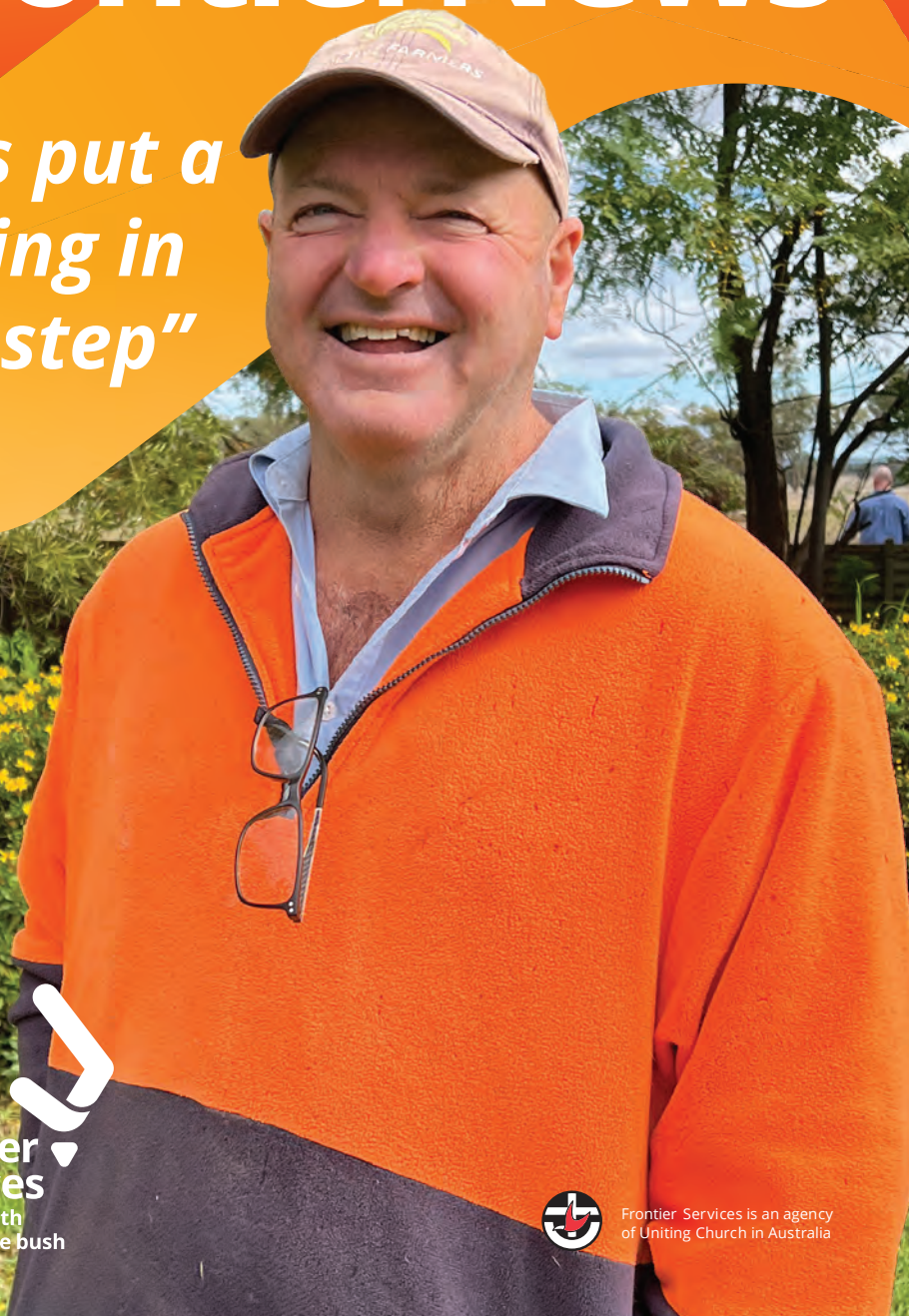


AUGUST 2022

# FrontierNews

*"It's put a  
spring in  
my step"*



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



Frontier Services is an agency  
of Uniting Church in Australia

# A message from Jannine



There's no denying our climate is changing. The last few years have seen Australians severely impacted by extreme weather. Amid the heartbreaking loss of lives and livelihoods, so many farmers like Margaret and Paul are telling us they're facing utter devastation.

