

AUGUST 2024

FrontierNews

*"It's the people
who make it
special"*



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 on page 11 of this magazine, or donate online at frontierservices.org/donate
- ✓ Register to volunteer and to check out our current volunteering opportunities in areas of most need at frontierservices.org/outback-links
- ✓ Leave a lasting legacy by including a Gift in your Will to Frontier Services. To learn more, visit frontierservices.org/bequest



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August 2024 Edition 126, Volume 3
Print Post 100020006

Front Cover Outback Links volunteers Therese and Clive

Circulation 12,000

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If you have a story relating to our work that you would like to share, email us at team@frontierservices.org

Message from the National Director



In my role, I have learned that offering care and support to people in need can be truly transforming. Showing compassion in this way helps build authentic connections and provide support that goes far beyond what is expected of us.

Being present and showing that we care has the power to lift spirits and enhance wellbeing for both the person giving and the person receiving support. It can be life-changing.

In this edition of Frontier News, you'll hear from carers from all walks of life who are united in a common mission to stand with people in the bush. Thanks to your support, Therese and Clive have been able to volunteer their time and skills, travelling from Sydney to Lightning Ridge to make a difference. Bush Chaplain Jill Doolan shares her stories of how she looks out for this generation and future ones, and Bush Chaplain Ric Payne is supporting the communities of Mid West, WA. You'll also read about how your support helped keep our Bush Chaplains on the road.

But there's another thread that binds our amazing people together, and that is the sense of abiding compassion that drives them. From travelling hundreds of kilometres a day for one visit, to volunteering time to help a remote farmer with cleaning and cooking, compassion is at the core of everything our people do to care for others.

In the same spirit, you show your own wonderful compassion by supporting our work. Without your generosity and kindness, we simply couldn't continue to do what we do for people in the bush. So, I'd like to thank you as well.

I hope you enjoy reading these stories. Please know that your generosity is what makes it all possible.

Rob Floyd
National Director



Forging connections in Mid West

Appointed as a Bush Chaplain after Cyclone Seroja, Erica 'Ric' Payne dedicates herself to nurturing and uplifting communities in the Mid West of Western Australia. Ric is forging connections and fostering resilience by offering crucial support in towns across the region.

One way Ric supports the region's recovery is by collaborating closely with local authorities, community groups, and individuals affected by the disaster. Her presence in Kalbarri, Northampton, Morawa, Perenjori, and Chapman Valley has been instrumental in providing an emotional outlet during times of loss and uncertainty.

In Kalbarri, Ric organises activities for the seniors' group where a sense of companionship can be hard to find.

"Visiting the Kalbarri seniors is a highlight. Their resilience and positivity inspire me," Ric shares.



Ric assisting the Dongara Dizzy Dames at a social function in Chapman Valley

Ric says she has appreciated the way Northampton's First Nations community, particularly the Northampton Old School Community Initiative, have welcomed her with open arms. *"Being part of their board is an honour. It's been deeply moving."*

In her hometown of Dongara, Ric liaises with the local Community Resource Centre, and the Uniting Church's volunteer-led Martha's Pantry, to address local needs. *"Meeting with community leaders is essential. We're exploring initiatives to support local families,"* she notes. Together, they help by making grocery deliveries directly to families' homes, giving them relief when they might be overwhelmed or face financial hardship.

Ric also attends school functions and playgroups for young mothers and children in an environment that fosters early development and social connection. As a proud mum, Ric says, *"Seeing children and mothers connect warms my heart. These moments strengthen our community."*

As a former teacher and School Chaplain, Ric understands the value of encouraging and growing these strong foundations. *"The education challenges in remote areas are increasing, but together, we find solutions. Every child deserves opportunities to thrive."*

Sadly, among these challenges, some families face an even greater crisis. Just as in our cities, domestic violence

affects many women and children in remote communities as well.

Ric is someone who women can talk to, and she looks out for families by connecting them with safehouses and other counselling services.

"My role is to listen, to take time to help the victims come to a decision about what's best for their family, and reassure them I will walk beside them every step of the way, whatever they decide to do."

Despite challenges, Ric finds joy in celebrating community achievements and milestones. Ric shares, *"Standing by people in the bush involves challenges, but also moments of hope and celebration. It's a privilege to share in their dreams and successes."*

"Engaging with the community through these programs is incredibly rewarding. Whether it's the joy of reading to school children or the laughter in seniors' gatherings, participating in community recovery groups, or leaning on a gate post chatting with a farmer, these moments reaffirm why I do what I do."



