Frontier Services

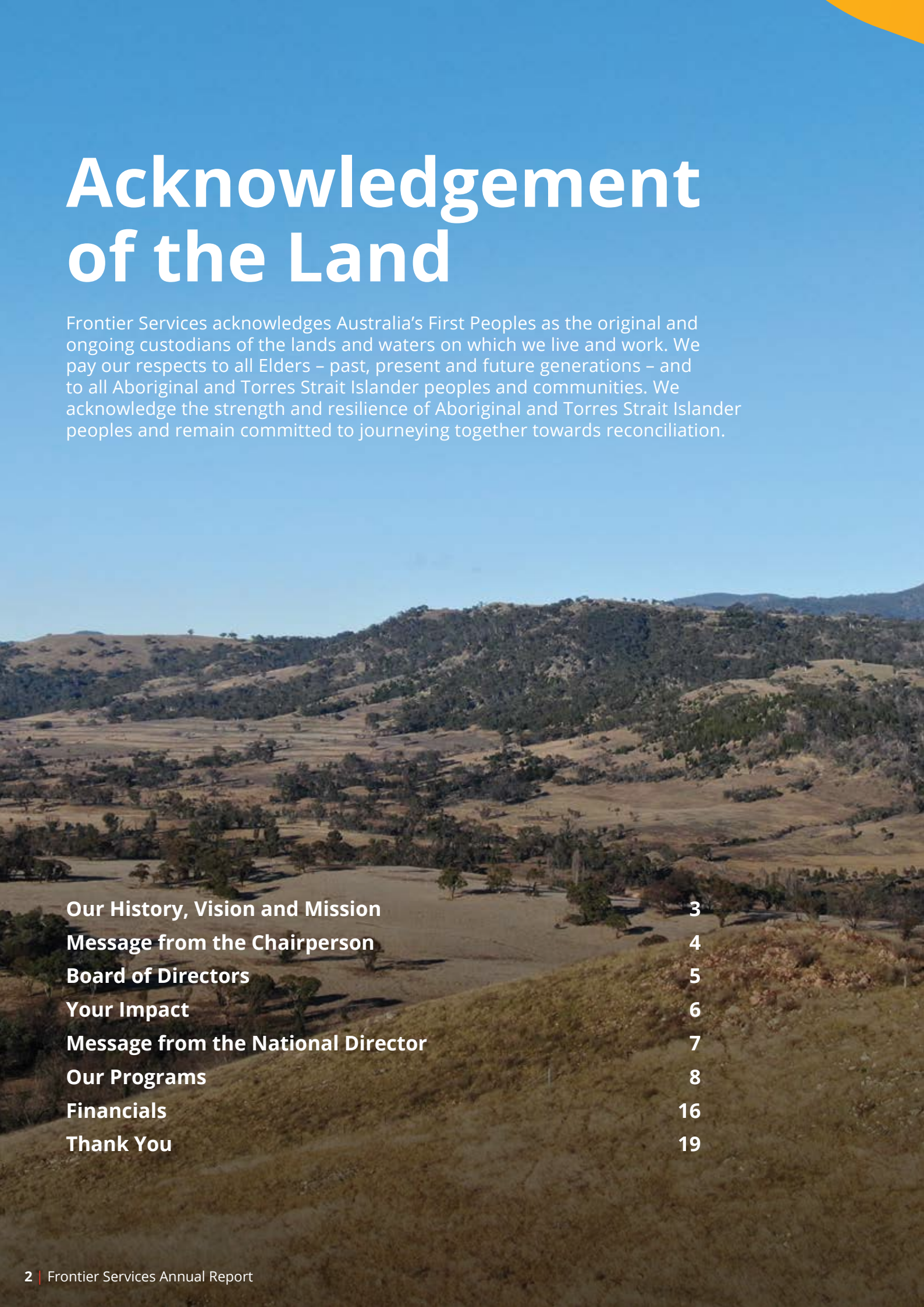
Standing with people in the bush

Annual Report 2022-23

Celebrating 110 years

Acknowledgement of the Land

Frontier Services acknowledges Australia's First Peoples as the original and ongoing custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work. We pay our respects to all Elders – past, present and future generations – and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. We acknowledge the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and remain committed to journeying together towards reconciliation.



