

NOVEMBER 2023

FrontierNews

*Thank you for
turning up!*



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 rural and 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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Share your story If you have a story relating to our work that you would like to share, email Karen at karens@frontierservices.org

Message from the National Director



Whenever people in the bush gather, especially when they gather to discuss issues important to them, we make a commitment to be there. We're present where farmers are, where rural communities are, where decision makers are.

We want to always be listening to people in rural and remote Australia. We want to hear what gives them hope. We want to know what issues keep them awake at night, that make it hard for them to keep going.

That way, we can make sure we continue to provide the kind of help and support that people really need, not what others think they need.

And even more importantly, that way we can amplify their voices, advocate with them and for them, and help to bring to light the issues that really matter.

When we are there, we are standing with people in the bush on your behalf. You are there, whenever and wherever you can make the most difference.

In this edition of Frontier News, you'll see many more ways that you are there for people on the land doing it tough. You'll see how your support for our Outback Links volunteers changes lives – over and over again. You'll see how you help our Bush Chaplains be there for people who feel so alone. And you'll see how your kindness flows across this vast country, touching the lives of people in some of the most remote parts of Australia.

Rob Floyd
National Director

The bushfires took everything – but not their hope

Outback Links volunteers help people of Buchan recover from the Black Summer bushfires



A note in a local business in Victoria reads “Please don’t ask locals about the bushfires.”

The impact of the Black Summer bushfires is still plain to see. Blackened trees line the road. Bare hillsides mark the horizon.

But you can’t see the emotional impact. You can’t see the terror the locals felt when the fires came. You can’t see the profound sense of loss returning to an empty block of land where home used to be, the heartbreak of losing a friend you’d just spoken to.

Almost four years later, many people in the community are still recovering. They’ve been busy helping everyone

else, and their own property – their own sense of security – is still in disrepair.

But thanks to the kindness of supporters like you and the generosity of Trinity Families charitable fund, we were recently able to send a group of 24 Outback Links volunteers to help the people of Buchan.

The volunteer working group was led by Bushfire Recovery Bush Chaplain Rev Peter Harvey.





The family's home was destroyed by the fires. They managed to rebuild a new dwelling but had not found the time to turn it into a home.

Peter said,

"Our mission was to instill renewed hope and lift spirits.

"The families were extremely grateful for our support, and the value to them was immeasurable."

The complex project included practical and emotional support across six properties.

One of the properties was owned by two community stalwarts, a couple who has selflessly given so much to others in the years following the fires. It was time for them to receive

support themselves. Their house was destroyed. They had managed to rebuild a new dwelling but had not found time to turn this into a home.

At another property, a couple is still rebuilding their home after it was also lost in the fires. When the



Pat and Bill
Outback Links volunteers

volunteers had completed the work at the site, the couple said,

"It looks like the old place almost.

"It was just wonderful [to see the garden revitalised]. They've done a magnificent job. It's just unbelievable."

The volunteers also helped renovate the old Butter Factory in Buchan. This building will serve as a venue for the community to come together for events such as exhibitions, concerts, and film nights. Having the Butter Factory back up and running as a community hub will be a symbolic step towards recovery for everyone in Buchan.



Volunteer Bill taking a well earned break



It can take years to recover from natural disasters like the Black Summer bushfires. Help us be there for those still recovering and those bracing for the upcoming El Niño season.

Please consider making a donation today using the form on Page 9.

Give a **Gift of Hope** this Christmas

Instead of giving traditional gifts, spread holiday cheer by giving back. Make a heartfelt donation to Frontier Services on behalf of your loved one.



A cuppa and a chat \$50

Give the gift of a Bush Chaplain's listening ear



Mend a fence \$100

Make repairs on damaged homes and farming stations



Fill a tank \$250

Ensure Bush Chaplains can travel to those who need them most



The gift of mateship \$_____

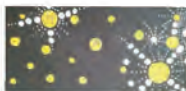
Show people doing it tough in the bush that they are not alone

Order your **Christmas Cards** by 1 December

Say Happy Christmas 15 different ways with 15 uniquely Outback-themed cards. All proceeds go to our Bush Chaplain and Outback Links programs.