**And as Frontier Services celebrates 110 years, I realise we're more relevant now than ever.**

We've stood beside so many of our friends from rural and remote Australia over the decades through punishing drought, devastating bushfires, a biblical mice plague and unforgiving cyclones. This year alone swathes of agricultural land submerged under catastrophic floods. It has been frustrating to watch the agony unfold, my heart going out to the tens and thousands of Australians out there battling nature's elements.

With COVID-19 restrictions finally easing, our Bush Chaplains are back out on the road travelling far to reach as many people as possible. With massive backlogs of urgent repair jobs running high in the bush, our teams of Outback Links volunteers are trying to visit all who need our help and support.

**But recovery and rebuilding takes years.** With labour shortages and supply chains stalled across the country by the pandemic, some farmers are struggling to harvest their crops. Fruit and vegetables have been left to rot. Floods have also ruined harvests and delayed planting. The destruction of machinery and supplies by mice is still hurting our bush friends too. With no reserves left, they're desperately looking for a ray of hope.

As we confront empty shelves in the supermarkets, and soaring prices, we're reminded of the brutal impact of food scarcity. And the importance of supporting our Australian farmers and keeping them on the land.

We believe that everyone should be able to access the help and support when they need it the most. We are working on ensuring that everyone in remote Australia can access a Bush Chaplain if and when they need them. We also are working hard on increasing our skilled volunteers team to respond to the increasing numbers of disasters across the country. We are so grateful that you are with us to allow us to keep showing up and showing we care. We have an incredibly dedicated and passionate team that keeps showing up to the furthest fences. Thank you so much for being a part of our passionate team.

**We need to act now, before it's too late. Your generosity can help.**

Jannine Jackson  
National Director

**P.S. With your Frontier News is a special magazine that will lead you down memory lane. Lovingly treasured photographs and memories from our archives feature in this keepsake edition celebrating 110 years of Frontier Services. Enjoy!**

## Pastor Michael Chapman takes flight

Last edition we introduced you to our new Flying Bush Chaplain in the Carpentaria-McKay Remote Area of Queensland.

For Pastor Michael Chapman to serve in this role, connecting with people in Australia's most rural and remote corners, he needed to learn to fly a plane.

On the morning of 11 June, Michael took his first solo flight in Cloncurry, in challenging conditions. It's a huge leap towards him getting his wings so he can start bringing practical, pastoral and spiritual care to farmers and communities across vast distances in the Outback.

**Congratulations Michael, and we wish you the best in your new role!**



### How you can help bush communities right now:

- ✓ Make a tax-deductible gift by completing the self-sealing envelope in this magazine, or donate online at [frontierservices.org/donate](https://frontierservices.org/donate)
- ✓ Register to volunteer at [frontierservices.org/outback-links](https://frontierservices.org/outback-links) and to check out our current volunteering opportunities in areas of most need.



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



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**Front Cover** Brad, farmer from central west NSW

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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.

# Giving hope after disasters



*Rev. David Jackson (right) with Rev. Erica Payne (centre) who served as acting Disaster Recovery Chaplain before his appointment.*

**When Rev. David Jackson finally decided to hang up his boots and retire as a church Minister, he was hoping to enjoy some downtime with his wife where they live in the Margaret River wine region outside Perth. Instead, he's preparing for a new assignment.**

Formerly patrol padre in Tasmania in 1989, David is returning to Frontier Services as the new Disaster Recovery Chaplain, Mid-West in WA. He'll be doing what he does best – helping communities struggling to recover from the deadly impact of natural disasters.

