

FEBRUARY 2023

FrontierNews

*"We feel truly
blessed."*



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 self-sealing envelope 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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Standing with people in the bush



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Front Cover Alan and Susan from Finley, NSW

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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



We are living in a tumultuous time where so much feels uncertain, especially for people in the bush.

Those to whom I've spoken are constantly bracing themselves for the next disaster. The last few years have brought them one crisis after another, with no time to recover in-between. The long, devastating drought. The mice plague. The bushfires. The global pandemic. The floods.

And they're not wrong. We're fearing more unpredictable, severe weather in 2023 and rapidly growing cost of living pressures as well.

This uncertainty adds more stress to an already challenging situation of trying to make a living on the land.

Yet one thing is more certain than ever before: the power of your kindness.

I've seen first-hand just how much difference your kindness and generosity make.

I've seen the exhaustion on people's faces as they tell me about the animals and crops they lost in the drought and floods. They don't just lose income, they lose hope.

But then I get to see the relief that comes from knowing someone cares. I see their eyes light up as they tell me about the Outback Links volunteers who helped them clean up the paddocks or fix the broken-down truck. They tell me how much it meant to them to be able to sit around a table with new friends and simply laugh for a moment.


And I see their tears of relief as they reveal how good it feels to know their Bush Chaplain is there for them, sharing God's love, ready to listen, to comfort and to support them.

It saddens me to know there are people out there still trying to survive alone without support. I want to make sure everyone living on the land can get the support they need to keep going – and with your help, we can.

If you'd like to give today, you can use the enclosed form and envelope to send your gift. Thank you so much for caring – it makes all the difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Floyd', written over a light blue background.

Rob Floyd
Acting National Director

A photograph of an elderly couple, Susan and Alan, standing in a grassy field. Susan is on the left, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, black pants, and a patterned scarf. Alan is on the right, wearing a brown jacket, blue jeans, and glasses. They are both smiling. In the background, there is a wooden structure with hay bales, a fence, and trees under a cloudy sky. A white hoist structure is visible in the foreground.

*Susan and Alan
with their working
Hills Hoist - at last!*

**“The best thing that’s
ever happened to me.”**

Volunteers bring relief and joy to Alan and Susan

It had been a difficult time for Alan and Susan. They’d been feeling the toll of isolation, ill health, and decades of hard work, as well as financial challenges.

Alan was dealing with arthritis, a double knee replacement, torn bicep, and multiple other health issues that made keeping their property a constant struggle.

They didn’t know how they’d get through the long list of jobs around the farm.

Then the Outback Links volunteers arrived.

“It was an answer to a prayer,” said Susan. “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.”

Volunteers helped Alan and Susan get their machinery and property back into working order with a whole host of jobs including fixing quad

bikes, a lawn mower and whipper snipper, clearing waterways, and feeding and moving animals.

Susan said having the machines fixed had a huge flow-on effect. "As each piece of equipment was cleaned, that piece of machinery could be used to get all the jobs done."

They even fixed Susan's washing line, which she hadn't been able to use for eight months.

"It gave us a big boost, physically and psychologically," said Susan.

The volunteers came from many diverse backgrounds, and Susan said it was wonderful to learn about other ways of life and hear their stories.

Alan admitted that, at first, he was reluctant to accept the offer of help. "There's always someone worse off than me."

He's so grateful for the help and loved having the company and camaraderie. He said it was one of the best things to ever happen to him and the friendships that were built are some of the happiest moments in his memory.

"We sat around the table, and we yarned; we had a wonderful time. This was as much a nourishing emotional experience for us as it was for the volunteers," Alan said.

"We feel truly blessed."



Alan feeding his animals



Outback Links volunteer Chris fixing Alan's 4WD. Look at that smile!



A moment to share a joke between Alan and Josh, Frontier Services Programs Manager

Your gift today can bring support to more farmers like Alan and Susan. If you'd like to help, please send your gift using the enclosed envelope.



“Look into the future and do it.”

Fred and Meron with their children and grandchildren

How a lifelong legacy of helping people inspired Meron and Fred to leave a gift in their Will.

Meron had been involved in helping people in the bush her whole life, so when it came time to think about her Will, it made perfect sense to leave a gift to Frontier Services.

“My husband Fred and I left a gift in our Will so Frontier Services can continue into the future. We want to help keep Frontier Services running because it's so necessary,” said Meron.

Meron’s connection began with her father who had been heavily involved in the Australian Inland Mission, and then Frontier Services, and her aunt had always helped nurses in the bush.



Rev Max Griffiths (left) and Meron's Dad Harry Richardson (right) in Oodnadatta

She says she was inspired to keep supporting Frontier Services because of our philosophy to help isolated people in remote parts of Australia. "It gives families hope that somebody from the city cares."

"I feel if you can give, you should. It's a good feeling that you're doing something for the world."



"If I was to meet someone who was thinking of leaving a gift in their Will to Frontier Services, I would say: Do it. Now. Don't put it off. Look into the future and do it."