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History

At the heart of Frontier Services lies the enduring legacy of Reverend John Flynn. Established in 1912, Rev Flynn had a vision of providing a mantle of safety for people living in the most isolated parts of Australia.

110 years later, this legacy lives on today through our enduring commitment to stand alongside people and communities in rural and remote places across Australia.

This report includes the work of Frontier Services and its Controlled Entity, The John Flynn Foundation.

Vision

We dream of an Australia where everyone who lives in rural and remote Australia is cared for and supported, and has a mantle of safety and well-being.

Mission

People living in remote communities experience greater isolation, have limited access to support services and are more vulnerable to crises.

As an agency of the Uniting Church, we raise funds to advocate for people and communities in rural and remote areas, equip our Bush Chaplains, and mobilise volunteers to offer practical, pastoral and spiritual support.

We believe that everyone in rural and remote Australia deserves access to help and support when they need it most.

Frontier Services
Standing with people in the bush

REGISTERED CHARITY
acnc.gov.au/charityregister

Message from the Chairperson

As we reflect on the challenges faced by those living in remote parts of Australia, it becomes clear that our work at Frontier Services is more critical than ever. These communities are resilient and used to hardships, but their vastness and isolation present unique difficulties, from limited access to essential services to the harsh realities of unpredictable weather conditions. It is precisely these challenges that fuel our commitment to stand by the communities that call these remote landscapes home.

Small communities in remote areas are often defined by their qualities — a community spirit that binds individuals together, fostering a sense of unity and shared strength. These places are not just geographic locations; they are a tapestry of stories, traditions, and unique identities that contribute to the rich fabric of our nation.

Our Bush Chaplains and Outback Links volunteers play a pivotal role in weaving this tapestry. They work hard to provide support and services to these remote communities, embodying the values of compassion, understanding, and respect. Their efforts go beyond geographic boundaries, reaching out to those who may feel isolated, ensuring no one is left unseen or unheard.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the dedication and hard work of our Bush Chaplains and Outback Links volunteers. Your commitment to service is the cornerstone of our organisation, and it is through your actions that we can make a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

Amidst the challenges and successes, I am privileged to hear some of the poignant stories that emerge from the bush. These stories, often untold and undiscovered, capture the resilience, courage, and hope that define the spirit of remote Australia. They serve as a powerful reminder of why our work is so vital, and speak to the impact it has on the lives of individuals and communities.

I am pleased to report that our organisation is in a strong financial position, thanks to the generosity of our supporters. This solid foundation enables us to continue our mission and expand our reach, ensuring that we can provide support where it is needed most.

As we look to the future, let us continue to stand alongside those in remote Australia. Together, we can build a future where all people can receive the compassion and support they need.

Lisa Sampson
Chairperson

Board of Directors

Lisa Sampson Chair

Appointed to the Frontier Services Board in 2016, Lisa held the role of Deputy Chair for three years prior to being appointed Chair in 2021. Lisa has held senior executive roles in the Australian media and the not-for-profit sector in public relations, marketing, communications and philanthropy, as well as a non-executive directorship within the education sector. Lisa graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce Marketing from the University of New South Wales.

Rev Mark Kickett
Board Member

Mark is a Noongar man from the south west of Western Australia and the Interim National Chair of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). Mark has worked in Government, Community Services, and congregations, and has served as a minister in churches in Brisbane, Perth, Broken Hill, and Kalparrin.

Aunty Dianne Torrens
Board Member

Aunty Dianne Torrens is a Widjabal woman and Githabul woman of the Bundjalung Nation from the Northern Rivers. She was a founding member of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) in NSW and one of the first five Aboriginal women to be made a Uniting Church in Australia Elder. Aunty Dianne and her husband Tim Torrens initiated the "Walking on Bundjalung Country", inviting non-Aboriginal people to join them for a time of learning, connection, and sharing.

