

MAY 2024

FrontierNews

*Your kindness
is felt far and
wide*



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 Jackie, Cobargo community member

Message from the National Director



This edition of Frontier News is a celebration of all the wonderful things that you make possible.

We celebrate our Outback Links volunteers and our generous and caring supporters who stand with people in the outback. You'll meet Naomi and Jane – two first-time volunteers who loved every moment spent with farmers Mary and Bruce.

We celebrate your support of our Bush Chaplains who work across this vast land in ways that continue to surprise us all. There's Bush Chaplain Lindsay bringing music and boomwhackers to enthusiastic seniors; Bush Chaplain Benji playing building blocks with preschoolers; and Bush Chaplain David putting together a wicking bed for the community garden as he forges new connections in the Pilbara.

You'll also read an update from Julia on the new church being built in Oodnadatta, in the heart of the country. This is such an exciting time for a community that has struggled with the pain of disconnection for so long.

And as we take part in National Reconciliation Week, now is a time to appreciate how powerful the support we offer one another can be. Small milestones like the one in Oodnadatta are so encouraging in our larger mission to foster unity and connection.

I hope you are as inspired and moved by these stories of kindness and connection as I am. Thank you for standing with our friends in the bush.

Handwritten signature of Rob Floyd.

Rob Floyd
National Director



“You can give back a little bit and make a big difference.”

It was a lifelong dream for Naomi to volunteer with Frontier Services, and late last year, she finally did.

Was it everything she dreamed of?

“And more!”

Together with her sister Jane, Naomi volunteered to help Bruce and Mary on their cattle farm in central western NSW.

Naomi is a nurse in the outback, but she and Jane grew up on a broadacre farm for crops and sheep.

“We’re country girls through and through. We wanted to give back to people out in the bush.”

Bruce and Mary are getting older, and Bruce was recovering from a bad accident. He wasn’t able to get to all the jobs he usually could.

“And Mary’s an absolute trooper, a true lady of the land,” says Naomi.

“She hadn’t left the farm in years except for essential shopping trips. I think it was a little bit of a break for them to have some help.”

“It was hard for them to have a long list of things to do, but not be able to do them.”

Naomi and Jane got stuck straight into it, helping with fencing and repairing creek lines.

“We brought youth and energy, but we learned so much in that time. Mary and Bruce have been on the land for that long and have so much experience and so much to share.

“They were really generous and put us up in their house. Even at the start of the day, you might sit down for an hour and chat, or share a meal at night and sit around and chat then.

“You’re not just giving to them through skills, but also socially. And for me, hearing amazing stories and having those chats was very meaningful.

“It was rewarding for us as well. We got a lot out of it.”

Naomi says she would thoroughly recommend volunteering with Outback Links.

“There are people like Bruce and Mary who won’t ask for help, but the need is definitely, definitely there.

“You can give back a little bit and make a big difference. You meet amazing people doing it as well.”

Your support helps fund the Outback Links program. Thank you so much for making this work possible.



Jane (left), Bruce, and Naomi loved having a laugh and a chat between work

You can register your interest in Outback Links by scanning this QR code



Thank you to our amazing Outback Links volunteers!



This National Volunteer Week (20-26 May), we celebrate the diverse passions and talents each of you bring to remote communities across Australia. When you generously donate your time to travel and help our mates in the bush, you make a huge difference in someone's life. Thank you for standing with us.



Outback Links volunteers Pat (left) and Hilary

Seasoned Outback Links volunteer Geoff honoured at NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards



Bush Chaplain Sunny with Outback Links volunteers

A place for refuge in Oodnadatta



The old "church" in Oodnadatta.

Thanks to your ongoing support of our Bush Chaplains, Julia and the community of Oodnadatta will soon have a dedicated place to gather in fellowship and mateship.

In Bush Chaplain Julia's patch of Oodnadatta in South Australia, the nearest town is over two hours' drive away. That kind of isolation makes finding connection tough.

This is why Julia is looking forward to the completion of the new church, a project that kicked off last year, led by Julia.

"Here in this little community, we have to come together as one, because we have no one else to turn to.

"[We've needed] a place where people can find healing in themselves. It's so disconnected here, and having this church will really bring people together."

