



The BlazeAid POST

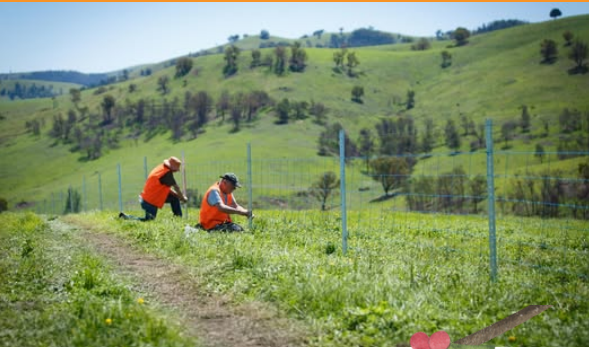


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A Quarterly Insight into the BlazeAid Organisation and its efforts to Rebuild Communities Affected by Natural Disasters

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BlazeAid 2025 – A Year of Community and Resilience

As we look back on 2025, we are filled with gratitude and pride for what we've achieved together. This year, BlazeAid volunteers worked tirelessly to help farming families rebuild fences and restore hope after floods, fires, and storms across Australia. From the flood recovery basecamps in Qld and NSW - Longreach, Quilpie, Isisford, Jundah, Blackall and Taree, to fire recovery in Wagin WA and Nhill and Willaura in Vic, your dedication has made a lasting impact.

Key Highlights from 2025:

- 12 basecamps running throughout Australia
- 1,490 volunteers donated their time and skills.
- Over 2290 km of fencing cleared and rebuilt for farming families.
- More than 232 properties assisted after natural disasters.
- 135 trailers restored, maintained and/or deployed for recovery efforts.
- Partnerships strengthened with councils, service clubs, and corporate supporters.

Special Initiatives in 2025:

All Fired Up – Delivered \$1 million in grants to expand farm fire fighting resources for rural property owners in fire prone regions.

Dams for Drought – to clean and restore dams, ensuring vital water supplies during dry seasons.

Give a Farmer a Break – Provided respite opportunities for farming families under stress and coordinated hay deliveries to drought-affected regions, easing the burden on struggling farmers.

These programs reflect BlazeAid's commitment to not only rebuilding fences but also building resilience in rural communities.

As the year closes, we want to say thank you.

To our volunteers, supporters, and farming families – you are the heart of BlazeAid. Your effort, resilience and kindness inspire us every day.

From all of us at BlazeAid, we wish you a safe, joyful Christmas and a New Year filled with hope and happiness. We look forward to working together in 2026 to keep rebuilding lives and communities.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

With Love,

Kevin, Rhonda, Melissa, Debbie and The BlazeAid Board





ALL FIRED UP



As BlazeAid's All Fired Up program wraps up, it's clear that this initiative has left a meaningful mark on fire-prone farming communities across Australia. Launched to help farmers upgrade their Private Fire Fighting Units, the program delivered exactly what rural communities needed - practical support, safer equipment, and stronger partnerships with local CFA brigades. We are acutely aware that if a fire can be attacked within minutes of it starting, it is less likely to escalate into a major bushfire. Brigade trucks are not always quickly accessible, given the time it can take volunteers to reach the station, gear up and head out to the fire zone.

We are proud to announce that BlazeAid provided \$1 million to over 170 farmers across Australia.

Over the course of the program, farmers accessed grants to upgrade pumps, install baffled tanks, replace hoses and nozzles, improve communications, and boost personal protective gear.

These improvements didn't just modernise equipment, they lifted confidence preparedness and the ability for farmers to respond quickly and safely when fire threatens.

The collaboration between BlazeAid and local CFA captains ensured funding reached those who needed it most. It's been wonderful to hear reports of farmers



feeling better equipped and more connected to their community's fire-readiness efforts.

