

NOVEMBER 2022

FrontierNews

*Thank you for
being there
when we need
you most!*



Frontier Services
Standing with people in the bush



After five and a half years leading the Frontier Services team, Jannine Jackson recently resigned from her role as National Director.

Lisa Sampson, Chair of Frontier Services Board said, "We are very grateful for Jannine's significant contributions to the vital work of Frontier Services, supporting people in rural and remote Australia. Jannine helped secure our financial future and worked alongside the Board to develop exciting plans for the future. On behalf of the Board and the team at Frontier Services, I thank and acknowledge Jannine for her leadership and wish her every success for the future."

On leaving Frontier Services Jannine Jackson said,

"I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have worked with so many incredible people; our bush chaplains, our volunteers, and of course, incredible every-day Australians in rural and remote Australia who are braver and more resilient than most of us will ever know. It has been my privilege and honour to work with each and every one of them, as they lend a hand to Australians in every corner of our land."



You can help bush communities today.

- ✓ Make a tax-deductible gift by completing the self-sealing envelope in this magazine, or donate online at **frontierservices.org/donate**
- ✓ Register to volunteer at **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



Published by
Frontier Services
PO Box 3424
Parramatta NSW 2124

Suite 53 / 2 O'Connell St
Parramatta NSW 2150

T 1300 787 247
E enquiries@frontierservices.org
W www.frontierservices.org

November 2022 Edition 124, Volume 4
Print Post 100020006

Editor Karen Salipuran
Front Cover Jane Middlebrook

Circulation 15,500

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

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.

A message from Frontier Services



As many of us enjoy some spring sunshine, we're reminded how the seasons change our mood. But the weather can make or break Aussie farmers like Pete and Jane, along with Rhonda and Tony. Now a third flooding 'La Niña' has been predicted this coming summer, and I worry if they'll survive yet another disaster.

I see pain in the bush, but I know a helping hand can give relief and hope.

That's why I'm delighted to have this opportunity to be part of the Frontier Services team, continuing to support people in Outback Australia as we celebrate 110 years of bringing John Flynn's vision to life.

The stories our staff bring back from visits to isolated farms and communities across Australia are inspiring. In spite of the unrelenting pressure, these are places of resilience and strength. What I hear also reminds me there's exceptional power in going through the tough times together.

Our Outback Links volunteers make an incredible impact. They keep turning up at the farm gate for those who need us so much. Their practical help eases the burden of endless 'to do' lists on the land. But it's the conversations and sense of

connection created by working side by side that mean the most to some of the farmers we support. They tell us this gives them the lift they need to carry on.

Having our Bush Chaplains to talk, cry and laugh with also provides life-changing support. Every year they travel vast distances to offer practical, pastoral and spiritual care where it's needed most. And now we've been able to place Bush Chaplains in more communities, including Barwon, NSW, thanks to you and our other supporters.

It couldn't be more timely, as farmers try to rebuild after the recent disasters and brace for whatever will be thrown at them next.

I appreciate your role in our essential services in the bush. With new threats looming, your generosity can strengthen people who are isolated and struggling in rural and remote Australia.

You can use the enclosed envelope to give today. Thank you for supporting people in the bush.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Floyd'.

Rob Floyd
Acting National Director



Helping farmers stay on the land

Meet Noel Williams, our new Bush Chaplain in Barwon NSW.

Noel Williams with his lovely wife Kayleen

The Bush Chaplain role was a match made in heaven for Noel. It brought together all his loves: his previous role as chaplain in the Air Force, his farming background, his experience as a radio technician and his love of connecting with people – and helping them connect with God.

Noel was a chaplain in the Air Force for 40 years, and when he was age-retired earlier this year, he wasn't ready to hang up his boots.

"Frontier Services have a motto, 'Standing with people in the bush'. And when I reflect on my 40 years in the Air Force, I think that I've been

standing with people in support for my whole working life," he says.

"It's just who I am and what I do."

Noel is already connecting with people all across the wide expanse of his area, which extends from Narrabi to Cobar (and surrounds).

