

MAY 2020

# FrontierNews

Driving social  
connections  
in the bush



**Frontier  
Services**

Standing with  
people in the bush



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people in the bush



# A message from Jannine

We are still here. We are still connecting people.

I want to thank those who responded to our call for volunteers recently. Whether you completed an Expression of Interest form on our website, or shared your copy of Frontier News to help spread the word, you are showing those in remote Australia that there are people who care.

People in the bush have gone through so much; prolonged drought, bushfires, floods. Their communities were only just starting to recover from recent disasters when COVID-19 arrived on our shores.

We planned to send more helping hands to the bush during the cooler months, but sadly, we made the difficult decision to postpone all our volunteer placements until conditions improve. We simply cannot risk spreading this virus to these already-vulnerable communities.

But we haven't lost hope. We've been investing time to build and maintain connections with our farmers and remote communities. Every day, our team is calling to check in and make sure everyone is ok. Our Bush Chaplains remain in their respective Remote Areas too, continuing to provide a vital lifeline and connection for people in the Outback.

Now is the time to build our network of incredible volunteers. And once we get the 'all clear' from government and health officials, we will deploy them to areas most in need. Please help us spread the word – visit

**[www.frontierservices.org/volunteer](http://www.frontierservices.org/volunteer)**

This pandemic may be seeing us all self-isolate, but rest assured we're still standing with people in the bush – just

with a healthy *physical* distance of 1.5m!

## Great Outback BBQ 2020

We're optimistically planning ahead and hope we can be out of isolation in the near future - and ready to host a Great Outback BBQ this September.

What better way to celebrate reuniting with our friends and family than sharing a meal whilst giving Aussie farmers a hand up.

Watch out for announcements in our next magazine, as well as on our website and Facebook page for details on how to register your barbecue this year.

## National Reconciliation Week – 27 May to 3 June 2020

As I shared with you in our February magazine, I'm excited about our first female Aboriginal Bush Chaplain. With Pastor Julia Lennon, I feel we have a stronger foundation to work with First Peoples as we continue on our journey of reconciliation.

I believe part of Frontier Services' role is to continuously learn the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and share them with others. It is my hope to encourage more Australians from all walks of life to join the conversation, understand our shared history and start the journey of reconciliation. In hearing, sharing and learning, we can be *in this together*.

**Jannine Jackson**  
National Director





Our Bush Chaplains continue providing a vital lifeline for people in the Outback. They are committed to reaching out and keeping people connected.

## Support vital services in the bush

- Make a tax-deductible gift by completing the self-sealing envelope at the centre of your magazine, or go to [frontierservices.org/donate](https://frontierservices.org/donate)
- Register to become a volunteer at [frontierservices.org/volunteer](https://frontierservices.org/volunteer) – once we get the go ahead from government, we will start deploying volunteers to areas most in need



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**Front Cover**

Our Bush Chaplains - Lindsay, Mitch and John, Kalgoorlie



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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.

# Out west with our Bush Chaplains

We travelled to Western Australia recently to welcome our new Bush Chaplain, Pastor Lindsay Ginn, and were joined by Rev John Dihm and Rev Mitch Fialkowski. In this feature, we introduce you to Lindsay and share highlights of our conversations with our two other WA Bush Chaplains, including how COVID-19 is affecting their remote communities.

## Goldfields welcomes our new Bush Chaplain

At the end of February this year, Pastor Lindsay Ginn joined our team of Bush Chaplains. Based in Kalgoorlie, he hopes to use his love of music to bring people together.

Music has been part of Lindsay's life since age seven. He knows the piano, melodica, guitar and the guitalele (which we learned was a hybrid guitar-ukulele). Lindsay loves country life too, having travelled through Outback Australia with his music.

But in his travels, Lindsay noticed how people in remote Australia were struggling. He saw that they did not have the same access to resources as those in the city. And so, his interest in working with smaller towns, churches and country folk grew.

When the opportunity came for him to move to Western Australia's Kalgoorlie, he farewelled life in Mt Isa, Queensland to pursue his passion for connecting communities through his music.





