

AUGUST 2019

# FrontierNews

Forging friendships  
and lifting spirits  
in the Outback



**Frontier  
Services**  
Standing with  
people in the bush



# From the Director

## A message from Jannine



I can't say 'thank you' enough. I am overwhelmed by the outpouring of support you've shown our farmers over the past year. A year that's been very tough for them.

Battling relentless drought, many faced extreme heat, bush fires, torrential rain and floods in 2019. The recovery and rebuilding efforts are ongoing and will continue for years to come.

This year, for the first time in over a decade, Australia has had to import wheat after drought across the eastern states saw grain production fall 20 percent<sup>1</sup>. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences say we're facing a third straight year of lower-than-average production<sup>2</sup>.

Despite some regions receiving rain, it often hasn't been enough for a deep soak. This is crippling our growers and placing livestock feed supplies in a precarious position – there's simply not enough hay to go around. Graziers are telling us they've had to either destock or pay ever-increasing prices for hay. It's just heartbreaking.

Our farmers have endured so much for so long. But what's getting them through is knowing that other people are there for them. People who care and people who are willing to give them a hand up.

We recently visited a number of farms around the town of Moree in central-northern New South Wales, bringing a team of 20 skilled volunteers in partnership with Qantas Cabin Crew Team.

Over the course of a week, our incredible volunteers helped with projects farmers say they simply couldn't get around to given the day-to-day demands of looking after their stock. Volunteers worked on fencing to give farmers better use of their land, renovations to bring comfort to the family home, and painting to refresh tired and worn-out exteriors.

The helping hands, friendship and respite our volunteers bring with them are so valued by people in remote Australia. We share these stories with you and more in this edition of Frontier News.

I believe we can all do our part by buying Australian grown, volunteering with Outback Links or hosting a Great Outback BBQ this September. Your ongoing support makes all this possible. Thank you!

**Jannine Jackson**  
National Director

References:

1. [www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/may/15/australia-to-import-wheat-for-first-time-in-12-years-as-drought-eats-into-grain-production](http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/may/15/australia-to-import-wheat-for-first-time-in-12-years-as-drought-eats-into-grain-production) [Accessed June 2019]
2. <https://finance.nine.com.au/business-news/aust-cuts-wheat-forecast-by-11-per-cent/d2b5e7d3-d88e-4bcf-a4d2-c9f5c1949191> [Accessed June 2019]



Image: Cuong Lam

Our next generation of farmers showing volunteer Peter Weir how to milk a cow

## Support our Aussie Farmers

- Register to host your very own Great Outback BBQ by visiting [greatoutbackbbq.com.au](http://greatoutbackbbq.com.au) or calling us on 1300 787 247
- Volunteer with us! Sign up and lend a hand at [frontierservices.org/volunteer](http://frontierservices.org/volunteer)



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**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.

# Standing with farmers in Moree

In May, we partnered with Qantas Cabin Crew Team to bring twenty skilled volunteers to farms around the township of Moree, NSW. By the end of the week, lifelong friendships had been forged and jobs that had been neglected for years were finally complete.

## Three generations at Bingara

For Greg Stace, farming runs through his veins. His parents started on a station in Armidale when he was younger. They built up then sold properties, working towards bigger stations to develop until finally arriving at Wyandra, where they graze cattle, sheep and goats.

Now married, Greg and his wife Bethany live on the station with their five young children and Greg's parents - three generations on the family farm.



Images: Cuong Lam

**“...it’s the worst drought I’ve seen...everyone is struggling...”**

Right now, water is the biggest issue facing farmers in the area. The soil is simply too dry to grow any grass, forcing them to destock or pay ever-increasing prices for hay.

Every day, Greg heads out with his father to feed the animals while Bethany looks after and home-schools their five children. They have two-hundred head each of cattle and sheep, and over a thousand goats. They normally have double those numbers but the last few years have been really tough.

“It’s by far the worst drought I’ve seen,” Greg said. “I’ve spoken with other farmers and they all say the same thing. Everyone is struggling financially.”



## Painting the family home

The daily demands around the farm have prevented the family from repainting their home. It's been seventeen years since it's last coat of fresh paint! But that all changed when our volunteers arrived.

Leading the team was one of our seasoned volunteers, Royce O'Neill. He understands that when times get tough in remote Australia, a lot of jobs around the home get neglected. Royce knows that a few extra hands can make a really big difference.

