The Real Australian

This Fabulous Century

Going the distance in the name of Christ for the past 100 years

10 years of ministry in the NT  
A BCA man right from the start
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Cover: BCA has been going the distance in the name of Christ for the past 100 years. Photo taken by NSW/ACT Regional Officer Ted Brush in the Pilbara of WA.
**What’s a century? Isn’t it just one more than ninety-nine?**

Technically ‘yes’, but ‘no’ in the stuff that excites celebration, sticks in the memory and inspires others to dream. Centuries do matter. Don Bradman’s last innings – London 1948 – ended with the second ball, out for a duck. If he had scored only four runs his average would have been 100.00, the perfect century, but forever it stays at 99.94. ‘The Bradman Collection’ in the South Australian State Library laments: ‘Cricket enthusiasts will mourn that dismissal forever.’ Not so Steve Waugh’s innings against England in Sydney in 2003. All the talk had been that he was past it. The Australian captain regained strike for the last ball of the day. He was on 98. Even in the stuffy members’ stand they were on their feet, holding their breath till Waugh drove the ball to the fence for four. One second, silence; the next, the loudest cricket roar in Sydney since Bodyline: a massive celebration for a fabulous century!

May 26 is celebration day for BCA’s fabulous first century. A hundred years ago over 40 per cent of Australians belonged to the Church of England. Today we Anglicans are down to 18 per cent. At the same time Australia’s population has mushroomed from 5.4 million to over 25 million. It still means twice as many Australians today call themselves Anglican than was the case in 1919 but of course the rural and remote proportion of Australia has lessened. So, the big picture is sobering. The local picture however has been noble and impressive.

Across this century every state has received a steady flow of BCA Field Staff into parishes or ministries which would otherwise not have happened. The good news of Jesus has been broadcast in the bush where the local believers were too few to afford a pastor. Originally our Field Staff were all clergy or deaconesses. Since then there have been nurses, Scripture teachers, hostel house parents, evangelists, youth workers, school chaplains, a diocesan administrator, staff at Nungalinya College, pharmacists, mine chaplains and leadership trainers. As church life has grown weaker in many rural areas, BCA has often kept the gospel flag flying and over & over people have put their faith in Jesus.

The frequent isolation from fellowship, family, services and support have been overcome by the power of the Spirit, the prayer of countless supporters and the certainty of God’s call.

This has been a fabulous century, so worthy of being celebrated as we praise God for His constant call, provision and presence. And gear up with zeal for century number two when BCA will be as urgently needed to go the distance as we were in the last.

**David Crain**

*Interim National Director*
In less than two weeks it will be exactly 100 years since the Bush Church Aid Society of Australia was founded on a wet and windy night in Sydney. Celebrations are taking place right across the country; in cathedrals, Field Staff locations, and in link parishes.

At these services we will remember the hundreds of remarkable people who have gone out into the bush to spread the gospel of Christ. Today while most of our Field Staff work in parishes and schools, we remember all our committed staff including van missioners, nurses, doctors, pilots, pharmacists, radio operators, prison workers and mine chaplains to name a few. These dedicated servants are heroes of our faith whose stories inspire us to continue in the journey that Christ called us to.

At St George’s Anglican Church in Beenleigh, former BCA Mine Chaplain and now Priest-in-Charge Peter Palmer has planned a monumental event with a bush themed service complete with hay, gum trees and a bush BBQ lunch.

After the 10.30am service at St Andrew’s Cathedral in Sydney, where Indigenous Ministry Officer Neville Naden will speak, we will launch our Centenary book – Never too far, Never too few – 100 Years of Bush Church Aid.

We hope that your church will help us celebrate a century of reaching Australia with the good news of Jesus Christ.

How can you celebrate? There are a number of resources that BCA has made available via our website bushchurchaid.com.au/100. There are five short centenary videos (two minutes each) – maybe you
This Fabulous Century can show some of these in the lead up to Sunday 26 May and also on BCA Sunday.

Reaching out for another 100 years

Last month we also launched our Centenary Appeal. To mark our centenary we are establishing a number of exciting new ministries to lead BCA into its next 100 years. One of which is a new ministry in the Snowy Mountains.

Committed Christians Ken and Ella Meyer moved to Jindabyne just over a year ago and soon became aware of the potential for God’s work in this part of the bush.

“In Jindabyne the harvest is great but transitory,” says Ken and Ella. “We need faithful disciples who will make other disciples, and pray this new initiative will spread good news to the mountains and beyond.”

We need your prayers and support to fund this exciting new ministry and other initiatives across the country. It is our prayer that through your generosity the good news of Jesus will ring out through the mountains and across the country. If you are able to support this appeal please visit bushchurchoaid.com.au/donate.

BCA Centenary Prayer

Our former National Director, and now Bishop of Canberra & Goulburn Mark Short, wrote the following Centenary Prayer with input from BCA staff right across the country. We hope that you can use this prayer in your churches and your private prayers on BCA Sunday, 26 May.

Almighty and gracious God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We praise you for planting your fruitful word in this land over many generations, through many different ministries, and we rejoice that many Australians have found new life through faith in Jesus.