*Pastor Lindsay Ginn*



## **Bringing music back**

Lindsay told us that in smaller communities, music is often neglected in the school curriculum, with up to 60 percent having no music whatsoever. He recently discovered one school in his Remote Area, where instruments were still in their boxes from two years ago – never been touched!

“I’ve taught music for many years, and I love writing songs to play in public spaces,” Lindsay said. “In the country, music is sadly left out of many schools, but I’m here to offer lessons with the

hope of getting to know students, their parents and then the wider community.”

One school has expressed an interest in having a music program, but was also concerned about COVID-19 infiltrating their community. As a small gesture, Lindsay brought the school some essentials: a pack of toilet paper, a box of tissues and a bottle of hand sanitiser. They were delighted!

“In these days of fear and uncertainty, let us remain strong and continue to give people hope.”

# A ministry among miners

During Rev Lindsay Ginn's induction, we were joined by another of our Bush Chaplains, Rev John Dihm from our Pilbara Remote Area. We spoke with John about what it means to be a Bush Chaplain, and in this article share with you some highlights from our conversation.

## John, what does it mean to be a Bush Chaplain?

*Well, it means a lot of things to a lot of people. You're a minister of presence, a minister of listening. You're a comfort to some and for others it means someone walking beside them, just being there. For FIFO workers on site, it's a welcome presence. They have someone they can trust, someone they can talk to, and someone who's their friend.*

Based in the small mining community of Tom Price, John works closely with fly-in-fly-out workers. The usual hardships, anxiety, dangers and isolation of living in a remote location are only part of the struggle for people who work in FIFO. Many in John's community also deal with being separated from their partners and children for long periods of time, and the volatility of the industry means they constantly feel the stress of job security.

Because of the pressure FIFO careers place on workers and their families, John is regularly on-site to give talks that equip them with the knowledge and skills to look after their mental health. He is also on-call for them, so if they fall into despair they know they can reach out to John.

"They share the most personal stories with you," John said. "Like the worker whose son is going in for a brain tumour operation and how he's worried for him. Or another who told me that he and his wife planned to go around Australia when he finishes FIFO, but now she's got cancer he's thinking about early retirement."

John told us that being a Bush Chaplain is about giving people, who live in isolation from those they love, an outlet to confide their worries and fears.

*John speaking at Lindsay's induction*



## What are the joys of being a Bush Chaplain?

*Performing marriages on the stations, then going back to baptise their children. It's being totally involved with the families – even receiving Christmas cards from them with little 'kisses' from the children. It's also seeing people grow in their roles, like the FIFO workers on the construction projects.*

John has been a Frontier Services Bush Chaplain for 17 years. In that time, he's touched the lives of hundreds of families. He spoke of one in particular from outback South Australia when he was Bush Chaplain there.

The family was struck by two separate tragedies. The first was losing an infant to SIDS. The second, years later, a plane crash that killed the husband during a routine flight to muster cattle. Each time, John provided practical and pastoral care to Nina and her young family, and connected them to vital services to bring them back on their feet. That was years ago, but he said he's still connected with them.

**"My favourite part is being with the people."**

"Only the other day, I sent Nina a birthday greeting," John said. "The next thing I knew she gives me a call and we were on the phone for half an hour."

"I also remember seeing them in Sydney a couple of years ago and thinking how much those kids had grown," John recalled. "But they still called me 'poppa'! I will never forget what we'd been through together."

## Emerging challenges in the Pilbara

Today, John continues to work with FIFO workers in Tom Price, families on remote stations and Aboriginal communities. But he faces a new challenge as restrictions have been placed on visiting communities and mine sites, in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Sadly, the annual cultural event *The Karijini Experience* (April 14-18) was cancelled, as the safety and well-being of Elders, traditional owners, staff and guests was paramount.

John tells us that he stays connected with the people of the Pilbara by phone and Skype. We hope and pray that the community can reopen soon.





# It's my gift to them

We're so grateful that Rev Mitch Fialkowski from our Murchison Remote Area was able to join us during our recent visit to Kalgoorlie. It gave us a chance to catch up and talk about his ministry in Meekatharra.