Dorothy Creek Board Member

Dorothy has served on the Frontier Services Board since 2016. As a farmer living in rural NSW all her life, Dorothy brings a valuable grassroots perspective to the Board. She knows only too well the reality of living on the land. Dorothy is also a lay preacher and a foundation member of the Uniting Church in Australia Riverina Presbytery.

Tim Ford
Board Member

Tim was appointed to the Frontier Services Board in 2021, carrying forward a family legacy of involvement with the organisation. He operates a leadership advisory practice serving Boards and Executive Teams in a range of areas encompassing succession planning, developmental assessments, team optimisation, and executive coaching.

Rev Heather den Houting
Deputy Chair

Heather was appointed as the General Secretary of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod in June 2016. Heather serves across a range of Church Boards and commissions with the Uniting Church at national, state and local levels. Heather has a background in law including government, community, and private practice. She is a Graduate of the Australia Institute of Company Directors and holds degrees in Economics, Law, and Theology and post-graduate qualifications in Management.

Colleen Geyer Board Member

Colleen is the General Secretary of the Uniting Church National Assembly. She has held executive leadership positions across the community services work of the Uniting Church for over ten years, and leadership roles with the Church, at both state and national levels for twenty years, including serving on Councils of the Church and numerous governance groups. She has extensive experience in organisational strategy, leadership development, innovation, ethics and environmental sustainability; and building programs for culture change and engagement.

Ben Cohen
Board Member

Ben has over 60 years of experience in investment banking, accounting, information technology and strategic development. A member of Toorak Uniting Church, Ben has been serving the Uniting Church in an official capacity since 1989, contributing to numerous Boards and committees including a 10-year membership of the Assembly Finance Audit and Risk Committee.

Sharon Lee
Board Member

Sharon was appointed to the Frontier Services Board in December 2019, bringing over 15 years of experience across a range of sectors including telecommunications, professional and financial services, government, and not-for-profit. She has also served as a Trustee to the John Flynn Foundation since 2018. Sharon concluded her role in December 2022.

Your Impact

Our accomplishments are a testament to the power of your support.

17,083

hours of volunteer work

20

Bush Chaplains living and working in remote communities

270

Outback Links volunteers

148

volunteer placements

300,000

square kilometres of disaster affected area covered

$4.85 million

raised to support our friends in the bush

Message from the National Director

With the wonderful commitment of our supporters, the past year has been a year of activity defined by hope, resilience, and impactful service to communities in the bush.

When reflecting on the last twelve months we must remember that it included major flooding in some parts of the country while other parts experienced bushfires.

Having spent time with some of these communities in the months that followed, the narrative has already changed. People on the land have begun to cast their eyes to the future, anticipating further challenges ahead. Sometimes it can feel like moving from one extreme to another.

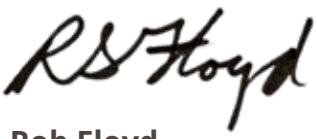
I am proud of our efforts to step into these areas of need, and encouraged by the impact we can have among the communities and households we engage with. Our Bush Chaplains continue to offer companionship and hope in their regions; a valued presence for people struggling or just needing a quiet chat. They make great personal sacrifices to be where they are and to do the work that they do. I am immensely grateful for the dedication and compassion they show every day.

I am thrilled that our network of Bush Chaplains has been extended in 2022/23, with the induction of four new Bush Chaplains in remote areas across the country. They each inherit a legacy which I know they will carry forward proudly, strengthened by the wider Frontier Services community.

In the East Gippsland region of Victoria, it is apparent from our ongoing presence that people's recovery from the harrowing Black Summer bushfires of 2019/20 is far from finished. Again, we are seeing the consequences of people's very foundations being ripped from underneath them, sometimes without any tangible prospect of it being restored. We are seeing people who are isolated and alone, in need of connection and support.

It is in circumstances like these across Australia that we have seen our Outback Links volunteers making a real difference, answering one call after another, travelling long distances to meet with people doing it tough in remote Australia. Their devotion to working alongside people in need in faraway places is a testament to the very best of humanity.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who helps to carry us forward so that we can continue to be there for people who are often considered out of reach. To our Bush Chaplains, our Outback Links volunteers, our committed staff and, most importantly, our supporters from across Australia, I am inspired by what you have achieved, your generous heart and seemingly inexhaustible energy. Thank you for standing with us, and alongside our remote communities across Australia.