Today we especially thank you for your faithfulness in sustaining the work of the Bush Church Aid Society over the past one hundred years.

We grieve that we have not always shown your love and truth in our common life. We recognise the injustices done to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and ask that you would help us walk together as one, reconciled through Christ.

Please continue to pour out your Spirit on your church, so that we might reach Australia for Christ. Raise up many labourers and empower us to be your witnesses, so that this nation would worship its true Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ,

In whose name we pray, Amen.
100 Years of BCA

Celebrate with us across the country on Sunday 26 May 2019

New South Wales/ACT
St Andrew’s Cathedral, Sydney 8.30am, 10.30am & 5pm
Guest Speaker – The Revd Neville Naden, Indigenous Ministry Officer

Queensland/North New South Wales
St Peter’s Cathedral, Armidale 7:30am, 9:30am & 6pm

Victoria
St Paul’s Cathedral, Melbourne
5pm Afternoon Tea followed by Choral Evensong at 6pm

Tasmania
St David’s Cathedral, Hobart 2.30pm
Guest speaker – The Revd Canon Brian Roberts
Former BCA National Director. Current Field Staff also attending

Western Australia
St Lawrence’s Anglican Church, Dalkeith
2pm service followed by afternoon tea

South Australia/NT
A special Centenary service will be held in August in Ceduna
Other services will be held on BCA Sunday in churches across the country. Contact the National Office on 02 9262 5017 for further information or visit our website

bushchurchaid.com.au
Brendan & Laura Hurley and their three boys have recently joined the BCA family. They are serving in Bluff Point WA in an evangelistic ministry.

I grew up in Sydney and became a Christian when a friend challenged me to give Jesus a fair go. I started reading the Bible for myself and was instantly struck by the uniqueness of Jesus’ knowledge, power and love.

Laura and I were married nine years ago after meeting at a Christian conference for university students and have been working at churches in Perth for just under a decade. We have three wonderful boys; Ethan (5), Jake (2) and Ollie (six months).

A couple of our friends partnered with BCA as they worked in regional and rural churches and we thought what they were doing was great but never expected that sort of ministry would be something we could do. And then this position in Bluff Point came up.

We saw the great need for people in Geraldton to hear the gospel. There are about 40,000 people in the greater Geraldton region and so many of them have their backs turned to Jesus. We wanted to see if we could help in some way with the good work people are already doing here.

My main focus is on evangelising youth and young families. Many young people see Jesus as an irrelevant relic of the past. Together we want to show them that a man who has conquered death is the most important and relevant thing out there.

After we have settled in, I’ll be doing some evangelism and evangelism training in other churches throughout North West Australia.

We have only been in Geraldton for a few months and yet it already feels like home. The people at church have been incredibly supportive and welcoming. We are very excited about partnering with them as we share the gospel.

Please pray that God would save hundreds of people in Geraldton. Even if that were to happen it would only be the tip of the iceberg compared to the many people who live here. But our God has a big heart for the lost, so we are excited to see what He will do.

Brendan Hurley
Exciting new ministries in regional Victoria

Two exciting ministries were launched in April to help celebrate BCA’s Centenary and lead us into the next 100 years. We are delighted to welcome Trevor & Cindy Bell as well as Jacob & Sarah Kelly who are serving in regional Victoria.

Trevor & Cindy Bell together with their four children have commenced ministry in the central Victorian town of Bendigo.

Cindy and I have been involved in ministry within the Anglican Church since 2003 and we have four energetic children – Josiah, Corben, Levi and Charlotte. We both grew up in Central Victoria around Castlemaine, not far from Bendigo. We enjoy walking and sports, particularly AFL and basketball. Our family AFL team is the Sydney Swans and in the NBL we follow the Detroit Pistons.

I came to faith in Jesus as a late teenager, through the influence of my brother whose life had been turned around by an encounter with God at a camping ministry. This change in him, first made me persecute him, but then after his resolve to show God’s love, it caused me to be interested in going to one of these camps myself. From there I heard the message of God come close in Jesus afresh and experienced His love through the Holy Spirit. Cindy grew up in a Christian family and was blessed to have always known about His love and accepted it for herself for as long as she can remember.

We have followed the work of BCA with great interest over the past 14 years while serving at various Anglican Churches and have also used the prayer notes to join in the work of BCA through prayer.

Because I was so influenced by camping ministries, I do not underestimate how much God can use these moments in the lives of searching teenagers. I am excited to think that God might use me in this task.

Initially I will work to establish and grow connections and fellowship between the children and young people across the Diocese of Bendigo. This work includes establishing camping ministries, weekly discipleship via digital platforms, creating/sourcing appropriate Sunday school resources for small churches and raising up new leaders and youth champions across the Diocese. As the role progresses we will also look to initiate schoolies mission trips for high school leavers and potentially a gap year program.

Recently I was the speaker at a five-day camp in Central Victoria attended by 50 upper primary school children from different churches and denominations. It was exciting to present the gospel in this way and I hope for more opportunities to do so.