## A community concerned with COVID-19

Mitch told us his community was worried about COVID-19 reaching Meekatharra. Anxiety is running high at the moment, making Mitch more determined to check in on people and make sure they are ok.

Mitch told us Indigenous members of the community have shared their concerns about the virus' impact on First Peoples. Some are understandably reluctant to accept visits, with one person only willing to chat through the screen door.

We are so grateful our Bush Chaplain is there for the people of Meekatharra. Concerned about the impact the pandemic is having on people's mental health, he is making more calls than usual to check in, and tries to visit whenever possible.

"It's in my DNA to go out," he said. "I'm still making visits, however, practising physical distancing."

**"I'm still making visits, however, practising physical distancing."**

Sadly, panic-buying has also gripped the community, with bread, eggs, meat and milk all bought up within half an hour of the delivery truck arriving in town. An added concern is the stimulus payment potentially causing an increase in alcohol consumption, prompting bottle shops to place restrictions on the daily amounts people are allowed to purchase.

"Local stores have enforced the rule 'if it's not your normal shop, put it back'," Mitch said.

## Why he loves being a Bush Chaplain

Whenever we catch up with Mitch, we know he will have plenty of stories to share. The interesting and sometimes quirky situations our Bush Chaplains





find themselves in exemplify the very practical nature of their work, and provide us with a bit of humour along the way.

Mitch told us being a Bush Chaplain is the best job in the world, because he gets to see more of Australia than he would having a nine-to-five job in the city with only four weeks of annual leave.

"I get to see the country and the mix of people," he said. "My work is with those who are going through difficult times, and they often tell me I've helped a lot because they have someone to talk to."

**"I know  
I can't give  
them a cure,  
but I'm here  
to listen."**

Mitch wanted to express his gratitude to the people who support our Bush Chaplains, saying, "I don't charge people for a visit or a conversation. It's my gift to them."

"But there is still a cost to what I do. To those who support our ministry, thank you, you're helping us to be with people in isolation during these tough times."

**To support the work of  
Rev Mitch Fialkowski and our  
other wonderful Bush Chaplains,  
simply complete the form on the  
enclosed envelope and return to us.  
Thank you.**

# A journey for all Australians

This year, National Reconciliation Week celebrates its 20th anniversary (27 May – 3 June) with the theme In This Together. It's a theme with deep resonance as Australians, both on the coast and inland, deal with a barrage of challenges which have included drought, bushfires, floods, a global pandemic and economic instability.

Just as Australia's ability to survive challenges and move forward as a nation relies on all of us - individuals, organisations and communities – so too do we need to come together in the spirit of reconciliation.

We spoke to some members of the Frontier Services family about the meaning of In This Together. While they have different life experiences, their approach to reconciliation and their suggestions on how we can start our own journeys of tolerance and understanding are remarkably similar.

We hope you feel inspired to join the conversation, learn more about our shared history and consider your journey, too.

**Benjamin Quilliam is our Bush Chaplain in our Centralian Remote Area. His region includes Alice Springs and surrounds as well as the APY Lands (Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara) which is home to around 2,300 First Nation people.**

The APY Lands is large, sparsely populated and located in the remote north west of South Australia. The people speak the Pitjantjatjara language, making English a second or third language for many. According to a report tabled with the South Australian Government in September last year, the APY Lands are home to some of the highest levels of intergenerational disadvantage in Australia.

Benjamin has lived in Alice Springs for four-and-a-half years and been our Bush Chaplain for three. When you speak with Benjamin about what In This Together means for him and his community, the overwhelming message is about confronting hidden biases and learning the facts.

"There are still a lot of cultural and language barriers in this area as well as



*Benjamin Quilliam*

many inequalities. Even so, there are many things to be learned from our First Nations People. It begins with sitting down and listening to them. You learning about their culture, their language and their beliefs. It's all about getting to know them.

"I provide advocacy whenever an individual or their entire community has a need. One of the things I'm most proud of is that together, we were able to obtain a mobile dialysis unit for the people of the APY Lands."

