

FEBRUARY 2024

FrontierNews

*The power of
your generosity*



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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Front Cover Ros and Chris, Outback Links volunteers

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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 team@frontierservices.org

Message from the National Director



2023 was certainly a roller coaster year, and I'd like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your faithful and generous support of the people living and working on the land.

We're only at the start of 2024 and already our teams are dealing with several disasters. In this latest edition of Frontier News, you'll meet Rev Dr Stephen Robinson, who equips our Bush Chaplains with the skills and knowledge to effectively look after their communities in times of disasters.

You'll also hear from Bush Chaplain Sunny, meet Outback Links volunteers Chris and Ros, read Eula's story and her reason for supporting Frontier Services, and see more great work of the volunteers from NRMA. Each is playing their own part to make a difference for people in the bush, now and into the future.

On a personal note, one of the highlights of 2023 for me was meeting so many Frontier Services supporters during a number of speaking

engagements across the country. It's heartening to hear the passion in so many of you to stand alongside people in the bush during tumultuous times and as costs of living continue to rise.

Together, we can achieve so much, but there are still so many people living in the bush who have no regular support. If you are in a position to make a gift today, it will be used to help them keep going. You can also show your support by holding a dedicated Frontier Services church service or by hosting a Great Outback BBQ (tip: if you register before 30 April, you'll receive a free premium hosting kit).

With your support we can share God's love with more people, bringing hope to their hearts, and showing them they are never alone. Now, more than ever, they need us.

Rob Floyd
National Director

"You don't have to know how to brand a cow to be an Outback Links volunteer."



Chris and Ros say that in the bush, there's always something you can do to help.

It was four years ago when they did a google search that would herald the start of a life-changing journey of friendship, adventure, and good hard yakka in the Australian bush.

The retired education workers were looking for a way to help others when they came across a call for Outback Links volunteers. They both grew up involved in rural activities, so the opportunity to travel to the bush and put their skills to good use was an attractive one.

"We looked at the kinds of things people needed help with, and we knew we could provide a bit of value to them," says Ros. "Travel wasn't

an issue for us, which is just as well because one of the properties we worked on was 1,400 kms away and on 28,000 acres."

Since then, they have gone on multiple Outback Links trips to properties of different sizes doing anything from minding the property on their own to cleaning and cooking. Chris says:

"We've looked after stations by ourselves so the owners can take some time off - their first in over a decade. Once, it was so the owners could leave the farm and care for their daughter after an operation.

"We clean cattle troughs, feed the animals, do some painting, and check bores. Anyone can do these sorts of jobs."



Ros cleaning a trough in Northwest Queensland

They add, "Most of the time, we're there to provide general help and company. Chatting over a cuppa or a cold beer is part and parcel of the role; people in rural areas often have few visitors."

"Just us being there - physically present - is value enough. Everything else is bonus."

Through their volunteering, Chris and Ros have built life-long friendships and connections in the bush, and they count them as one of the many blessings their Outback Links experience has given them. The couple says:

"There are so many benefits to volunteering! We've not only grown our confidence and knowledge around farming, we've also built friendships with the people we help, and those are very precious to us."

When asked what special skills must an Outback Links volunteer have, their answer echoes what every member of the Outback Links team say: none, just what you already have.

"You don't need experience with farming and rural activity. Don't feel you don't have the skills, because there's always something you can help with," says Ros.

"You have something valuable to offer. You'll be amazed at the nice people who are out there who are so happy to see you, and to them, **simply having someone to chat with is value in itself.**"



Being there to provide company is just as valuable as doing farm work

We need more volunteers!

Scan the QR code to view current volunteering opportunities



frontierservices.org/outback-links



When disaster strikes, people need people

Over 10 years, Rev Dr Stephen Robinson has helped Frontier Services provide best practice in disaster recovery.

Dealing with disaster is a multi-faceted and long-term process. For Frontier Services Bush Chaplains, confidence in supporting disaster-vulnerable communities on both a practical and emotional level is critical. Thanks to Rev Dr Stephen Robinson, our network is well-equipped, from preparing for and responding to a disaster, to the long road to recovery following an event.

Stephen has spent the last ten years working as National Disaster Recovery Officer for the Uniting Church. He's a valuable resource for the Uniting Church including Frontier Services.

Stephen says supports for disaster-affected people are too often focussed on the early stages following a disaster. When services begin to leave, often after the first month or two, people are left feeling alone. Abandoned.