"Before I started, I heard that people in the bush don't like opening up, that they don't want to talk about their feelings. But I find people do want to talk – both men and women. They will talk if they feel you haven't come with a hidden agenda.

"And that's why this chaplain role is so important: there's no agenda, just absolute care and support."

Noel finds unique ways to connect with and support the people in his care. In his vehicle, he carries a welding helmet and his autoelectrical toolbox, so he can chip in and help wherever and whenever people are in need.

"This job is about building strength in people, sometimes physically like with welding, but sometimes it's just having a chat. It's just having someone who can listen. It's about inner strength: emotional, mental, spiritual.

"The welding helmet and the toolkits become symbolic of what I do as a chaplain."

Noel knows what it's like to struggle on the land, dealing with floods and bushfires and the tough competitive

market facing primary producers; he and his wife run a working sheep farm.

Although only a few months into the job, Noel is already getting to know his community. He recently met with an Aboriginal Elder and had a wonderful chat about the struggles facing Aboriginal people and leaders.

"They have similar issues to other families on the land. They're losing their children to electronic devices, and their kids are moving away from their cultural homeland. Other farming communities have the same problem with the kids moving off the farm and going to the city."

Loneliness and isolation are a huge issue for the people Noel sees everyday.

"That emptiness within, that loneliness – it has an impact on self-worth and self-respect. For me, bringing new perspectives to people in terms of life and well-being is really at the heart of what I offer."

"Like the daughter I never had"



Tara dug in to help rejuvenate their garden - and their hope for the future!

Pete was amazed at how much the volunteers achieved, and how much difference it made to their lives.

Running a dairy farm can be relentless, back-breaking and lonely work. That's why a team of NRMA volunteers made all the difference to Pete and Jane.

Pete works around the clock to keep his farm operating. He and his wife Jane (cover photo) produce 10,000 litres of milk every day, often with little help.

Lack of staff has been a huge pressure for this farm. On top of that, Jane has serious health issues and often goes through tough stages.

Peter finds it incredibly difficult to have to be away from her for so long, but the demands of the farm means he just has to keep working day and night.

He would love to spend more time together, but that seems impossible with staff in such short supply.

So when our volunteers turned up in their NRMA vans, they were welcomed with open arms.

Pete said Tara, the corporate volunteer from NRMA, was "like the daughter he never had". Tara accompanied him for a week and did everything from wrestling calves and feeding newborn cows to gardening and helping paint a bathroom with Jane.

The volunteers chipped in straight away and got through a week's worth of work. Pete said, "These were all important jobs that I just didn't have time to look at, and it's helped us

get closer to where we should be in terms of operational equipment."

They took two broken quad bikes, stripped the parts and created one fully functional quad bike, while fixing another 4x4 bike. They got a tractor running "from nothing", said Pete, along with fixing two more motorbikes, plus several jobs that helped restore vital pieces of equipment.

Pete said the mental health challenges can be crushing, particularly being so isolated on the farm, and the stress of keeping their head above water with the business. He said community support like that provided by Frontier Services Outback Links and NRMA corporate volunteers means everything and helps him get through tough times.



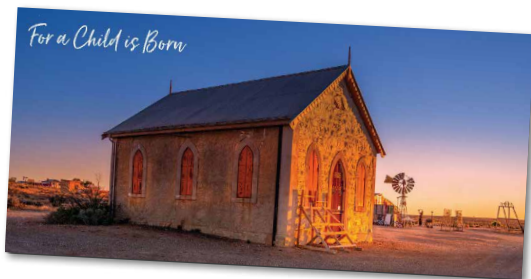
Let the Outback hear your Christmas cheer!

This year's Christmas card collection features five stunning photographs of Outback Australia.

Share the beauty and grace of the rugged country this Christmas with these unique cards, while spreading care and cheer with the people in the outback.

Please place your order by Friday 2 December 2022.