Rob Floyd
National Director

Bush Chaplaincy

Our network of Bush Chaplains are living in rural and remote communities, providing support to people doing it tough in isolated areas.

They give a helping hand, a listening ear and a caring presence. They are a pillar of support when a community is confronted with disaster. There is so much value in their presence alone and their work extends far beyond that.

Joe Eka:
Kennedy, QLD

Following a string of adversities, Joe's visits to communities in Far North Queensland have infused hope, prayer, and fellowship, offering solace to many who have felt abandoned.

Undeterred by the vast distances he travels, Joe embodies Frontier Services' mission - bringing vital support to those feeling abandoned and overlooked.

Joe's presence has been a beacon of encouragement in the Kennedy remote area, bridging distances to deliver vital support and spiritual connection to communities that call for it.

Julia Lennon:
Oodnadatta, SA

Oodnadatta is a small community located in the north of South Australia. The nearest town, Coober Pedy, is two hours away, with nothing but desert between.

Raised in Oodnadatta herself, Julia Lennon is connected to the community on both a cultural and personal level. In her own words, Julia seeks to foster 'healing' in a part of the world that struggles through isolation and among people who have been historically disenfranchised.

Through her presence and by driving community activity, she envisions creating a sanctuary amid the arid landscape she has always called home.

Gascoyne, WA
Past. John Tomkins

West Arnhem, NT
Rev. Lindsay Parkhill

Tennant Barkly, NT
Rev. Peter Wait

Kennedy, QLD
Past. Joe Eka

Barwon, NSW
Rev. Noel Williams

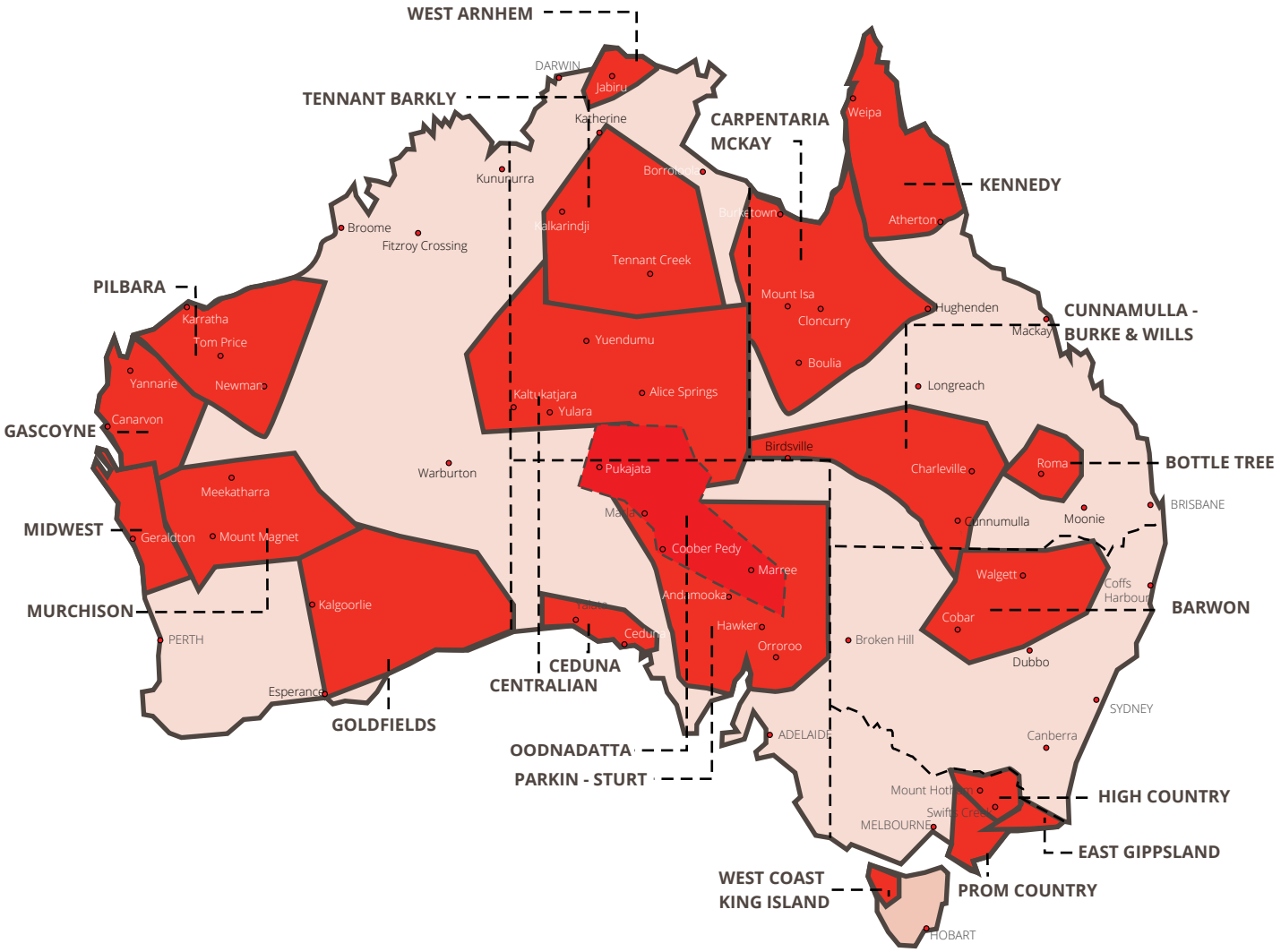
Pilbara, WA
Rev. John Dihm

Centralian, NT
Past. Benjamin Quilliam

Carpentaria/McKay, QLD
Past. Michael Chapman

Bottle Tree, QLD
Rev. Dona Spencer

National Disaster Recovery Officer
Rev. Dr. Stephen Robinson



Disaster Recovery Midwest, WA
Rev. David Jackson

Murchison, WA
Rev. Mitch Fialkowski

Oodnadatta, SA
Past. Julia Lennon