Ric with Ku'arla Mangga artist Mauretta in Fremantle



No strangers to volunteer work

Outback Links volunteer Therese has always loved to move around and see new places. So, when she and her husband Clive finished work some years ago, the couple invested in a campervan and set about planning some adventures on the open road.

No strangers to volunteer work, the couple had looked at ways they could help people while travelling, before discovering Outback Links.

"There was a lot that appealed to us about the program, but we particularly liked that it was something we could do together as a couple," says Therese. "It also seemed flexible and there was a choice of jobs

all over the country, so we contacted Frontier Services and asked when we could start!"

Their first project took them to Yeoval, near Orange NSW. The managers of the Banjo Paterson Museum were looking for help cataloguing books and as a long-term fan of the poet, Therese was in her element. From there, she was hooked.

"Since then, we've been back to Yeoval a couple of times and taken on a number of other jobs across the country," says Therese. "Most recently, we were in Lightning Ridge helping possibly the hardest-working, most resilient woman I have ever met!"

That woman was Marianne, a farmer who raises cattle and goats as well as growing and harvesting crops. According to Therese, she just doesn't stop.

"We stayed with her for a week and said we'd help her with any jobs she felt needed to be done, which turned out to be a bit of everything," says Therese. "Clive helped by moving animals and building a goat yard, while I cleaned, gardened, and did a week's worth of cooking."

Marianne also suggested they bring meals to a friend in town who'd been doing it tough—a gesture of human kindness and community that touched Therese, particularly given how busy Marianne's life is. Over the week, the group formed a firm bond, making it tough to say goodbye.

"It was so special to meet her, so kind of them to let us stay, and I feel it was Marianne's way of saying thank you for what we'd done for them."

Therese and Clive say the journeys home are often emotional as they discuss the differences their efforts have made.

"It's such a privilege to be let into someone's life, regardless of the circumstances, and that's the most important thing I've learned," says Therese. "It's not the volunteers who make Frontier Services so special, it's the people of the bush who so graciously and bravely accept our help to make their lives a little easier and brighter."



To register as a volunteer, or receive some Outback Links support, scan the QR code or visit



frontierservices.org/outback-links



Looking after Country

Newly appointed Bush Chaplain Jill Doolan looks after Country and a community that means everything to her.

Finke, known by locals as Aputula, is a town in the Northern Territory of fewer than 500 residents, most of whom are First Nations People. Speaking three Indigenous languages, Jill is widely recognised in the community and draws strength from her deep connections to people and place.

Now serving the Aputula region as a Frontier Services Bush Chaplain, Jill

sees an opportunity to support people through challenges that she's always been aware of but hasn't had the time or resources to help with herself.

"Growing up in the community, I know the struggle. But just helping each other, being there for each other, that's what community is all about. Being with friends and family, praying with them, encouraging them, supporting them, helping them."

Reflecting on what first inspired her to become a Bush Chaplain, Jill describes how the 'unity' in Uniting Church resonates with her.

"When I hear the word 'uniting', I think to myself, 'okay, I'm an Aboriginal person, I'm a pastor. I'm a Bush Chaplain, a Christian, and also an Aboriginal woman.'"

Becoming a Frontier Services Bush Chaplain is the merging of these core aspects of Jill's identity, enhancing her presence and impact in her remote hometown.

Jill looks out for this generation of elders, preparing and delivering meals to their homes or helping them to visit the doctor, where there may be a language barrier or complications with transport.

While she supports these immediate needs, Jill also looks after Country through her involvement with the Central Land Council.

"We don't want our Country destroyed. This is what I always say to governments or other organisations or the Central Land Council. That without our sacred sites, we wouldn't have a story to tell."

Jill makes a point of telling these stories to the next generation, teaching children about their culture and history, so that they can be torchbearers in the future.

"I will say to them, 'You are the next generation.'"



Thank you for keeping our Bush Chaplains on the road



“If my Bush Chaplain wasn’t here, I just think it would have been all too much, and I probably wouldn’t be here either” - Elaine

Elaine* felt her world had come crashing down around her when her husband died, and things got even worse with subsequent diagnoses of both Parkinson’s and early-stage dementia. Living on a remote property and with no family around, Elaine was terrified she’d have no support.

Thanks to you, though, she did.

Elaine’s Bush Chaplain drives 400km to see her. Together, they pray and talk. Her Bush Chaplain takes on some practical jobs around the place, but the most important thing is providing a caring, listening ear and voice of guidance. It’s a relationship built on compassion and faith.

