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## News Release 2010

# OUTBACK TRAILBLAZER EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

*WHEN an intrepid bunch of folk set off on a new 4WD charity event through western Queensland last year, they were simply out for a good time to help a good cause. Few expected what most came to describe as ‘the experience of a lifetime.’*

The inaugural Angel Flight Outback Trailblazer was a madcap, magical adventure that left its participants in awe of the land, exhilarated at the camaraderie shared and deeply moved by the spirit of everyone involved.

Hard to beat, you might think. But the 2010 Angel Flight Outback Trailblazer is shaping up to again eclipse expectations and build on its reputation as Australia’s must-do new motoring experience.

“Hang onto your hats, pack your swag and enter a team now for seven of the most action-packed days and magical nights you can imagine,” says Outback Trailblazer organiser, Lance Smith AM.

“2009 was a tough act to follow, sure, but you’d better believe the 2010 Angel Flight Outback Trailblazer will be filled with incredible new experiences and more fun than ever.”

From October 17 to 23, the convoy of ‘outback angels’ in 4WDs, utes and off-road coaches will take part in everything from an outback ‘oompah’ Oktoberfest in Jundah to raft races on Muttaborra’s Broadwater, yabbie races at Aramac and dining with the dinosaurs on a Winton plateau.

A spectacular highlight will feature 20 massed choirs from Queensland country towns and schools joined by Angel Flight Outback Trailblazer patron Tania Kernaghan and father Ray Kernaghan for an inspirational early Christmas in Longreach.

Compered by Channel Seven presenter Dean Miller, the Woollam Constructions ‘Deck the Hall’ Bush Christmas Pageant at the Stockman’s Hall of Fame on October 21 will even see Santa give his reindeer a spell to arrive by a traditional outback bullock wagon.

Also on Trailblazer’s unique 2010 itinerary will be a stirring welcome at Barcaldine’s Tree of Knowledge Memorial for VIPs aboard QR’s Spirit of the Outback, drive-in movies at Jericho, a teddy bears picnic in Tambo and a 60s-themed finale party in Blackall.

The event, supported by several regional councils, RACQ, QantasLink, QR, Queensland Events, Queensland Tourism, GBA Consulting Engineers, Woollam Constructions, Ballandean Estate Wines and a host of businesses, raises funds for Angel Flight Australia.

Established in 2003, Angel Flight co-ordinates free non-emergency flights for financially and medically needy people to assist patients, family and carers travelling to and from medical appointments anywhere in Australia.

Volunteer pilot 'angels', who donate their time, skills, aircraft and the bulk of their costs, have so far flown more than 8000 missions helping over 1800 people.

"Angel Flight relies entirely on donations, so fundraising 'earth angels' like the Outback Trailblazer participants are critical to keep the service aloft," said Barcaldine Regional Council Mayor Rob Chandler.

"We'll be raising the dust on outback dinosaur trails, visiting a bush pub or two, meeting kids from tiny schools, sharing yarns with characters of remote Queensland and stopping in at sprawling stations, all under the watchful eye of two RACQ teams to keep us on track."

Among the 2009 trailblazers was 'best job in the world' winner, Ben Southall from the UK, who told the world he was sorry to leave the convoy after flying in to share in the fun.

"My time in the Outback was a real treat and hugely good fun. The people we'd been lucky enough to meet all showed us great hospitality and it was fascinating looking into their lives," he blogged.

"The feeling of community and perseverance when up against it is overwhelming."

That level of emotion was even felt by local participants.

"It would be up there in the best three things I have done in my lifetime," said Monique Rayment of Jundah. "The tears started and I was absolutely lost for words."

Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) team member Kristine Arnold described it as "a superbly co-ordinated, wonderful experience" and vowed to return in 2010, as did sponsor QantasLink.

"The concept of engaging local communities, schools, tourism, fun and a fine charity is sure to be a winner for many years to come. Count us in!" said QantasLink's Tony Edwards.

Team nominations are now open for the 2010 Angel Flight Outback Trailblazer, which is offering participants the chance to share in over \$20,000 worth of prizes along the way.

Organisers are urging would-be trailblazers to sign up fast as team numbers will be limited.

"Everyone is a winner – Angel Flight of course, all the communities along our bush route and, most certainly, each of those lucky enough to be an 'outback angel' team member."

For further information, the full 2010 itinerary and entry forms, visit the event website [www.outbacktrailblazer.com.au](http://www.outbacktrailblazer.com.au), or call Andrea Lingard, Barcaldine Regional Council, 07 4651 5600.

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