

MAY 2023

FrontierNews

*"You
completely
lifted our
spirits."*



Frontier Services
Standing with people in the bush



Acknowledgement

Frontier Services acknowledges the sovereign First Peoples on whose lands and waters we live, meet, and work. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to all descendants of these Nations who have cared for this place since Creation.

About Frontier Services

We are Australia's oldest bush charity, and we are here to help people living on the land. Through the generosity of our supporters, we provide practical, pastoral, and spiritual help to people in remote areas of Australia.

You can help bush communities today and into the future.

- ✓ Make a tax-deductible gift by completing the donation form 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.
- ✓ Leave a lasting legacy by including a Gift in your Will to Frontier Services, visit frontierservices.org/bequest



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May 2023 Edition 125, Volume 2

Print Post 100020006

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Front Cover Irene of Bingara, NSW

Circulation 14,000

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A message from Frontier Services



Every day, I meet the most incredible people in my job here at Frontier Services.

And every day, I am humbled by the courageous spirit of the people we help, and the people who help them – kind and generous people like you.

I think of Scott and Jenny, who you'll meet in this issue of Frontier News. They've been through the wars with Jenny's health: breast cancer followed by leukaemia. Scott has been torn between trying to care for Jenny and taking care of the farm, all while juggling paid work just to keep his farm and his family going.

And I think of our amazing Outback Links volunteers, like Ron and Gwen, two retirees who graciously gave up their time to travel hundreds of kilometres to help people in need.

Most of all, I think of you and the generosity you show through your support. **Your kindness stretches right across Australia, bringing comfort, hope and strength to people who need it most.**

It's a privilege for me to share in this work with you. You inspire me and humble me every day.

If you would like to give today to help more people doing it tough, you can simply complete the form on Page 11. Anything you can give makes a direct and powerful difference to people in the bush.

Thank you for your continued support.

Rob Floyd
National Director

Thank you for being there for those who feel alone



*Main image: Erika and Ron planning the day's work
Left inset: Volunteers Ron and Gwen
Right inset: Erika and Gwen with Erika's chooks.*

Outback Links volunteers are ordinary people who make an extraordinary difference.

They're humble, hardworking, big-hearted people like Ron and Gwen, who drive around the vast expanse of Western Australia, helping people living on the land.

Ron urges everyone to volunteer with Frontier Services.

"You don't need to be an expert. We started by looking on the Frontier Services website, which shows lists of jobs you can search. We found one, and thought, 'We can do that. Let's go!'"

"I encourage people to really think about getting out there and having a look in their area."

"Frontier Services literally saved my life!" – Erika

One of the farmers our volunteers helped said that without the support of Outback Links volunteers, she would have needed to sell up and leave town. "Frontier Services literally saved my life!" she said.

Erika's property was ripped apart by Cyclone Seroja in 2021.

"She'd only been on the property a short while before the cyclone hit, so it was a devastating situation for her," explains Gwen.

"She lost the roof off her house, her sheds were demolished and her water tanks blown off their stands."

Erika was there on her own and was still learning the ins and outs of farming. Ron taught her how to use some of the machinery, so she could keep on with jobs after they'd gone.

He gave her real support and encouragement, building her confidence in the tools she needed to use on the farm. Teaching her these skills meant that every day of her working life is now less stressful and more efficient.

"She enjoyed taking us around, just showing us the property and talking about her plans and her hopes for what she could do in the future," says Gwen.

To this day, Gwen continues to knit little woollen jackets for the newborn lambs on Erika's farm. It's a wonderful, warm, and colourful way to stay connected.

That's the power of your support. By helping to fund Outback Links volunteers, you're giving people such as Erika physical and emotional support.

If you'd like to become a volunteer, call us on 1300 787 247 or visit frontierservices.org/outback-links.

It's a powerful way to stand with people in the bush and show them they are never alone.