#### Did you know?

Before European settlement, Australia was divided into more than 500 different clan groups or 'nations', many with distinctive cultures, beliefs and languages.

*Story continued on page 12...*



## Could differences in educational resources be adding to intergenerational disadvantage?

Benjamin reminds us that, like many families living in Australia, some First Nation families do not speak English at home. This is particularly common in remote Australia. As a result, when their children start school, they are being taught in an unfamiliar language (English).

"In the city, schools often have educational supports for children with English as their second language. But in remote areas of Australia, where various types of resources are limited, the schools simply don't have the ability to support children to build their English language skills.

"There may only be one teacher for an entire school. One person simply can't do everything. Even to attend a Professional Development Day, the teacher may need to travel for 2 days (each way) for a 1-day course. That means the school is closed down for a week."

We wonder how many Australians understand how language and distance barriers impact the education of our First Peoples. In city schools, there are educational supports for children who have English as their second language. But most remote schools do not have access to this valuable resource.

Dianne Torrens is Widjabal woman and Githabul woman of the Bundjalung nation from the Northern Rivers. She is a member of our Board, Chairperson of the NSW Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress and one of the Elders at her local church.

For Auntie Di, In This Together means having a voice and developing the courage to speak out when required. She also believes it is important to be respectful towards others. When you speak with her, it's very obvious Auntie Di is a warm, loving and forgiving person. She is a lady with a purpose and a close relationship with God.

"When I hear negative comments, I'm not frightened or ashamed to say something. When I was younger, I didn't like speaking out but now I understand I need to speak up for the people who can't. These days, I'm stronger and feel more courageous.



"I always try to be respectful so if I hear someone say something that isn't right, I'll ask them why they think that way. Then I invite them to see how we live so they can see for themselves that things might not be as they seem."

We understand it can be difficult to speak up when we hear someone saying something mean-spirited or discriminatory. But we find inspiration from Auntie Di's example and hope it helps many to find their voice, because when we speak up for each other we are saying 'hey, we're in this together'.

*Captured at our last Walking on Country (2019) - Mt Conner in the distance; (inset) Kat Piper, Auntie Di and Michelle McLeod*

*Story continued on page 14...*

A woman wearing a blue button-down shirt over a floral top and a white bucket hat is looking up at a massive, textured red rock formation. She is standing behind a dark metal railing. The background shows more of the red rock landscape under a clear blue sky.

## Reconciliation – seeing the progress

Aunty Di is heartened by all the positive changes she has witnessed along our country's reconciliation journey.

"My grandchildren have many more choices, friends and options than I did when I was their age. That's what I call 'Reconciliation in Action'. Their friends come from a variety of cultures so they can all learn from each other.

"I never want to see the things I went through - ever! It's lovely to see there is less prejudice and more inclusion. It really brings joy to my heart."

Aunty Di also talks about her work with the NSW Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress. She is often asked to visit churches to speak about National Reconciliation Week and other issues. It is at these gatherings that Aunty Di will sometimes see people who hesitate to speak with her.

"Sometimes it's not easy for people to accept me when I visit their church. For some, it can take longer than others to reach out. I need to show them respect too. They may not be sure how to reach out to me, but I just need to give them some time. Hopefully, that's the start of us breaking down barriers."

Aunty Di believes In This Together and the pathway for reconciliation requires truth, justice, forgiveness and simply sitting down together to share a conversation over a cuppa. It is being open with each other, saying hello and focusing on our similarities, rather than our differences.

This year, the Reconciliation Week theme highlights the need for all of us to come together to create a better Australia for everyone. In the coming weeks, we will be sharing more stories about reconciliation on our website and Facebook page. We invite you to join the conversation by commenting on and sharing our posts.



While you wait to exit self-isolation, why not plan the experience of a lifetime? Register your interest in becoming an Outback Links volunteer – visit [frontierservices.org/volunteer](https://frontierservices.org/volunteer)



# Ninety years of Frontier News

On October 1930, the first volume of Frontier News was published. In this Flashback, we share with you snippets of stories and photos from the day.