Building a church in one of the hottest and remotest parts of the country isn't easy. But knowing that there is an entire world of support extending far beyond the dirt road into Oodnadatta, Julia has kept faith. Faith that the humble church will be a haven where people can connect, heal, and celebrate in the outback.



Bush Chaplain Julia (centre) with fellow Bush Chaplain Jill Doolan and National Director Rob Floyd.

With the church almost ready, she is so thankful for the care and generosity of people like you that has helped get them over the line.

Julia says that without it, her work in Oodnadatta and projects like this just wouldn't be possible.



The new church in Oodnadatta is almost ready.

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

One-off donation

I wish to make a one-off donation of

\$30 \$75 \$100 Other \$ _____

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

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Thank you for your donation

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Thank you for supporting outback families

When families from remote areas come together for an annual conference to talk about the need for their children's education, you are there to support them.

Many children who live hours away from a school do their education through School of the Air. While the lessons are provided online, parents often need to help their children during these sessions or for homework. The annual Home Tutors Conference is run by the School of the Air to help parents support their kids' education.

It targets the early years of a child's development, which are so important in building a strong foundation for education in future years.

At the conference, school age kids attend School of the Air in-person for a week, but some parents risk missing out on sessions because they need to look after their younger children at home. That's where the creche comes in.

Bush Chaplain Benji runs the creche for the School of the Air every year, and loves the chance to form lasting relationships.

"I get to know their kids, so if I see them on the stations when I'm visiting, they're like, 'Hi, I remember you.'"

It's a big job: taking care of all the forms and admin, managing staff, and ensuring there is adequate and age-appropriate toys and changing areas. For Benji, it's a chance to connect with the children and their families in new ways and provide support.



"I've seen the kids grow up. I first started the creche six years ago, and those kids are now finishing primary school."





Megan's chooks are safe – thanks to you!

Megan was able to keep up with the farm and stock work, but she didn't have time to look after the yard as well.

Heavy jobs were piling up. Foxes were getting at the chickens, and large branches needed trimming.

When she was offered some assistance from Outback Links volunteers, she gratefully welcomed the help from Gordon, James and Ron.

Megan was blown away by their work ethic.

"The first morning, I couldn't see anyone out there, so I went out a bit later to discover they were already halfway through their morning. They'd started at 7am.

"They did an amazing amount of work in the time they were here."



The volunteers built a fox-proof chook coop.



Together, they cleared fallen branches, cleaned up the orange orchard, and built a secure chicken enclosure.

Foxes had gotten to Megan's chickens, and she didn't want to get any more until they were protected.

"The volunteers made the chicken coop fox-proof with mesh over the top as well. It's like an inner sanctuary for chooks now."

Megan said the best part was the companionship. They shared meals together and had wonderful long chats.



"I was mostly out there working with them, and it was just really nice having people to work with. And if something got a bit hard, you had someone there to call out to, to say, 'I'm a bit stuck. Can anybody else get it out?'"

"Just the fellowship, the friendship, the hard work they put in, but even just sitting down and chatting. It was all really, really good and very worthwhile."