Ceduna, SA
Past. Gary Ferguson

High Country, VIC
Rev. Marian Bisset

Disaster Recovery Midwest, WA
Rev. Erica Payne

Goldfields, WA
Rev. Lindsay Ginn

Parkin-Sturt, SA
Rev. Sunil Kadaparambil

Prom Country, VIC
Rev. Veronica Bradley

Bushfire Recovery East Gippsland, VIC
Rev. Peter Harvey

Mental Health and Disaster Response

Our Bush Chaplains and Outback Links volunteers provide continuous support beyond traditional crisis interventions. This year's challenges, including a severe drought and catastrophic floods, have underscored the importance of our unique approach.

Our Bush Chaplains, including a number of dedicated Disaster Recovery Chaplains, provide invaluable emotional support in addition to practical assistance, often serving as the first responders in mental health emergencies. Their consistent presence and deep connections within these communities make a significant difference.

As some rural areas grapple with persistent drought and others face flooding, cyclones and bushfires, we recognise that tackling mental health issues is a priority. Our goal is to overcome stigma and ensure that every life in the bush is valued and protected. This commitment aligns with our mission of standing alongside rural and remote communities.

Mick's Story

In the heart of remote communities like Buchan, Victoria, a deep sense of family and belonging often keeps residents rooted, even when disaster strikes.

For Mick, a cattle farmer in Buchan, the impact of the devastating 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires was profound. The fire scarred the landscape, and the trauma and grief of losing everything still lingered.

Disaster Recovery Bush Chaplain Peter Harvey has been a safe presence, witnessing the community's resilience and enduring challenges. Outback Links volunteers stepped in, responding to the call for assistance. Within weeks, they transformed Mick's property, helping it feel more like home.

The Outback Links volunteers cleared burnt fencing and reclaimed overgrown garden beds, offering both practical support and heartwarming companionship.