The program's success is already evident in the strengthened resilience across regional areas. We have already seen two fires put out by BlazeAid funded fire fighting units - one farmer was able to save a one hundred year old school from damage! All Fired Up has demonstrated the power of targeted support and community-driven preparedness a proactive investment in keeping farms,

families and local brigades safer for fire seasons ahead.



Miles Storage Depot

For the past three years, BlazeAid has worked toward a key goal: establishing strategically located storage facilities across Australia, each supported by a dedicated team of volunteers to ensure asset safety, maintenance, and rapid deployment when needed.

We have now secured a second QLD depot, that will do a great job in protecting our equipment from the elements and keep everything properly stored. This involved organising shipping containers, installing shelving, a new roof, fencing and completing many other essential tasks. Thanks to the incredible generosity of Jeremy and Eddie who were volunteering in Jundah at the time of hearing our needs and offered BlazeAid the use of their property, and enabled this storage facility to become a reality.

Miles Storage has flourished thanks to the leadership and support of Mark Vine and Keith Murfet, two of our very clever and talented volunteers!

Their expertise, responsiveness, and willingness to go above and beyond made a significant difference in helping us navigate the logistical challenges involved. From sourcing the right equipment to providing timely advice and building skills, their contribution has been invaluable.

Mark's journey with the Miles storage facility began with a simple phone call while he was lending a hand at our Jundah Camp. What was meant to be a relaxing holiday quickly turned into a working holiday—and he says he couldn't be happier about it! Growing up close to his grandfather, he developed a passion for the country lifestyle. With a knack for tools, Mark is quite the handyman and has acquired a variety of skills over the years. He is a firm believer in giving back and helping others.

Similarly, Keith, who also grew up in the countryside near Morven, learned the art of fencing from his father at a young age, which has proven to be very useful. He first joined BlazeAid at our camp in Jundah. When the request came to relocate vehicles from Quilpie, he eagerly volunteered to help. Spending a couple of weeks at the Miles storage facility, he contributed significantly by assisting in everything that needed to be done to get this facility workable and secure.

We extend our sincere thanks to Jeremy, Eddie, and the entire team at Miles for their commitment and support throughout this process. Their efforts played a crucial role in ensuring that our storage operations were established efficiently and effectively.



Vale Les Sloan

We say good bye to one of our veteran BlazeAiders, Les Sloan.

Known affectionately across BlazeAid camps as “Sir Les”, and often proudly wearing a name badge that read “Grumpy Old Bigger”, Les brought not only his skills and dedication, but also a wonderful sense of humour and a generous heart to every community he served. Les was more than a treasured volunteer, he was a mentor to many, a mate to all, and a source of laughter and wisdom for so, so many. His presence lit up the fence lines, campfires and tool trailers alike, and his legacy will live on in the stories we share and the lives he touched.

He will be sadly missed in BlazeAid camps around Australia.

Rest easy, Sir Les.



Around the Grounds

Nabiac/Midcoast NSW

As we approach Christmas, we are pleased to say that we have only one camp running at this time. Our Nabiac Camp began after the NSW floods around the Taree MidCoast area, and is Coordinated by Lisa and Bob, along with the support of 19 dedicated volunteers, they have successfully cleared 89 km and fenced 86 km to date.

With 136 properties registered from Oxley Island to Wingham, and everywhere in between, they have started work on 53 and completed 23. As recovery efforts continue, the camp will extend into the new year.



BlazeAid and the Spirit of Giving: A Partnership in Action

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and BlazeAid Working Together for Australian Communities Working Together for Australian Communities

For several years now, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have found immense satisfaction and purpose through their partnership with BlazeAid, an Australian volunteer-based organisation dedicated to supporting rural communities in the aftermath of natural disasters.

Supporting Communities Through Humanitarian Aid

The Church's humanitarian arm has played a pivotal role in strengthening BlazeAid's capacity to respond quickly when disaster strikes. Donations from the Church have helped purchase fully stocked trailers, packed and ready to be deployed wherever and whenever the need arises. These mobile units are essential for rapid response, enabling teams to set up camp and begin assisting affected communities without delay.