Welcome to our newest Bush Chaplain

Bush Chaplain Pastor Joe Eka shortly after presenting Rev Dona her Frontier Services Bush Chaplain stole

Reverend Dona Spencer recently arrived in Roma in regional Queensland to start her new chaplaincy. We caught up with her before she left to talk about the journey ahead.

What made you decide to become a Bush Chaplain?

Rev Dona: It wasn't one single moment. It was a series of events that led me to strongly feel that I am meant to be out there.

I had been thinking about it, but I already had a position as

Minister, and my daughter and granddaughter were also nearby. There was no reason to go. But I went out for a drive to see Roma and meet the people.

The landscape was amazing. They had arranged for us to meet a few locals, and 20 people turned up at

the local pub. My husband Les and I felt so comfortable with them.

As we got in the car and we drove off, we just knew that we were meant to be there. I was just called there. I just felt it was a call.

And then everything fell into place to allow us to sell up and move.

What were you doing before you took the position of Bush Chaplain?

Rev Dona: I was a Minister in Kenmore just outside Brisbane for four years and, before that, I was a minister at Southport Uniting Church for seven years on the Gold Coast. I was also an art teacher for 30 years in high schools and community centres.

What inspired you to go from art teaching to Ministry?

Rev Dona: This might sound strange, but it was like a word from above to study theology that came out of nowhere. And then from there, I decided this was going somewhere and I threw my hat in the ring to become a Minister. So it was very much God speaking to me.

Tell us about your new position as a Bush Chaplain based in Roma.

Rev Dona: The area we cover is about 250 kilometres in every direction from Roma.

It's a new position, so it will be shaped as I get to know the

community. I'll start by working out the needs in the area and then talking with the Frontier Services team and saying, "Is there any way we can help them in this regard?"

I've already seen how much they really love getting together as a community.

What are you most looking forward to?

Rev Dona: Meeting and getting to know the people and making connections. It's getting to know the people of the bush, it's getting to know a different form of ministry, it's seeing where God will take us into this place and how He is going to use us.



Rev Dona with husband Les

We'll be catching up with Rev Dona again soon for an update on her journey.

"We're normally the helpers, not the helped."



*Husband and wife
Scott and Jenny*

Scott and Jenny felt other people needed the help more than they did.

Jenny and Scott live in Finley, near the NSW-Victoria border. But for the last six years, they haven't been home much.

They've been busy fighting the toughest fight of their lives: cancer.

It started with breast cancer. Then, less than two years later, Jenny was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.

And so began more gruelling treatment, including a bone marrow transplant and chemotherapy – all hundreds of kilometres away in Melbourne.

It seemed to work, but in January of last year, the leukaemia came back

again. They've been fighting it ever since.

"We were doing two trips a week to Melbourne and back for treatment. That's a seven-hour round trip," says Scott.

"The fear and uncertainty wears you down, as much as the physical challenge."

"But you've gotta do what you've gotta do."

It's tough on them in every possible way. They've both had to take huge amounts of time off work to manage the treatment and trips to Melbourne.

In between all this, they're trying to keep their farm going.

So when Frontier Services called them to say they had a team of volunteers who wanted to help, Scott and Jenny were blown away.

"We thought, 'There's probably other people that need it more'. You always think somebody else needs a hand more than you do.

"We're normally the helpers, not the helped, and it's much easier being a helper than being the helped."

"It made such a difference to us."

Scott and Jenny were away in Melbourne for tests when the volunteers arrived.

"When we got back on the Wednesday afternoon, I was blown

away by what the volunteers had done and what they would do for us," Scott says.

"They fixed the chook house. They fixed some plumbing. Whippersnipped the lawn. They rehinged some gates that the bulls had knocked over.

"We had tractors serviced. We had a car with a new timing belt put on it. We had a motorbike serviced, then lawn mowers and log splitters. They even pruned the trees.

"Every time they finished a job, they'd say, 'Yeah, righto, what do we do next? You just give us jobs and we'll do it.'

"It was just amazing what they did in a short period of time."