Many generous people choose to give to Frontier Services through 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 at annej@frontierservices.org or 02 8270 1341.



If you choose to leave a Gift in your Will to Frontier Services, we would appreciate you advising us of your intentions. This will help us in planning our future and managing our communications with you.

Recommended wording for leaving a Gift in your Will to Frontier Services:

I leave to Uniting Church in Australia Frontier Services ABN 77231384646 (Charity Registration Number CCP2822) of 53/2 O'Connell St., Parramatta NSW 2150

<the residue of my estate / N percentage of my estate / the sum of (specific amount)>

for its general purposes, and I direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or other proper officer or such other authorised officer shall be sufficient discharge to my executors.

*Max Griffiths replaced Fred McKay as Superintendent of Australian Inland Mission (now Frontier Services) when he retired in 1974.

The country can't leave me



After 20 years serving as Bush Chaplain for Frontier Services, we say a huge thank you to Rev. John Dihm as he moves into retirement.

John still remembers when he was first called to the outback, pulled from his duties as a Chaplain in a Melbourne cancer hospital. Two decades later, he admits it has changed him as a person, and that even if he might be leaving the country, the country can't leave him.

It gets into your blood.

It's been a wonderful ministry. A lot of fun, a lot of tears and a lot of kilometers.

When I accepted the position with Frontier Services, I didn't even know where Hawker was. I didn't know anything about the outback. Nothing.

Within the first few months of arriving though, John was thrown into the deep end attempting to provide support through disaster.

We had floods, absolute floods a bit like Fitzroy Crossing now.

It was challenging because I didn't know the people. The people didn't know me, but it really cemented our time in the place and they still talk about it today.

Through the relationships he has formed with the people he has supported over two decades, John has learned to see the beauty in tragedy. He's seen many people come and go, and each one has left a lasting imprint on him.

They become your friends, they become your family - because you're with them so often out there. How does it affect me when they pass away? Well, you've lost a friend. That's how it affects you. And you're the one doing the service. You're the one who's got to hold everything together. Because that's what Bush Chaplaincy calls for.

It's a ministry of three things. It's a ministry of listening, it's a ministry of presence and it's a ministry of being with people. That's what it's all about.

His message for the next in line to replace him is simple.

Get to know the town. Get to know your people. Get to know yourself. Because you're going to be a different person to who you were before.



Rev John Dihm (centre) and miners

Frontier Services will continue to support Bush Chaplaincy in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

Flood-hit farms need your help



Anna had been running a cattle farm with her son David through years of relentless drought. Then the floods hit.

She says she's one of the lucky ones compared to others on the flood plains. But by any measure, it's been tough. The creek broke the banks, the paddocks have turned to boggy mud, and fences were torn down by the relentless rain. "The little weaning calves were up to their knees in mud," Anna said.

Just before Christmas, Anna called us for help. She desperately needed the help of volunteers to work through the huge list of jobs, including the damage caused by the rains. It's just her and her son David running the farm.

"It would relieve some of the pressure of running the farm," Anna explained. "The fencing has come down and the cattle are going wandering. We have to get fertilizer out, get the cattle branded, fix the property."

But even more than the practical jobs, Anna hopes the volunteers would be much-needed company

for her son David, who's quite isolated on the farm. Especially since he lost his father.

"When his dad was here, they had great talks. He had someone to talk to if he wanted to get something off his chest. And with his dad here to take care of things, David could go into town on the weekend.

"But there's not much time to socialise when you're responsible for animals. It's isolating."

Drought, mice and floods

Anna and David are no novices to natural disasters. Before the floods, they'd already battled through years of drought, followed by a destructive mice plague.

"I caught 645 mice in the house, 480 in the shed and about 56 in the silo," said Anna.

"We've been through three droughts and now three wets, I don't know what will happen in 2023. I just don't know."

We're still working to find volunteers for Anna. Your donation today will help fund the volunteer program so we can make sure farmers like Anna can get the support they urgently need.



Anna with her dog Samantha

A great BBQ by a great family

The legacy of Rev John Flynn and Rev Fred McKay lives on

Towards the end of last year, a small church in coastal New South Wales held a Great Outback BBQ. It was a warm and friendly event, preceded by a special ceremony.

But the story behind this humble BBQ is epic.

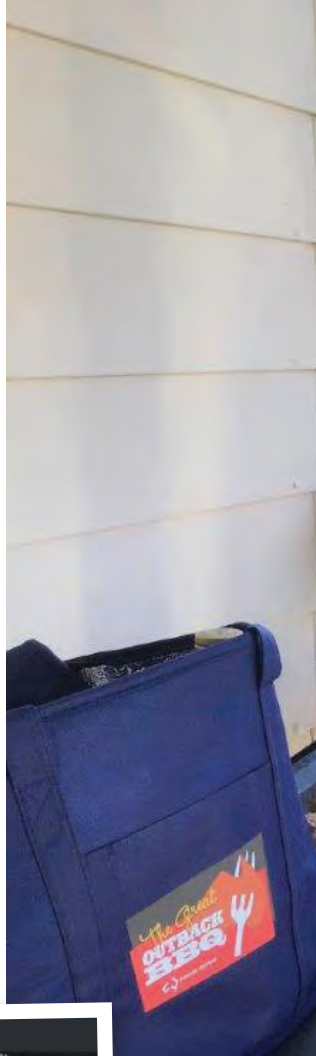
It was a Great Outback BBQ to raise funds for Frontier Services, and it was coordinated by someone with very deep ties to Frontier Services: Margaret Wheatley.