- Mail the enclosed form (next page)
- Call our team on 1300 787 247
- Order online: www.frontierservices.org/shop



**Place your order
by Friday 2nd
December!**



YES, I 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
MY ORDER (1-9 PACKS)		\$12 (including P&H)	\$
BULK ORDER (10+ PACKS)		\$10 (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.			
		TOTAL	\$

PLEASE ENSURE YOU COMPLETE YOUR ADDRESS DETAILS

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

Name

Address (please print)

State

Postcode

Daytime Telephone

Mobile

Email

Date of birth

I 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

NOV22

**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

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 would like to purchase Gift of Hope cards and/or make a donation to Frontier Services

YOUR GIFT	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
A cuppa and a chat (\$50): Isolation is one of the hardest things to endure and your gift supports our Bush Chaplains to lend a listening ear when needed.		\$50	\$
Mend a fence (\$100): Practical support is often what's needed most and your gift allows our skilled volunteers to complete repairs and maintenance on farming stations.		\$100	\$
Fill a tank (\$250): 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	\$
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, 2 December 2022. 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 using the Reply Paid envelope or 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.



Frontier Services
Standing with people in the bush

PLEASE ENSURE YOU COMPLETE YOUR ADDRESS DETAILS

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

Name

Address

Postcode

Phone / Mobile

Email

I 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

NOV22



Back on her bike

An update from Rhonda's farm

Do you remember Rhonda? Recently we shared the story of Rhonda and Tony, who are farmers in central west NSW. To lend a hand on their 2,000 acre property, where they run Hereford cattle and Merino sheep, we've sent two sets of Frontier Services volunteers - with the latest group visiting in March.

When we last spoke with Rhonda, she described the difference our volunteers made in easing the continual pressures and stress they'd been enduring on the farm.

First, they toughed it out through a long drought that went "forever". An awful mouse plague followed that did thousands of dollars of damage. Then this year, heavy rains ruined their planting season. Rhonda and Tony are amazingly resilient, but

these back-to-back disasters were an emotional blow as well as a source of major financial worries.

So Rhonda says "it was just lovely" having volunteers who chipped burrs in the rain, cleaned out sheds and fixed broken down machinery. They even got her beloved quad bike going after it had sat nearly four years "in bits and pieces" and it's now coming in handy around the farm.

But the opportunity for a chat to break up their usual isolation was what Rhonda appreciated the most.

"Sometimes you won't see anybody for it seems like weeks and weeks on end," she explains.

As their kelpie, Sandy, bounds up for a quick 'kiss' and a chin scratch, Rhonda elaborates: "One of the things we have enjoyed is the morning teas and the lunches where we all get together."

The lift provided by our volunteers is also helping Rhonda prepare to face whatever's around the corner.

She'd been concerned about the prospect of foot-and-mouth disease in Australia and says it's already reduced the income they earn selling their livestock. But she's been thankful the threat hasn't materialised into active spread throughout herds here.

Rhonda is also looking forward to plans coming to fruition which she made with our volunteers for this coming January. After bonding with them over a shared love of the Eagles, "I invited them back for the Elvis festival," she says.

"One of the guys said he might even come back and help us with lamb marking... because we've got a mine just over the road and we just can't get help because all of the young fellas go to the mines."

Overall, she sums up the support from Frontier Services as transformative.

"Having somebody actually come to your place and then be willing to put themselves out and feel your pain, to try and make things easier, it's just life-changing."



For Rhonda, having volunteers to lend a hand and a listening ear was "transformative".

Thanks to you, we could weather the storm

Standing with the community at Birdsville Races

For 140 years, people from across Australia have journeyed to Birdsville, nestled in the south-west corner of Queensland, for its iconic races. Over one frenetic week, the town's population balloons from a little over 100 to well over 10,000 as an interstate motley crew gathers in caravans and on campgrounds.

The event is steeped in Australian tradition and culture. Those who make the pilgrimage are rewarded with sights and sounds like the ceremonial drumming outside Fred Brophy's famous Fight Tent and the blaring of custom car horns for the Big Red Bash.