For Scott and Jenny, knowing that people wanted to help, that people were there for them, meant the world.

Jenny says, "To have the kindness of strangers who were willing to give up their time to come down and help us, it was absolutely incredible."

"I just couldn't thank everyone enough."

If you'd like to help more people like Scott and Jenny, please send your gift today using the form on Page 11.

Flood-ravaged farmers need your help

Communities across Australia are still waterlogged and covered in mud from recent flood events.

Many farmers' properties have been destroyed. It's not just their crops, cattle, and livelihoods that have been ruined but also their homes. Their floors and walls are beyond repair, and yet they still have to make do in amongst the wreckage.

Many others are still trying to get by in temporary accommodation, having no home to return to.

The recovery will take months, if not years. The news media will move on, and others will forget about people living on the land.

They need your help. They need your compassion, your strength, and your kindness.

A gift from you today will help send immediate support, including practical help to fix their properties, along with urgently-needed spiritual and emotional support.

Any donation you can make would make an immense difference to people who have lost everything. Thank you for caring for people on the land.

Yes, I wish to support the people of remote Australia.

☐ Please use my donation where it is needed most

OR I would prefer that this donation be used for:

☐ Outback Links ☐ Bush Chaplaincy

Please complete these details even if you have donated previously.

Supporter Number (if known)

Title First Name

Last Name

Address

Suburb

State

Postcode

Phone / Mobile

ONE OFF DONATION

☐ I wish to make a one-off donation of

☐ \$30

☐ \$75

☐ \$100

☐ Other \$

MONTHLY GIVING

☐ I wish to become a regular supporter and give a donation each month of:

☐ \$30

☐ \$50

☐ \$80

☐ Other \$

PLEASE EMAIL ME MY RECEIPT

Email

I WISH TO PAY BY

☐ Credit card. Please debit my: ☐ VISA ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Card Number

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Expiry Date

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Name on Card

Signature

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☐ Cheque / Money Order made payable to **Frontier Services**

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

You can also donate by calling 1300 787 247 or visit frontierservices.org/donate

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION

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Anna says, "Thank you so much!"



You might remember Anna and David from our recent letter. Anna's husband and David's dad had passed away, and they'd been working themselves to the bone to try to keep their property going after the floods.

Because of the generous support of people like you, we could send Outback Links volunteers Lester

and Wendy and Bush Chaplain Noel to provide much needed practical, pastoral, and spiritual support.

Anna shared, "They made me feel cared for. I had tears in my eyes when they left."

Your support truly matters. In Anna's words, "It makes a whole world of difference. Thank you so much!"

Walking Together

Frontier Services is an Agency of the Uniting Church in Australia, established to offer service and ministry through compassionate care to the people of remote Australia. We are the people who turn up, take the time to listen, and offer a helping hand, often on isolated properties but also in remote communities including our First Nations communities.

At the heart of the Uniting Church is a commitment to walk together with First Nations people, particularly through our Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). We work together for more just, inclusive, and equal relationships in this nation.

The Uniting Church and UAICC support the Uluru Statement and its calls for Voice, Truth and Treaty.

"The Uluru Statement is an invitation given by First Nations people to the people of Australia," said Rev Mark Kickett, UAICC Interim National Chair and Frontier Services Board Member.

"A constitutionally enshrined Voice will shape and guide the relationship between First and Second peoples in this country by enabling our people to have a say in the decisions that impact our communities."

"This is an opportunity for all of us to unite in a big way as we seek to restore justice and promote healing for First Nations people in this land," said Rev Kickett.

Uniting Church President Rev Sharon Hollis said the Voice to Parliament is a moral and theological issue, not a political one. "In the Uniting Church we believe we share a common destiny with our UAICC siblings and First Nations people. This is an opportunity for us to honour that commitment.

"Now is the time for us to hear the call of God to seek justice by doing what is right for our nation," said Rev Kickett.



