



Outdoor show to visualise problem

By **JANENE CAREY**

GIANT video projections will light up the Monckton Aquatic Centre carpark on Friday and Saturday nights when Beyond Empathy, the community arts organisation tackling Armidale's alcohol issues, showcases material from the Just One Less project.

Craig Walsh, a renowned projection artist, is using images and quotes contributed by the Armidale public, as well as films created by local high school students, to create a spectacular outdoor show on the wall of the pool's grandstand, on the corner of Markham and Dumaresq Streets, from 5.30 to 7.30 each night.

A music concert at the Skate Park from 3-5pm will lead into Saturday's show.

Beyond Empathy initiated the Just One Less project last year to address issues of binge-drinking and risk-taking in young people across the Armidale Dumaresq Local Government Area, and the personal stories of 300 people were collected in a mobile video booth converted from a horse float.

Invited to "Tell us about the role of alcohol in your life and for your family and friends", they gave candid and insightful responses about the endemic culture of alcohol, how young people blame their drinking on their parents' habits and how alcohol consumption plays a greater role once people leave home.

Stories shared in the video booth include:

■ From a middle-aged woman:

"My dad was a policeman and I remember mum cooking the tea every night, we didn't have a microwave, and she would leave the plate with the food on it on a saucepan of boiling water. And it would still be sitting there in the morning, boiled dry, because dad never came home and

you'd go outside and dad's car would be pulled up in the drive way and he would be half-in half-out of the car. He managed to open the door, he would have collapsed in the car because he was a heavy drinker, which as a policeman actually made him a very good policeman because he always spent so much time at the bars and clubs and the pubs that he always knew what was going on, but it wasn't very good for our family. It must have been very very hard for my mother, bringing up four children, pretty much as single mother, because dad was an alcoholic."

■ From a young man:

"Alcohol is a social mechanism that I have probably done to excess many times and probably my friends; with my family members. I have known to go to excess. I still drink. I've drunk probably from the age of 15; I am currently 21; I've probably been drunk every weekend, maybe a few, since that time. Probably anything that has gone bad in my life in a dramatic way could be related to alcohol. I crashed a car in '08 when I first got my licence when I was drunk; now I am in a lot of debt due to that. I ended up in hospital one night, lost a girlfriend, things like that tend to be all related to alcohol."



An example of the planned outdoor video projections

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Larger than life-size posters have gone up around town - like these ones in the alley between the Mall and Cinders Lane - to advertise the event