Year after year, we support this community so that its rich legacy endures, turning up so that they can keep going. Our team is there to be called upon for help, offering a comforting presence, a friendly chat and a chance to connect. The outback can be isolating, but for one week in Birdsville people come to the desert to be together.

Frontier Services has been coming to Birdsville for as long as anyone can remember. From the earliest days

of the Australian Inland Mission, Rev John Flynn formed many of his astute observations on the outback passing along the Birdsville Track. It would even help inspire him to form what today exists as the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

This year, pouring rain and gale force winds were not enough to dampen the spirits of our Outback Links volunteers led by Rev Sunny. The bright red Frontier Services stall stood out like a beacon against overcast skies, with passersby stopping for a chat or a helping hand. With a legacy so deeply ingrained in the community, Frontier Services will keep showing up when it matters most to stand with people in the bush. And in Birdsville, that involves collectively rejoicing at an iconic Australian event. Even if it means weathering a storm in the desert.

Because beneath the revelry are countless years of toil and untold stories. Like Bert West, a retired dairy farmer, who has been through the worst of cancer but is today appreciating every moment of life. With years of hardship behind him, giving up his free time to be among strangers in Birdsville is a welcome



reprieve. The community and unlikely bonds of friendship are also what bring Hoppo to town in his big, pink Mr. Whippy van with his 11-year-old son, Lance.

The main event is an added bonus. A soaked and muddy track could only delay the Birdsville Races. The collective spirit, resilience and hope of people in the bush always comes out on top.



Above: Bert West and the owner of Pellegrino Pizza.



Right: Hoppo and Lance outside their Mr. Whippy truck.

Tears, coffee and fences: it's all in a day's work for our Outback Links volunteers

Volunteers Lester and Wendy say everyone should have a go at being an Outback Links Volunteer.

"Don't be afraid to have a go even if you don't have farm skills," says Wendy.

"People in the bush have all got a garden, they've all got houses that need painting, they've all got a freezer that needs filling up with food."

Wendy says that although the job request is often for a fence or help with machinery, it's the human connection that makes the most difference.

"One property we went to, Lester and the property owner stood on the veranda for two days drinking coffee because that was his greatest need. The owner just needed some man chat. They had a huge list of projects they wanted done, but first things come first."

"The listening ear is a big factor for both men and women," says Wendy. "Women in the bush need a listening ear and a lot of moral support."

Lester adds, "By the third day with a family, I often ask Wendy, 'Have you made her cry yet?' It's because Wendy gives them a chance to talk to unburden and have a cry."

That's not to say it's all talk. Lester recently helped put in a long exclusion fence.

"Just one side was 4.3km long, with eight-foot star pickets every five or six metres.

"It took us weeks, and even then we went back later to keep going. It felt like a real achievement.

"I always say, if they cry when we leave, we've done a good job."





This page: Lester helping Anita, one of the many people he has volunteered to help, roll out hay for the goats

Opposite: Anita and Lester augering grain

Outback Links volunteers bring hope by showing up and showing they care. If you are ready to take part in a life-changing, meaningful experience, become a volunteer today.

www.frontierservices.org/outback-links



The Great Outback BBQ is a powerful way for people in the city to reach out and help people in the bush.



When people come together to help... wonderful things happen

Two churches came together recently to combine their energy, their generosity and their support for people doing it tough on the land.

St Andrews Uniting Church in Longueville joined with their neighbours at the Lane Cove Uniting Church to hold a hugely successful and enjoyable Great Outback BBQ.

Together, they raised money for Frontier Services to help struggling farmers in rural and remote communities across Australia.

Longueville in Sydney's leafy north shore is a long way from the bush, but running a Great Outback BBQ made them feel connected, and helped them feel they were making a meaningful difference in the lives of people they may never meet.

The Great Outback BBQ is a fun and easy way to 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 this summer by hosting your own Great Outback BBQ event – and let farmers know you care!

Register now at
greatoutbackbbq.com.au

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





*A rare moment of sun for Bush
Chaplain Reverend Sunny at the
wet and soggy Birdsville Races.*