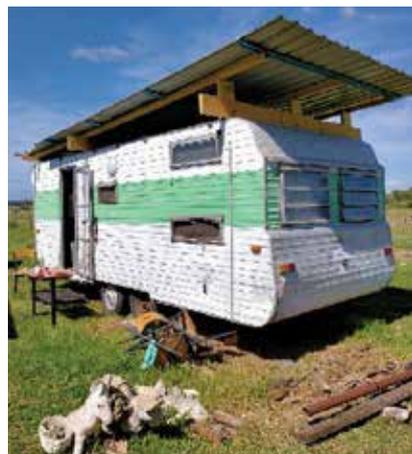


Make a Wish

**AND BLOW AWAY THE FLAMES.
WE MADE A WISH AND IT BLEW AWAY.**

We wished the large van had a roof to prevent rain spoiling our supplies. Only one statue remains but their panniers are smashed. The SES received our anxious call but were unable to help at all. Rain soaked the interiors through broken glass, including the overnight van that sheltered many people and dogs evacuated from their homes during the bushfires earlier this year. Everything in between the vans was crushed. Thankfully there were no injuries as no volunteers were in the vans at the time of the tornado. Ripped outer walls and broken windows can be seen in these photos. The entire walls are visibly stressed and buckled. A kind nearby farmer pulled the van onto its wheels with his tractor. Volunteers spent days disposing of all the large crushed items. Using a crowbar to open the door they began the internal clean-up and placed plastic over glassless windows. Our little hamlet has gone. **A melancholy ending to 2020.**



We often give thanks for the donkeys' land, The Heartland, at Berry Park, NSW.

Our charity purchased The Heartland, with her plentiful, vacant acres three and a half years ago, upon receiving a bequest. We often marvel at the enormous amount of voluntary, and some paid professional work undertaken to establish a fine layout of paddocks, muster areas, yards, sheds and shelters and all manner of essential aids and areas to keep DWWH donkeys always well maintained in all weather conditions.

Close to the muster areas, we set side-by-side, upon a firm base, two caravans, forming a snug 12 foot hallway in between. One small van, due to be scrapped, came cheaply from a North Coast van park. The second, larger van was locally sourced 'free' via a facebook plea. We dragged it from its shallow creek-bed-grave, after a flood, many years ago, swept it therein.

It took 15 volunteers 3 weeks to clean, fumigate and overhaul the vans sufficiently setting them up for human habitation and to safely enter and breathe normally.

We use the small van for any overnight stay, often necessary when a watchful eye is needed to be cast upon an ailing donkey or on one who is new, nervous and settling-in. We store within it lots of donated bed-linen, pillows, towels, blankets, sleeping bags, doonas, aprons, plus fold up tables and other fundraising supplies.

In the rear of the larger van we store a vast supply of all types of donkeys' medicinal needs, creams, lotions, potions, syringes and needles for vaccinations, bandages, wraps, rugs, towels, tools for feet and teeth, land maintenance hardware, drills, saws, nuts, bolts and screws. We set up in the front area the kitchen, gas stove, fridge, storing in cupboards tea/coffee, cups, mugs, paper plates, cutlery, paper towels and all simple necessary refreshment items.

In the hallway between the vans we store wheelbarrows, rakes, buckets, spades, steel posts, rolls of wire, bins, tubs, bbqs and much more. Tables and chairs, thoughtful nestled, provide a protected place for volunteers to eat and refresh after everyday's donkey muster, haltering, tying, grooming, handling and all husbandry activities.

We also adorned the welcoming caravan area with pot plants and 5 donated, 45-year-old gorgeous donkey garden statues, whose panniers support flourishing, hardy succulents. We were well satisfied with the humble result of years of toil, establishing our beautiful acres to suit the needs of whomsoever enters.

Our final wish was for a metal roof to be attached to the large van, replacing the temporary plastic tarp, to prevent rain getting in as that had previously caused us nuisance mopping-up. Our roof wish finally came true and indeed our humble caravan hamlet was a beautiful place to be. Everyone loved it, even the donkeys.

Then mid November 2020, just after we proudly, frugally survived a tragic financial year, a tornado hit the Hunter region, attacking

our caravans as if targeted to make this year even worse than it already was. The forceful wind lifted the large van dumping it on it's side, crashing it into the small van pushing both off their level footings, tearing walls, smashing windows, buckling steel and aluminium panels and breaking or squashing stored items within.

The days of torrential rain soaked and or ruined almost everything delicate inside our vans. Drawers and cupboards filled with rainwater. Most of the stored items outside the vans were crushed, smashed or broken including our flower bearing donkey statues and panniers.

We cried in the aftermath of the violent storm as we studied our once safe-keeping-area looking as though it had been attacked and in a fight with the world.

Our well-contained facilities now had a break-neck range of debris scattered beneath and in close proximity to our sorry vans. The once-happy, tidy, well established van area has perished and weeks later it is difficult to recall the joy of it all into our remembrance.

It is planned for a numerous circle of volunteers to gather soon to decide "whatever shall we do now". Whether expensive repairs to the vans' torn outer walls, broken windows, the damaged internal fittings and re-setting\levelling the vans can be arranged soon? Replacing all the lost items...we wait in hope with fractured spirits.

PLEASE HELP US DO THIS BY SENDING A DONATION TOWARDS RESTORING OUR VANS AND REPLACING LOST ITEMS.

- **Post cheque:**

DWWH Inc, 600 Wollombi Road, Bishops Bridge, 2326

- **Direct Direct deposit:**

DWWH Inc
The Mutual, Rutherford Branch
BSB 646 000
Account 100044785
Add your name and vans for id.

- **Paypal via our website.**

Thank you for helping to make The Heartland a happy place once again.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL.

Sincerely,
Christine Berry OAM
and Team Donkey Welfare With Heart.