While the entire country has been grappling with extreme weather, WA has

faced drought, bushfires and in April 2021, the unspeakable destruction of Cyclone Seroja.

Critical infrastructure was damaged including roads, telecommunications and many properties in the central west which hadn't been built to withstand this rare Category 3 cyclone. Farmers were left to pick up the pieces of what little

remained, having lost their homes, cattle and equipment.

We know that recovering from any disaster doesn't happen overnight. It takes years, especially in rural and remote Australia, where labour and materials are in short supply.

One person slowly battling back onto her feet is Erika, whose story you might remember from our February Frontier News.

Erika's sheep farm was devastated by the cyclone. Our Outback Links volunteers have assisted her with some of the extensive repair work. This was invaluable practical help. However, she still lives in a campervan because her home remains unsafe. Much more needs to be done to get her farm up and running again.

Today, many farmers like Erika are waiting for practical and pastoral support to tide them through these difficult times and prepare for future disasters.

David understands their plight from his own experiences. When he moved on from his role as Frontier Services patrol padre, he relocated to Karratha just after Cyclone Orson wreaked havoc across WA.

"It very much set the tone for all the disasters I was to witness during my time in WA," he recalls. "Eventually I got used to the cyclones, knowing that they brought much-needed rain for the farmers."

In his subsequent work as an Army Reserve Chaplain, David supported personnel after the 1996 Black Hawk crash near Townsville, QLD. He also

comforted people after Sydney's hailstorms in 1999, and helped survivors of the horrific Bali bombings in 2002 who were flown to Darwin.

Soon after that, the WA Synod of the Uniting Church started looking for a Convenor for their Disaster Relief and Community Recovery Working Group, and David became involved. This began his association with Rev. Dr. Stephen Robinson, Frontier Services National Disaster Recovery Officer.

David's heart broke for the communities he saw struggling after Cyclone Seroja and the 2021 Wooroloo bushfires, which ravaged suburbs in the Perth Hills. It drew him out of retirement, to help and care for people once again.

In Cyclone Seroja "many homes were destroyed, and pastoral properties turned upside down," David says. "People's businesses were ruined and their livelihood severely impacted. This brought a great deal of pain and anguish."

As Frontier Services Disaster Recovery Chaplain, David will walk beside those dealing with trauma and suffering. He hopes to encourage them and impart the skills they need to cope. "My job is to make people feel listened to and cared for, as they put their lives back together."

**A big thank you  
to Rev. Erica Payne  
who stepped into the  
role of the Frontier Services  
Disaster Recovery Chaplain in  
WA, as David prepared to return  
to active service from July 1.**

# Helping farmers stay on the land



**Staying on their property 600km north west of Sydney has always been an uphill battle for farmers Anita and Ken. When they moved in 25 years ago, their to-do list was never-ending. They've had the electricity connected, built cattle yards and sheep yards, fenced the perimeter and put dams in. Anita puts it mildly when she says, "We've been a bit busy."**

The work has been intense and the upfront costs were crippling. "Even to put electricity on the property costs \$90,000," Anita says.

The harsh climate is another challenge. Temperatures in their area range between minus 7 and 52 degrees Celsius, and for many years drought nearly brought them to their knees.

Despite the extremes, they've made a home for themselves and would never choose to move. This means

accepting a life of compromise and sacrifice.

Their nearest grocery store is 110km away. If they need mechanical parts or clothing, that's a 300km drive. As fuel prices climb, especially in regional areas, it's a devastating hit to their finances. And, as is the case for many farmers, there isn't much left in the bank at the best of times.

"It's been very hard trying to keep the farm," Anita says. "Out of our 25

years here, 14 of those years have been drought. And out of the 14, for 8 years we were losing money. We had no idea the drought would go on for that long."

When things feel futile and impossible, it takes a lot of resilience for farmers like Anita to stay on the land. Unfortunately, even when drought subsides, their stress and uncertainty continues.