Julia's Paintings



Three Wise Men



Red Dirt Pack



To learn more about Gift of Hope and Christmas cards, or to order online, visit frontierservices.org/shop by scanning the QR code



Or use the form on the next page to order via post

Yes, I will support our sisters and brothers in rural and remote Australia.

One-off donation

☐ I wish to make a one-off donation of:

☐ \$30 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

Outback Angel

☐ I wish to become an Outback Angel and make a monthly donation of:

☐ \$30 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

Christmas cards

☐ I would like to place an order for

Name of pack	Order quantity	Price/Pack of 10	Total amount
<input type="checkbox"/> Three Wise Men	_____	\$12 8	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Red Dirt	_____	\$12 8	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Julia's Paintings	_____	\$12 8	\$ _____

☐ I would also like to include a donation to my purchase \$ _____

Grand total \$ _____

Gift of Hope cards

☐ I would like to place an order for

Type of card	Order quantity	Gift amount	Total amount
<input type="checkbox"/> A cuppa and a chat	_____	\$50	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Mend a fence	_____	\$100	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fill a tank	_____	\$250	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> The gift of mateship	_____	Your choice	\$ _____

☐ I would also like to include a donation to my purchase \$ _____

Grand total \$ _____

Please write your payment and delivery details overleaf.

I wish to pay by

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

Card number Expiry Date

Name on Card Signature

☐ Cheque / Money Order made payable to **Frontier Services**☐ Direct deposit / Bank transfer

Account name: **Frontier Services**

Reference: _____

BSB Number: **032-014**

Please write the Reference you used to help us match your payment with your purchase.

Account number: **116430**

Please email me my receipt

Email address

Please deliver my order to

Recipient's full name Recipient's contact number

Recipient's email address

Street Address Suburb

State Postcode

Please return this completed form using the enclosed reply envelope or send it to **PO Box 3424, Parramatta NSW 2124**

You may also place an order and/or donate by calling 1300 787 247 or visit our website at frontierservices.org **Thank you for your support.**

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"Everyone has something to contribute"

Outback Links volunteer
Geoff and wife Roz

Outback Links volunteer Geoff Bond has volunteered at 44 placements on 29 different properties and travelled about 68,000 km to do so. When he volunteers his time, he is there on your behalf, acting as your helping hands, your warm embrace, your generous spirit.

"The people we visit are often quite overwhelmed that people from far away would come to spend time with them. They're amazed to know that people in the city care. Just being there, offering your presence, can make an enormous difference," says Geoff.

Geoff is one of our long-standing Outback Links volunteers, recently winning the NSW Senior Volunteer award for the Mid-North Coast. He says everybody has something to offer as a volunteer.

"You don't have to have a particular trade or skill, but just being there is often important."

"It would be an unusual person who didn't have some skills to share with people on the land who need a hand, either physically or mentally. Sometimes just that social interaction can be valuable."

Geoff is an accountant by background, and he's picked up a huge range of practical skills through his volunteering. He lends a hand with tasks such as cleaning, painting, clearing, working with animals, gardening, and patching and repairing.

"I learn so much on every trip. I'm always learning something new, like a new skill in carpentry or farming, which I can apply to the next job or even pass on to other volunteers."

Meet our newest Bush Chaplain, Jennie!



Jennie's new chaplaincy covers 450,000 square kilometres. It's a vast area with vast opportunities for Jennie to provide crucial support.



Frontier Services caught up with Jennie Feldmeier a few weeks into her new job as Bush Chaplain for the Cunnamulla, Burke and Wills Remote Area in South West Queensland.

It's a big job, literally. Her area is 10 hours' drive wide and eight hours' drive deep.