Light the World: Giving Machines Making a Difference

The Church also partners with BlazeAid each year through the "Giving Machine" initiative, part of the global Christmas campaign known as "Light the World." These special vending machines, placed in major shopping centres across Australia's capital cities, offer shoppers a simple yet powerful way to donate to those in need. With just a few taps, anyone can purchase items for nonprofit organisations, including BlazeAid, making the act of giving accessible and memorable. This initiative brings the spirit of Christmas to life, fostering a culture of generosity and compassion during the festive season.

First hand Experience: Volunteering with BlazeAid in Quilpie

Recently, a group of Church members embarked on their first hands-on experience supporting farmers in Western Queensland who had been devastated by flooding. In September, they travelled to the Quilpie BlazeAid camp, eager to lend a hand and learn more about the charity's work. Arriving late in the afternoon, the group received a warm welcome from the camp's team leader and fellow volunteers. After sharing a hearty meal, they listened to the day's work report, feeling inspired and ready to join the efforts in the coming days. The very next morning, their day began early—at 7 a.m.—with a muster to organise teams and allocate tasks. Some volunteers set off to repair and clean fences on neighbouring properties, while others focused on Greenmulla's fences. A few stayed behind at camp to prepare meals, clean, and ensure supplies were well-stocked. Each role proved vital to the group's collective success.



BlazeAid and the Spirit of Giving:



A Partnership in Action

The Impact of Teamwork and Community

The devastation caused by the floods was confronting –damaged livestock, ruined fencing, and battered infrastructure painted a stark picture of the challenges local farmers face. Yet, amid this hardship, the strength of community and collaboration shone through. Volunteers camped in motorhomes, tents, and caravans, forging bonds over shared meals, hard work, and heartfelt conversations. The sense of camaraderie grew each day, culminating in a true spirit of unity and accomplishment. Seeing the tangible results of their efforts—rebuilt fences, cleared debris, and grateful farmers—was deeply rewarding. It was clear to all involved that every task, no matter how small, played a crucial role in helping communities recover and rebuild.

A Lasting Message of Hope and Service

As the week drew to a close, the volunteers reflected on their experiences with admiration for BlazeAid and a renewed sense of purpose. They encourage others to join this remarkable partnership between charity and community partnership that truly embodies the joy of giving and the power of helping others.

To capture the spirit of their journey, a verse from Edgar Guest’s famous poem beautifully sums up their sentiments:

“It’s giving and doing for somebody else – on that all life’s splendour depends, And the joy of this world, when you’ve summed it all up, Is found in helping our friends.”

Whether through direct service in the outback or a simple donation at a Giving Machine, everyone has the opportunity to make a meaningful difference. This Christmas, and all year round, let’s continue to Light the World—together.





Lisa's Camp Cooking Tips



I have no formal training in cooking; my skills have developed gradually through hands-on experience over the years. and I am still learning and always will be!

I believe you need fresh Australian produce supplied by our dedicated Farmers and the right equipment

Equipment Recommended

3 large steamers & 2 small double steamers

3 large slow cookers

2 large fry pans- electric

2 deep fryers

Fry pans

Roasting pans

BBQ

Main Meals-

Every Friday night we have fish & chips cooked in deep fryers- 2 pieces of fish per person

Served with garden salad & homemade seafood sauce

Fresh damper rolls

Saturday nights we do not cook

Every Sunday night we have a roast dinner, with steamed greens & carrots, roasted meat, potatoes, pumpkin, onion, sweet potatoes, peas (microwaved) & 2 jugs of instant gravy using the hot water from the urn

The other 4 nights are rotated every 4 weeks with various dishes depending on weather with either vegetables or salads or rice

Garlic bread or fresh rolls with dinner a couple of times a week

Other Main Meals often cooked-

Lamb Shanks- Slow Cooker about 8 in each slow cooker- 1 per person

Spaghetti Bolognese- Slow cooker- allow 500g of mince for 4 people, cook spaghetti in the holder of the large steamer & use the steamer to drain, I serve with Greek salad & garlic bread

