

5-minute reads 



I love being able to bring some joy to struggling families

With Lady Kenya preparing hampers

Outback ANGEL

**Christine Henry, 64,
Everton Park, Qld.**

Driving through rural Queensland, I shook my head in disbelief.

Everything was dry and drought-stricken for as far as the eye could see.

In all my years, I'd never witnessed the country in such a bad state.

When I heard stories of suicide, financial debt, depression, and families forced to sell up their farms, I spoke with the Sisters of Charity, a group which I'd been part of for over three decades.

"We need to ask city people to support the farmers," I said.

With their encouragement, I set up the Downs and West Drought Appeal, which approached the community for donations to get farmers back on their feet. Even after the droughts, we kept going because floods and fires still

knocked rural towns to their knees.

I met a farmer's wife who told me Christmas was often a difficult time of year for many who were at the mercy of Mother Nature. I hadn't really made this connection before, so from that

moment, I began collecting Christmas hampers as well as providing a listening ear.

My trusted toy poodle Prince Harry, has just started coming



On the road delivering gifts to farmers

along with me for the ride following the death of my previous poodle, Lady Kenya.

"Ho ho ho, it's me, Sister Christine," I said, turning up on the doorstep unannounced.

I put decorations on the car and wore a Santa's hat and made Prince Harry wear a Santa's helper outfit, too.

Over the past decade, I have driven a million kilometres and delivered up to 150 hampers and gifts each year.

Through the generosity of our donors in the city, we have given gift vouchers to 135 families this year so they can have the Christmas dinner many of us take for granted.

I've learned that a hug and a kind word can make such a difference to someone's life. I plan to keep going for as long as I can make a difference.

AS TOLD TO ASTHA GUPTA