

TIMELINE for 4 Darling Street – when owned by Billabong Clubhouse. Joan Wakeford 21.08.2022

6 DARLING STREET - June 1997 Billabong Clubhouse's steering committee identified the house at 6 Darling Street, which was for sale, as the ideal site to open an International Clubhouse model of Rehabilitation for people recovering from mental illness. This model offers social support, support for education and part time work.

14. 11. 1997 Billabong Clubhouse was granted use of the Police residence at 6 Darling Street for their premises after meeting Paul Whelan, Min for Police at the building, with Tony Windsor. This followed 2 years of Government lobbying and community fund raising by potential users of the Clubhouse and their families.

Media present at that meeting interviewed people over the next week. They spoke about the severe lack of rehabilitation services in North- West NSW for people with mental health problems.

On 16.12 1997 Brian Crittenden, a rural worker in Moree made a new will leaving his estate to 'Billabong Clubhouse.' We assume he heard the radio programs; he did not visit Billabong.

10.01. 2001 The Public Trustee notified Billabong Clubhouse that Brian Crittenden had died in May 1999 and it was the beneficiary of his will (\$100,00). His family could have, but did not contest the will.

Billabong Members asked that the bequest buy "For Sale" No 4 Darling Street - for rural members eg from Moree.

14. 08. 2001 Sale of the cottage on 4 Darling Street for \$100,00 to Billabong Clubhouse proceeded.

RESTORATION of Crittenden Cottage: Extensive work was needed from Tradesmen and Volunteers.

Repairs to the building – Interior and Exterior; stormwater; electrical; Plumbing; tiling, bathrooms; landscaping.

Repaint inside, outside and roof.

Furnishings, security, utilities - with generous subsidies from Tamworth Service Clubs, businesses and tradesmen.

Voluntary Workers. (See The Tamworth Times, May 22, 2002)

Three newly retired parents of Members of Billabong Clubhouse took on much of the work, finished October 2004: Mal Crocker -Engineer, Bob Tait builder/concreter, and Peter Wakeford - Physician. Three restorations of note: First, they removed, hand restored and reglazed the timber windows. Bob restored the kitchen fireplace and hearth. The wide cypress floor boards – staples removed. Boards in ceilings caulked. Woodwork sanded. Other retirees joined in- it was a social club. Painters, electricians, tilers, landscapers gave days of voluntary work -for MH Services.

Funds: the community raised the money. A carer, John Muller organized Jazz Concerts that brought in the major funds – over 20 years and 15 concerts he raised \$250,000 for Crittenden Cottage and Billabong. As well funds came from Rotary and Lions Clubs, charity bike-rides - even a Race day at Tamworth Race Course.

BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY: A restored building of heritage significance in the Darling Street Police Precinct.

Affordable Accommodation in 4 separate bedrooms for:

People from rural areas wanting Clubhouse rehabilitation services, members visiting Billabong (see 2 letters) .

Crisis short term accommodation for members, and for a month, a breast-fed baby taken to Hospital to be fed...

Accommodation for Clubhouse accreditation inspectors; Visits from Clubhouses in Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide.

Visits in 2004 of international dignitaries when the Australasian Clubhouse Conference was held in Tamworth.

MEETINGS - Two front rooms:

A Meeting Room was regularly used by the MH Support Group, by other NGOs, for support, and for Christmas!

Another front room was leased to the Carer Support worker, Joyce Vernon until 2012. Much valuable support given.

Overall, thousands of people over 20 years have benefitted from this comfortable, homely, welcoming cottage, marking a time when community action helped to improve MH services in Tamworth and the North-West.

Recent History - and Sale of 4 Darling Street on 24. 02. 2002

Improved Mental Health Funding – NDIS has reduced the need for accommodation at 4 Darling Street by providing psychosocial support for people with mental health problems where they live.

Billabong - Maintenance, the work load of accommodation on staff has drained the resources of the busy Clubhouse. Gov funding for accommodation has never been available. Billabong struggled to get funding for its staff – from the moment it opened.

However, Billabong continues to support up to 80 active members, and some are very concerned about the future of Crittenden – see Letters. Membership is "For Life."