We really value the prayers of BCA.
supporters and ask you to please pray that we will have wisdom and seek God’s guidance as we start to enact the finer details of this new role. We also need to decide on key dates, places and events early on. I would love your prayers to be guided in this decision making.

*Trevor Bell*

Jacob Kelly and his wife Sarah (who were married in late April) have recently joined the BCA family. They are serving in Jacob’s hometown of Echuca.

I grew up in Echuca and have lived most of my life within the region. At the age of three, I felt the call of God and realised my need for a saviour. I decided to give my life to Christ. I felt the call to ministry as I grew up and at the beginning of 2018 I started Bible College, moving to Melbourne to enable this to happen.

Growing up in regional Victoria gave me a passion to serve in rural and remote communities across Australia. I was especially attracted to Echuca as it gives me an opportunity to serve amongst a community I am familiar with and have been part of before.

While I am new to BCA I had heard about the work of BCA from friends and family who are supporters. They told me about the work and ministry of BCA in remote Australia as well as in places closer to home like rural Victoria and New South Wales. BCA’s mission aligns perfectly with my passion.

The main focus of my role is to connect with the children and youth at Christ Church Anglican as well children in the wider community. This will involve running weekly children’s ministries, organising and developing Sunday ministries for children and working with parents and families. I will also undertake various other ministry roles across the parish.

I really look forward to running ministries with upper primary aged children and making connections in the community. I would ask for supporters to please pray for the development of the Kids’ Club which starts later this year and for confirmation classes which begin soon.

*Jacob Kelly*
10 years of ministry in the NT

Last year the Chapman family celebrated ten years in the NT. Bruce’s ministry has touched many young people across Darwin and beyond and here he remembers how his work has all been part of God’s grand plan.

God’s gracious plans for the world all revolve around people like you and me. All ministry is therefore about people and joining in God’s plans as He builds His kingdom for His glory. We think of God’s promises to Abraham to bless all nations:

The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation… and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Genesis 12:1–3

We also think of God sending His Son Jesus into the world to save people like you and me (John 3:16) and the great vision of a new heaven and a new earth with Jesus living with God’s people worshipping Him (Revelation 21:3).

The last ten years has been our small part in God’s grand plan and we’re so thankful for the privilege it has been.

As we think about this time there are the youth we have had contact with at St Peter’s Nightcliff. I recently baptised a former youth couple’s first child and another youth member is preparing for ministry training in Ireland. It’s exciting to hear of others serving in ministry in their local churches and going on trusting and growing in Jesus. At St Peter’s Nightcliff we have also recently seen the fruit of natural inter-generational ministry taking place with all ages mixing, and older Christians discipling and encouraging our youth.

I have also enormously enjoyed partnering with all our NT churches and leaders including remote Aboriginal churches. People like Craig, Darren, Mandy, Marlene, and Veronica have taught me so much as they welcomed me into their lives and communities. Together we have sought to build up young people and point them to Jesus. Amidst enormous challenges these leaders have demonstrated patient perseverance and a firm trust in Jesus. Their lives challenge our western materialism, individualism, spiritual world scepticism, and assumptions about the nature of biblical maturity and discipleship.
Perhaps one of the more surprising aspects of ministry has been opportunities to proclaim Jesus in Darwin. This has included preaching in different contexts, taking services in Dondale youth detention centre, working across denominations to encourage and train youth and youth leaders, running camps with Scripture Union Northern Territory, and pastoral ministry with parents and families.

Challenges & Opportunities

There are ongoing challenges in the NT to do with transiency, large distances, limited resources, different languages and cultures, and a mindset of receiving missionary help rather than engaging in mission. However, these challenges are also great opportunities. We need to keep working hard to give Aboriginal Christians a voice in the NT and national church. We need to learn from them and their unique insights. We need to keep working hard in all our churches to engage and identify future leaders. Small, regular investments in young people can reap enormous future gains with God’s blessing.

Future

Like all ministry we entrust the small weak efforts we have made in Jesus’ name to our heavenly Father to use for His glory. We know that God’s word is active and always achieves His purposes (Isaiah 55: 11). God continues to build His church (Matthew 16:18) and work out His good purposes. (Romans 8:28–29).

Partnership

We’re extremely grateful that we have had the BCA family to support and partner with us in this decade long ministry. We are all seeking to serve God wherever we live, and the BCA family has partnered with us in so many ways: praying; through financial support; practical care in emails, phone calls, cards and visits; mission trips like Church by the Bridge running an annual youth mission in Darwin for eight years; Cherrybrook Anglican and others helping run the Katherine Christian Convention youth program since 2009; and the sharing, hospitality and caring for our family when we have visited your churches. Thank you all for your godly, caring and generous support.

Bruce Chapman

Bruce and Oliver with friends at the Katherine Christian Convention in 2014

While Bruce’s parish-based ministry has finished due to his melanoma he is still involved in work at a Diocesan level. There are a number of new families who have recently moved to the NT to live and minister in remote Aboriginal communities. He is part of a group that helps them to think about ministry and support them as they settle in. He also continues his involvement in developing safe ministry within the Diocese.
Nomads descend on Narromine

The annual BCA Nomads gathering was held in Narromine at the end of March. Janice Ackland, Chaplain in the National Office, also doubles as a Nomad with her husband James. Here she tells us about her first Nomad gathering...

