

Shack out the back is a true blue slice of history

Recognise the efforts of your community's unsung heroes



ADAM ZUCHETTI
property writer

AN ordinary, unassuming shack in an Epping backyard has been the recording venue for the last seven albums from one of Australia's iconic entertainers.

Country singer John Williamson has been recording there since he bought the Ray Rd house in the 1980s, but is now selling the property.

"I bought the house because I wanted space for the 6-tonne truck that carries our gear," Williamson said in an exclusive interview with the *Northern District Times*.

"A lot of the neighbours must have thought I was a tradesman (because of the truck).

"I recorded seven albums in that studio. It felt like home to record there ... in my own garage."

Born in Victoria, Williamson has spent most of his adult life living in NSW and is eventually looking to settle down on his property in Springbrook on the Gold Coast hinterland.

But the Epping area certainly holds some memories for him – it was here that his children were



Country music singer John Williamson in his Epping studio, which is housed in the humble building in the backyard (above).

raised and where he still maintains an office.

"I think the older homes in Epping are equal to none," he said.

Williamson said the Ray Rd home was "absolutely charming" and would be ideal for someone looking to upgrade.

"I would have loved to have had the time to do it up myself."

The singer, who names his album *Mallee Boy* going platinum as the highlight of his music career, said he believed the home had belonged to the family who established Coopers of Epping Antiques and Jewellery in Bridge St. Many of the original features

of the Californian bungalow had been retained, including the decorative brickwork, leadlight windows and front bay window with window seat.

In its present layout, it offered three bedrooms and two bathrooms, but Williamson said it could be opened up and extended to the rear to provide even more space.

Selling agents Kim Toyer-Uttley and Kate Seehusen, of Epping First National, said interest in the property had been phenomenal, prompting them to alter the date and location of the auction.

"We will now be auctioning the property on Saturday, March 28, at 3pm on site and not on Thursday, March 26, as previously advertised," Ms Toyer-Uttley said. "We have had more than 130 inspections, with 73 groups coming through the property last Saturday."

Williamson is currently on his national Hillbilly Road 2009 Tour, and will be performing at Revesby Workers' Club on April 4.

Details on the auction can be obtained from Kim Toyer-Uttley on 0408 439 837 or Kate Seehusen on 0417 029 402.

IN a first for our community newspapers, the annual Pride of Australia Medal program launches today and needs your help to find the countless people who embody Australian values such as bravery, compassion and give selflessly to their fellow Australians with little or no recognition.

These unsung heroes could be your friend, workmate, neighbour, your child's



teacher, the local police officer or firefighter or simply someone who makes a difference and has made your community a better place to live.

Ten unique sterling silver Pride of Australia medals will be awarded across 10 categories that celebrate and honour values and attributes such as bravery, courage, leadership, community spirit, compassion and hard work.

The Pride of Australia Medal is a national award program that will culminate for the first time in a national ceremony and a television project.

Winners will first be recognised and honoured at a special ceremony held in their relevant state and territory in July.

Short-listed nominations will be judged by a panel of local community leaders and senior representatives from News Limited newspapers in each state and territory and the winners will be announced in that newspaper.

The nomination period opened on Sunday and closes at 5pm on Monday, April 13 and everyone is encouraged to make a nomination.

For information or to make a nomination go to Page 26 or www.prideofaustralia.com.au.



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