"There's so much that we couldn't do through the drought, we just had no more funds. And you just don't know, day to day, how long you've got and if it's going to rain."

At times like this, it's small rays of light that have given the couple the energy and inspiration they need to get on with things. That's what our Frontier Services Outback Links volunteers provide when they show up where no one else will. They give practical help to isolated farmers and vital emotional support as well.

"It was after the drought that the volunteers came and stayed at our farm," says Anita. "They've done everything from helping to move livestock for shearing to having a big clean up and decluttering. And another couple have helped me build yards for livestock. So it's been absolutely

fantastic for me. More than anything, it's just good to have someone to talk to."

Anita has become firm friends with one of the volunteers, Wendy. They've even been on 'girls trips', making the long trek into town to get their hair done together. Having the companionship and a chance to look after herself for a change was very special to Anita.

**Our Frontier Services volunteers and supporters change the lives of people in the bush. What a wonderful gift!**



*Anita always busy on the farm.*



*Frontier Services  
Outback Links  
volunteer Lester  
helping out.*

Anita is right: our Aussie farmers need support and it can keep them on the land. To help them now, donate using the self-sealing envelope within this magazine.

# Hurry to avoid missing out Our 2022 Christmas cards are now on sale!

We suggest you order early, as our print run is limited and has sold out in previous years.

Each pack features 10 cards, two of each design, revealing the rugged beauty and serenity of our vast Outback. Inside and on the back are uplifting messages to celebrate the festive season.

**\*\*Orders must be placed by Friday, 2 December 2022. Order your cards by completing the form or calling us on 1300 787 247. But be quick, they're only available while stocks last!**



# YES, I/we would like to purchase 2022 Christmas Cards\* and/or make a donation to Frontier Services

## Mixed pack of 10 Christmas cards (2 of each design)

	NUMBER OF PACKS	PRICE PER PACK	TOTAL
<b>MY ORDER (1-9 PACKS)</b>		<b>\$12</b> (including P&H)	\$
<b>BULK ORDER (10+ PACKS)</b>		<b>\$10</b> (including P&H)	\$
<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 received by Friday, 2 December 2022.			
<b>TOTAL</b>			\$

### PLEASE ENSURE YOU COMPLETE YOUR ADDRESS DETAILS

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

Name

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Mobile

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Date of birth

### 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

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**Please complete this order form and send using the Reply Paid envelope or 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 great distances to visit hundreds of families living across some of the most rural and remote parts 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.

**\$50**

A Gift Given In Your Honour



**A cuppa and a chat**



**\$100**

A Gift Given In Your Honour



**Mend a fence**



**\$250**

A Gift Given In Your Honour



**Fill a tank**



**\$ amount of  
your choice**

A Gift Given In Your Honour



**The gift of mateship**



## YES, I/we would like to purchase Gift of Hope cards and/or make a donation to Frontier Services

YOUR GIFT	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
<b>A cuppa and a chat (\$50):</b> Isolation is one of the hardest things to endure and your gift supports our Bush Chaplains to lend a listening ear when needed.		\$50	\$
<b>Mend a fence (\$100):</b> Practical support is often what's needed most and your gift allows our skilled volunteers to complete repairs and maintenance on farming stations.		\$100	\$
<b>Fill a tank (\$250):</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.		\$250	\$
<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>NOTE: All orders must be placed by Friday, 2 December 2022.</b> Cards are blank on the inside so you can personalise them before giving to family and friends.		<b>TOTAL</b>	\$

**Please complete this order form and send using the Reply Paid envelope or via**

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**PLEASE ENSURE YOU COMPLETE YOUR ADDRESS DETAILS**

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

Name

Address

Postcode

Phone / Mobile

Email

**I/WE WISH TO PAY BY**

- ☐ Cheque/Money Order (payable to Frontier Services)  
☐ Credit card – please fill in details below  
☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Name on Card

Signature

Card No.