Osso Bucco- Slow Cooker- can fit up to 10 in each slow cooker- 1 per person

BBQ Chickens- Oven- 1 chicken for every 4 people, cut up chickens removing all bones & put in baking tray in oven, splash some water over the top to reduce drying out, cover with foil, oven @ 100 degrees to warm

Bangers & Mash- BBQ- allow 2-3 thin sausages per person, allow 2 potatoes per person for mash

Pork Ribs- Slow Cooker- 1 packet usually serves 4-6 people, cooked with sweet plum sauce & served with whole potato with sour cream & spring onions, steamed corn cobs, steamed greens
Corned Beef- Slow Cooker- up to 5 pieces of corn beef for lunch next day

Prawn Linguine- Electric pan-1kg serves about 5 people (about 8 prawns each)

Mixed Grill- BBQ- sausages, chops, rissoles- 3 pieces each

Marinated Chicken Pieces- Oven- 2 pieces per person

Steak or Salmon Night- BBQ & Fry Pan

Beef Rissoles- BBQ, Oven, or Slow Cooker

Hamburgers- BBQ



Curry & Rice- Slow Cooker & Rice Cooker

Salt & Pepper Squid- Deep Fryer

Lamb Loin Chops- BBQ- 2 per person

Leftover food is used for lunches or frozen for Saturday nights

All vegetables are steamed except frozen peas, they are cooked in a glass bowl in microwave (1kg bag of frozen peas with a splash of water 3 x 5 minutes, stir in between, last 5 minutes add knob of real butter in)

Large steamers used mainly for potatoes, corn (frozen), broccoli, smaller steamers for carrots, beans, brussels sprouts, zucchini
Potatoes are cooked steamed using following methods-

Mashed with real butter & milk- allow 2 per person

Steamed & quartered with real butter & fresh crushed garlic

Steamed whole to have with sour cream & spring onions- allow 1 large potato each

Potato salad with whole egg mayonnaise & aioli, boiled egg (crispy bacon if no vegetarians in camp)
reduce amount of mayo & aioli to highlight potato

All meals are served in the container they are cooked in- e.g. the steamers, slow cookers & electric frypan are taken to the serving table & the Volunteer helps themselves, this keeps the food warmer for longer & reduces food handling & washing up!

Desserts-

Ice creams- Top-shelf ice creams purchased when on special at half price

Cakes

Cheesecakes

Fruit salad

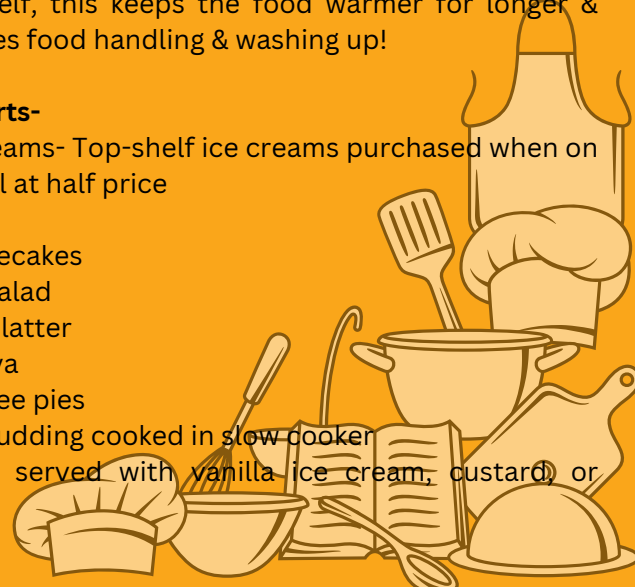
Fruit platter

Pavlova

Sara Lee pies

Rice pudding cooked in slow cooker

Above served with vanilla ice cream, custard or cream



Bob's Fencing Tips

When it comes to fencing, few know the ropes like Bob. A long-time BlazeAider and experienced Coordinator, Bob has spent countless hours on properties across Australia, helping farmers rebuild after disasters. His practical know-how and passion for lending a hand have made him a trusted source of advice for volunteers and team leaders alike.