Margaret is the daughter of Rev Fred McKay who succeeded Rev John Flynn in running the Australian Inland Mission – one of the predecessors to Frontier Services.

Rev McKay shared Rev Flynn's immense compassion and respect for people in the bush and devoted his life to serving them.

At Rev McKay's funeral service, he was honoured by Prime Ministers and Governors General, parliamentarians, corporate leaders, church leaders, soldiers from WW2 and people from across the outback – all regarded Fred as their personal friend.

A Great Outback BBQ is a powerful way for people anywhere to reach out and help people in the bush. It's also a great way to invite the wider community to join in with you and become involved.





Hosting a Great Outback BBQ is a fun and easy way to show your support for people in rural and remote Australia. The funds you raise will help provide practical, pastoral and spiritual support for those doing it tough in the bush.

We'll send you a free BBQ host kit and the rest is easy.



Register now at greatoutbackbbq.com.au



Marj and Ray finally got a break!

You may remember Marj and Ray, who we told you about before Christmas. They'd had a very tough year running their farm, as they care for four young grandchildren.

You'll be delighted to know they finally had a family holiday at Christmas – camping by the beach in Hervey Bay! It was a wonderful opportunity for them to spend time together as a family away from the daily chores of the farm.

Their little three-year-old grandson was wide-eyed with delight at presents from Santa, and Marj even got a break from cooking, thanks to Ray and the older grandson manning the BBQ.

It was a rare and much needed break away for the family, especially for Marj and Ray who don't get weekends off when on the farm.

Marj admitted she was worried about the year ahead, particularly

the impact of the rain on the 2023 crop of stone fruit. "The fruit rots if it gets too much rain when it's ready to pick." She's particularly worried about Ray. "I don't know how he keeps going sometimes, but he just keeps going."

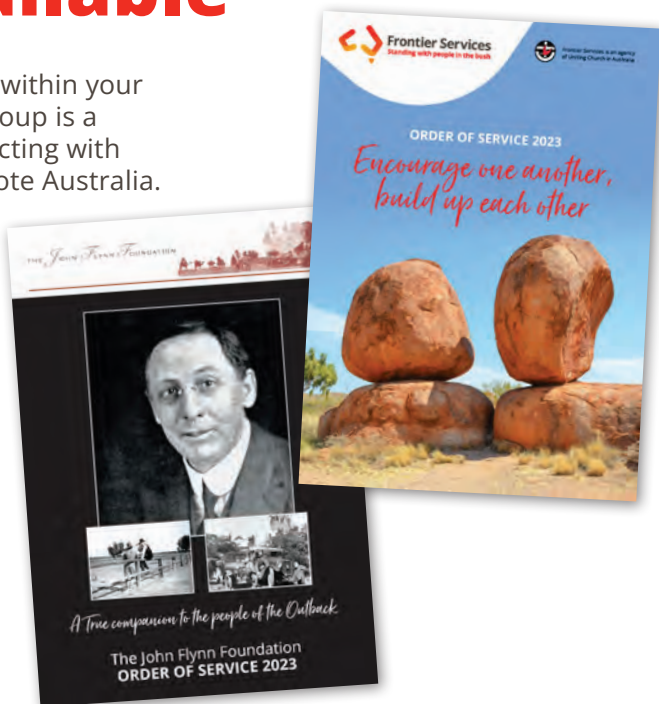
Marj said she's so grateful for the help of the Outback Links volunteers: "It's the difference between us keeping going and not keeping going."

Your donation today will help the Outback Links program continue, so together we help more people like Marj and Ray. You can use the envelope provided to send in your gift. Thank you for your support.

2023 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.

There are two Order of Service options available for 2023, each contains a beautiful selection of prayers, hymns and readings that reflect life in the bush and Reverend John Flynn's vision for the inland.



Order yours today at frontierservices.org/order-of-service or return the completed form below

Order of Service selection:

Frontier Services

John Flynn Foundation

Formats required:

Printed booklets - Qty*: ____

Digital PDF

Organisation name: _____

State: _____

Postcode: _____

Contact name: _____

Contact email: _____

Contact phone number: _____



**Frontier
Services**

Standing with
people in the bush

frontierservices.org

1300 787 247

*Fred and Meron are leaving
a Gift in their Will to Frontier
Services to help isolated people
in remote parts of Australia.
"It gives families hope that
somebody cares."*