Your donations have helped with this vital work. Our Bush Chaplains

together cover an average of 3,103kms per day to check on people like Elaine. The cost of fuel alone is very high. In supporting our work, you’ve helped keep them on the road, doing what they do best—instilling hope and building companionship. For that, we are all so grateful.

“As I write this, I’ve just travelled 390km to visit a nursing home, dropping in on two country schools on the way, and I couldn’t have done this without the amazing support of our donors. So thank you, you are wonderful,” says Bush Chaplain Lindsay Ginn.

**Donate today to stand
with people in the bush.
Scan the QR code or
complete the form on P11.**



*Name changed to protect privacy

Yes, I wish to support the people of remote Australia with a:

One-time donation of:

\$30 \$75 \$100 My choice of \$ _____

Monthly donation of: (gifts will be debited on the 15th of each month)

\$30 \$50 \$80 My choice of \$ _____ (\$15 minimum)

I wish to make my payment by:

Credit card. Please debit my: VISA Mastercard Amex

Card Number

Expiry Date

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Name on Card

Signature

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BSB number: 032-014

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Title First Name Last Name

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 Donate online frontierservices.org/donateFN

 Call **1300 787 247**

Thank you for standing with people in the bush.

Your personal information is collected to enable us to provide you with news, and a receipt for donations. You can request to have your details or contact preferences changed at any time by phoning 1300 787 247. To read more about how Frontier Services uses your information, please visit frontierservices.org/our-privacy-policy



Frontier Services

Christmas Cards



Get your orders in to ensure you don't miss out on our beautiful outback-themed Christmas cards. Each pack comes with 10 cards (2x5 unique designs) and 10 envelopes. Prices include postage costs, and all proceeds support our Bush Chaplain and Outback Links programs.



Christmas Card Order Form

Order Quantity	Pack Name	Price/Pack	Total
_____	Red Dirt	\$8	\$ _____
_____	Three Wise Men	\$8	\$ _____
_____	Julia's Paintings	\$8	\$ _____

I wish to make my total payment of \$ _____ by:

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Card Number

Expiry Date CVV

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Visit frontierservices.org/shop or scan the QR code to purchase online, and to learn more about the pack options.



John Flynn: Back in time

This article first appeared in a 1970's issue of Frontier News.

Nature wins the battle once again. This is the other side of the pioneering story in the outback.

As we send "Frontier News" on its stretching journey into all kinds of places, we are bound to have a thought for the people who even today—in the inland and around the world—are facing the ravages of desolation.

We clap our hands at the mighty technological developments in the north; but we just as readily share the agony of battle which the wool men are fighting up and down our sheep-land. Droughts and floods have devastated their plains in past years—but now they are confronted by a greater devastation. Their product seems no longer to be seriously wanted by the world. And it is a case of Farina ruins all over again.

We are forced also by our own very conscience to have a care for the desolate people who live on the fringes of our bursting affluence. In the Australian Inland Mission we are simple people. But our love for others has been forged out of our own battles. We admire the strong and need them at our side. But we have a deep and practical compassion for the desolate.

At this time we therefore join with all people in the bonds of Christian goodwill.



We remember everybody and send our greetings into every corner of the inland, and into every corner of the world. Christ brings great peace—even to the desolate.



“When one starts a patch, you’ve got to weave yourself into the community”

After celebrating a decade of dedicated service, Bush Chaplain Gary Ferguson transitions to a new chapter. This marks the end of a journey deeply rooted in his family’s pioneering legacy in South Australia.

In 2014, Gary began as a Patrol Padre covering 350,000 square kilometres across South Australia’s outback. His role extended far beyond spiritual guidance, as he became integral to the communities he served by offering ongoing support in times of need.

Establishing trust in the remote area of Ceduna, where Gary served most recently, took time. But Gary

was determined to foster genuine connections with people. Eventually, his persistence paid off. *“Your work starts after that initial period,”* he says.

“You weave their everyday life into your everyday life, until that then becomes one, and you virtually live with them. Even though you may not be with them physically, you’re with them spiritually.”

From the vast sheep and cattle stations of South Australia’s far north, to the mixed farming and fishing communities along the West Coast, Gary immersed himself fully in local life.



*Gary and his late wife
Kris volunteering for
SA Ambulance Service*

"When people can relate to personal experiences, it opens up conversations that might otherwise remain unspoken."

Gary describes his way of drawing on personal experiences, using metaphors like the "black dog tied up on the end of the veranda" to spark crucial conversations and destigmatise depression.

Serving on hospital boards, advocating for mental health, participating in farmers' meetings, and leading funeral services are all a testament to the deep personal bonds he cultivated.

