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empathy

JUST.BE





# be.fore what's been happening?



beyondempathy.org.au

It's been a while since we've had a newsletter. Its time to check in and see what's been happening at Beyond Empathy. Some friends have left and new people have joined us. Martin Mantle is now editing our newsletter. Martin has previously worked on the *Checkers* project as the writer and director of that play. All our programs have had great successes and these are highlighted in this newsletter.

## The all new website.

The big news!

Our new website is up. Mira and Phoenix have been working together for months on the new website: Phoenix on the content and Mira on the design. The final touches and information should be added soon. It looks great - a place that is colourful, easy to use and exciting - its be.autiful!

Check us out at [www.beyondempathy.org.au](http://www.beyondempathy.org.au)

# be.longing

## farewells and greetings

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Denni Scott Davis and  
Kim McConville

*“We cannot direct the wind but we can adjust the sails.”*

- Author Unknown

BE would like to farewell Denni Scott Davis and welcome two new team members, Kai Tipping and Josh Thomason.

After nearly five years of working with BE, Denni resigned in April. We are deeply indebted to Denni for her generosity, creativity, and all that she has dedicated to BE since its inception in late 2004. We will build on Denni’s legacy through the projects we continue to deliver in community. Everyone at BE wishes Denni the best of luck in, and good wishes for, her future ventures. Denni is currently working on re-igniting her small not-for-profit organisation, Slippry Sirkus, which she founded in 1996.

We recognise the space left by her departure and, whilst change is often confronting, we look forward to the changes that will emerge from the contributions of new team members. As Mario Morgan said, “New things cannot come where there is no room” and the space created through Denni’s departure provides new opportunities and ways of working for BE and for Denni herself.

Kai Tipping has joined BE as the *Out of the Blue* Community, Arts and Cultural Development Coordinator for the Lower North Coast communities of Taree, Bowraville and Kempsey. Josh Thomason has joined BE as Executive Producer.

Both Kai and Josh have previously worked with BE as artists on various projects. Their new roles reflect that they are taking on more responsibilities in the managerial and organisational spheres, while continuing to contribute in the artistic realm. We are looking forward to working with Kai and Josh in new and exciting ways.



# be.friend

## Who's the new guy on the board?



“What is the purpose of the board?”

“The Board of Beyond Empathy is there to help guide and support management, to participate in setting the strategic path of the organisation and to ensure that the monies entrusted to Beyond Empathy are spent efficiently and effectively in helping disadvantaged young people find pathways into meaningful and positive social participation.”

Chair of the Board, Anna Buduls.

### Paul Heath

We asked Paul: Why did you become involved with Beyond Empathy?

I became interested when I attended an SVA awards night on behalf of Goldman Sachs JBWere and met Kim McConville. Our foundation offers support to a number of organisations in the SVA portfolio. I was then offered, via SVA, the chance to join the mentor programme and acted as mentor for Denni Scott-Davis. I learnt an enormous amount from Denni about the nature of the work BE does, and importantly the importance of art and people in the change process. Subsequently, I was invited to join the board and I look forward to working with other board members to help make a difference.



## *KP11: producing communities* exhibition



The Australia Council for the Arts is an important partner in our work at Beyond Empathy. BE is the recipient of a Community Partnership grant as a Key Producer, one of only 11 companies Australia wide. This year we have a fantastic opportunity to show some of the work we have done in the last year, at a special exhibition called *KP11: producing communities*.

*KP11: producing communities* brings together work from the eleven key producer organisations, devoted to developing and producing the arts in the community.

The exhibition was launched in Sydney in March.



Some of the work on show at the exhibition.

Beyond Empathy's part of the exhibition is an installation called *Postcodes from the Edge*, and was designed by artist Stephen Killick, who incorporated aspects of the artistic work created in community by young people and mentoring artists across BE projects. We aim to show how we work together with individuals to bring about change in both individuals and their communities. We want to show how change happens one on one, one by one and then in partnership. It is also an opportunity to highlight the quality of the art produced in BE's projects in community.