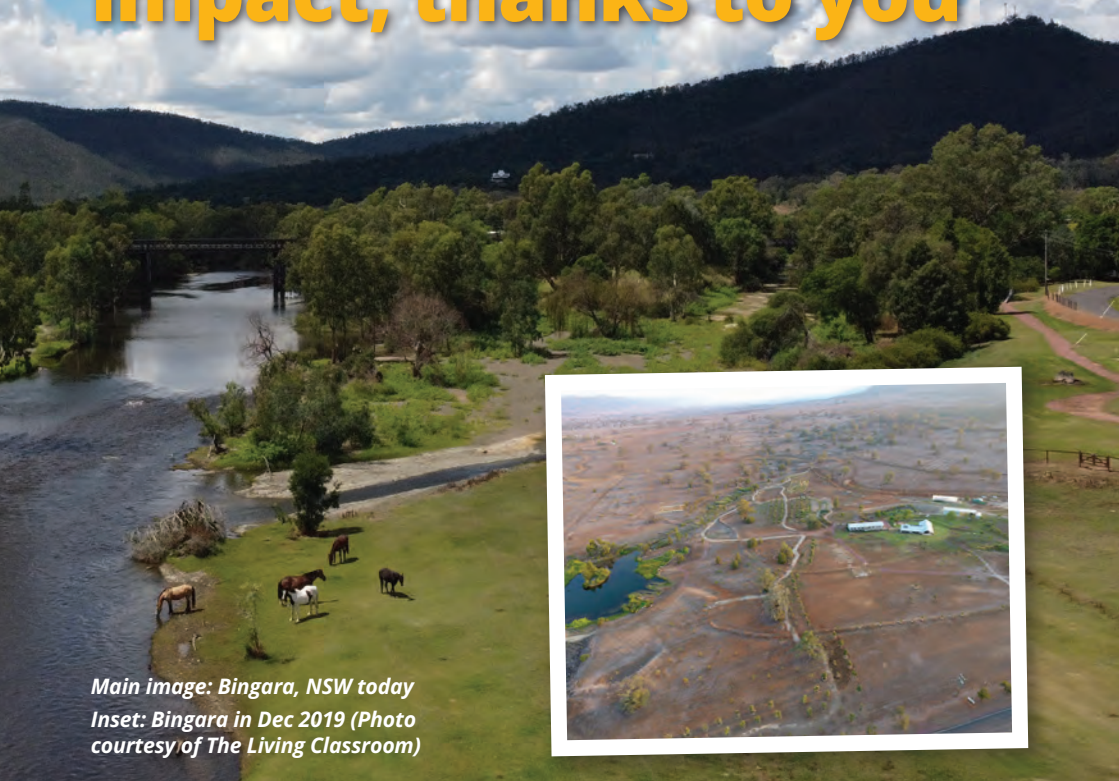
Rev Mark Kickett



Rev Sharon Hollis

Background artwork: Honey art home (Tjala), by proud Yankunytjatjara woman and Frontier Services Bush Chaplain Julia Lennon.

A deep and lasting impact, thanks to you



Main image: Bingara, NSW today

Inset: Bingara in Dec 2019 (Photo courtesy of The Living Classroom)

Today, Bingara looks like a place people come to for its greener pastures. Situated along the Gwydir River in Northern NSW, the natural landscape is vast and undulating with forested hills forming a boundary around open fields.

You wouldn't know that less than a year ago, Bingara was bracing for a crisis. You wouldn't know it is a town where disaster is all too familiar.

While visitors now might see the greener pastures, the people who live there still see traces of the volatile past. Barren fields from years of drought, fences brought down by flooding waters.

Living only a couple of kilometres outside town, farmer Graham describes the way a sudden hail storm stripped the trees on the hills bare and left his house and shed battered. The resilience on show is extraordinary but it takes a mental toll.

We can be impressed by how the people of this remote community have weathered adversity, but any of us in their shoes would be worn out.

