



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY
Assembly Standing Committee

15 – 17 July 2022

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Type of Paper (Information/Decision)	For information
Title	Frontier Services
Assembly or ASC Minute	N/A
Consultation	AFARC Frontier Services Board
Purpose	To detail new strategy for Frontier Services and obtain endorsement from Assembly.
Rationale & Findings Summary	
Attachments	Executive Summary Frontier Services Strategic Plan 2022-2025 Frontier Services Organisational Plan 2022-2025
Recommendations	
Submitted by	Jannine Jackson - National Director janninej@frontierservices.org .

Executive Summary – Jannine Jackson Frontier Services

Out and about again

This quarter has seen us returning to getting out and about more with the ease of COVID restrictions and travel now back to being a part of our role. It has been wonderful being able to fly the Frontier Services flag in person and make connections with individuals zoom just didn't allow for.

Assembly Meeting Sunshine Coast Queensland: Attending the 16th Assembly in person allowed for reconnection with old and new faces. Being able to witness the coming together of so many stakeholders of the Church was an honour to be a part of. Being able to listen to important decisions being made with openness and humility was inspiring.

Book Launch in Adelaide: Frontier Services was invited to Launch the book 'It Makes One Smile, It Makes One Weep' a Biography about a Methodist Patrol Minister that worked under John Flynn. Rev. Victor Henry Goldney was one of Flynn's Mob and attending this event was very special and reminded me of Frontier Services deep history.

Meeting UAICC South Australia: After attending the book launch I spent two days sitting with congress in Adelaide and dialling in other members across the country to talk about how we can be in partnership and walk alongside each other. It was such a positive meeting and we are working together in a meaningful way.

Two NRMA Group Projects: Several volunteers descended on Parkes/Trundle and Condobolin. These areas have been significantly hard hit with drought, floods and mice plague. We had teams of mechanics and operational volunteers to rebuild machinery, property but also community. A great time and hope was restored for dozens of families. The difference it makes to community when we physically show up and show we care is always humbling. The immense gratitude we receive from those areas where we go for group trips lasts long after the volunteers have been.

Oodnadatta, Cockburn, William Creek & Hawker Outback Links & Bush Chaplains Projects: When our Bush Chaplaincy and Volunteer program work collaboratively together we see incredible results. There are a number of recent projects completed and so many more still more to come. Teams of volunteers arrive work ready to support families in need under the guidance of our Bush Chaplains. We paint, repair, garden and provide companionship to those who are in need of help.

Human Resources

We have recently hired a National Operations Manager, Shontell Peawini who started on the 15th of May. Shontell joined us with a vast background of experience. Most recently, she was the General Manager of Maketu Health and Social Services - Tumuaki in New Zealand where for several years was responsible for ensuring the running of the organisation from the ground up. She worked with the local Mouri community and rural communities in developing programs. In the short time since she started she has injected vibrancy into the team and been very efficient in working on getting our policy and procedure documents up to date.

Unfortunately this quarter we said farewell to Michelle McLeod, National Fundraising Manager. Michelle had been with Frontier Services for over 4 and a half years so this is a resignation that I felt both professionally and personally. However, after giving Michelle the grace to make a decision on whether she was to be vaccinated as well as her return to Sydney after moving to Queensland, she made the choice that it was time for her to start a new journey. A big hole will be left in her absence due to her extended tenure and wealth of experience with the organisation, however, I feel this decision was the best thing for her at this time.

We have successfully recruited to fill this role, Jackie Simpson starts with us on the 4th of July 2022. Jacqui Simpson will be joining the Frontier Services team on the 4th of July, heading up our Fundraising team. Jacqui comes to us as a senior fundraising and marketing team leader with over 15 years of experience. She loves to build programs and mentor team members to be successful in their fields. In Jacqui's most recent role at Caritas Australia, she was responsible for overseeing a portfolio valued at approx. \$20M across individual giving, community giving, supporter services and data team. During her tenure there she was responsible for developing robust processes and systems across all fundraising areas to improve effectiveness and efficiencies. She has managed large teams, budgets and programs. Prior to her role at Caritas Australia, Jacqui worked for other organisations like Fred Hollows Foundation and the Heart Foundation.

