

AUGUST 2020

FrontierNews

A journey
to recovery



**Frontier
Services**

Standing with
people in the bush



A message from Jannine



Resilience, generosity and hope.

I want to start by thanking you for your incredible support over the past months. As COVID-19 restrictions begin to lift, our Bush Chaplains, volunteers and Frontier Services team have been busy reconnecting in person to support farmers and others doing it tough in Remote Australia. Thanks to your generosity we are able to show up and show we care during this extremely difficult period. The journey to recovery is long but your support really does make a difference and give hope.

For people in the bush there is no denying that the last 12 months continues to be one of the hardest years in living memory. After almost a decade of prolonged drought, catastrophic bush fires and other natural disasters, the recent blow of COVID-19 has meant that just when we thought things couldn't get any worse, they did. We need your support now more than ever.

While the much needed rain brought some hope, COVID-19 restrictions have meant that many of our farmers haven't been able to sell their crops and cattle, plus critical bush fire recovery had to be paused, making this already traumatic experience even worse.

Despite all this it warms my heart to read of the kindness, generosity and resilience of our brothers and sisters in Remote Australia, our Outback Links volunteers, Bush Chaplains and supporters who continue to raise spirits, lend a hand, donate and help the healing process begin. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I am also really excited about the return of this year's Great Outback BBQ! I am really looking forward to reconnecting in person with friends and family and sharing a meal. Doing it whilst having a BBQ to raise money for farmers in need is an incredible bonus. This year we are extending the Great Outback BBQ season to the end of the year to give you even more time to register and raise money over a good old sausage sizzle.

I am so delighted to release this year's Christmas Cards. They are special because the artworks are by our very own Bush Chaplain, Pastor Julia Lennon who looks after our Oodnadatta Remote Area. Get in early to not miss out.

My sincerest thanks again for showing you care and walking together with us on the journey to recovery.

Jannine Jackson
National Director



Support vital services in the bush

- **Register to host your Great Outback BBQ** and show your support for people in remote Australia, including our Aussie farmers. Visit greatoutbackbbq.com.au. Check out pages 18-19 for more info.
- Give the gift that gives twice. Go to pages 20-23 for this year's Christmas Cards and Gift of Hope cards. Get in early to avoid disappointment!
- If you know someone who might be interested in **volunteering** with us and having the experience of a lifetime, please visit 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.

When you can't sell your wool

It was clear when speaking to Kylie that her life as a farmer has been incredibly hard. Both Kylie and her husband, Greg, came from farming families and have been feeling the brunt of the drought for years.

"You can deal with most things in life if there is an end in sight but with the drought there just didn't seem to be a clear end. Before the rain came I felt like I was at my lowest point," said Kylie.

I was moved when I heard Kylie speak about the bond her and Greg shared with the NRMA volunteers Frontier Services organised to come out and help on the farm for a week.

"I just couldn't believe that these professional people took time out of their busy lives to come and help us," she said.

The volunteers really helped to lift the spirits of Kylie and Greg, who said they were at an ultimate low.

"The volunteers really helped to just give that burst of energy that we so needed," said Kylie.

"Even just having the Reverend call us and check how we are helps so much."

Our hearts sank when we heard of the struggles that Kylie and Greg faced. During the worst of the drought there were very bad dust storms and the animals were in awful shape with infected, red eyes.

"It was so hard to see our animals in that condition. It really makes the reality of the situation sink in. We just didn't think there was any way out of this," she said.

Kylie and Greg felt a glimmer of hope when the rain came. "People were really relieved with the wet weather but were very wary to buy back into stock," she said.

Just as things were starting to get better, COVID-19 hit and the joy disappeared.

"COVID-19 has affected us farmers



NRMA volunteers at Kylie and Greg's property near Nyngan NSW

Continued over...

greatly with the export market and the national market," she said.

Kylie and Greg are wool producers and the wool industry has had a huge knock due to COVID-19. China is said to be going through a second wave of the virus and are not buying wool from Australia currently. Australian wool is also exported to Italy and currently that is also on a halt due to how badly Italy was affected by the virus.

