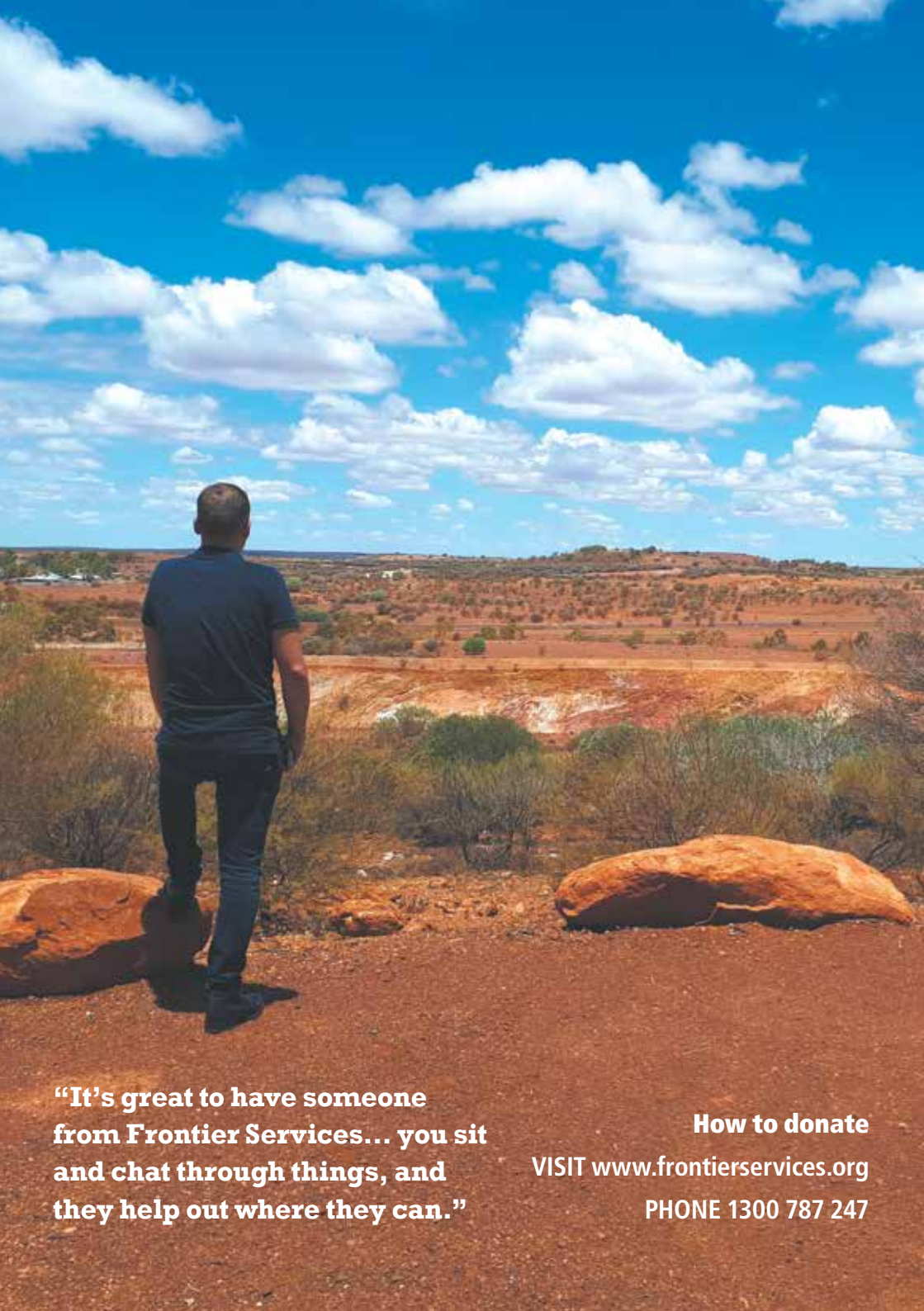
\$50 Mend a fence
or other farm
infrastructure



\$100 Fill a tank
to speed support
from bush chaplains
to more families in
remote areas

**"God didn't promise days without pain,
laughter without sorrow ... But He did promise
strength for the day, comfort for the tears."**

Pastor Paul Glazbrook, 2017 bush chaplain, Parkin-Sturt Patrol



**“It’s great to have someone
from Frontier Services... you sit
and chat through things, and
they help out where they can.”**

How to donate
VISIT www.frontierservices.org
PHONE 1300 787 247