In line with the strategic plan, we have also had the opportunity to fill the role of Partnership and Trusts Manager. Paul Deverell, who will develop and maintain a pipeline of individuals, foundations, and corporate partnerships and trusts to enable us to deliver on our vision. Paul Deverell will start with us on Monday 27th of June 2022. Paul comes to us with over 9 years of experience working in various fundraising roles. Paul is a master at developing relationships through his work as a business development lead at Beacon Foundation - Paul was also responsible for securing significant amounts of funding through partnerships and trusts. He was also responsible for developing robust processes within Salesforce to track and manage opportunities.

Bush Chaplains

We are continuing to grow the number of Frontier Services Bush Chaplains. We had in the plan and budget for this year to place 22 Bush Chaplains. We are however dependent on the Synods and Presbyteries to complete the placements based on what they have asked for funding to do. Currently at the time of writing we have agreed to fund 6 vacant roles this financial year:

Kennedy, QLD (Chris Guise finished in March 2022)
Cunnamulla, QLD (Cain Hartigan finished in April. Replacement Bush Chaplain in Supply Currently)
West Coast, TAS
Kimberly, NT
East West Arnhem. NT
Katherine, NT / WA

We have been able to confirm Noel Williams to accept the call to the Barwon Remote Area. Noel starts in July 2022 and has already been in touch with Rev. Phill Matthews to have a "handover" of important information and key stakeholders in the community.

There is continued complexity managing bush chaplains in conjunction with Synods and Presbytery. Some of the difficulties we face regarding Bush Chaplaincy and Bush Chaplaincy management have come to light significantly this quarter. We continue to work with the concerned areas towards resolutions.

Redress

This quarter saw Frontier Services be notified of three new claims. One of these was through the Redress Scheme and two via civil claims. Upon research all of these claims we believe have named Frontier Services incorrectly as the responsible institution.

Sarah Lim agreed in regards to the claim that arrived via Redress that fortunately the Australian Inland Mission had been confused with the Aboriginal Inland Mission, a totally separate entity that had no affiliation with our organisation. This issue has come up several times before and had been picked up however, in this instance it wasn't picked up until Peta Fenton started looking into the history of the claim.

The two civil claims that we were served with in April 2022 both contained significant traumatic events and horrific experiences by those involved. We were notified of 2 claims, pursuant to the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 (Qld). Due to the nature of these claims, both Peta and myself are undertaking 4-12 weeks of supervision counselling to ensure that we are both taking care of our mental health after digesting the type of information that was enclosed in these cases.

New Strategy 2022 - 2025

The Frontier Services Board, staff and external support have worked hard to develop our new strategy plan for the next three years.

Vision

Our vision is that all people can live a holistic and fulfilled life in remote areas of Australia.

Mission

Frontier Services is standing with people in the bush to provide practical, pastoral and spiritual care to enable well-being and quality of life. As an agency of the Uniting Church in Australia we will foster collaboration with its other agencies as well as external partners in order to fund chaplaincy, advocate for people and communities, and mobilise volunteers and resources where they are needed most.

Goals

- 1. 30 Bush Chaplains covering remote Australia**
- 2. Be strategic with our disaster response.**
- 3. Increase fundraising revenue to above \$6.4m**
- 4. Improve brand presence and voice for the bush**
- 5. Improve measurable outcomes for our programs**

Why a new strategic plan?

There is a continued growing divide in the bush from those on the ground and for our Bush Chaplains this is the worst it has been in their living memory. The crisis in mental health mean that all of our Bush Chaplains are dealing with suicide and suicide ideation. There is increased homelessness, domestic violence, less employment and education opportunities on top of the growing digital divide. This community is also dealing with some of the worst natural disasters in Australian recorded history, yet these communities are last on the list when it comes to government intervention and support.