"Some people are having to sell their wool for less than it's worth just so they don't get into worse debt," said Kylie.

"We are probably going to end up having an over supply of wool. Many of us can't do business currently due to COVID-19 on top of the droughts. It's just a very hard time," she said.

I really felt for Kylie when she told me that her and her colleagues are going

to have to keep borrowing in order to survive.

Kylie said that the rain has been a great respite as well as knowing that there are organisations such as Frontier Services that really care about farmers.

"If you want to help it's important to support organisations such as Frontier Services," said Kylie.

"It was so hard to see our animals in that condition. It really makes the reality of the situation sink in. We just didn't think there was any way out of this."

Farmers Kylie and Greg with Frontier Services staff and NRMA volunteers at their property near Nyngan NSW



Our livelihood depends on the rain

The past six months have been very trying times. Recovering from droughts, bushfires and now COVID-19. Farmers are working incredibly hard to make ends meet in these rough times. Two hardworking farmers who have been through it all are David and Linda.

The couple are located 200km north of Dubbo, an area that has been terribly affected by the drought. The drought has caused much distress for farmers in the area but rainfall earlier in the year brought some hope in a dark time. While there was some hope with the rain, tough times are still a reality due to COVID-19.

During the drought, David and Linda said the only thing that got them through was the help of the community, the Church and organisations like Frontier Services.

Our Bush Chaplain Phill Matthews has been in regular contact with David and Linda during this difficult period.



David working hard with the RFS

"It's going to take 2-3 years to get back to 'normal'."

David and Linda told us that while crops are looking better there is still a very long way to go until business starts to do well again.

"Our livelihood is very dependent on getting rain," said David.

David said that his main focus right now is getting money back into the farm after such a bleak time.

"I need to be breeding more cows, harvesting more crops. It's going to take 2-3 years to get back to 'normal'," he said.

After speaking with David and Linda it is clear they are worried of what's to come as they believe cattle farmers could really feel the hit at the end of the year.

COVID-19 has also made it very difficult for the couple to find chemicals to buy for their crops.

"At the moment, when we sold our crops we couldn't get any chemicals which is due to COVID-19," he said.

"It's all part of the farming industry and Coronavirus makes it even harder than it already is."

David and Linda are proud community members and David is also a volunteer Fire Captain and believes in supporting the community in any way he can.

"The best way we find to help the community is by supporting local farmers and shopping local," said David.

David and Linda both let me know that if there hadn't been any rainfall and COVID-19 struck then the situation could have been even worse.

"We are just very thankful that we at least had rain when COVID-19 hit," said Linda.

By supporting Frontier Services and our incredible Bush Chaplains like Phill Matthews you are helping do your bit to support hard working farmers like David and Linda get through this incredibly difficult period.

"The best way we find to help the community is by supporting local farmers and shopping local," said David.

David cutting hay



Feeding cattle in the yards



The dam behind David and Linda's woolshed after rain in February 2020.



David and Linda with their two boys Lloyd and Aiden

The dam behind David and Linda's woolshed before rain in March 2019.

Volunteers lifted our spirits

Megan has worked on her brother's farm since 2003 and has had a really heartbreaking decade. Megan moved onto the farm in NSW with her brother to look after her sick parents. Sadly, they have since passed away and her biggest reminder of them is the farm.

Megan feels a huge connection to the land and it brought her to tears to see it all become nothing when the drought was at its worst. I could hear the sadness in Megan's voice when she spoke about what has happened to the farming industry.

Although, it was lovely to hear a little perk in Megan's voice when she spoke about the rain and how that has provided some hope for her and her brother.

"It really did lift our spirits and the whole community. Everyone was feeling a bit better and it was great to see the animals in good condition again. But it will be a long time till we are out of the woods," she said.

Megan said that last year when times were really tough and she felt like giving up, her spirits were lifted with the Qantas volunteers who were organised by Frontier Services. They camped in her neighbour's backyard and brought much needed laughter to the farm.

All Megan felt for a long time was sadness until the volunteers came and lifted her spirits. I feel this really shows how vital our Frontier Services volunteers are.

