

MEDIA RELEASE

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A 'Family' Reunion *Back of Beyond*

The celebration of the 50th anniversary screening of the Australian classic black and white film *The Back of Beyond* brought together a major gathering of 1000 people from all parts of Australia at Marree on the weekend. The gathering including surviving cast members and many of the children of those involved in the 1954 Shell Film Unit production.

“The Marree organising committee was absolutely delighted that Dr. Elizabeth Heyer from Alice Springs and Anna Turner from the tip of Cape York Peninsula, (daughters of *The Back of Beyond* Director John and Janet Heyer) took part in the celebrations. It’s also wonderful that Tom and Valma Kruse’s daughter Pauline and four children of Tom’s aboriginal offsider Henry Butler – Eileen, Betty, Joyleen and Robert are also able to be in Marree“, organiser Ian Doyle said.

The *Back of Beyond* Leyland Badger mail truck was bought new by pioneering outback transport operator Harry Ding in Adelaide from the CMV Group in 1936. Members of the Crawford family from the CMV Group also took part in the celebrations and the launch of *The Back of Beyond Collection* double DVD.

Cast members included Tom and Valma Kruse, Brian Oldfield, David Coverdale and David Brook. “Every one of the families involved with the film was affected by it in some way. Most of the children of the main participants had never met before. The celebration allowed this to happen for the first time. None of this would have been possible without the efforts of the Marree community and the generous support of the CMV Foundation.” Ian Doyle said.

On July 24th 1954 at the Marree Town Hall *The Back of Beyond* was screened for the first time in outback Australia. Fifty years to the day, a double DVD of the four major film and television stories about legendary outback mailman EG (Tom) Kruse MBE (including *The Back of Beyond* and *Last Mail from Birdsville*) was launched by Colin Munro from ABC Radio to commemorate this historic screening.

It was a memorable celebration and a significant tribute to Tom in his 90th year (Tom’s 90th is on August 28th). Tom and Valma Kruse were presented with a chromed and engraved shovel from the Marree Community, a framed photo and flag by Chairman of the Year of the Outback Bruce Campbell. Cast and family members were presented with a framed certificate signed by Tom and a copy of the DVD from Film Australia and Corrugated Air as a memento of the event. The impressive 1954 Venice Film Award trophy, awarded to *The Back of Beyond*, loaned from The Shell Company of Australia, was on display.

More than \$7,000 was raised for the RFDS and the Marree Hospital from the film night, community BBQ and recovery breakfast on Sunday morning. The sale of the DVD is in support of the RFDS.

To order a copy of the Tom Kruse tribute double DVD *The Back of Beyond Collection* ring the RFDS free call 1 800 813 318 or visit www.lastmailfrombirdsville.com

More Information:
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The Back of Beyond Collection
Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of *The Back of Beyond*
Supported by the CMV Foundation and in support of the RFDS ph 1 800 813 318