Sixty people descending on a town the size of Narromine does not go unnoticed especially when the sign on the Anglican Church welcomed us! Everyone in town was so warm and made us feel really welcome.

The Gathering was packed with teaching on evangelism from the very gifted James Daymond (see left) and we had the opportunity to meet and pray with the team he has been building to carry on the work after he and Brittany move to the next region. Some Nomads even went out visiting with the team to meet locals and share the gospel.

Nomads also visited older folk in town and ran a craft outreach to women. After the outreach I had the opportunity to share some insights on pastoral care to those living with dementia. Some Nomads were able to visit the drought-affected farm of one local. He was converted through the ministry in Narromine and is now passionate about sharing his faith.

We were fortunate to be able to spend time with BCA Field Staff Ayumi Tamsett and Alfrene Wright as well as Indigenous Ministry Officer Neville Naden. James and I also had the privilege of joining Ayumi at one of her SRE classes in Gilgandra.

Former BCA National Director and now Bishop of Canberra & Goulburn, Mark Short and his wife Monica (a Nomad herself) also joined the Gathering where they were presented with all things purple, to follow the trend already established in Sydney (see story page 23). It was an emotional but fun farewell to them from all the Nomads.

The weekend was perfect – just enough structure but not too much so that we had free time to mill, have coffee at each other’s caravans and just get to know one another.

We praise God for His goodness and the encouragement of our fellow Nomads and the warm fellowship of the church at Narromine.

Janice Ackland
From a tiny mustard seed twenty years ago the BCA Nomads program has grown to a group of over two hundred faithful servants who travel the country showing practical love and care to our Field Staff. Max & Jan Boyley never imagined how the program would grow following their trip around Australia from 1998–1999.

After Max retired we had 14 months away and travelled 56,000 km around Australia. Before we set out on our trip we thought we would like to enjoy the beauty of God’s creation but also have some focus at times during our travel. We approached BCA and they were only too happy for us to work in BCA supported churches and the hostel at Broken Hill.

We were self-sufficient in that we carried our tools for work; we stayed in caravan parks and did not expect Field Staff to feed us. We served by doing many different jobs including painting, cleaning, gardening, repairing and office work. We enjoyed stopping and becoming part of the community and worshipping with them. We also became a listening ear for many.

We could see a great need to help folk in these remote places. We were struck by the isolation of Field Staff and the little practical help that was available to them. When we returned home we contacted BCA and talked to them about starting a ministry that other Christian travellers both young and old could do. In 2000 we became part of the steering committee and the BCA Nomads were born.

To be accepted as a BCA Nomad, applicants need police checks, working with children checks, and their application has to be approved by their home church Minister. Being a BCA Nomad is a wonderful way to show Christ’s love to our distant neighbours. It is a really practical way of working for His Glory, working in active partnership with our brothers and sisters in the bush. Nomads support ministries by offering friendship and skills.

Since 2000 BCA Nomads have undertaken hundreds of projects in remote and regional areas around Australia and are still finding plenty to do.

Like the tiny mustard seed, it has grown; both couples and single people have joined and are sharing wonderful experiences in this ongoing ministry. For many it gives them a new lease of life.

Jan Boyley
Giving thanks for nine years in Yass

When Helena Painting started out with BCA in early 2010 she was to work in schools ministry but wasn’t quite sure what shape that ministry would take. At the time she said “It’s brand new ground and I don’t quite know where it’s going or where God is going to take it.”

Her role at first was to connect with students in the Yass district schools. A local, she knew the language of rural people and was able to reach out as someone who experienced first-hand the isolation of living in the bush.

By the following year Helena had become the full-time Community Schools Worker. This involved a chaplaincy role in Bowning and Dalton primary schools as well as Yass High School, connecting with community members, teaching SRE and running youth groups which grew thanks to her connection with the high school kids.

“My role has been a complex one working within small country communities, in schools, doing SRE, chaplaincy & youth groups and building relationships with groups and individuals in many different ways,” says Helena.

Her ministry grew and flourished over her nine years with BCA.

In 2011 she got the Shine program up and running with Year 8 girls at Yass High School. This nine-week personal development program was embraced by the school and had a really positive impact on the girls who have been part of it. Helena also established the Mini Music program to engage with young children and parents.

Another cause for joy was the establishment of the Bookham Community Church “God has blessed this ministry in so many ways: bringing people who have made it their church home, the musicians, the people who make it happen each month and the prayer support.”

While Helena and Doug continue to live and work in the Yass community, Helena’s official time as BCA Field Staff has come to an end.

“It has been an immense privilege to be part of this amazing organisation which exists to take the love and truth of God and the message of the saving work of Jesus to remote places around this vast country,” she says. “It has been a remarkable nine years and there has been much fruit and lives changed. We pray for the fruit that is to come in the future from seeds sown.”