In this edition, Bob shares his top tips for assessing properties, working safely, and tackling fencing challenges with confidence. From meeting the farmer and understanding their needs to clever tricks for emergency repairs, these insights come straight from years of hands-on experience in the field.

Whether you're new to BlazeAid, a coordinator or a seasoned volunteer, Bob's advice will help you work smarter, stay safe, and make a real difference.

Farmer

When arriving at the property, first arrange to meet with the Farmer. During this initial meeting, assess whether the Farmer may be at risk of self-harm and be mindful of their well-being throughout your interaction.

Conduct a thorough inspection of the property together with the Farmer. Engage them in the process by asking for their ideas and perspectives. If the Farmer is receptive to new approaches, provide guidance where needed. Consider whether there are opportunities to improve or relocate fencing to help minimise the impact of future events.

While on the property, remain vigilant for any potential safety issues that could affect Volunteers.

Evaluate the urgency of the situation by determining whether the Farmer is a high priority. Factors to consider include the risk to livestock and the impact on the Farmer's livelihood.

Finally, estimate the time required for the work, including when it can begin, how long it will take, and how many Volunteers will be needed to complete the tasks.

Trailers

If you only need a few items place them in the back of the vehicle & return to trailer when you return to camp

Keep trailers on-site for extended stays, provided they are safe and secure to save fuel costs

Team Leaders

You don't have to drive the vehicle, if you're feeling tired, let someone else drive

Equipment-

Try to use weekends for training Volunteers to use & maintain equipment

Fencing

For emergency fencing use "Davo's Fencing Clips" to trees if required to replace posts or they can be placed on posts with correct screws

Straighten steel pickets using tow bar of vehicle or draw bar of trailers if needed

When straining wire, you are better off straining from the middle of a run rather than the ends

Calf pullers are useful for pulling barb wire





THE BELL'S AND BLAZE AID



Stuart and Wendy Bell along with their son Matt have a property on the NSW/QLD border, running Angus cattle and a farm camping experience at Cullendore NSW. They were devastated by the fires that hit the region in 2023. The following is their story.



September and into October 2023 were worrying months. We were flush with feed, but the early heat was drying it out very quickly. The district was so worried in fact that we called a meeting with the Tenterfield Mayor, NSW NPWS and RFS to discuss the state of the neighbouring national park in the face of this increasing danger. Unfortunately, NPWS couldn't find the time to attend. RFS representatives listened to our concerns and visited the park. They too were terribly concerned and agreed that a fire trail along the eastern boundary of the park was needed. They assured us that this would be passed on to NPWS who were absent.

A week later our worst concerns were realised. An unprecedented dry electrical storm ignited multiple fires over the Tenterfield Shire. Over sixty uncontrolled fires were reported in the shire that afternoon, stretching the resources of locals and RFS alike. Four of these fires ignited in the neighbouring park. While this wasn't by any means the first fire we had been forced to deal with from this park, four simultaneous blazes were something new and quite uncontrollable. With no fire trail between the park and all eastern neighbours the result was catastrophic. The part that sits with our community is that we had been asking for action from NPWS for about a decade. Parks had been allocated fire trail money as an outcome of the Black Summer Bushfire Inquiry but had spent the money elsewhere. We felt abandoned...that was until Blazeaid reached out to us. To say that this fire left us with an overwhelming sense of devastation would

be an understatement. We had lost our main set of cattle yards, much of our water reticulation infrastructure, most of our cattle feed and of course kilometres of fencing. It was the first time in our lives spent battling the odds that we just didn't know where to start. The importance of the Blazeaid offer cannot be understated, it was a lifeline.