As part of our Outback Links program, a team of NRMA staff spent four days across five properties to lift some of the burden that had been building from years of hardship.

When Irene arrived in Bingara thirty years ago with her husband Mike and their young children, she couldn't have anticipated just how much would be thrown at them.

"Those thirty years had everything." - Irene

But despite the recent deluge of rain, Irene's mind is still imprinted with the 'Big Dry'. For three years, Bingara - along with many other parts of remote NSW - were decimated by drought.

"It was just bare dirt. Nothing but dirt. When I look outside now and see green, I'm still reminded of how bad it was. It's not something you forget."

The NRMA staff join our Outback Links team to give the people they visit something better to remember.

Staff like Chris have decades of experience as a mechanic, but their greatest value is the desire to connect.

"I find it's really rewarding just to help out and put a smile on someone's face."

For Irene, spending quality time with quality people is a passion. When the NRMA team arrives, she greets them with warmth and gratitude. She sets forward



Main image: Irene having a laugh with Rob from Frontier Services

Inset: Mechanic Chris



NRMA staff Lisa and Britney celebrating a job well done

on a mission to know them, to understand them, to connect with them.

And Chris succeeds in putting a smile on her face. More than once.

All while working on a project of even greater significance - to get the shed ready for Irene's family to visit

over Easter. With her children, now adults, and grandchildren traveling from Mackay in North Queensland and Canada, it's a chance they don't enjoy very often.

In their time in Bingara, the Outback Links and NRMA teams got through a staggering amount of mechanical and practical household work, and made a deep and lasting impact.

Thank you to the NRMA, our Official Mobility Partner, for standing with us and people in the bush.



Farmer Jess, another property owner helped on this trip, was grateful for all the help

If your organisation would like to partner with Frontier Services to stand with people in the bush, please contact Paul Deverell at pauld@frontierservices.org, 02 7201 9937, or 0448 063 805.



We're always ready to help

mynrma.com.au



National Roads and Motorists' Association Limited ABN 77 000 010 506 is a separate and independent company from Insurance Australia Limited ABN 11 000 016 722 trading as NRMA Insurance. CS4284

Thank you for your feedback

Through your answers to the 2023 Supporter Survey, you kindly shared why supporting Frontier Services matters to you.

We are so grateful to you for taking the time to share your thoughts, and supporting our mission to provide a mantle of safety to our friends in remote areas of Australia.

Your feedback is being reviewed and helping us plan our work, increase our impact, and stand shoulder to shoulder with people in the bush.



Your Will can bring hope to people in the Outback

Making a Will is one of the most important decisions you can make in your life. It ensures your wishes are carried out and the values you hold most dear continue to live on through the work of others, such as the amazing work of our Bush Chaplains and Outback Links volunteers.

Frontier Services has partnered with Gathered Here, Australia's most trusted end-of-life services provider, to help you write a Will for free with unlimited updates for life.

You can create your free Will online now by visiting www.frontierservices.org/bequest

If you'd like to find out more about how to leave a Gift in your Will to Frontier Services, please contact Anne Jones, our Donor Relations Officer at annej@frontierservices.org or phone **1300 787 247**.



Spark up the barbie



A Great Outback BBQ at Mount Waverly, Victoria

Ready to share a feed, a yarn, and a cold drink, or a cuppa? The Great Outback BBQ is a fun, easy, and delicious way to help people in the bush doing it tough.

Our farmers have been through the wringer lately. They're still struggling to recover from the floods, which came hard on the back of the seemingly endless drought, unforgiving bushfires, and mouse plague.

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.

They're now hit with the cost-of-living crisis, which makes basics like food, fuel, and electricity painfully expensive.

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

It's so easy...You'll receive a kit with everything you need to run your own Great Outback BBQ.

Register now at
greatoutbackbbq.com.au



Frontier Services National Director Rob
Floyd (c) with Bush Chaplains Rev. Dona
Spencer (L) and Pastor Joe Eka (R)



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