Expiry Date

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# The power of a helping hand



*Brad (and his four-legged best mate) with our volunteers from NRMA.*



**When our volunteers show up to a farmer's gate, the joy goes both ways. Blokes like Brad welcome us into their homes to help out. In return, our volunteers get to see what country hospitality is all about – morning tea, a friendly chat and some hard, honest work. It's enough to bring a smile to a farmer's face and forge connections that make a difference to people's lives.**

Finding time to get through all the work is one of the hardest things Brad confronts day to day on his family farm, 100km away from Condobolin, in central west NSW. And natural disasters haven't made his life any easier. In 2017, it "just stopped raining" and a drought struck that Brad sums up with one word – "atrocious".

Before long, there was nothing left for the livestock to graze on. For two years, Brad and his wife Beck had to hand-feed their sheep and cattle every single day, to stop them starving. The arid conditions also destroyed vehicles and machinery on the farm, adding to his outstanding jobs while making others harder to do.

"When we had the long drought, things break," Brad points out. "You park them under a tree and think, 'Oh, I haven't got time now. I'll get back to that. And then it's overwhelming."

Being an hour's drive from the nearest town meant Brad can't simply phone a local mechanic or electrician to help. "It's very hard to get them to drive this far out," he says. "That's one of the hardest things, getting services from people that you need."

So Brad was extremely thankful recently when Frontier Services and our long-term partner NRMA visited with a group of volunteers, including mechanics. By the time they said

goodbye, after a whirlwind of hard slog, all the break-downs were back running again.

"Those blokes came out and they were incredible, they've fixed everything," he praises. "It's put a spring back in my step. If I want to go and use something I know it'll work."

Countless farmers like Brad are still doing it tough to put food on our shelves. At the same time, many are being pushed off the land because the pressures are too great – drought, isolation and debt to name a few. Sometimes a friendly visit can be make or break.

In his own community, Brad has seen the worst that can happen when people are isolated from the support they need. Just over a year ago, a mate his age began quietly withdrawing into his shell. Tragically, his friend committed suicide.

Now Brad's determined to giving others a hand when they're struggling. And knowing the enormous difference this makes, he feels even more grateful to our volunteers.

"I think that's just the Aussie way of life," he says. "You see someone that needs help, you help them."



# Saving Cockburn

## How Outback Links volunteers supported a whole town

You could almost be forgiven for calling Cockburn (pronounced Koh-burn) near the SA-NSW border a 'ghost town'. With a current population of only six residents, this old mining and railway town is a shadow of its former self. Once a bustling centre back in the late 1800s and the early 1900s, it's now desperately in need of a facelift to attract people back and avoid fading away completely.

Led by Frontier Services Bush Chaplain Rev. Sunil (Sunny) Kadaparambil, a team of 18 Outback Links volunteers recently joined forces to help Ryan Esam, the current owner of the Cockburn Community Hotel, with some urgent jobs around town.

According to Ryan, living in isolation and away from easy access to vital services is hurting people in town. His mate Ian, from Broken Hill, who travels into Cockburn daily to serve as manager at Ryan's hotel, says residents have become withdrawn after extended periods of forced solitude. Mental health concerns are rampant.



Before Ryan bought the hotel, which was built in 1889, his mother Iris was the long-term manager. She explains that it's the only local public meeting place and helps keep the town alive.

"Any profit we make goes straight back into the community. We're hoping with a tidy up that more people might come and settle here. That's the only way the town can sustain itself."

Enter Frontier Services Outback Links volunteers, who tackled a long list of practical tasks like general maintenance, especially around the caravan park. This involved painting, yard cleaning and gardening, fixing fences and pathways, and repairing doors and windows to make the surroundings as welcoming as possible. They also worked hard on tiling,

painting, electrical and plumbing jobs at the hotel so it can continue supporting locals and visitors to come together and connect.