Janine van den Tillaart
Late last year BCA launched its Reconciliation Action Plan and we commissioned Indigenous Artist Melissa Lilley to come up with an artwork to represent it. The painting is quite striking but when you learn the meaning behind it the imagery of the artwork really comes to life.

The artefacts in the centre of the painting acknowledge the culture of the First Nations People while paying tribute to the BCA logo. The cross in the centre is depicted as a river flowing out from the centre circle represented by three figures depicting the Triune God. The river flows from the circle and runs over the dry land and continues out into the communities.

The four figures around the centre cross represent the workers of BCA who share the gospel of Christ and the footprints depict them taking the gospel message to communities across Australia.

Four circles around the outside of the painting depict figures from all peoples gathering as believers and represents the churches being set up in communities with the Triune God in the centre as the living waters flowing through them. This represents Christ changing communities.

The figures around the outside of the circle represent the BCA commitment of service to those who are hurting or in times of crisis and sharing the gospel with them.

The background around the community circles represents the change that Christ makes in our lives, depicted by the change from dry cracked earth into one that is flourishing.

This artwork is on display in the BCA National Office in Sydney.
Each year Moore Theological College sends teams of students to locations around Australia and internationally to gain experience in ministry. This year, in partnership with BCA and the Diocese of North West Australia, Moore sent a two part team to Geraldton (six students and a faculty member) and Newman (three students and a faculty member). Rob Healy, BCA’s WA Regional Officer accompanied the Geraldton team, and I accompanied the Newman team.

Students in both towns experienced a broad range of ministry opportunities, from seeing how the Mission to Seafarers ministers in Geraldton, to a Saturday afternoon sale and sausage sizzle at the Newman Anglican Op shop. It was great to hear members of the Newman church express how much they were encouraged by the team spending time with them, taking an interest in their lives, participating in Sunday church meetings, a ladies’ dessert night, a dinner for the men at the Newman Hotel and simply hanging out.

For BCA the mission trip is particularly exciting as, unlike the usual Moore College mission trips where students are assigned their mission, students on this trip self-selected based on their high degree of interest in remote area ministry. Time with Rob and me, plus exposure to the reality of life and ministry in very remote places means that all nine students now have a much better idea of how BCA works, what we do, and just how exciting ministry can be in the far-flung corners of our nation.

While Moore College receives many requests for mission teams, we are hopeful that BCA locations will continue to feature in their plans. After all, the opportunities to serve our Lord Jesus in rural and remote parts of Australia continue to grow!

Ted Brush
NSW/ACT Regional Officer
Letters to the Editor

Our story on the Mail Bag Sunday School in the last edition of *The Real Australian* garnered a great deal of interest and feedback. The BCA National Office received phone calls, emails and letters.

Dear Editor,

In 1946, when I was six years old, my mother spoke to the vicar of Uralla about obtaining Sunday School material for me. We lived on an apple and pear orchard about twenty kilometres from Uralla at Kentucky. My mother was given details to contact Miss Rose Campbell at BCA to make arrangements.

Our system was somewhat different to other mailbag Sunday School students in that our work was not sent in to be marked (Mum did that). My mother gathered the two boys from the orchard next door and the boy who lived on a grazing property across the road and taught us each Sunday around her kitchen table. We sang hymns from the Church Army Song Book. We then had our lesson from the BCA material and completed our questions/craft work. I remember weaving a small mat on a cardboard loom after the story of the crippled man who was let down through the roof by his friends to meet Jesus for healing. We prayed. We learned a memory verse. We placed a penny in a little collection box during our last song then went outside for morning tea. My greatest surprise on my birthday however, was to receive a card from Rose Campbell. I had no idea that she would know that it was my birthday. I still have the card with a picture of Jesus and the children on the front.

I do not quite know how to express my deep gratitude for this experience as it set me up for a rich life as a “soldier and servant” of Christ. I have also appreciated my later contact with BCA as pray-er and supporter. Congratulations to BCA on 100 years of faithfulness.

Anne Holley

MBSS Chocolate Christmas Pudding

The recipe came from the Campbell family. Alex was diabetic and we shared our lessons with his daughters Ethel and Judith.

- 3 dessertspoons of gelatine
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup raisins
- ½ cup currants
- 1 cup sultanas
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 cups milk
- 4 oz chopped peel
- 4 oz blanched chopped almonds
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- pinch salt
- 3 tablespoons cocoa

Place milk, and cocoa in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Add all except the gelatine. Boil 5 minutes. Allow to cool.

Dissolve gelatine in 1/2 cup hot water, cool slightly. Add to the mixture stir well.

Set in a mould in the refrigerator. Turn out onto a plate and cut slices. Serve with ice cream.

This is gluten free and also suitable for diabetics in small quantities.

The Revd Cameillia Flanagan

(who was mentioned in the MBSS story in the Autumn edition of *The Real Australian*)
A BCA man right from the start

It was 1957 and Ernie Carnaby had recently become a Christian when he was introduced to BCA and the pioneering work that was being done in North West Australia.

“BCA was really in at the ground floor of the mining boom in Western Australia,” says Ernie. “I thought I’d like to have the pioneering spirit of Don & Margaret Douglass who moved to Port Hedland and Bill & Joan Rich who moved to Mt Magnet. They really gave me a vision for BCA reaching people in remote Australia.”