## A new head office

On the cover of volume one is a sketch of the new Assembly Hall and offices on Margaret and York Streets, Sydney. The building opened on 8 September 1930, with the Australian Inland Mission (now known as Frontier Services) due to move in at the end of the year.

Something in the related article resonated with us – “For years we have been hampered for lack of space; now we are eagerly planning things bigger and better” – because while we wait for conditions to improve with the current climate, we are planning bigger and better things for our return to the bush!

## An assembly of AIM staff

In Port Hedland, a rare gathering of AIM staff was captured on camera. We believe they met in the course of their duties, with Port Hedland being the turning point for two Remote Areas back in the day. Picture from left to right are Rev W Dorin, Mrs Dorin, Sister Baldwin, Rev J A Barber, Sister Colls, Rev P Somerville and Mrs Somerville.





#### NEW HEAD OFFICE FOR THE A.I.M.

According to the statement of the Indianapolis Chapter of the South Branch chapter, the A.M. is glad to have a very improved facility for its work at Indianapolis. The Indianapolis chapter, published on the first page, gives an excellent idea of just the new "Weekly Chapter" and makes for more growth.

Tourism has been weak in the aftermath of September and since then, but when the additional money has come, all the previous and more recently has seemed more rapid than ever.

Admission to the Assembly Hall was opened on November 14, and was used by the General Assembly of Kentucky, which met the following day, and continued until the 14th. The organ which will not be mentioned has never worked. The floor of assembly of the officers from the new building has not yet been decided but it will probably be located at the end of the hall.

We, of course, did not see all graduates for this wonderful year, so much to be desired. But please, let your book department for 1971.

For one decade and not realize that the A.I.M. and the Free National Church of New South Wales are working into new wealth. The new building is the fulfillment of dreams of help being given and it is pleased to provide for standing needs of a century.

Whether the Syracuse "Bulldozers and Redskins" of today are anything but a new name for the same old thing, only time will tell. But it is a fact that the Syracuse "Bulldozers and Redskins" of today are a new name for the same old thing.

On these new facilities we will have more to say in a later chapter. Meanwhile, while the population of these different zones, the parts of the A-3-M, fluctuates in size, and in ethnic composition, of African and non-African descent.

A CENTRAL PATROL, ONCE MORE.

While these elements are sufficient that arrangements are being made for construction of the United Forum, which has long been in operation. Transmitted and several years in operation, the Board of Directors, the University of Virginia, N.E. and the University of Virginia, with a long list of names, covered the entire list and with almost unanimous and other names.

All letters with a letter prefix will be acknowledged about one month. It will be with the latest way include a Western Union, and we hope the reader will be attending 1933 issue of South Atlantic Journal issued by Rev. J. V. Elliott of New York.

Shannon says new colonies are constructed from old and have been underway, is preparing to go west and return here, W. Jones. "Three months in the West will be of great interest to him, and will add much knowledge that will prove valuable; also work in the 1937-1938. We hope that the 1938 will be completed in a few weeks."

## A CENTRAL PATROL ONCE MORE

With deep pleasure, we estimate that arrangements are being made for resumption of the Central Fair, which has long been in abeyance. Throughout our earlier years, it was managed, Mr. Bruce Fierman, New Kingsley F. Partridge, M.A., and Mrs. Chisley Harford, an estate, with a large key in hand, traversed the trails far and wide, around Goddards and Alice Fierman.

All being well, a motor-party will be inaugurated about next April. If all is well, the party may include a wireless expert, and we hope the thing will be extended into areas of North Australia (probably covered by H. M. S. "Porpoise").

Sometimes, our new volunteer an experienced minister, and a very fine layman, is preparing to go west and relieve Rev. W. Doris. Three months in the No. West will be of great interest to him, and will add much knowledge that will prove valuable, afterwards, in the Centre. We hope this formalities will be completed in a few weeks.

FORWARD THE A.M.S!

**FORWARD THE A.M.S.!**  
He sends the General Assembly of America, last month, in the  
shape of the "Defiance," following in the reception of the report  
of the A.M. Board.