This Bush Chaplaincy role is both the end and the start of a journey for Jennie. She's lived a life of adventure, homeschooling her four kids as their family undertook missions in Australia and Africa.

Her children are grown up now, and her husband Rainald has passed away.

"My husband was a German version of Steve Irwin, but with God. So, we were always off on some adventure, and God was at the forefront of all of that."

Jennie says that when her husband told her his cancer had come back, she felt God speak to her.

"I've only had probably three times in my life where the Lord spoke to me beyond a shadow of a doubt. He spoke so clearly and said, 'Jennie, I've got your back. You're going to be fine. But there's something I've got you to do that you can't do with Rainald.'"

"I held it very loosely, and I didn't try to make it happen, but I knew it would happen."

After her husband passed, Jennie worked as a school chaplain and ran a successful adventure play therapy business working with kids with disabilities.

"Everything I was doing was for God," says Jennie. "Working as a chaplain was God's purpose, and working

with these kids and giving them a sense of 'I see you, I hear you, I want to support you' all had purpose and meaning, but I knew there was more."

Then a friend sent her a link she'd seen on social media: a job as Bush Chaplain for Frontier Services.

"I said, 'Oh my gosh, that's my job.'"

"I feel so honoured and blessed that Frontier Services entrusted me with this part of Queensland. They haven't had somebody here for about two years, so I'm not stepping into anybody's past work. It's fresh, it's new, and Frontier Services is trusting me to do what I do best."

"God will use my skills and strengths"

Jennie says she's using her first few weeks to get to know the local community and strengthen her connections.

"I'm embedding myself into the fabric of this community. This community knows what it needs. I don't have answers. I'm not here to fix anything or change anything. I'm here to become part of it, so that God will use my skills and strengths to stand beside people and help."

"I'm just here. I'm available. I can sit in that space with people who are hurting and be guided by the Holy Spirit to do whatever He wants."

Where people in the bush gather, you are there



Frontier Services has been out and about in recent months, advocating for and with our friends in the bush.

With you by our side, we work to have a presence across rural and remote Australia: alongside the people and communities who need us, and in the rooms where decisions are made.

We were at the historic Birdsville Races again this year to meet old friends and forge new connections.

Birdsville is one of the earliest places where Frontier Services began to work, and it's part of our DNA. Connecting with the people in the region reminds us that even though so much has changed in 111 years, the need for Rev John Flynn's vision of providing a "mantle of safety" to people in the bush still remains now, greater than ever.



We are there at the summits, the symposia, the meetings; places where decisions are made.

Whenever we attend meetings with decision makers, we are there on your behalf, amplifying the voice of people in the bush, and listening to their concerns.



The original Australian Inland Hospital in Birdsville, based in the old Royal Hotel, was one of the earliest nursing stations.

With community leaders, we discuss the vital issues that will shape the future of rural and remote Australia: health, drought and bushfire, housing, and more.

National Director Rob and NSW Bush Chaplain Noel recently attended the Bush Summit in Tamworth with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, NSW Premier Chris Minns, Minister for the Environment and Water Tanya Plibersek, and numerous other movers and shakers from across Australia.

At the summit, we discussed the concerns of possible drought and bushfires, along with the rising cost of living and the lack of affordable housing.

In June, we were at the Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium in Canberra with researchers, policymakers, government, and other non-government representatives, gathering to discuss the future of rural and remote health.



In Charleville in September, Bush Chaplain Jennie was at the Remote Australians Matter Conference. Attendees developed a charter for integrated and community-based and led health services to deliver universal health coverage to remote Australia. It's now called the Charleville Charter.



Bush Chaplain Noel Williams dropped in to Frontier Services' head office after the NSW Farmers Federation Conference.



There after all the others have gone

Gordon and Wendy are staunch supporters of Frontier Services, devoting much of their daily lives to helping people in the bush.