Ernie went to Moore College in 1961 as one of three BCA assisted candidates. Because he received help with his college fees from BCA he was to be sent out into the bush after he had been ordained and spent time as a curate.

“I really thought that I would end up in North West Australia, but God and BCA had other ideas.”

Theo Hayman, then Rector of St Matthew’s Kensington and former BCA missioner at Minnipa & Streak Bay on Eyre Peninsula, offered Ernie a curacy which saw him ordained in Adelaide rather than Sydney. And so began Ernie and Jan’s ministry in South Australia.

After 20 months in Adelaide the then Federal Secretary Bill Rich was keen to fill another BCA vacancy, and in 1966 Ernie, Jan and daughter Robyn, moved to Leigh Creek Coalfields and the Northern Mission. But Leigh Creek wasn’t the only place that Ernie was to look after.

“I was given a map by my predecessor with two-thirds of South Australia coloured in green,” recalls Ernie. “He said, ‘that’s it, that’s yours’. I nearly died. It included Leigh Creek but also Oodnadatta, Coober Pedy, Flinders Ranges, Musgrave Ranges and...
Birdsville to name a few. I even ended up going to Uluru as well.”

Ernie was away for five months of the year and covered 40,000 bush miles on corrugated roads.

“This was in the days where some would say we foolishly attempted to try and cover everything,” says Ernie. “It was hard on Jan who had a two-year old to manage and a baby on the way.”

Ernie conducted weekly services at Leigh Creek, monthly at Blinman in the Flinders Ranges, every three months at Oodnadatta, and twice a year drove the 700 miles to Uluru (Ayers Rock). And as you can imagine travelling back in the late sixties was not the travelling of today.

“I would sometimes sleep out under the stars during my travels and I had to regularly dig my Landrover out of bogs and sand while on the road,” says Ernie.

Ernie says that his time with BCA really opened his eyes to the scattered nature of our population. “While I did a great deal of travel, I enjoyed meeting genuine people from the land. I was always accepted without exception when I visited sheep and cattle properties, but I always sent letters in advance telling them I was coming. They would offer me hospitality and I would talk to them about Christian things. Out of that came baptisms and marriages. It really was a privilege to serve and it taught me the value of reaching individuals, Indigenous people and farming families.”

During his years after Leigh Creek Ernie was an army chaplain in Woomera, then CMS Secretary of South Australia, CMS Asia Secretary and then he returned to parish ministry at Chatswood and Shellharbour before being called back to BCA.

“We were hoping to spend at least four years in Shellharbour, but BCA Federal

Secretary Wakely Wade died,” says Ernie. “BCA wanted to put my name forward for the position, but I had only been there for two years and wanted to stay for three years as an absolute minimum.”

BCA were willing to wait, and Brian Roberts acted in the position of Federal Secretary for that year. During his time as Federal Secretary Ernie oversaw all the ministries of BCA and saw the establishment of a new mining ministry in Roxby Downs and Andamooka, as well as biennial Field Staff Conferences.

“I was Federal Secretary for five years before moving on to minister at St James’ Turramurra and Brian Roberts moved straight back into the role that he was so familiar with,” Ernie says.

Ernie and Jan shared many great years of ministry together and even though they moved many times, they don’t regret a minute. “We really look back with fond memories,” says Ernie. “The Lord has been so gracious to us as a family.”

Janine van den Tillaart
Bob Witten and his wife Sue have served BCA faithfully for many years. First as Field Staff, then as office staff and now as Nomads. Here Bob answers a question asked by many supporters.

“What difference is there on the day your name appears in the Prayer Notes?”

I was embarrassed that I had no answer. This question, which was asked while we were on deputation, was one that needed to be answered. I’m sure we are not the only ones who have been asked.

Well, some homework was required. When we arrived back in the parish we went through old diaries, church registers, and any other bits that might have helped, plus we spoke to people who had been involved.

You probably won’t be surprised at the answer when you acknowledge the power of prayer, and how Jesus walks with us...because Sue and I were absolutely blown away by the results.

The number of times I had to confront someone about some issue, and when I arrived in a ball of sweat, the person said something like, “I have become aware that I have been a problem, or done this or that”. And I hadn’t said a word. What day of the month was it?

Other times I had a difficult decision to make about the parish or family; and it was somehow taken out of my hands. What day of the month was it?

We had our answer and a very humbling one it was. Another prayer point was added – Lord, we repent, help us to walk humbly with You!

If God organises such minor things, should that not encourage us to trust Him with our lives? – completely? Lord, help my unbelief.

A second question that had us stumped was “We enjoy your prayer letters (usually sent each quarter) and in them, you finish with prayer and praise points. How many of the prayers are answered?”

Again, we had no immediate answer. More homework.

It is many years ago now, so I can’t give precise numbers, but it was close to 100 per cent. Some prayers were answered in the negative and many in the positive. Thank you to all those who prayed for us then...and now.