"Painting a house can take a lot of time and the demands of feeding their animals every day makes things difficult," he said. "So we're more than happy to lend a hand."

We learned that Greg had earlier received a quote - for \$10,000 - to repaint their home. But that was over two years ago! The painter didn't show up for the job. It's a story that's all too familiar among our farmers. Sometimes, the distance is simply too great for skilled labour to travel.

**"...being out here really helps lift everyone's spirits..."**



But there's always a silver lining, as Greg pointed out.

"It's been really difficult with this drought, so having these volunteers really saves us," he said. "Ten thousand is a lot of money, and it'd be hard to find that this year."

"Plus, the volunteers have been great. You can sit down and have a chat over a meal. It gives you a mental break from the daily stress."

By the end of the week, the house started to look more like a home and Royce could feel the morale had lifted on the property.

"You can see that being out here really helps lift everyone's spirits," Royce said. "We know it's not life-saving work, but it's work that helps out the community."

**"It's been really difficult with this drought, so having these volunteers really saves us."**



# Frontier Flashback

## Living Legends

Frontier Services is truly blessed by the dedication of the people who have worked with us in the past. Using their skills and drive, they have made a huge difference in the lives of people living in Australia's most remote communities.

### The 'Outback Angel' - Sandy Kelly OAM

A country girl at heart, Sandy was in her 50s when she saw an ad for an Outback nursing position with Frontier Services. Her children were grown up and living their own lives. Sandy wanted to do something worthwhile.

She vividly recalls her reaction when she first saw the ad. "I knew in my heart it was the job I was meant to do!" But she didn't get the position.

Twelve months later, Sandy saw the ad again so she applied. She told the interviewers, "If you don't hire me this time, I'll get it next year!"

How could they resist that energy and enthusiasm?

It was this tenacity that helped Sandy achieve so much during her time with Frontier Services. While she knew it would be challenging, Sandy quickly realised everything was going to be more difficult than she could ever imagine.

### The challenges came from all directions

For people living in the city, it seems unimaginable that life in Outback Australia could be so rough and primitive in the 1990s.

But at that time there were very few sealed roads. Instead, there were dirt tracks. Sandy remembers standing in a pothole that came up to her waist!



Around Burketown (north of Mt Isa, Queensland), Sandy met Wally, an elderly veteran. He lived in a caravan that had lost its roof. While Burketown doesn't get a lot of rain, when it comes, the rainfall can be very heavy. To keep dry, Wally would have to put up an umbrella. No Australian should have to live this way, yet it was Wally's reality.

Sandy turned to the relevant government department for funding assistance to buy Wally a replacement caravan – one with a roof. But she was swamped with bureaucracy.

Undaunted, Sandy took matters into her own hands. She purchased a pre-loved road-maker's caravan located at Mt Isa. She fixed it up, painted it and then towed

it over 400km to Wally. It took her all day - over dirt roads - to get that caravan to him. But it was worth the effort when she saw Wally's joy.

As Sandy says, "Outback people are tough, resourceful and resilient. They have to be. They don't expect help and they don't want pity. But when someone offers them sound, practical assistance, they are so grateful and they never forget you."

This is what Frontier Services has been delivering to people in the Outback for over 105 years.

## Building trust can take time

Another challenge Sandy faced was the suspicion some locals have about strangers from the city. It takes incredible perseverance and patience. Fortunately for an elderly gentleman called Clarky, Sandy has an abundance of both.

Clarky didn't believe he needed help. He didn't trust Sandy and wouldn't let her near his house.

As his nurse, Sandy spent 12 months standing at Clarky's front gate while he sat on his veranda. Undaunted, Sandy continued keeping her eye on his health with regular visits, and chatting to him about all sorts of things from outside his gate.

Eventually, Clarky gave Sandy permission to enter his home and gradually, he began to accept her help in the form of a daily cooked meal and assistance with his washing, cleaning and garden maintenance. In our June 1997 edition of Frontier News, Clarky was quoted as saying, "I just love seeing Sandy. She's been a big help."

## Still helping others

Sandy is now in her 70s and still helping others. Her experience with supporting the frail, elderly and disabled (as well as their carers) in remote areas of Australia has made her a world-renowned authority. She is asked to speak at conferences and present papers on her observations and experiences. She also volunteers in the Cancer Ward at the Atherton Hospital in Far North Queensland.

