

Beyond Empathy showcases local talent

Bowraville youths' artistic, musical skills shine at Port Macquarie's Saltwater Freshwater indigenous festival

Bowraville-based community organisation Beyond Empathy proudly showcased its achievements at the Saltwater Freshwater indigenous festival held in Port Macquarie on Australia Day.

Beyond Empathy's stall at the festival was a showcase of the artistic and musical skills of local young people involved in the organisation, digi-hub organiser and studio manager Shayne Johnson said.

"It's been a big year's worth of work, and we get to showcase what we've done at Bowraville and at Beyond Empathy," he said.

The festival incorporated performances from talented indigenous musicians such as Shelly Morris and *Street Warriors*. Forums were held to discuss bridging the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous people.

Art by local artists such as Vallery Quinlin, Liz Jarrett and Cathy Duckett was on display at the festival, with products from social enterprise projects for sale.

Workshops held at the festival included aerosol art with artist Snarl, and teenagers at the festival worked together to create a huge graffiti piece, Mr Johnson said.

"It's a great example of cross-cultural fusion, aerosol and indigenous art.

In the lead-up to the event, Mr Johnson said he was anticipating a great performance from local hip hop artists *Big Q*, *Taktix* and *Zicko MC*, along with *Uncle Dos*.

"It's great to be a gateway for these young guys, the amount of talent around here blows me away."

For the Digi-hub, the Saltwater Freshwater festival marked their first successful bid for the rights to film the festival.

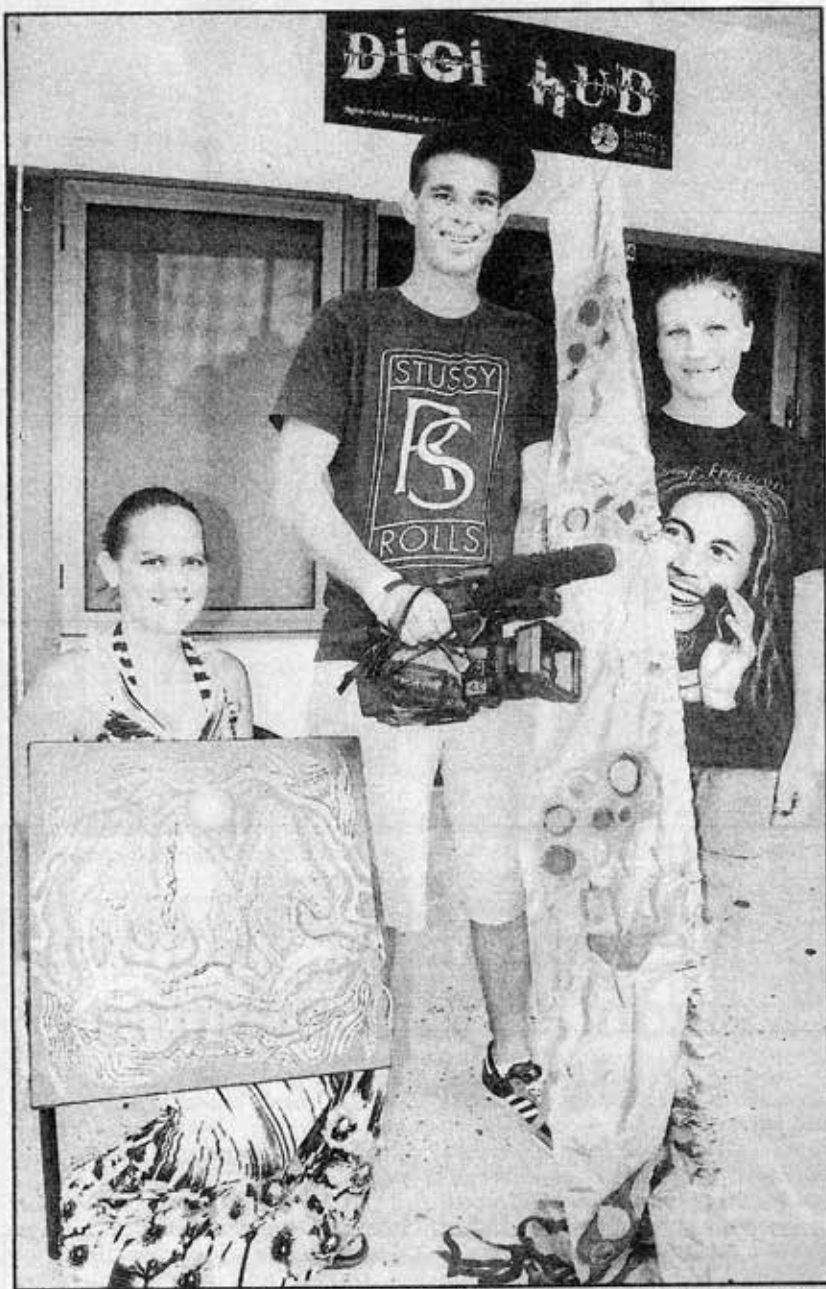
Beyond Empathy came to Bowraville in 2008 with the 'young mums' group, Ngarrwa, said General Manager of Beyond Empathy, Susie Spencer.

Ngarrwa was instrumental in bringing outside organisations to Bowraville to offer services and information regarding health. The initiative went on to combine art and health.

Last year, the art aspect of these community organisations grew into social enterprise.

"It's great to see it gather momentum, it's great to see everyone get to that point where they've got products together and are ready to move to the next level," Ms Spencer said.

Beyond Empathy is a community organisation which offers support for all community members, regardless of age or background.



Trainee artist Vallery Quinlin, Digi-hub studio manager and filmer Shayne Johnson and artist Liz Jarrett all travelled to the Saltwater Freshwater festival in Port Macquarie to showcase indigenous art from the local area.

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