"Disaster recovery takes a long time, and Frontier Services is well-placed to ensure people in rural and remote parts of the country have the support they need longer-term," says Stephen. "I help guide that activity and work closely with Bush Chaplains to ensure they're trained, and that they themselves feel supported as they care for their communities."

Stephen's role involves structured training, one-off support, and ongoing relationship building, so his network knows they can call on him as and when they need help. He also helps establish new support programs in areas affected by disaster.

Following the Black Summer bushfires in 2019-2020, Stephen was a key figure in designing Frontier Services' response, ensuring communities had the ongoing support they so desperately needed as other agencies were pulling out. He did the same in 2021 following Cyclone Seroja. He says it's critical that disaster-hit communities know they are not alone when initial relief efforts leave them facing the daunting and long process to recovery.

"The losses hurt, and Bush Chaplains embedded in the communities make a huge difference," says Stephen. "That's not to mention the Outback Links volunteers who play a significant role in providing both practical support and company."

Stephen himself has spent 30 years (and counting) in the ministry, including 20 in parishes before he took on this role. He says his heart is always in caring for people affected by disasters.

"I love that it's a very relevant ministry that supports Chaplains and meets very real needs," says Stephen. "There are a lot of challenges, but there's also a lot of need, so I know every day that what I'm doing is helping."



And when it comes to helping, Stephen says we should never underestimate the human value that Bush Chaplains and Outback Links volunteers bring to people at all stages of disaster recovery.

"When people feel isolated, or perhaps the mechanics of government are remote, the face-to-face support that's driven by Frontier Services makes a remarkable difference," says Stephen. "It goes to show just how much people need people."

Eula's connection to Frontier Services will live on forever



Eula, her younger brother, and father Patrol Padre Bruce

Frontier Services has been part of Eula's life for as long as she can remember. She is heartened to know that her deep connection with the bush and the people living on the land can continue into the future, thanks to a gift she has left in her Will.

"Leaving a bequest to Frontier Services feels like a way to pay it forward for the huge role it has played in my life and my family's. It's also a way to keep the connection after I'm gone," says Eula.

Eula's parents Bruce and Jean met in Alice Springs, and after marrying, were very involved in the work of the John Flynn Memorial Church.

The family's relationship with the Australian Inland Mission (AIM), now Frontier Services, only grew stronger from there.

"Fred McKay influenced Dad's decision to become a minister, and we all lived in Western Australia while he trained and worked as a home missionary," shares Eula. "Dad's work and Mum's involvement meant I really grew up with AIM and Frontier Services built into our family."

As a young adult, Eula qualified as an Early Childhood Educator in Sydney but felt the strong calling of the bush. She successfully applied to join AIM in their preschool at Halls Creek



Eula's father Patrol Padre Bruce with Rev Fred McKay at John Flynn's grave

in WA to work with First Nations communities.

"I wasn't aware that at the same time, Dad also had a calling to become a Patrol Padre, now called Bush Chaplain," she adds. "He ended up going back to Alice Springs as I was leaving for Halls Creek."

To Eula, the family's lifelong connection with the church and Frontier Services is an ever-present adventure for all of them. Proudly she adds, "Red dirt is in my blood."

Eula emphasises that the true value of Frontier Services is often in the things that go unseen.

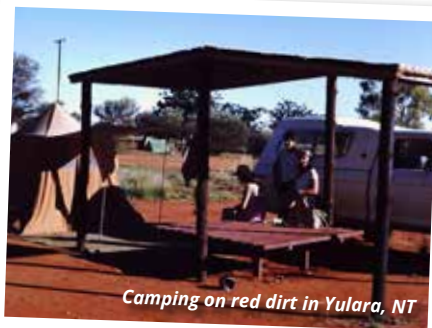
"A listening ear, a good yarn, makes such a difference to people living in the bush, and it's really important we continue to provide that sense of connection."

When asked what she'd say to anyone considering leaving a Gift in their Will to Frontier Services, her answer was simple and immediate:

"You shouldn't underestimate the power of your generosity."

"Your gift, big or small, can create ripples that change the lives of people living in the bush. It's a way to continue making a difference long after you're gone."

Many generous people choose to give to Frontier Services through a Gift in their Will. It's a powerful way to ensure that people in the bush never have to struggle alone. If you're interested in finding out more about how you can leave a lasting legacy, contact Anne Jones on (02) 8270 1341.