Working for Frontier Services was more than a job for Sandy Kelly. She loved her time working with us and continues her relationship with our team.

To us and to many people in remote Australia, Sandy Kelly is a living legend and an Outback Angel.



## REGULAR GIVING PROGRAM

# Outback Angels

### Providing hope in the bush

When times get tough in the bush, feelings of loneliness and isolation increase. Nearly every day, we hear people's struggles to stay on the land, pay their bills, feed their family and keep their homes.

But you can make a real difference to the lives of people in remote Australia. We invite you to join our regular giving program and become an Outback Angel.

You can start today by completing the form opposite and returning to us.

As an Outback Angel, you will be helping us grow the number of Bush Chaplains from 13 to 25 across remote Australia by 2022, as well as helping us build a network of 1,000 active Outback Links volunteers.

Become an Outback Angel and bring hope, comfort and care to people in the bush. With your help, *together*, we can make a difference. Thank you.

**"...it just gives you that sense of hope that you can keep going, because there are people who care..."**

*Bethany*

# Outback Angels

## Monthly Giving Form

**YES, I wish to become an Outback Angel and bring hope, comfort and care to people in the bush.**

Mr  Mrs  Miss  Ms  Dr  Rev

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth ||

**PLEASE NOMINATE YOUR MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION LEVEL:**

\$30  \$50  \$100  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please debit my:  Visa  Mastercard  Amex

If you wish to arrange a direct debit from your bank account, please call us on 1300 787 247.

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Card number

Expiry Date |

**Please return this completed form to: PO Box 3424, Parramatta NSW 2124**



# Centralian farmers holding out hope for rains

We recently caught up with our Bush Chaplain Benjamin Quilliam, who told us about the challenges facing pastoralists in Central Australia. Spending some time with Craig and Sarah at Aileron Station, he got a first-hand account of farmers' struggles following a dismally dry summer.



A bit of rain came through last week. It was very selective though, with some stations getting a good 60mm while others only got a shower or missed out completely.

Craig had just arrived home from trucking cattle and wanted to see if the dam had filled with any of what little rain they got. It was a good excuse to get in the little Cessna. This man loves aviation. Having a love of the sky as well, I was excited to join him on the short flight.

After seeing the dam, Craig seemed hopeful. It didn't look like much water to me, but it was more than he was expecting. He said it gives him options.

But from the air everything looked pretty dry. It usually doesn't take long after a rain for grass to shoot again, but nothing had greened up. Craig's wife Sarah said that after two years of scant rainfall, they'll need more than a few good showers to have any effect on pasture.



"It's one thing that we haven't had enough rain," she said. "But the extreme heat over the last summer really knocked the life out of the country. I worry it may have killed root systems."

Not far away, we flew over some new erosion mitigation they had done. On this part of the station there wasn't even enough rain to see if the mounds of earth were working.

## Struggling to keep their stock alive

Pastoralists in Central Australia are really starting to struggle after an extremely hot and dry summer. It's the season when we normally get most of our rain. Because of the lack of grass, they are having to feed hay just to keep their stock alive.

Craig and Sarah told me that it's hard to sell cattle to destock because they are barely in

good enough condition to survive the truck to market, even after the hay. High prices for agistment to Queensland mean it's not a financially viable option either.

"Water isn't our main problem as we have plenty of bore water," Craig explained. "What we need is enough rain to grow grass."

"The recent rain has spread the cattle out onto different country so that's a positive, but once that small amount of water dries up, they'll be back relying on bore water which means they're back on the same grazing country."

At the moment it's a cycle of checking bores, feeding out hay and waiting/ praying for rain. Back on the ground I'm immediately reminded that it's also been a horrendous season for flies.

A winter rain like we had last week is welcome - for those who managed to get a decent amount. It doesn't evaporate as quickly when the weather is cooler. But people are counting on some good early summer rains in November and December this year to pull them through. Without them things will start getting desperate.





# Aussie farmers are doing it tough, but you can make a real difference

There are many ways to support the people who put food on our table. Register to host your Great Outback BBQ this September, buy Australian grown and share our farmers' stories with your friends and family.

We want to thank everyone for participating. There are incentives and prizes just for registering. Show you care today.

This year, the host who fundraises the most will receive an exclusive 'Choose Your Own Adventure' voucher with Camplify (valued at up to \$1,000).