They are Outback Angels, generously donating each month to fund our vital services, they are Outback Links volunteers, they organise Great Outback BBQs, and they travel NSW to speak and take part in church services on behalf of Frontier Services.

When Gordon retired, he didn't miss a beat before heading off on his first Outback Links adventure. Wendy had seen a brochure listing the volunteer opportunities and organised the trip ahead of time to help Gordon transition into retirement.

His first trip was, symbolically, to work on the John Flynn Memorial Church in Alice Springs. It was quite an entry: Gordon didn't just come along, he assisted with the coordination of the project, drawing on his 40+ years in the public works and the building industry.

"We had more than 30 volunteers and the work needed to comply with heritage requirements. It required a lot of preparation," explains Gordon.

"It was the first time I'd been west of Broken Hill, and I drove the 3,000km there with my tools in the back of my vehicle."

Since that first stint in Alice Springs, Gordon has volunteered on many more Outback Links trips.

One of his most memorable was at a property near Tottenham, which is the geographical centre of NSW.

"Farmers Michelle and Howard were hit hard by the drought, and the shearing shed had become unsafe and was dangerously tilting," Gordon says.

Gordon applied his building skills to redo the foundations and strengthen the shed for years to come.

Although Gordon has professional carpentry skills, he says anyone can be a volunteer.

"Quite often, the people we visit are just looking for somebody to talk to. Or perhaps they need to go away for a funeral or medical appointment, and they need someone to house-sit and feed the animals.

"If people can feed a dog or can throw a bit of hay over a fence to feed livestock, that's quite often all that's needed. And when the farmers are there, it provides them with company and connection as well."

Gordon and Wendy also encourage people to donate to Frontier Services. "It costs a lot of money to keep the Bush Chaplains in the field 24/7. Any donation you can

give, whether it's big or small, goes to the Bush Chaplains and the work that they're doing in remote communities. Unfortunately, suicide and substance abuse have greatly increased, and our Bush Chaplains quite often are the first ones to respond."

"They're there after all the others have gone," says Wendy.



Opposite: Gordon at the gate of a property he has visited.

Above: Gordon speaking to a Uniting Church congregation on behalf of Frontier Services.

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.

frontierservices.org/outback-links

Farewell and thank you, Peter and Lindsay!

We say a heartfelt thank you and farewell to long-serving Bush Chaplains Reverend Peter Wait and Reverend Lindsay Parkhill.

When **Bush Chaplain Peter** started his remote post in Tennant Barkly in the Northern Territory back in 2013, he said,

"We send a message by our physical presence. When we are there for people in hard to get to places, we embody God's love for them."

At Peter's farewell service, National Director Rob said, *"As a mainstay in the Tennant Creek community, you have been an approachable figure with a passion for helping the town's most vulnerable."*



Rev Peter Wait's (centre) closure service in Tennant Creek

Bush Chaplain Lindsay's ministry has been in the heart of Northern Australia, working mainly with the Indigenous inhabitants of Western Arnhem Land. He supports 22 pastors, driven by a desire to empower First Peoples. Lindsay says,

"Few people are accurately informed about the health and welfare conditions of First Peoples in remote communities, particularly around housing."

"They are also not aware of the enduring strength of the Indigenous spirit."



Rev Lindsay Parkhill (second from left) at a recent cross dedication Gochin Jiny Jirra (Cadell)



Host your Great Outback BBQ today

Holding a Great Outback BBQ is a fun and delicious way to get your friends, family, or congregation together to make a difference to people doing it tough in the bush.

Caloundra Uniting Church recently held a fabulous Great Outback BBQ and church service to raise funds for Frontier Services.

Using the resources in their free hosting kit, they held a beautiful service and a highly popular sausage sizzle.



To find out more or order your kit visit
greatoutbackbbq.com.au



***"I feel so honoured and blessed
that Frontier Services entrusted
me with this part of Queensland."***

- Jennie, Bush Chaplain for the
Cunnamulla, Burke and Wills Remote
Area in South West Queensland



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