"Congratulations to the Flying Medical Service; authorize the others concerned in the Aerial Medical Service; authorize the assistance of the work with such modifications as may be necessary to meet changing circumstances; and endeavor to co-ordinate both medical and selection work with kindred activities within the army."

What does this mean? Aerial Medical Service Station was eliminated as an experiment and our theories and hopes...

(1) That, although "radio" will be great would be a factory to official communication services, for people who have the authority to... in the hands of...

...it is of investigative value, in the hands of a  
...house-dwellers, as a means of maintaining and in time

(1) That in substance it is the law, and as such, is  
of settlement, air transport is as efficient as movement  
of goods and other articles by water.

(14) That there are many people in the South who are of



## COMPENSATIONS

The Navaho and Indian well occupying these lakes (1880), who, with the assistance of some boys, is now conducting to the south of Grand River (1880).

Between Jan. 4 & 11, 1961, when Kennedy, Mr. Hoover and his family were in the Islands off the coast of the United States, the U.S. could not return to the many thousands ordered as during the terrible past year have been paid in.

There is no doubt that the above is a very good example of a well-organized and well-written report. The report is clear, concise, and to the point. It is a good example of how to write a report that is both informative and easy to read.

## THE KIMBERLEY PATROL.

Stages of Bayonet have fast lanes and most remaining at Bayonet have gathered around the floating Indians, and the Bayonet Boatmen has been passing by itself in his net. His Bayonetville has been the major destination in these waters, which were intended to be all Bayonet, from Bayonet to the end of Bayonet, Bay to the south.

At approximately 10 hours another emergency call from Washington brought a change of officers having arrived, and there it was—once again seen the encephalitic syndrome.

It is showing to indicate, however, that there is little difference in a feature. As, upon evidence, of experiment, with the following exception of which also qualified, however, from which evidence of further progress, what with a provision, also, in pointing to the

This location complemented a room with a very real sense of purpose. There seems to be a synergy of A.I.M. efforts here and such this is as it should be. These days of institutional discrimination,

and the long time when Howard the Lord went to America. I.M. had them up and the days were, I actually wrote several times to the Lord.



# Our volunteers stepping in

Last September, Paul Gray journeyed from Sydney to Nyngan to lend a hand to remote communities ravaged by drought. He told us about connecting with our farmers and the value of corporate volunteering programs for remote parts of Australia.

Paul is a mechanic and regularly volunteers with us through the Outback Links NRMA partnership. This year, he placed with Howard and Michelle Weber on their sheep property, Kia Ora.

"I think farmers can understandably get a bit overwhelmed with all the jobs that need to be done around the station, like hand-feeding the animals, and a few extra pairs of hands can really take the

pressure off," Paul said. "They just don't get around to everything that needs to be done."

**"They couldn't believe how much we were able to get done over the few days we were there."**

Putting their mechanical skills to good use, Paul and his team member Heather were able to fix machinery such as the truck used for feeding, which needed new brakes. A lot of other vehicles on Kia Ora needed attention, like the quad bikes, cars and harvesters.

"They were brilliant and got through all the jobs we needed a hand with," said Howard. "It's really nice having people around. Their company is like a breath of fresh air."

## Connecting with the people

Paul is only too happy to volunteer as it's a great opportunity to give back during tough times. He also talked about the importance of feeling connected to combat mental health issues.

"I am a big believer in making sure I can connect with people and really find out how they are going. Connecting with real people on a farm facing real

problems, you really get to understand what they face every single day."

"It allows me to give something back. I know I've had some sort of impact even if it's small. You get more the more you give. Also we stay friends either via Facebook or I give them a call every now and then to check in to see how they are going," says Paul.

Paul says he would definitely do it again. It is an opportunity to keep learning and growing with people. It's good for you and good for your soul."

If you want to learn how to become a volunteer, please visit [frontierservices.org/volunteer](https://frontierservices.org/volunteer)



*Paul Gray  
on placement*

***"There's always something at home that needs to be done. Having some time to yourself can help with 'inner peace'."***

- Chris, one of our farmers,  
on coping with isolation

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