For more information and to register online, please visit [greatoutbackbbq.com.au](http://greatoutbackbbq.com.au)





# 2019 Christmas Cards

**Order now to avoid disappointment!**

Our Christmas cards often sell out. This is a strictly limited print run, so we encourage you to order early.

This year's designs celebrate our Aussie Farmers. We hope you love this year's cards as much as we do. Each pack contains 10 cards, with two of each design.

**Order early and receive a complimentary pack of our 2018 Christmas cards with your order. Hurry - available while stocks last!**



# YES, I/we would like to purchase 2019 Christmas Cards\* and/or make a donation to Frontier Services

Mixed pack of 10 Christmas cards (2 of each design)\*  
= \$12 including postage & handling

	NUMBER OF PACKS	PRICE PER PACK	TOTAL
<b>MY ORDER</b> (1-9 PACKS)		<b>\$12</b> (including P&H)	\$
<b>BULK ORDER</b> (10+ PACKS)	Contact us for bulk orders E <a href="mailto:fsfundraising@frontierservices.org">fsfundraising@frontierservices.org</a> or T 1300 787 247		
I would like to include a donation to help the people of remote Australia. (Note: donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.)			\$
*Note: All orders must be received by Friday, 6 December 2019.		<b>TOTAL</b>	\$

## PLEASE ENSURE YOU COMPLETE YOUR ADDRESS DETAILS

Mr  Mrs  Miss  Ms  Dr  Rev PLEASE TICK

Name

Address (please print)

State

Postcode

Daytime Telephone

Mobile

Date

/   /

### I/WE WISH TO PAY BY

- Cheque / Money Order (payable to **Frontier Services**)  
 Credit Card: Please debit my  Visa  Mastercard  Amex

Name on Card

Signature

Card number

Expiry Date

/

AUG19

Please complete this order form and send via:

Post Frontier Services, PO Box 3424, Parramatta NSW 2124

Email [fsfundraising@frontierservices.org](mailto:fsfundraising@frontierservices.org)

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



# The Gift of Hope this Christmas

## The Gift that Gives Twice!

Each year, our incredible Bush Chaplains and Outback Links volunteers travel vast distances to visit hundreds of families living in the most remote places of Australia to provide practical and pastoral care when it's needed most.

This Christmas, you can help make someone's life in the bush a little easier. Simply choose the way you would like to help, purchase one or more of our tax-deductible Gift of Hope cards and gift it to a loved one, knowing you're making a real difference to the lives of people living in Outback Australia.

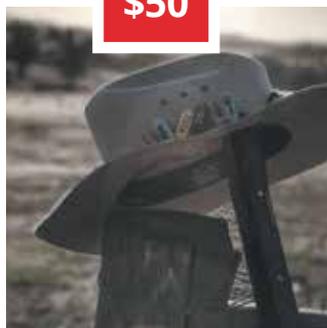
\$25



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
<b>A cuppa and a chat (\$25):</b> Isolation is one of the hardest things to endure and your gift supports our Bush Chaplains to lend a listening ear when needed.		\$25	\$
<b>Mend a fence (\$50):</b> Practical support is often what's needed most and your gift allows our skilled volunteers to complete repairs and maintenance on farming stations.		\$50	\$
<b>Fill a tank (\$100):</b> Our Bush Chaplains spend much of their time travelling to visit people in isolation. Your gift helps to keep them on the road so they can be where they are needed most.		\$100	\$
<b>The gift of mateship (Gift of your choosing):</b> Show people doing it tough in the bush this Christmas that they're not alone by giving the gift of mateship. Every amount helps, but gifts over \$10 means we can cover our costs.		\$ 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.)			\$
		<b>TOTAL \$</b>	\$

**NOTE:** All orders must be placed by Friday, 6 December 2019.  
Cards are blank on the inside so you can personalise them before giving to family and friends.

**Please complete this order form and send via:**

**Post**

Frontier Services  
PO Box 3424,  
Parramatta NSW 2124

**Email**

fsfundraising@frontierservices.org

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



**PLEASE ENSURE YOU COMPLETE YOUR ADDRESS DETAILS**

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

Address

Postcode

Phone / Mobile

**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

Card number

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Expiry Date   |

AUG19

**“...the demands of feeding their animals every day makes things difficult... So we’re more than happy to lend a hand.”**

*Royce O’Neill, Qantas Cabin Crew Team volunteer*



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Services**

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