"One of the biggest highlights in this terrible time was when Frontier Services organised the amazing Qantas crew to come and help build fences for us and our neighbours. We camped out at night and ate food and chatted for hours. It was just so good for our souls," Megan said.

Megan and her brother have struggled immensely with the hardship of the droughts and their mental health was at an all time low but she said that when the Qantas volunteers came it brought such joy to their lives.

"It was a really beneficial time for us, both practically and as a mental health circuit breaker," she said.

"We can't thank Frontier Services enough for that incredible time. We will cherish it forever."

Just at a time that things started to look better, COVID-19 hit and really affected all farmers on multiple different fronts. Farmers are struggling financially, having to borrow money and live week to week, with demand for meat dropping with COVID-19 restaurant closures and the wool industry majorly affected by strained relationships with China. Our farmers also tell us and Bush Chaplains that since the lock-down finding the right products for crops and cattle has been impossible.

The rain brought hope to the farmers but COVID-19 came and shut that down.

"If there is one thing I couldn't stress more it is to shop local and support organisations like Frontier Services!" said Megan.

I hope that we can continue to help people like Megan and her brother who were at an all time low until the Frontier Services volunteers stepped in.



Bush Fire Recovery

Arnie Wierenga and Jennie Gordon are Chaplains in the Presbytery of Gippsland. Two incredibly kind hearted people who worked to support Frontier Services' Bush Chaplain Rowena Harris during the bushfires earlier this year. Arnie Wierenga and Jennie Gordon have been there for our remote communities at a time when hearts are broken and morale is low.

As extraordinary bushfires swept across Australia, tens of thousands of people were forced to evacuate their homes. By the end of the first week of January, more than 8.4 million hectares burnt and 1,500 homes were destroyed. It only got worse from there.

The Church, ministers, chaplains and Frontier Services played a key role in caring for communities that were torn apart.

In February, Arnie and Jennie received bush-fire emergency support funding from Frontier Services for relief chaplaincy for the bush fire affected communities of the Swift Creek Area but tragically COVID-19 hit and the assistance had to be placed on hold.

"The hardest part was knowing that people needed our help but that we weren't able to go out and support them physically due to COVID-19 restrictions", said Arnie.



Top: Arnie Wierenga and Jennie Gordon are Chaplains in the Presbytery of Gippsland.

However since July 1, Arnie and Jennie have been starting their chaplaincy with the bush fire affected communities. This is made possible by our generous Frontier Services donors. In a time as tragic as this, where people have lost everything, it is humanity that is able to get us through.

"Our biggest struggle was that we couldn't get into the bush fire communities earlier this year due to COVID-19 to use the amazing funding provided by Frontier Services," said Jennie, "but since July we have been slowly able to provide much needed support by going out to comfort farmers most in need".

"Some in our communities have experienced it all, droughts, bush fires and now COVID-19," said Jennie.

"It's what we call interrupted grief. No one has been able to grieve properly as COVID-19 hit at the worst possible moment," said Jennie's husband Arnie.

"It's what we call interrupted grief. No one has been able to grieve properly as COVID-19 hit at the worst possible moment."

Complete farm land has been lost to the fire, businesses burnt to the ground and some homes are now nothing but a memory.

"We couldn't wait to begin our chaplaincy and have a cup of tea with those who have been in the darkest place of their life. We are there to have a chat and support in any way needed," said Jennie.

"We have been collecting the stories of the community. Our job is to listen and support."

COVID-19 has meant that people can't begin to heal and can't begin to rebuild communities. At a time when we all thought things couldn't get any worse, it did.

"We are just happy that we can finally start helping the community to begin their healing process," said Jennie and Arnie, "thanks to the wonderful people who donate to and support Frontier Services".

Images courtesy of Ian Ferguson and Arnie Wierenga and Jennie Gordon



*Above: Scenes of devastation including a burnt tractor in the aftermath of the bush fires
Right: The landscape begins to recover*





Aussie farmers are doing it tougher than ever in 2020, 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 year, buy Australian grown and share our farmers' stories with your friends and family. We have special thank you gifts for everyone hosting a Great Outback BBQ. Simply register to show up and show you care today.