We were unsure what to expect. I have to say that what we experienced was more helpful than I could have imagined in so many ways. It certainly wasn't just a process of fixing fences. It proved to be a far more positive experience for us in our recovery than I could have expected. My son and I worked with the Blazeaid volunteers for weeks and weeks. We cut and erected the fence strainers and stays, remaining just in front of the Blazeaid team as they erected the steel posts and wire behind us. We got to know them well. The teams often changed but the attitude was always the same. These young people from all over the world were a credit to themselves. The team leaders provided a fantastic leadership base to keep these young people on course and safe. We, as a family, can never



The Wedding Venue



Stuart and Wendy Bell with Veronika from BlazeAid

thank them enough. While the re-build is still going on the boost to our spirit from their help and the sense that we can come back from this cannot be overstated. Probably the greatest lesson I learned from this experience is the power of enthusiastic young people, no matter what part of the world they come from, is a most positive force. Modern Australia has been built on this force, and we should never let people tell us that it is in our own interest to close the door on such people from overseas. The BlazeAid team from Stanthorpe worked on the property from May 24 until August 2024.

Welcome to our New Board Members



I'm married for 54 years to fellow board member Gary. We have 2 children and 3 grandchildren and are current living in West Kempsey New South Wales. I have been volunteering for various organisation for over 50 years.

Together with my husband, Gary, I have been volunteering with Blazeaid for over 15 years in various roles from being a general volunteer and to camp coordinating throughout Australia.

Since moving to West Kempsey, together with Gary, I have done a numerous presentation on behalf of Blazeaid covering the Mid North Coast region of New South Wales, in addition to assisting at Blazeaid camp in my general area.

In addition to volunteering with Blazeaid I am an active member of our local hospital auxiliary and the local CWA Branch.

Since joining Blazeaid over 15 years I have made some lasting friends and meet numerous farmers who have also become friends through Blazeaid.

While being born in Sydney, I have spent several of my teenage years holidaying at a West Wyalong sheep property as a junior member of Legacy, where I gained by love and appreciation of country life.



Colleen Waterson

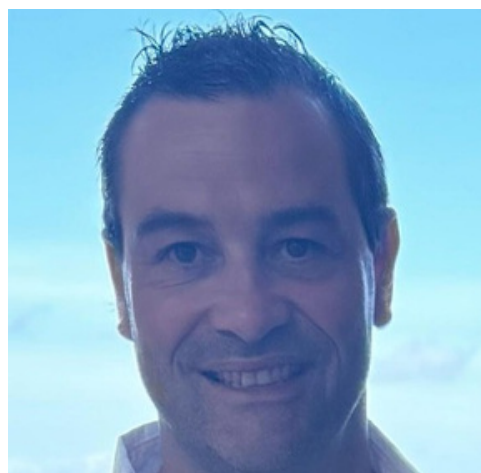


Charmaine Wheatley

I first became involved with BlazeAid when my Rotary Humanitarian Team of 2020 had been very dramatically evacuated out of South Africa on the last flight back into Sydney in March 2020. While in that awful 2 week quarantine period (remember when the world turned upside down ?) it was announced on our local radio station that the Blazeaid Camp in Milton had dozens of young backpackers and fruit pickers working on fence repairs and bush cleanup after the devastating fires in NSW and that due to the very unexpectedly cold snap and border closures - they were freezing and unprepared for the harsh weather conditions as they had planned to head off to Queensland soon to work. I immediately put out an appeal to the local Kiama Community for warm clothes, jumpers, beanies, boots and blankets.

We sorted a whole busload of beautiful warm donated clothing and when I was 'released' and free to leave home again - we borrowed a huge bus to deliver the items to the grateful. BlazeAid Coordinator at Milton camp.

I was so impressed at the love and generosity displayed by everyone concerned at the camp and the grateful farmers whom I also managed to talk to - that I decided immediately I also wanted to be part of the Blazeaid family and 2 weeks later I volunteered and was kindly provided a little igloo to stay in for the duration of my assignment. (I have since bought a small motorhome). After the recent passing of my husband, I had more time to volunteer and this gave me the opportunity to combine my fundraising and networking skills, love of country music festivals and the opportunity to give back to this great country I now call home. One of the highlights of my Blazeaid experience was when my granddaughter volunteered with us at Rappville 2 years ago and we still speak of this time with great fondness and many friendships made then continue to flourish.