One of the really exciting parts of this exhibition is that these works will be touring around Australia for two years. So lots of people are going to get to see some of what we do here at Beyond Empathy.

More information can be found at:

[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/the\\_arts/features/community\\_partnerships](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/the_arts/features/community_partnerships)

What do Malcolm Bywaters and David Sudmalis (the curators) say about the exhibition?

“At the heart of all the works in the exhibition is a fresh cultural language which is forged through an undeniable optimism and constant challenging of the ideas and boundaries of art. Central to this is respect: respect of self, respect of others, and respect of histories and experience within a framework.”



be.dazzle

## *KP11: producing communities* exhibition



Staff from different Australia Council programs were asked to review each of the Key Producers exhibition pieces. Chris Cyrill, Section Coordinator for the Literature Unit at the Australia Council for the Arts reviewed Beyond Empathy's installation. Chris is an acclaimed author and lecturer and is the Fiction Editor of the Australian literary publication *Heat* magazine and the Fiction Consultant of Giramondo Publishing, Australia.

Chris observed of the installation *Postcodes from the Edge*:

*The artists have gone 'postal' – these are exaggerated post office boxes on display. On first viewing it reminded me of the work of the American artist Joseph Cornell – who also assembled imagery/collages within boxes. When I peered closer though, and you must move in as close as a lover to experience this work fully - these disparate narratives, these marginal voices seem like the flotsam and jetsam.*

Chris's responded to the exhibition with the following poem.

Every postbox contains a country,  
Art will not rely upon old allegories.  
Boys know in their bones how to run and carry,  
Mothers remember the divinity of the breast.  
All life is shipwreck - burka or bathing cap may lie  
Upon the coast.

*Life beats down and crushes the soul and art reminds you that you have one.*

Though the country can be pierced by quills  
And knitting needles, a continent can be reclaimed  
By seedlings, all explorers begin at the edges.  
All flotsam is useful  
When you live upon an island.

*Life beats down and crushes the soul and art reminds you that you have one.*

All explorers begin at the edges.  
Life may be shipwreck, the trough of eulogy,  
But art is the balm, art is the redemption.  
Put your face close to mine, I am on the edges,  
And I have been lonely.

*Life beats down and crushes the soul and art reminds you that you have one.*

# be.leaders

## Adam

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In March 2009, BE Leader Adam Williams acted in *Who is Frank Archibald?* in Armidale's Short Plays Festival, *Favourite Shorts 09*. The name Frank Archibald is a familiar one in Armidale, NSW, but not many people know who he was. In his own lifetime he was renowned as a forceful and eloquent spokesman for the rights of Aboriginal people in Armidale.



*Who is Frank Archibald?*, written and directed by Barbara Albury, is a short documentary drama which explores the life and times of Archibald during the fifties and sixties, a period of great ferment and change in Aboriginal/white relations. It was a time of Aboriginal political activism and the push to gain Aboriginal people equal rights, including being counted as citizens in the census. There were demonstrations, freedom rights and the gradual redefining of the role and status of Aboriginal people in the Australian community. *Who is Frank Archibald?* explores these issues through the life of one man and his struggle to become part of the general community.



Adam played the young Frank in this compact and powerful piece. *Who is Frank Archibald?* won the audience's votes to take out the Audience's Favourite play in Week 2 of the festival.

**Favourite  
Shorts**





# illawarra

## RollOut! Youth Week Event in Berkeley NSW



Thanks to the support of all those involved, 'Roll Out' school holiday activities on Saturday, 18 April at Berkeley Park was a great success.