Ian, the hotel manager, is hoping residents can carry on the general upkeep and chip in to complete any outstanding jobs in the future.

"Sometimes all you need is a helping hand, and someone willing to share a cuppa and a yarn. It can go a long way in reassuring people they're not alone. It's not easy living in a faraway, forgotten town. Rev. Sunny and the

Frontier Services volunteers have extended critical support when we needed it most, and everyone is feeling more positive about the future."



**If you want to help people in the bush and make some incredible friends at the same time, contact our Outback Links team online at [frontierservices.org/volunteering-to-change-lives](https://frontierservices.org/volunteering-to-change-lives) or call us on 1300 787 247.**

# National NAIDOC Week



**Annual National NAIDOC Week celebrations across Australia in the first week of July (3-10) recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It's an opportunity to learn more about First Nations histories, and participate in the world's oldest, continuous living culture.**

This year's theme is Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up! and all of us at Frontier Services couldn't agree more.

We're committed to standing up with First Nations peoples, listening to their stories and truth, and working together to develop programs and resources.

Most recently, our Outback Links volunteers travelled to Oodnadatta (SA), Australia's driest town, to complete a project alongside Frontier Services Bush Chaplain Julia Lennon and other residents. With SA Water soon to

construct a new treatment facility to deliver clean, safe drinking water to the town for the first time, there was plenty of preparation work to get through. Volunteers pulled out all stops to finish every job, hand-in-hand with our First Nations brothers and sisters.

We stood up to provide help where it was needed, based on what was needed. Together we walk with our indigenous brothers and sisters, and celebrate the heroes and champions of change and equal rights.

# We are better together

Our Outback Links volunteers are our heroes. They generously commit their time to help out on the farms and properties of people living and working across rural and remote Australia. Every night they go to sleep knowing their hard work has positively impacted those struggling with isolation, harsh weather and natural disasters. We celebrated National Volunteer Week (May 16 - 22) with a huge shout-out to the goodwill and dedication of our Outback Links volunteers. Here's to you!



"In my role, it has been a true blessing working with thousands of volunteers who lend a hand to countless farmers. It humbles me every day to witness the compassion, empathy and friendship along with the practical help that our volunteers bring to a farmer's doorstep. Whether they're fixing a fence, building a shed or sharing stories over a cuppa, our volunteers give farmers a comforting presence when the going gets tough. It's life-changing for our volunteers too. They can see first-hand the difference they're making."

Montarna Cohen  
Volunteer Programs Administrator



*Support our hardworking Aussie farmers like Rhonda by hosting your own Great Outback BBQ this year.*

# Spark up the barbie



**Ready to share a feed, a yarn and a cold one or a cuppa? Our Great Outback BBQ is back, and we hope it's bigger and better than ever before.**

Last year was tough for everyone. As if Aussies had not been through enough, stricter COVID-19 rules created new hardships and challenges. It was especially tough on our farmers who were struggling to recover after a seemingly endless drought, unforgiving bushfires and an epic mouse plague. And finally, just when restrictions were easing and we were all feeling more positive, dreadful floods smashed large parts of Australia's east coast.



Right now, farmers are dealing with widespread loss and damage to their property, cattle and crops. After years of pain, they have little to fall back on. It's pain we all share, as supermarket shelves stand empty and prices skyrocket.

**By hosting a Great Outback BBQ, you can show you support our hardworking Aussie farmers.** Every dollar raised goes straight towards helping them to make it through this crisis and stay on the land. Please join us – and let farmers know you care!



Register now at  
**[greatoutbackbbq.com.au](http://greatoutbackbbq.com.au)**

*Sign up to host your very own Great Outback BBQ and receive an exclusive BBQ host kit!*



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*Remember Frontier Services volunteer Geoff (front) from our February edition, who at 84 years young has clocked up over 1,577 hours of voluntary work in the bush? Here he is helping out a farmer, also named Geoff, at Gravesend in north west NSW.*