Beyond traditional Bush Chaplain duties, Gary addressed broader community needs, advocating for healthcare and mental wellbeing resources that are crucial in remote areas where support is often scarce.

Central to Gary's approach was the art of listening—to what people said and, sometimes more importantly, to what they didn't say. His ability to recognise and respond to these needs pre-emptively made a profound impact on many lives.

Although his time as a Bush Chaplain is coming to a close, Gary will continue travelling to Kimba Uniting Church in South Australia where he is needed as a pastor—channelling his enduring commitment to John Flynn's legacy.

Gary extends his heartfelt thanks to you, our generous supporters, for making his work possible in a ministry spanning over a decade.

Thank you. Your contributions have been instrumental in making a lasting difference in the lives of people living in Gary's patch of rural Australia and beyond.



*100-year anniversary shoot
- on the camel in 2015*



Gary conducting a seaside wedding

“Come back anytime, there will always be an open door”

The Outback Links team heads to Kiah and Towamba



The area of Kiah and Towamba, just south of Eden near the New South Wales-Victorian border, was severely impacted by the 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires. Nearly four years later, many still live in sheds and caravans, as they slowly rebuild their lives. In partnership with the NRMA, our Outback Links team recently came together in solidarity, formed friendships, and provided essential support to these resilient communities.

Jessie and Jo moved to Eden five years ago seeking tranquillity. Not long after they'd settled, the bushfires destroyed their home and cherished possessions. While they've kept high spirits since that

disaster, they are still recovering from the physical damage.

Our team helped repair various vehicles and garden equipment, vital for maintaining their property. Jessie and Jo's resilience and your kind support highlight the power of community and family in the face of adversity.



"Thank you for all your work. We couldn't have completed this without you."

Another resident of the area, Harry channelled his energy into rebuilding after the fires, finding it a therapeutic way to cope with the disaster. Our volunteers rebuilt his chicken coop, providing not just physical assistance but the spirit of mateship. The camaraderie offered Harry hope and direction amidst the ongoing challenges of recovery.

"I wouldn't mind doing some volunteering myself when things settle down."

Errol and Joy-Anne, like many residents of Kiah who refused to be dependent or helpless, faced multiple challenges with their farm equipment. Running the local café after the fires and during the COVID-19 pandemic, Joy-Anne kept her café open, offering a sense of normalcy and connection.

"Come back anytime, there will always be an open door."

The practical assistance provided and the emotional connections formed during the Outback Links project were invaluable, helping residents navigate the overwhelming task of rebuilding.

Heartfelt words of gratitude from the community encapsulate the impact of the work that you make possible and the importance of standing together in times of adversity.

The resilience and courage of the residents inspire us all, and we hope you're as honoured as we are to have played a part in their journey towards recovery.



Partner with us!

If you're interested in supporting our work through a Corporate Partnership, please get in touch today. Your generosity is crucial in helping communities like Kiah and Towamba rebuild and thrive.

Scan the QR code to find out more, or visit frontierservices.org/partner



Your Will can bring hope to people in the Outback

"I always had it in my mind to make a Will, but I'd never actually done it. When I discovered I could leave a gift to Frontier Services, I finally acted."

In the heart of the Australian outback, Lindsay Ginn's story is a testament to the enduring impact of generosity and foresight. A dedicated Bush Chaplain, Lindsay's passion for supporting remote communities is matched only by his commitment to ensuring that support continues long after his time.

Following in the footsteps of Reverend John Flynn, Lindsay has found purpose in offering aid and comfort to those living in isolation. His journey is not just about providing assistance; it's about forging connections, understanding struggles, and making a tangible difference in people's lives.

Lindsay's decision to leave a Gift in his Will to Frontier Services epitomises his dedication to the outback and its people. This foresight ensures that his legacy will continue to support those facing adversity in remote areas, just as he's doing during his lifetime.

By leaving a Gift in your Will, you can follow Lindsay's lead, pledging to ensure that vital assistance will reach those who need it most in the outback, long into the future.



Your legacy matters. Join Bush Chaplain Lindsay Ginn in ensuring that the spirit of support and compassion thrives in the Australian outback.

If you'd like to speak to us about leaving a Gift in your Will to Frontier Services or the John Flynn Foundation, please contact Anne Jones, Donor Relations Officer at annej@frontierservices.org or call 1300 787 247.

To learn more about leaving a Gift in your Will, or to write your Will for free, please visit frontierservices.org/bequest

Host your own Great Outback BBQ!



Registrations are now open!

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

Register now to receive your **FREE** premium hosting kit.

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





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