



# Slam poet gives alcohol awareness a boost

By **JOSH PATERSON**

LOCAL not for profit community arts group Beyond Empathy continues to find unique ways to engage the community in alcohol awareness.

Last week saw the group bring well known Queensland slam poetry artists Darkwing Dubs to Armidale to host a number of workshops and also contribute to the 'Just One Less' project which is aimed at educating the community about alcohol related issues.

Darkwing or Scott Sneddon when he is not performing would be known to many in Armidale as he attended the University of New England for a time and took part in many local theatre performances.

He was also a member of the Armidale hip hop group M.A.S.

His focus is now on slam poetry which has taken him all around the country performing and seen him place high in the national finals.

Sneddon told *The Express* he was proud to be apart of the project, and was of the belief that slam poetry had much to offer.

"It's great to be a part of getting slam and poetry out there to more places because Australia has a really unique opportunity to get unique stories from places such as Armidale, and slam poetry is a great way to tell those stories," he said.

Sneddon performed a number of poetic verses relating to alcohol which have been uploaded to Youtube by Beyond

Empathy, and the group is hoping this will encourage others to take part in the project.

"We are taking film of Scott performing his pieces for the project which will be uploaded to Youtube so that people can view his performance and get their head around the topic and how to go about it," Beyond Empathy lead artist Shayne Johnson said.

Sneddon encouraged any and all to get involved and said slam poetry is an all inclusive medium.

"It's definitely for everybody, in the Queensland finals we had a 60-year-old indigneous lady up against a 14-year-old and they were up against seasoned slam poets," he said.

The work by Sneddon

and Beyond Empathy will culminate in a series of workshops and performances later this year with popular spoken word and slam poetry artists Omar Musa and Emily Baker to visit, as well as one of Australia's most well loved hip hop performers Tommy Illfigga aka Thom Thum.

If you're interested in the Just one Less project or recording a slam poem visit Beyond Empathy's new suite at the traffic education centre in Mann St East between 4 and 6pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

You can view Darkwing Dubs' slam poetry performance at [www.youtube.com/beyondempathy](http://www.youtube.com/beyondempathy)



**RIGHT: Darkwing Dubs during the recording of his performance last Thursday**