The main activity on the day involved the repainting of the toilet block in Berkeley Park. Designs were created for the block by young residents in workshops run by BE leader and Berkeley resident Steve Rees, which were held at the community centre in the lead up to the event. Other activities included: circus skills workshops with Circus Monoxide's Youth Circus 'Half High'; dance workshops with BE leader and emerging artist James Taurua; a free barbeque provided by Berkeley Neighbourhood Centre with drinks and giveaways from Coca-Cola, as well as live performances from Hip-Hop artists from Berkeley, Wollongong, Sydney and Newcastle. The event also provided an opportunity for workers to engage with young residents from West Berkeley, who have not previously been involved with programs in the community. But the highlight of the event would have to be the preview screening of scenes from the Out of the Blue / BE Leaders film *Steve Rees*, a film showcasing the talents and abilities of disabled skateboarder Steve Rees.

I'd like to thank everyone involved in making this event a success: BE Leaders and emerging artists Jess, Steve, James and Jeremy; BE artists Yanni, Jack, Michael, Jack (Hyjak) and Phil. Ange, Malika, and all the staff at Berkeley Neighbourhood Centre. Dave and Megan at Wollongong Youth Services. Emma and Richard from Coca-Cola for their support and enthusiasm, and, of course, all the sponsors of the Out of the Blue project in the Illawarra.

Look out for more from the Illawarra over the next couple of months. Including the official launch of the film *Steve Rees* and more exciting film projects to come.

Gemma Parsons  
Project Manager  
Illawarra



Young residents from West Berkeley test their balancing skills with Corey and Ryan from Half High Circus



BE Leader James takes some of the boys through a six step.



"BE heard 2506"- Young Berkeley residents with some of their artwork on the toilet block in Berkeley Park.

# out of the blue

## Checkers

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Michael Brazier and Sorcha Harrop ready to perform at the BE Leadership camp



Some of the cast performing at the BE camp

Part of the Out of the Blue program, *Checkers* is a new play that was written and directed by Martin Mantle, based on the novel by the well known Australian writer John Marsden. It was performed in December 2008. With a cast of eight playing multiple roles, the actors take the audience on a journey through the life of a young girl. The young girl, now a patient in an adolescent psychiatric unit, retells the story of what happened in her life in the months and years before.

During rehearsals the cast also had the opportunity to meet with two people who had experienced mental health illness and who shared their stories. One cast member commented that meeting them “had the biggest impact on me of the whole experience. It made it real and raw”. As part of the rehearsals the cast performed at the BE Leadership Camp in November.

*Checkers* toured 4 high schools in the New England region. We played to over 250 high schools students.

Central to the schools tour was a discussion held after the performance guided by 6 BE Leaders and their “buddies”, local mental health professionals. A very special thanks to the BE Leaders Rusty Bennett (Lismore), Sarah Bennett (Lismore), Amy Hahn (Illawarra), Raphaela Rosella (Rosie) (Nimbin), James Taurua (Illawarra), and Adam Williams (Inverell/Armidale); and Cathy Hunt, Dr Stan Bolden, Matt Parsons, Helen Carter, Warren Isaac, Sam Carter, Jodie Shipp, Grue Smith, who provided guidance and support at the workshops and school group discussions.

*Checkers* was a co-production with Armidale youth theatre group Stage One Creative. This project was a great example of Beyond Empathy linking arts, health professionals, young people and the wider community.

“Audience members came and went during the performance and small children wandered onto the ‘stage’, but the cast were unfazed by it all.” Phoenix Valore talking about the performance at the BE Leadership Camp.

“There was a real sense of family amongst us all.”

Out Of The Blue



# connections

## “6x6” - artists connecting community



The “6x6” *Artists Connecting Community* project brought nationally renowned non-indigenous artists together to spend six days in Moree working alongside local indigenous artists, each being a mentor and guide to the other.

The artists’ brief was ‘New Horizons: Indigenous Families and Children within the Moree Landscape’. Each of the artists represented one discipline from six visual arts genres: abstract, figurative, landscape, photography, portrait, and sculpture. Historically, Aboriginal people (particularly young Aboriginal mothers) have experienced discomfort and dislocation through the intervention of non-Aboriginal welfare services. In this style of intervention young Aboriginal mothers and families end up feeling that their approach to parenting is incorrect, with the focus of the intervention fixed firmly on their problems rather than on their potential and their strengths. In this sort of environment, where families and individuals are out of their comfort zone, barriers are built and blocks to learning are perpetuated. This project placed the non-Aboriginal artists in an environment that was removed from their comfort zone and placed them in the world of this particular Aboriginal experience. Art formed the bridge between the two cultures and differing life experiences. Through the shared experience of creating art, barriers were dissolved and interpersonal connections were made.

