



# Downs & West Community Support

a ministry of Sisters of Charity Community Care Ltd  
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## Our Mission:

Downs & West Community Support (DWCS), a ministry of Sisters of Charity Community Care Ltd (SCCC), offers encouragement, discreet and personalised assistance to farming families and their communities in Southern Queensland who are severely affected by climatic conditions or family matters beyond their control.

We are motivated by a sense of responsibility to provide compassionate care and to share our resources as far as possible.

SCCC Ltd is a not-for-profit Registered Charity and DWCS is dedicated to supporting our farming families and their rural communities. DWCS is funded by the people for the people!



## Our Beginning:

When one door closes another one opens. In March 2007, after nursing for 36 years, Sr Christine Henry, a Sister of Charity, was drawn to country life after seeing firsthand and hearing stories of struggling farmers who could not afford to put food on their own tables during the worst drought in Australian history.

*Sr Christine wrote in 2007: 'Farming communities continue to face many challenges to retain their stations/farms and the family unit. Increased stress and pressure postpone decision making, potentially draining their reserves and putting people in a diminished capacity to make more informed decisions. Disbelief, despair, and depression are widespread. Many families are more vulnerable financially than ever before. Virtually all families are questioning the value and possibilities of staying on the land. At least 25% of farming families have hit the wall and begun to talk about life after farming'.*

'40,000 equivalent full-time contract workers are without jobs due to the decreased work on the land especially in the harvesting, vegetable, and fruit picking seasons. Many of these people are strengthened and sustained by the love of their families and support given by organisations. For some, the harshness of their situation had taken its toll and the suffering had been too great to bear and, sadly, they had ended their lives'.

On 1 May 2007, with no money in the bank, the Downs & West Drought Appeal commenced. Flyers were sent out and within the first 24 hours, Sr Christine received the first donation. Yes, the people were wanting to show their support of farmers struggling and 'doing it tough'. By 2010, the ministry needed to continue hence the name was changed to reflect the services provided. Words and Compassion in Action.



## Our Service: What We Do: drought - flood - fire - storm.

Farmers and their communities experience financial and emotional hardships. A loss of income and farming infrastructure, culling of quality stud breeders and the prospect of needing to leave their home and farm has a direct impact on family, social interaction, their health, and agricultural production.

**Support DWCS offers focuses on individual and family needs.** These may include:

- Practical support may include providing food and household hampers, toiletry care packs, Christmas hampers and gifts.
- Financial support may involve providing cash assistance, prepaid grocery and petrol vouchers, essential home appliances, paying domestic and farm bills, purchasing stock feed, replacing water tanks, fencing, gates and repairing machinery.
- Emotional support is achieved by visiting farmers – unlimited face to face interactions, writing letters, phone contact, visiting people in hospitals and utilising appropriate referral systems as required.
- Social Events involves hosting Wellness Days and the unique Dragonfly Health and Wellness Retreats for country women, which may include health checks and relaxation therapies, self-care presentations, motivational speakers, companionship, and times for personal reflection.  
We work, in collaboration with other rural service providers, to organise rural events and will assist, where possible, families needing immediate care.



## Our Values

Our Values underpin our activities and interaction with people with whom we work.

### Generosity

We greatly appreciate all donations received from organisations and members of the public.

We value the significant role our volunteers play as they offer a variety of services.

### Respect

We strive to treat people as we would like to be treated.

### Accepting

We aim to see everyone as equals and treat them accordingly.

### Collaboration

We work together with organisations and individuals to make a difference to farmers and their communities.

### Encouragement

We offer encouragement, building hope and meaningful connections.