Camping on red dirt in Yulara, NT



Eula and her mother Jean having a cuppa on Tanami Track

Scan the QR code to find out more or to create your Will online for free



frontierservices.org/bequest



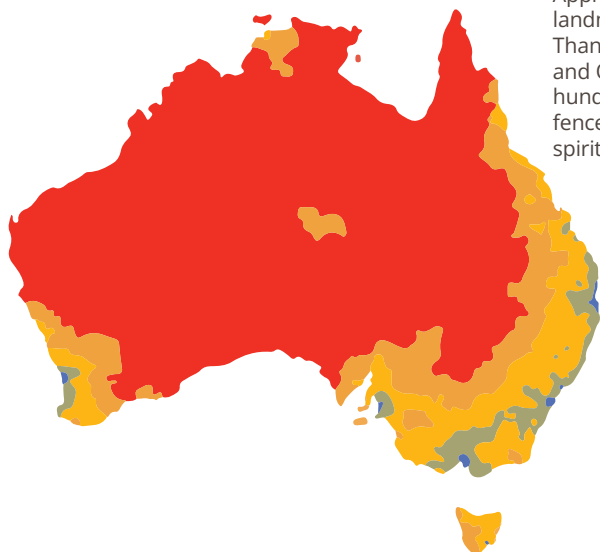
Bush Chaplains Gather

This past October, our Bush Chaplains travelled from their remote communities in Australia to come together to connect, learn from each other, and plan for the year ahead.

Your support enables our Bush Chaplains to continue Rev Flynn's mission of providing a "mantle of safety" to people living in rural and remote parts of Australia.

Where we are needed

Approximately 75% of the Australian landmass is considered "Very Remote." Thanks to your support, Bush Chaplains and Outback Links volunteers can travel hundreds of kilometres to reach the furthest fence to provide the practical, pastoral, and spiritual help to people living inland.



Proportion of Australian population by area of remoteness

- Major Cities 72%
- Inner Regional 18%
- Outer Regional 8.2%
- Remote Australia 1.2%
- Very Remote Australia 0.8%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (Australian Statistical Geography Standard Edition 3 / July 2021 - June 2026) Remoteness Areas
[<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/australian-statistical-geography-standard-asgs-edition-3/jul2021-jun2026/remoteness-structure/remoteness-areas>], accessed 10 December 2023



"Bush Chaplaincy isn't work for me; it's my life."

Bush Chaplain Sunny has a big job. His patrol area of Parkin-Sturt in South Australia includes 49 towns, around 170 farming stations, and multiple mines. But while his job may be big, he says it's the small things that make a difference.

"Mother Theresa once said, 'We can't do great things in our life, we can do small things with great love'," says Sunny. "I hold these words dear, and I know when I do small things with great love, that's when I make a big difference."

The communities that Sunny looks after face a range of challenges: drought, the flow-on effects of COVID-19, the cost-of-living crisis,

isolation, and an overall sense of uncertainty for the future.

For Sunny, the best way to build a connection with the community is through visible and tangible practical support. On that foundation, Sunny deepens the connection by offering emotional and pastoral support.

One interaction that sticks in Sunny's mind was with a local business

owner with whom he spent three days to help clean his property. The man was struggling to find staff after the pandemic.

"At the end of three days, he turned to me and said he had never been a religious man, but to him, my helping him was the very definition of faith," shares Sunny.

"That was so touching. He could begin exploring his faith because of something so simple that I had done for him."

Beyond the small projects, Sunny also runs a program of big projects. This year, a particularly exciting project is Clean and Green where volunteers help the local community to deep-clean the town, plant trees, and establish new waste management processes.

"We designed Clean and Green around the feedback from our communities," says Sunny. "Many

complained that their towns are too hot, have too many flies, and don't have enough shade. So we're going to do something to make these things better, with sustainability for the future at the forefront."

For Sunny, the most important part of being a Bush Chaplain is actively demonstrating to the people he serves that Frontier Services is there for them, whatever challenge they may face and regardless of their faith. He says:

"I am there with them to witness their life's joys and successes. But more importantly, I am there with them through their sorrows and hardships.

"People in the bush are not alone in their life's journey. Frontier Services - the Bush Chaplains, the Outback Links volunteers, and donors - is always with them."