Frontier Services was started by John Flynn to bring a mantle of safety to the bush. He had a vision that those who lived in the bush should have access to assistance when needed. However, the gap is growing and we need to act. We need to act now.

Understanding that we cannot and should not be all things to all people. Our new strategic plan is really focused how to act smarter, act braver and address the growing divide.

We need to play to our core strengths and understand what we are being called to do. We also have a financial opportunity to invest in our strategic and sustainable growth.

In developing the plan we wanted to answer a couple of key questions. What could Frontier Services look like in 5 years if we were true to why we exist? Understanding our history and future is to

address the gap between metro and rural Australia. How do we do that? What can we measure? What do we want to be accountable for?

How can we change lives?

30 Bush Chaplains covering more of remote Australia

Improve the reach of our Bush Chaplaincy network. With unprecedented weather events and back to back disasters impacting the lives of tens of thousands of Australians, a mental health crisis has been brewing across rural and remote areas of the country. There is a growing need to have Bush Chaplains in areas that have little to no mental health coverage. Almost every Frontier Services Bush Chaplain has a story of how they have saved a life. We believe that all their lives are important and worth saving. In addition we intend to track the evidence of the effectiveness of Chaplaincy so that we can also advocate for their importance in a care continuum.

Be strategic with our disaster response

We are increasingly being called into this space and want to ensure that we not stretching ourselves but also responding to the significant needs in rural and remote Australia. We will recruit staff to support our volunteer team to respond to the rebuilding efforts. There is a significant gap in the market for disaster response after the 3 month mark and very little resources in remote areas. There is a large need not being met by anyone else. We intend to collect the evidence and research as we go through our response. We would ensure we focus our disaster response volunteer team efforts collaboratively alongside our Bush Chaplains. Our Bush Chaplains are already on the front line for disaster response in evacuation centres, first responders with emergency services and in the practical elements of schools and hospitals. We intend to support the response already happening with other practical elements to rebuild.

Improve Brand Presence and voice for the Bush

This is again with evidence. Our policy and advocacy position would develop a position around a strategic issue 3 times a year. This would be supported by our media and PR. It is essential that we publish position papers that work at the same time as our appeals and campaigns. This integrated communication strategy not only means we can reach more people with important messages it also means we have a greater capacity to raise more money.

Improve measurable outcomes for our programs

This is about moving towards social return on investment in order to prove our worth. This is an ambitious project which will enable us to advocate the importance of Bush Chaplaincy in the care continuum. It also allows us to show the value of chaplaincy more broadly. What does it cost? And what is the true impact of having a Bush Chaplain or a volunteer? With detailed measures this provides a strong position on why chaplaincy is so critical and essential to community capacity building. Also provides the demonstration of the importance of mental and spiritual health in healing especially in a disaster area.

Year One

First year is an investment in growth in our internal resources to ensure we are growing our revenue capabilities alongside our increased level of professionalism for our bush chaplains and volunteers. We have already made the material gains in our efficiencies now we need to increase our internal capacity. We have identified a number of strategic positions to support the growth.

Recruit a Corporate Partnerships Manager - This role is to increase fundraising revenue. They will focus on fundraising from corporate sponsors and trusts and foundations. This position will allow us to find additional NRMA like sponsors for Outback Links. Between the trusts and corporate income we are projecting 600,000 over the two years but it will take between 12 – 18 months for this position to get into a break even position.

Recruit a Disaster Recovery Coordinator - This role will be working in the outback links team to recruit

skilled volunteers responding to the natural disasters. This role will be focused on responding to the long tail of recovery for bushfires, floods and cyclones that we do but allow us to recruit the specialised volunteer team required for rebuilding those communities

Recruit a Policy Officer - to develop the research and data regarding the primary issues we are being told are relevant from our Bush Chaplains. These issues will allow us to do more with less. As we see and understand the issues and substantial gaps from Metro & Rural, Frontier Services does not need to be the agency that delivers programs and the solution but can develop partnerships and policy which advocates for those changes.