We started to keep a sort of diary after that, so that we could praise God for His generosity in answer to the prayers of many people. I think our prayers ‘improved’ after that. But a warning, which is a story I have told often for many years. You must be specific in your prayers!

At one point we covenanted together to pray for a Christian family to come to our town – either come or to be converted. Our prayer was answered, a Christian family DID come to town! But..’wrong’ church! They were Roman Catholic! But this family became involved with both churches and were a wonderful blessing to the whole town.

Thank you Lord for answered prayer; just help us see the answer and continue to walk with you in your love of blessing.

There was another time when tragedy involved us, personally, and the response of BCA was fast and terrific – even though I personally had trouble coping. It has been
and still is, a special privilege to belong to the praying family of BCA.

Oh, that every ‘ordinary’ parish be enveloped with such prayer, and the answers by God, the Father would result in an avalanche of praise to our God who loves us more than we may ever know – to eternity.

**Bob Witten**

Top: Sue and Bob Witten
Centre: The Wittens’ prayer card when they served in Quilpie QLD
Bottom: Bob and Tim making cement bricks on Flinders Island
The bells rang out at St Saviour’s Cathedral on Saturday 6 April to announce that a new Bishop was to be welcomed to the Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn.

Our former National Director Mark Short was consecrated and installed as Canberra & Goulburn’s 11th Bishop with around 1200 people celebrating this great event. None more so proud than Monica, Matthew and Andrew Short.

Archbishop of Sydney and NSW Metropolitan, The Most Reverend Dr Glenn Davies led the service. The Primate of the Anglican Church, Archbishop of Brisbane, twenty-one Bishops and clergy from across Australia, as well as representatives from other denominations, members of parliament, supporters, and many from the BCA family united for the three-hour service.

Mark was presented to the Dean of St Saviour’s by BCA Chairman Fred Chilton, Chief Operations Officer Greg Bridge and former BCA Field Staff Helena Painting (see above).

Indigenous Ministry Officer Neville Naden gave the sermon and reminded the congregation about the good shepherd. He also told those in attendance that while the Diocese was celebrating the beginning of a new chapter, BCA was grieving. “We knew our Mark was destined for greater things in the church of God. You have been a blessing to so many and no doubt you will continue to be a blessing as you take on your new role.”

Monica, Matthew and Andrew all played
The bells ring out at St Saviour’s a part in the ceremony. Monica gave a Bible reading and Matthew and Andrew presented Mark with the pectoral cross that belonged to The Right Reverend Cecil Warren who was the seventh Bishop of Canberra & Goulburn.

Mark told the congregation he was acutely aware of, and grateful for, the role so many people had played in his life. “It’s often said that it takes a village to raise a single human life. Monica and I are so aware of the contribution so many of you have made to our lives. You have shaped us in so many ways...I look forward to meeting you on the journey ahead...Let the adventure begin.”

Janine van den Tillaart

The BCA family celebrated the leadership, insight and friendship of Mark and Monica Short at a number of functions around the country before Mark was installed as Bishop of Canberra & Goulburn. He was presented with purple Ugg boots in Sydney, cut a centenary cake in Brisbane and received more things purple at the Nomads gathering in Narromine.
I grew up in Darwin in a Catholic and Anglican family. My older brother and sisters were baptised but I was not. When I was 10 I decided that I wanted to be like one of my girlfriends. There was something different about her. She went to church and was always happy. I wanted to know who this God was and have that same happiness. I started attending the Anglican Church and was baptised later that year. God really came into my life and my whole world changed.

My love and commitment to BCA came when my husband Barry and I returned to Darwin in 1984. I rang The Revd Bob George who was in the Northern Territory supported by BCA and I really liked him. I worshipped in his parish at Sanderson and eventually became his church treasurer. Bob and BCA played a major role in building up that parish including the construction of the church building. The church initially had a cold concrete floor because nobody could make up their minds as to the flooring. Trans Australian Airways (TAA) was ripping up perfectly good carpet in their Darwin headquarters and we got that for the office space!

When we moved back to Adelaide I continued as a BCA supporter but when Bob George started as the South Australian State Secretary in 1988 I went to work for him once again. Bob really added another dimension to my faith.

In Adelaide I became Bob’s personal assistant. It was just him and me. After Bob returned to parish ministry I worked for Owen Thomas before Barry and I transferred to Sydney to do our last working stint before retirement. Before leaving Adelaide I spoke with the then National Director Brian Roberts who encouraged me to apply for the PA position in the NSW/ACT Office. So I stayed with the BCA family and worked for Paul Dew. I loved working in the National Office. I got involved on occasions helping the BCA Ladies Auxiliary with printing and other tasks and also helped John Cronshaw with the BCA Christian Fellowship Tours. I would make the tour booklets and even went on a few tours as the Bush Church Aid representative.

After retiring back to Adelaide in 2004 I picked up where I left off and joined the SA/NT regional committee and eventually joined the national executive. BCA has been and continues to be a major part of my life.

Aila Alderson
WELCOME

Brendan & Laura Hurley with their boys Ethan, Jake and Oliver have joined as BCA Field Staff in Bluff Point, Western Australia. They arrived a few months ago and Brendan’s main focus is on evangelising youth and young families.