Their work is a reminder that recovery takes time, but with support, a fresh start is possible. Mick's resilience, combined with the care of Peter and the Outback Links volunteers, shines as a beacon of hope.

Outback Links

Our program is open to all, with thousands having already participated. Volunteers include retired tradespeople offering critical skills to undersupplied regions, or friendly individuals willing to share a cup of tea and a chat. We actively listen to the needs of those in rural and remote places, and we respond by sending real, compassionate individuals to the doorstep.

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

By Showing Up, We Make a Difference

Through friendly conversations and hard work, we've impacted rural communities. Our volunteers provide practical support when it's needed most. With many people facing challenges, our volunteers help them overcome difficulties and regain their footing.

"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."

Forging Lasting Connections

Outback Links fosters deep connections between strangers, building lifelong friendships and offering transformative experiences for both volunteers and the remote communities they assist.

"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."

Stronger Together

Bingara, nestled along the Gwydir River in Northern NSW, might now appear as a place of serene green pastures. However, less than a year ago, this resilient community was bracing for disaster, haunted by memories of drought and flooding.

As part of our Outback Links program, a dedicated team of NRMA staff gave four days to assist five properties. Their work, underpinned by mechanical expertise, extended far beyond machinery. It was about human connection. Irene, a long-time Bingara resident, reflected on the challenges her family had faced over thirty years, a period that had witnessed every extreme of nature. With resilience, she described how the 'Big Dry' had transformed the landscape into barren dust. When NRMA staff and our Outback Links team arrived, the transformation they brought was not just practical; it was deeply personal.

Chris, a skilled mechanic, excelled in his role, but his most profound impact was forging connections. His tireless efforts brought smiles to faces weathered by hardship. For Irene and her family, the shed they prepared symbolised more than a physical structure; it was a sanctuary, a gathering place for loved ones separated by great distances.

"The team of volunteers, mechanics, and pastoral carers gave us their professional services with such care and humility, we were able to receive their support as it was a blessing."

The NRMA team's dedication and the depth of their contribution reminded the people of Bingara that they were not alone in their struggles. This is the essence of community support, of hands extended across the vast expanse of the Australian bush.

"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."

"Community support like that provided by Frontier Services Outback Links and NRMA corporate volunteers means everything and helps get through tough times."

Giving voice to people in rural and remote Australia

In the vast and diverse landscapes of the Australian bush, countless voices and perspectives represent its rich history.

Each voice signifies unique communities, regions, and challenges, echoing the depth of life in rural and remote Australia. At Frontier Services, we carry a strong commitment to amplifying these voices.

Our strategic priorities, such as promoting the welfare of First Nations people and fostering stronger community resilience, are underpinned by the voices of those who reside in these remote areas. This communal approach ensures that our efforts align with the realities and aspirations of those who call the bush their home.

By standing with and for these diverse bush voices, we contribute to creating positive and sustainable change, whether it's advocating for improved mental health services or delivering essential pastoral care. It's our honor to serve as a channel for the stories, struggles, and successes that define the Australian bush. Together, with the people of these remote regions, we offer support and promote equitable opportunities for all Australians.

Anna and David's Story

Anna and David, a resilient cattle farming mother and son duo, have faced multiple challenges in recent years.

Relentless drought had already taken a toll when disaster struck late in 2022 in the form of a devastating flood, breaking creek banks, tearing down fences, and miring paddocks. In need of both practical support and companionship, Anna contacted us with their farm in urgent need of attention. The volunteers who arrived were indispensable.

David's isolation, particularly since his father's passing, was of concern. Our Outback Links volunteers, besides aiding with tasks like fixing fences and herding cattle, provided much-needed human connection. They had already endured droughts, a destructive mice plague, and now, the floods, leaving Anna uncertain about the year ahead.

Thanks to donor support, we connected Anna and David with Outback Links volunteers Lester and Wendy, alongside Bush Chaplain Noel Williams, to lend a hand. The volunteers made an incredible difference, reinforcing the vital role of our Outback Links program. Anna and David's heartfelt words and gratitude underpin the profound impact your support makes.

"They made me feel cared for."

"Your support is more meaningful than you can imagine."