Recruit a Bush Chaplain Manager - This position will oversee bush chaplaincy and to enable an increase Bush Chaplains from 19-30 to also provide the care and support that our bush chaplaincy team deserve. This role will do the "on-boarding & off-boarding" of these roles. This role will also be the first point of contact for our Bush Chaplains, including ensuring The second part is to ensure that the bush chaplain roles that are in place that we know are underfunded to increase the funding for those positions to ensure that their positions are viable.

Recruit a Fundraising Coordinator - to manage the increase regular giving revenue and donor retention. As this program is now generating revenue not just for the regular giving program but beyond.

Recruit a Marketing Graduate - to increase our brand presence and PR through online and support the marketing manager. This resource will help produce the collateral for integrated marketing campaigns that go across digital, hard copy, and PR.

Year Two and Three

Second Year Objective is to build on the first year plan and continue to grow our revenue but also our reach. The growth in income will mean we will be meeting year one increase in expenditure and be able to minimise budget deficit to \$250,000 for this year with returning to surplus in following year. As we continue with the new revenue opportunities will depend on how fast the next phase can be implemented.

Create A State of the Nation Rural Report combined with the John Flynn Lecture. This will allow Frontier Services to be on the front foot for what is happening in rural and remote Australia inviting others who have similar issues to share as well.

Communications Manager - This position is to support Policy Officer position focusing on media and PR. This is being able to develop a proactive media engagement strategy for media and policy decision makers on how our information can be turned into action that can change peoples lives.

Human Resources Officer - to support the team

Bush Chaplaincy Expanded to 30 Bush Chaplains including Disaster Chaplains like we have in place already in Victoria and Western Australia.

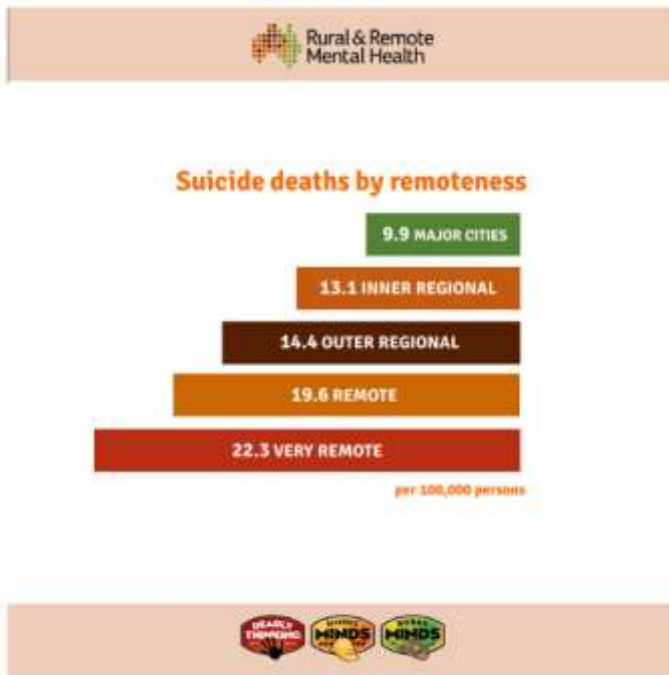
Recruit a Trusts and Foundations Manager to grow revenue that requires grant writing and reporting

Disaster Manager to develop the strategy to support coordinators and bush chaplains. This role will also allow Frontier Services the opportunity to raise funds to support areas of high need as we will be able to plan our response.

Outback Links Team to have 3 Outback Coordinators in the larger states to be a liaison point for key relationships. Like volunteers, farmers, speaking engagements, key stakeholders, CWA, rural financial counsellors. The primary KPI is about getting more "boots on the ground" in remote areas.

Recruit a Marketing Graduate - to increase our brand presence and PR through online and support the marketing manager. This resource will help produce the collateral for integrated marketing campaigns that go across digital, hard copy, and PR.

Why are Frontier Services Needed in Rural and Remote?



Source: ABS