Rhys Long

I am originally from the UK but Melbourne is very much my home now with Sarah and my two children Grace and Charlie. I have been involved with BlazeAid for over 7 years volunteering in a number of capacities from a little bit of fencing to assisting with technology in the back office and even representing BlazeAid at the not-for-profit round tables at Parliament House with the PM!

In 7 years, the amount of conversations I have had with coordinators is staggering and the one theme that sticks out, is the passion for helping others. There is also nothing more rewarding than seeing the myriad of heart felt thanks from those that have received support from our amazing volunteers. I feel privileged to be a part of this wonderful organisation and look forward to contributing in different ways. Outside of BlazeAid, I look forward to the weekends away in the caravan with my family and am always looking for that next annual golf day!



ROTARY ON THE ROAD

Three Trips Eight Vehicles ONE BLAZE AID ADVENTURE



When BlazeAid needed a hand returning vehicles from Isisford and Quilpie, our club jumped at the chance. None of us expected it would turn into one of the most enjoyable three trip adventures we have had as a club. Over several weeks, members of the Toowoomba Range Rotary Club completed three recovery missions to collect BlazeAid vehicles and trailers and return them safely to BlazeAid yards in Miles and Warwick. What began as practical service quickly became something far more memorable.

Trip One: Isisford and the Birth of the “Mitchell Ritual”

Our first journey took us deep into Isisford, where we collected two cars and three trailers.

After a night at the Isisford pub, we learned our first lesson about BlazeAid utes. They have personality.

While warming the ute and loading gear the next morning, it locked itself.

Engine running, keys inside, windows up, perfectly useless.

We broke in, problem solved, lesson learnt.

From there we made our way toward Mitchell, where the hot springs became an instant favourite.

A soak after a long day in an old farm ute is something special.

The pub then welcomed us like locals for dinner around the bar, and from that day on, Mitchell became an essential stop for every trip.

Across the west, publicans already knew BlazeAid well.

When they heard what we were doing, the welcome got warmer, and the appreciation was genuine.

Trip Two: Back to Quilpie

The second mission saw us collect one vehicle and one trailer from Quilpie.

By now we were familiar with the quirks of BlazeAid utes.

Some had no radios.

Some had no aircon.

One had a window that did not wind down so much as rotate then awkwardly fall down and threaten to fall either inside the door or out onto the ground.

Turning the blower fan on for some reprieve from the heat usually resulted in having your face blasted with enough dust to classify as a skin treatment.

Each trip was like a lottery, with a definite “Grand Tour”, or “Top Gear” vibe about it.

Despite all that, these utes always started, always drove and never let us down.

They may be rough, but they are tough, well maintained and obviously built for the outback.

Trip Three: The Final Pair and a Night Under the Stars

Our last mission involved collecting the final two vehicles from Quilpie.

Three of us stayed at the caravan park, and after a meal at (you guessed it) the Quilpie pub, we settled into the natural springs hot tub jacuzzi with a bottle of Jameson.

We sat under the stars in the dark, telling stories and enjoying the quiet of the outback.

It was one of those simple moments that sticks with you. The Outback at its best. The channel country is stunning, wide open skies, cracking sunsets, nights by a fire. Kangaroos everywhere, emus shepherding their chicks across the road as if daring us to brake.

Our soundtrack included everything from Chad Morgan and Slim Dusty to Metallica, Guns N Roses and Ozzy Osborne, ACDC. An unusual mix, but it suited the road trip.

We made a point of supporting locally owned pubs, shops and roadhouses on every run, we were often greeted with that outback hospitality “where you from, what brings you out here” and when we told our story it was always appreciated.