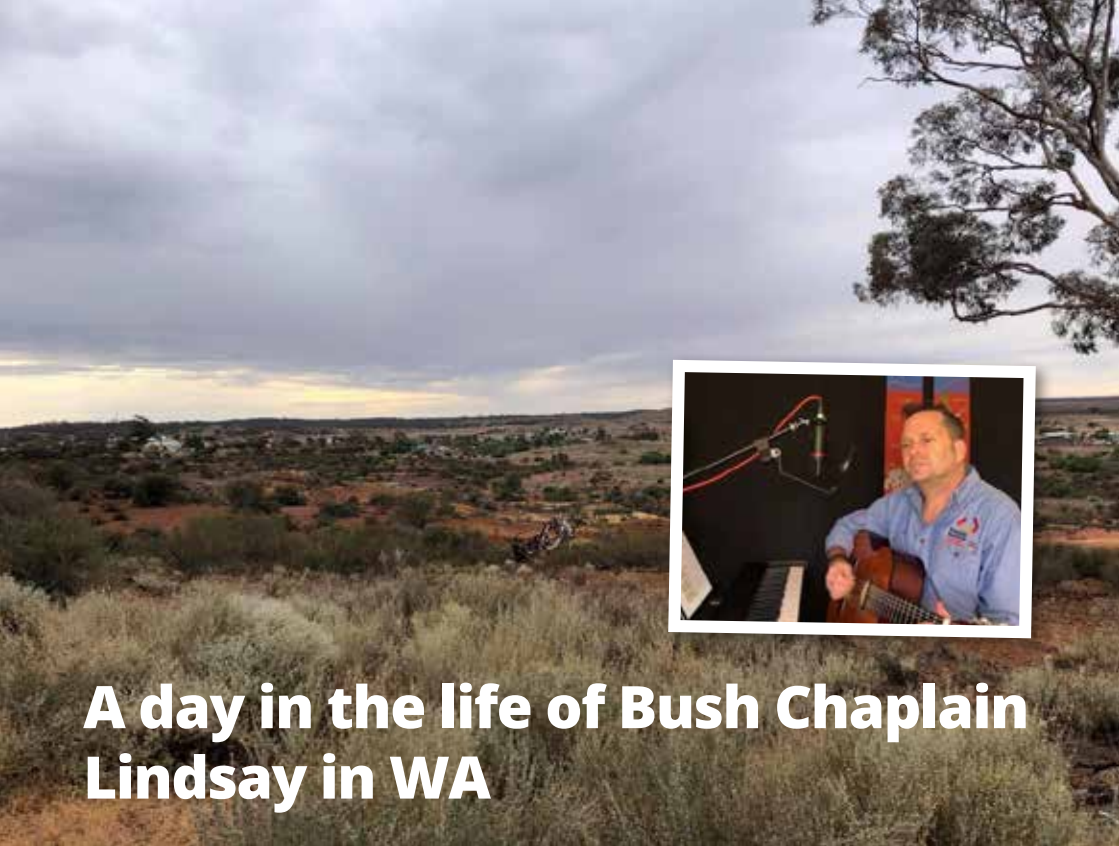
"I feel very blessed."

Our Outback Links volunteer program is only possible thanks to the generosity of supporters like you. Thank you for being there for people living on the land like Megan.

If you'd like to become an Outback Links volunteer, or if you know someone in rural Australia who would benefit from the help of volunteers, scan this QR code



frontierservices.org/outback-links



A day in the life of Bush Chaplain Lindsay in WA

Bush Chaplain Lindsay Ginn brings a special kind of joy and connection to the people he serves - music!

His music brings people together, breaks down barriers, and allows Lindsay Ginn to check in on people and communities on a deeper level.

From his home in Kalgoorlie, he travels to local schools in Esperance to teach music to kids, and he has recently started introducing his music to seniors living in Kalgoorlie. We asked him to share what his typical day looks like to give you a sense of just how much you make possible through your support.

5:00AM

I get up, and I'm on the road by about 5:45AM. When I'm visiting the school at Salmon Gums in Esperance, I travel for three hours, stopping for fuel at Norseman.

9:00AM

I arrive and set up all the instruments for the kids. There are around 18 students, all from the big properties around that area. We do ukulele, percussion, and singing.

I'm using music as an avenue to get known in the community. Once you've spent time teaching a student, they will know you right into adulthood. So I'm connecting into this generation coming up.

I see it as one of the ways that I as a Bush Chaplain can support people in these areas and get to know them.

11:00AM

After Salmon Gums, I head over to Scadden to another school which has around 40 students from kindy upwards.

1:00PM

I spend a bit of time with the teachers and the parents who help out. It's wonderful because you build friendships and strong connections.

2:00PM

I pack up and head home, and I won't get back to Kalgoorlie until after 5:00PM.

On other days, I work with teenagers in Fairbridge (7.5 hours west of Kalgoorlie) who have disengaged from traditional schools. I work with students who are interested in music. I took a few of them through a ukulele exam last year. They were so nervous, but they got Honors!

All ages welcome

On days that I visit the retirement village and nursing homes, I aim to see two centres. I need to take all

my equipment, so it takes time to set up and pack up each time.