Sunny doing heavy lifting, literally, in Manna Hill



Lending a listening ear and sharing a laugh are a key part of Sunny's work

Seven years of mateship

Supporting the people of Lightning Ridge



Every country town has a personality that mirrors its history.

In the far north of NSW, 400km northwest of Tamworth, Lightning Ridge shares many of the traits common among towns in the Australian bush: a sparsely populated gathering of modest houses interspersed with watering holes and essential amenities, all placed upon a flat and arid track where many of the trees are withered and much of the ground is grey from drought.

For all it shares with these remote towns though, there are countless quirks that make Lightning Ridge stand out. Entering from the east, a large, abstract emu sculpture greets visitors, and coloured car doors ripped from the hinges of



old wreckage mark several offbeat driving routes.

Seven years ago, NRMA partnered with Frontier Services to support people living and working in Lightning Ridge while it was in the midst of extreme drought. Since then, NRMA has gone on several Outback Links trips, providing specialist skills and companionship to people in the bush.

Late last year, the NRMA team returned to Lightning Ridge with our Outback Links team. Many of them were from the original crew from the first visit all those years ago.



*Frontier Services team
with Bush Chaplain Noel*

Over the course of three days, the volunteers worked across five properties providing mechanical and everyday support: restoring vehicles, fixing broken windscreens, clearing gutters, and painting. Of course, there were plenty of cuppas and chats and sharing stories that lift spirits.

These visits don't just improve the physical state of properties, they also have a profound effect on the mental well-being of farmers. Having people turn up to help tackle these tasks gives renewed hope and energy to farmers who have lived through very tough times.

For locals Helen and Ric, seeing the NRMA volunteers turn up in numbers was a big surprise; it took them aback. It's not every day that a team shows up on your doorstep to provide support. But they knew,



*Helen enjoying a cuppa and a
chat with an NRMA volunteer*

even only after three days, they would miss the noise and energy of the large team of enthusiastic helpers.

When the Outback Links team left, their buzz was replaced by a humming of vehicles and farm equipment that are back to working order.

Yet another mission accomplished by the partnership of Frontier Services and the NRMA.

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 or 0448 063 805.



Property owner Ric with an NRMA volunteer





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. CS-1284

2024 Order of Service now available

A dedicated celebration within your church or community group is a wonderful way of connecting with people in rural and remote Australia.

The new Order of Service contains a beautiful selection of prayers, hymns, and readings that reflect life in the bush and our work to continue Rev John Flynn's vision for the inland. Order yours online today, or return the completed form (see Page 10).

We also have a number of wonderful volunteers and representatives available to share their unique stories of our work in the outback. Contact us to register your service date and check speaker availability.



frontierservices.org/order-of-service



Left: National Director Rob Floyd sharing stories in Nerang Uniting Church

Right: Bush Chaplains speaking at Burnside Uniting Church in Adelaide

Fire up the barbie



Wyong Uniting Church (NSW)

Registrations are now open for 2024!

Join us this year by hosting your own Great Outback BBQ. Gather your friends, family, and community together for a fun and delicious way to show your support for our mates in rural and remote Australia.



**Register by 30 April
to receive your
FREE premium hosting kit.**

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



Casuarina Uniting Church (Wanguri, NT)

Did you miss these updates?

Read about our work as they happen and join the conversation online.

Like and Follow us on Facebook

Go to facebook.com/FrontierServices or scan the QR code



Frontier Services

18h •

...

Just pulled into his new 'patch' in Tom Price after a 3-day, 2000km journey from Dunsborough. Bush Chaplain David and his wife Di, despite tackling a heatwave ... **See more**



Frontier Services

January 5 at 10:00 AM •

...

Fantastic progress, Julia! Last year, our Outback Links volunteers teamed up to restore essential community spaces and drinking water in Oodnadatta. ... **See more**



Frontier Services

January 15 at 11:17 AM •

...

Great work **Pastor-Joe!** This weekend, he extended a caring hand to Wujal Wujal and Cooktown, offering support and essential items to community members affected by Cyclone Jasper.

[#FrontierServices](#) [#CommunitySupport](#)



Frontier Services

5d •

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Since introducing a new stream into his work our Bush Chaplain, Lindsay, has had the honour of featuring in the local newspaper!

This year Lindsay will be making regular visits to Victoria Park Nursing Home and others ... **See more**