For more information and to register online, please visit greatoutbackbbq.com.au



Artwork by
Bush Chaplain Julia Lennon

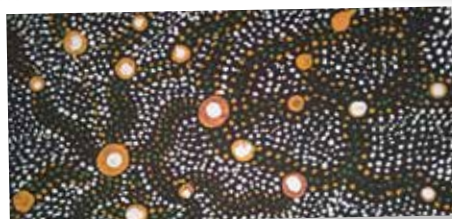
2020 Christmas Cards

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. The artwork for this year's cards is by our very own Bush Chaplain Julia Lennon who looks after the Oodnadatta Remote Area.

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

Hurry - available while stocks last! You can order online from our website or call 1300 787 247.



**YES, I/we would like to purchase 2020 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
MY ORDER (1-9 PACKS)		\$12 (including P&H)	\$
BULK ORDER (10+ PACKS)		\$10 (including P&H)	\$
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, 4 December 2020.			TOTAL \$

PLEASE ENSURE YOU COMPLETE YOUR ADDRESS DETAILS

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

Name

Address (please print)

State

Postcode

Daytime Telephone

Mobile

Email

Date / /

I/WE WISH TO PAY BY

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☐ Credit Card: Please debit my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Name on Card

Signature

Card number

Expiry Date /

AUG20

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 or visit shop.frontierservices.org to order online.



The Gift of Hope this Christmas

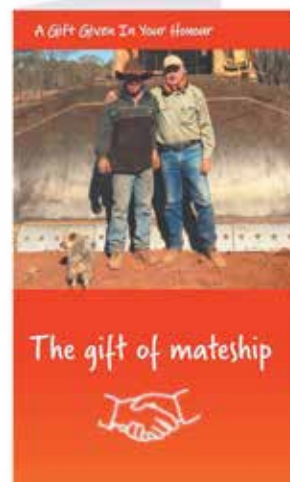
The Gift that Gives Twice!

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.

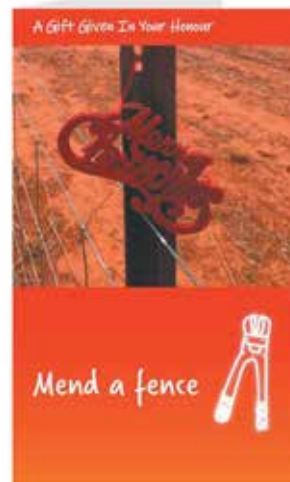
\$25



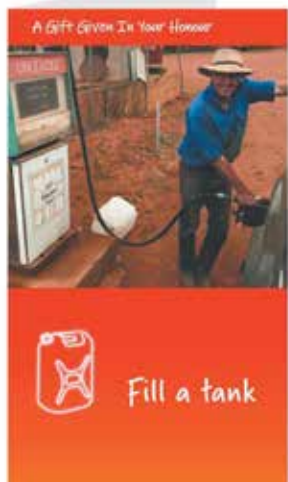
\$ amount of your choice



\$50



\$100



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): Isolation is one of the hardest things to endure and your gift supports our Bush Chaplains to lend a listening ear when needed.		\$25	\$
Mend a fence (\$50): Practical support is often what's needed most and your gift allows our skilled volunteers to complete repairs and maintenance on farming stations.		\$50	\$
Fill a tank (\$100): 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	\$
The gift of mateship (Gift of your choosing): 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.)			\$
NOTE: All orders must be placed by Friday, 4 December 2020. Cards are blank on the inside so you can personalise them before giving to family and friends.			TOTAL \$

Please complete this order form and send via:

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Alternatively, please call us on 1300 787 247 to place an order over the phone or visit shop.frontierservices.org to order online.



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Dr/Rev PLEASE PRINT

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Postcode

Phone / Mobile

Email

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☐ 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

Expiry Date

AUG20

***We have been listening to
the community. We are there
to have a chat and support
in any way needed.***

Frontier Services bush fire relief
Chaplains Arnie Wierenga and
Jennie Gordon

frontierservices.org

1300 787 247



**Frontier
Services**

Standing with
people in the bush