Music is a way to help combat loneliness in our senior citizens. I want to get to know these people and just be able to sit down and chat with them. It's more than just music. It's becoming their friend as well.

The other day in a music session, I had four ladies using the boomwhackers. Boomwhackers are large light-coloured tubes, and you "whack" them to play a note.

They played "Mary Had a Little Lamb" and had a great laugh. It's something that can brighten their days and give them a new activity to enjoy.

And everything else

Bush Chaplain Lindsay also looks after two congregations in Kalgoorlie and Esperance and leads a service once a month in the People's Church, an Indigenous church in Kalgoorlie. At the same time, he works on committees including the Uniting Church Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network and the Rural and Remote Ministers Network.

Bush Chaplain Lindsay Ginn has created a song especially for Frontier Services! "Mantle of Safety" is dedicated to the amazing work started by Rev John Flynn.

Scan the QR code to check it out.





Outback Links teamwork gives Cobargo a boost

When people in a community go through a crisis, it can break them or it can bring them together.

In this small rural NSW town, strangers are greeted as warmly as friends, and friends are looked after like family.

Alexa, who helps run the Cobargo Community Garden, arrived shortly after the fires and says the community is wonderful.

“I’ve felt very welcomed and embraced, even after the multiple crises they’ve been through.”

Throughout the Black Summer bushfires, the Cobargo Co-op, Cobargo Commons (“Cocos”), and local pub, all pitched in to make sure everyone made it through. Cocos is looking to keep that momentum going.

With many people already growing their own gardens, the Community Garden is a place where people come to connect and share knowledge. Initiatives like a “10x10”, where ten people come together for ten weeks to learn how to grow veggies from a “master grower”, give people practical skills that they can use at home.

Alexa says, "Everyone's really creative around here, and everyone supports each other's projects in a really beautiful way."

For people who are isolated or facing financial hardship, having a place to spend time with others, where they can exist without pressure, is a huge relief.

Following the bushfires and through the pandemic, the garden fell into disuse and became overgrown.

When the Outback Links volunteers from the NRMA arrived to help reinvigorate the Cobargo Community Garden, it was a boost that was sorely needed.

In a matter of two days, grass which stood four-foot tall was mowed neatly, sections of the garden were weeded, and new veggies were planted.

It was the start of something even bigger. Shelves were fitted to an adjoining shed to start plans for a

small library and rubble was removed from land on a local property, where the Post Office operators David and Kyle lost their home.

In the nearby town of Quaama, volunteers weeded and pruned the garden area surrounding the Community Hall, which served as an evacuation centre during the fires.



Your support means we can show town's like Cobargo that they may be isolated, but they are not alone.



(Above) A few of the NRMA volunteers

(Left) Alexa is thankful for the support of Frontier Services and the NRMA



Bush Chaplain David serves a new patch of the outback



After two years of incredible impact in Western Australia's Mid-West, Bush Chaplain David Jackson has moved to Tom Price in the Pilbara region.

Armed with his knowledge and skills in disaster recovery, David arrived in the Mid-West to support those adversely affected by Cyclone Seroja in 2021, which had destroyed entire communities.

"I came out of early retirement for this Bush Chaplaincy role, and it's been a journey filled with meaningful connections and purposeful moments," says David.

For David, a sense of purpose gave him the strength he needed to serve the community. He adds:

"It's not always easy, but knowing that I'm making a difference, that I'm providing support makes it all worthwhile."

After Rev John Dihm's retirement in 2023, David has now moved to

the Pilbara. He brings with him the lessons learned and connections forged in the Mid-West, and the loving presence and support of his wife Diane.

From their caravan, their temporary base until their home is ready to move into, David is nurturing new relationships and growing roots in his new patch of the outback.

In just a few weeks, David has already introduced himself to several communities. He has joined an SES training session and met an enthusiastic group of volunteers, later attending an Emergency Services Cadet night to meet its leaders and another 100 young volunteers. David has also visited a St John Ambulance station, connected with a First Nations community, and shared in fellowships with local churches.

David knows it is early days, but says he is inspired by the amazing people he's met so far.

"I'm excited for what comes next!"

**Follow David's journey on
[facebook.com/FrontierServices](https://www.facebook.com/FrontierServices)**



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