The (mostly) urban non-indigenous artists worked together with the local indigenous artists to each produce works that expressed their individual interpretation of the vitality and importance of families and children within the Moree community landscape - a landscape that, for many indigenous people, is characterised by marginalisation and hardship. In this landscape the subject was the future and the artist’s perspective became a vision of how to communicate this ‘new horizon’ through a visual dialogue. The “6x6” *Artists Connecting Community* project was documented by a documentary filmmaker and a stills photographer, who each also mentored a local indigenous filmmaker and photographer.

The culmination of the project will be the showcasing of the completed “6x6” works alongside other art works produced by Connections in an exhibitions at the Moree Plains Art Gallery in August 2009.

## connections

“6x6” - artists connecting community

## Six days in Moree - a photo essay





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## Coca-Cola Live Positively Festival



In March 2009, Gemma Parsons (Illawarra Project Coordinator), Phoenix Valore (Community, Arts and Cultural Development), and Steve Rees (BE Leader – Illawarra) attended the Coca-Cola Live Positively Festival at Homebush in Sydney. They manned a stall during the lunch break to showcase and discuss what Beyond Empathy does.

In 2008 Coca-Cola South Pacific (CCSP) launched the Live Positively program, which is:

“CCSP’s commitment to making a positive difference in the world by re-designing the way we work and live so that sustainability is part of everything we do. Forever.

The Live Positively event aims to bring to life the essence of the Live Positively platform by educating associates on the four pillars of the program (marketplace, communities, workplace and environment) and the actions they can take to make a difference at work and home. Approximately 150 associates from the Sydney offices will attend the event.

Your organisation’s involvement in the Live Positively event is aimed to further educate associates around the role of CCSP’s partners and provide them with a taste of how they can get involved with particular partner activities or initiatives at work. It is also a great opportunity to showcase the good work of your organisation to a wide range of already engaged associates.”

BE’s stall was very popular, with people standing five deep at one point. Both Gemma and Phoenix talked with interested associates non-stop for the hour. We were fortunate to have the support of Kellie Martusciello, who was able to attend for the lunchtime. BE’s stall was very well received and all literature, as well as badges, disappeared quickly. Thanks to CCSP and Richard Plumpton for the opportunity to get more information about BE out there!



Steve Rees



Richard Plumpton (CCAF),  
Gemma Parsons, Steve Rees



Gemma Parsons, Kellie  
Martusciello, Steve Rees

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## The camp

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In November 2008 the second BE Leadership camp was held at Echidna Gully, near Armidale, NSW. It was attended by approximately sixty people in total, including artists, mentors and BE Team members. Forty-five young people participated in the camp.

This camp focussed on building existing skills that young people had in the areas of dance, circus, painting, film and photography. Intensive daily workshops were held in each of these disciplines as well as more general workshops for the whole combined group. Daily sessions with Peter Slattery (youth therapist, educator, facilitator and trainer) also took place.



Four short films were created by the participants, numerous paintings and photos, and dance and circus performances. These were showcased in a final evening performance, where the audience were treated to traditional Aboriginal women's dances and men's dances, hip hop dance, the screening of the films and slideshows of the photographs and a circus finale using standard household furniture as props. The paintings were displayed around the hall.



Apart from the art pieces and performances created, the camp provided opportunities to develop skills in working in groups. Participants were also encouraged to voice concerns and to explore various solutions and the impact these might have on the group. The values of both hearing and being heard, problem solving, and consideration and respect for others were highlighted in these processes.

All in all, the camp provided many interesting learning experiences for all involved and we are looking forward to the camps in 2009.