Kim Hinkley has commenced with BCA as the PA to the National Director. Kim attends St Thomas’ Anglican Church in Cranebrook and is married to David. They have four children Chris, Mikayla, Sam and Lucas.

Jacob Kelly will serve as a Ministry Apprentice in Echuca, Victoria. Jacob and wife Sarah were married in late April.

Trevor & Cindy Bell with their children Josiah, Corben, Levi and Charlotte are serving in the Diocese of Bendigo. Trevor is the Youth and Families Ministry Development Officer.

Ali Williams former Field Staff in Goulburn has been appointed as a part-time children’s and family worker, serving in the Parish of Bulahdelah and Tea Gardens alongside former NSW/ACT Regional Officer Peter Adkins and his wife Gwen.

FAREWELL

Lucy Vallentine, the Executive Assistant in the NSW/ACT office, commenced maternity leave in early April. Larissa Simpkins, who has worked in the National Office since late last year has taken on Lucy’s role while she is on leave.

Helena Painting has finished her term as BCA Field Staff in Yass and Bookham after nine years. She and husband Doug will focus on their farm and their increasing number of grandchildren.

Vale

The Reverend Frederick Buchanan (6 May 1928 – 27 February 2019) served as the Treasurer of the Western Australian Regional Committee for many years. His ministry included chaplaincy to Mission to Seafarers and the Parishes of Kensington, Armadale and Nollamara. In recent years Fred was an Honorary Associate Priest at St George’s Cathedral. He is survived by his wife Beth, children and in-laws Andrew and Ann, Peter and Shelia, Angus and Grace, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

CONGRATULATIONS

Former National Director, The Revd Dr Mark Short was consecrated and installed as Bishop of Canberra & Goulburn on Saturday 6 April at St Saviour’s Cathedral in the heart of Goulburn.
In the BCA Centenary Book, *Never too Far, Never too Few – 100 Years of Bush Church Aid*, Robyn Powell has uncovered hundreds of fascinating stories of BCA pioneers who went out into the bush with very little, to give a lot. She tells the great story of BCA nurses, who from 1925 on, set out for the bush, after our Founding Missioner SJ Kirkby realised the great need for hospital and nursing care there.

Kirkby was a realist and understood that people needed temporal alongside spiritual help. He had come to the aid of the people of Croajingalong by sending a nursing sister, Dorothy Allmond, not so long after his first visit there. So, late in 1925, a small farm house in Ceduna became the town’s first ever cottage hospital. Sister Doris Percival from Sydney was the first to take up residence in the galvanized iron building, which had just one hospital bed, a cupboard made of petrol cases and a primitive stove. Support from the cities must have been good, because within a year the hospital was extended to ten beds, four bassinettes and even a tiny operating theatre. More nurses began to volunteer to work in Ceduna, and at Penong, 46 miles from Ceduna where a nursing service opened in 1927. In 1931, a larger house in Ceduna was leased, and three wards were opened.

Over the years, scores of nurses came to work at Ceduna. Some stayed a short while before returning to the familiar comforts of home. But for many the work was a calling and they stayed until they could stay no more. There are many famous names among these nurses, and space does not permit us to mention them all. But no (even very short) history of Ceduna Hospital would ever be complete without talking about Grace Hitchcock.
The beginning of her BCA story tells us that here was someone very unusual. Grace Hitchcock was a typist in Melbourne. In March 1922, when she was 18, she wrote to SJ Kirkby:

…. On hearing you preach about ‘the trials of the pioneers’ I resolved to offer my services… I am fully aware of the trials that would have to be gone through, but they do not daunt me, and I would put my heart and soul into the work.

It took more than ten years, but she finally gained double nursing certificates, and arrived at Ceduna Base Hospital in 1933. The Matron at the time was the formidable Florence Dowling, another BCA legend, and together they faced unimaginably difficult work. After three years Hitch (as she was always known) volunteered to move on to Penong Hospital, and in 1938 her great love for Aboriginal people (and especially Aboriginal babies) led her to move on to Kooninbba Mission Hospital. In 1942, Mrs Traegar (wife of the superintendent of Koonibba Mission) told a story in The Real Australian about an old Aboriginal woman who was dying. Because she was uncomfortable inside the hospital building, the staff had built a ‘wurlie’ for her to live on the hospital grounds, complete with a fire. Every day she wanted to go ‘walkabout’ but the only way she could do so was to crawl. As she was also nearly blind sister was afraid she may crawl into the fire. So, we saw sister crawling with her in the dirt of the yard so as to keep her out of the fire. Some would think it funny to see a nurse crawling round with an old black woman, but we just wept.

Robyn Powell

Top: (Back) Grace Hitchcock and Florence Dowling (Middle) Anne Beattie (Front) Rhonda Laws and Gladys Moodie, Ceduna Base Hospital circa 1936

You can read more of Grace Hitchcock’s amazing story and those of other BCA nurses by purchasing your very own copy of this 138-page coffee table book on our website bushchurchaid.com.au/centenarybook or by using the order form on page 29 of this edition of The Real Australian.
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