Financials

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	30 June 2023 $	30 June 2022 $
Revenue		
Donations and bequests	4,429,929	4,022,709
Other income	417,533	704,567
Total revenue	4,847,462	4,727,276
Employee expenses	1,435,483	1,092,259
Professional services	319,910	165,798
Administration costs	510,097	462,810
Communications	105,771	31,976
Depreciation	21,078	47,917
Travel and accommodation	83,420	14,626
Other expenses	100,999	254,425
Grants to Bush Chaplains	1,895,094	1,451,979
Total Expenses	4,471,852	3,521,790
Surplus for the year	375,610	1,205,486
Finance costs	(85)	(365)
Gain/(loss) on revaluation of financial assets	377,960	(1,059,841)
Net surplus for the year	753,485	145,280
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	**753,485**	**145,280**

Financials

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2023

	30 June 2023 $	30 June 2022 $
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	4,415,257	3,674,068
Trade and other receivables	63,324	90,740
Other current assets	22,138	8,568
Total current assets	4,500,719	3,773,376
Non-current assets		
FInancial assets	6,190,807	6,143,440
Property plant & equipment	84,683	67,082
Lease - Right-of-Use Assets	1,334	4,401
Total non-current assets	6,276,824	6,214,923
Total assets	**10,777,543**	**9,988,299**
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Trade creditors and payables	157,416	141,121
Provisions	1,037,375	1,007,532
Lease liabilities	1,381	3,256
Total current liabilities	1,196,172	1,151,909
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	-	7,128
Lease liabilities	-	1,376
Total non-current liabilities	-	8,504
Total liabilities	**1,196,172**	**1,160,413**
Net assets	**9,581,371**	**8,827,886**
Equity		
Endowment Fund	636,118	636,118
General Fund	8,945,253	8,191,768
Total equity	**9,581,371**	**8,827,886**

Financials

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Restricted Fund $	Unrestricted Fund $	All Funds $
Balance at 1 July 2021	**636,118**	**8,046,488**	**8,682,606**
Surplus for the year	-	145,280	145,280
Balance at 30 June 2022	**636,118**	**8,191,768**	**8,827,886**
Balance at 1 July 2022	**636,118**	**8,191,768**	**8,827,886**
Surplus for the year	-	753,485	753,485
Balance at 30 June 2023	**636,118**	**8,945,253**	**9,581,371**

These financial statements are general purpose financial statements, consolidating those of Uniting Church in Australia Frontier Services and its controlled entities as at 30 June 2023. Full Financial Statements are available on request.

Thank you for your generosity and support

Frontier Services thanks our incredible network of supporters that collaborate with us to care for our sisters and brothers in the bush. Your contribution makes a profound impact on the lives of those living in rural and remote Australia, and we're so grateful to have you with us.

Partnerships and Major Supporters

Corporate partners, Trusts and Foundations are instrumental in advancing our programs and our gratitude is extended to each partner who supports our work:

- NRMA, NSW and ACT Official Mobility Partner
- Trinity Families
- The Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust
- Wyatt Benevolent Institution
- Coopers Brewery Foundation
- Connellan Airways Trust
- Uniting Church in Australia National Disaster Relief Fund

Generous Bequest Gifts

To the families and friends of those who left a Gift in their Will to Frontier Services or the John Flynn Foundation, and to those who have made the commitment to do this in the future, **thank you**.

Leaving a Gift in your Will is an investment in the future of rural and remote Australia, ensuring John Flynn's vision of providing a "mantle of safety" over inland Australia can continue for years to come. For more information, or to write your Will for free, visit **www.frontierservices.org/bequest**

Get involved

You can help transform the lives of those in remote communities today and into the future.

Become an Outback Angel

Make a monthly donation by calling **1300 787 247** or visit **www.frontierservices.org/donate** to establish your monthly contribution.

Volunteer with us

Register to volunteer at **www.frontierservices.org/outback-links** and explore current volunteering opportunities in areas of most need.

Host a Great Outback BBQ

Head to **www.greatoutbackbbq.com.au** to register your BBQ event and secure your free host kit.

Keep in touch

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