Phoenix Valore  
Community, Arts and Cultural Development  
Armidale





Beyond Empathy Leader and Emerging Artist Raphaela Rosella (Rosie) has ventured forth from her home in Nimbin to attend university in Brisbane. Rosie recently commenced her first year of a Bachelor of Photography at Griffith University and she chats with us now about how she is adjusting to her new life as a university student.

*So Rosie, it seems like you really love to take photos. What is it about photography that you most enjoy?*

I love looking at the pictures that I take and when I get a great picture it makes me feel really happy. I really like working with kids and doing social documentary photographs – pictures that show the real world. I wouldn't necessarily call myself a confident person but when I have the camera I feel confident – I feel great!

*So you are a university student now. Are you enjoying your studies?*

Overall, I am enjoying uni because I'm happy to be out of Nimbin, but it is really difficult also. I am really proud of myself for doing this though.

*Do you have a favourite subject?*

I like Photo Prac because I get to take the most photos in this subject but it is also the hardest because it is so technical.

*What do you think is the most challenging aspect of studying at university?*

Trying to cope with the financial pressure of uni is definitely the hardest part. It is a really expensive course as I need so much equipment and all of our assignments have to be printed and mounted in a particular way. It is also really hard coming from Nimbin, as I feel a bit different from everyone else and I find I can't always be myself.

*Have you learnt anything new about yourself since you started university?*

That I'm determined - but I guess I always knew that about myself. It's just reconfirmed to me that photography is what I want to do and that I am strong enough to cope with difficult situations in order to get there.

*You moved away from home to go to university. How are you finding this?*

Yeah, it's really hard. I miss my mum, my sister and my little nephew. It is really difficult fitting into a new environment when I don't have my family here to support me.

*How does your mum feel about you attending university and moving away from home?*

She is so proud of me but she misses me heaps. Whenever I go home to visit, she goes through all her cupboards and gives me heaps of pasta to take back to Brisbane.

*Do you think your work with Beyond Empathy helped prepare you for university?*

Yeah, heaps – I never thought I'd ever get to uni. I thought uni was only for smart people and I didn't think it was possible for me. I just never thought I'd get there but then they encouraged me and supported me to do it. I think the leadership program and heaps of the other projects gave me more confidence in myself and made me believe I could do it. Sometimes, I still can't believe I'm here. Everyone in Nimbin is really surprised when I tell them I'm at uni - they spin out. It still feels weird at the moment to say I'm a uni student but I'm sure I'll get used to it.

*Do you know what you would like to do when you graduate university?*

I would really love to be a social documentary photographer working in community with organisations like Beyond Empathy and for newspapers like *The Australian*. I also want to do a DipEd so I can become a photography teacher and I've always really wanted to publish a book of my photographs.

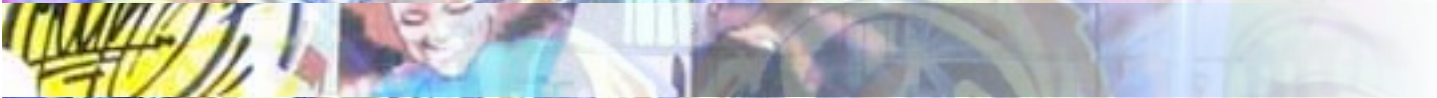
I really enjoy working in community because I feel like I can relate to people and I always feel like it's a privilege to be there. People in community usually really like getting their photo taken and I enjoy making them happy by using my photography. I think my pictures can express a powerful message about the community and so I always try to make sure it's a positive message.

Rosie has been involved with Beyond Empathy since 2005 and in that time has documented numerous BE projects and has exhibited her work. She was awarded a merit prize in the Ilford Secondary School Competition in 2005 and was a finalist in the secondary school section of the Moran Photographic Prize in 2007. Stay tuned for more amazing photographic achievements from Rosie in the coming years.

This interview was conducted by Wendy Kimpton, photographer, who has worked on BE projects: *Across My Bridge, Connections, "6x6", Ngarrwa, and Out of the Blue*, and is also Rosie's mentor.

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