



Armidale, NSW

[www.beyondempathy.org.au](http://www.beyondempathy.org.au)



*'The intellectual rigour and resource shared by SVA in the developmental journey of BE has been without doubt, a critical contribution to our solid and sustained growth over the past four years.'*

**Kim McConville** Executive Director  
Beyond Empathy

### How we came together

Beyond Empathy (BE) executive director Kim McConville became familiar with the SVA model in 2002 while working with another arts-based organisation which had successfully applied for SVA funding. Eighteen months later, Ms McConville set up her own organisation in BE, receiving backing from SVA chief executive Michael Trill, her mentor via SVA, Anna Buduls, and an invitation to join the SVA portfolio. BE hoped SVA could provide some rigour around the way its business was built, with particular focus on accountability and governance issues and diversity of funding streams.

### Mission

To use the arts to influence change in the lives of individuals and communities experiencing recurring hardship.

### Purpose

BE aims to improve lives by creating an environment of inclusive communities. BE uses art genres such as film, theatre, radio, multi-media and visual arts to enable young people to explore issues and build skills to improve their social and economic opportunities. It works with communities to build shared understanding about the issues faced by young people who experience hardship. BE advocates use of the arts as a catalyst for change, producing profound works of art and developing the skills and leadership qualities of participants and alumni. It uses an integrated service model that is embedded in sustained community partnerships that connect pre-parenting, parenting and early childhood support services with participants, primarily in regional and remote Indigenous communities.

### Growth

- SVA assisted BE as a start-up in November 2004. In FY08 more than 300 young people were engaged in BE workshops across eight projects. Over 50 per cent of these participated regularly in a BE intensive intervention. Through these projects BE delivered over 115 workshops, produced 34 arts based products, delivered 22 public events and two major regional outcomes, including a regional exhibition in Armidale, NSW involving 34 participants.
- BE has successfully expanded its award winning *Mubali* program into two new sites in NSW, while work has begun in Derby, WA for the implementation of a local *Mubali* program, through local and regional WA health partners. BE has also expanded its arts intervention program into five new communities in NSW and to Tennant Creek in NT.
- In FY08, 32 community support workers (from other agencies or community groups) worked alongside the BE team, learning new skills and ways of working that engage participants to incorporate into their everyday service delivery. Over 60 people from communities nationally participated in two BE Skill Development and Leadership camps.
- The three year *Message in a Bottle* program involved a total of 449 artists, community workers and BE Leaders from 10 communities in 126 workshops, performances and exhibitions.

### Social impact

- Through the *Mubali* program, 33 per cent of the girls who received antenatal checkups had not previously accessed any antenatal intervention. Ninety three per cent of Indigenous women younger than 21 years articulated a greater awareness and understanding about the importance of health during pregnancy and breastfeeding including use of prohibited drugs and alcohol while 55 per cent of these young women met a midwife for the first time.

Initial SVA distribution	<b>2004</b>		
Total distributions from SVA	\$840,011		
SVA in-kind support	\$280,000		
SVA brokered support			
– Matrix on Board financial systems assessment (2008)	\$10,000		
– Allens Arthur Robinson (2004-05)			
– AIN Coaching co-mentors x 3			

	FY05	FY08	CAGR
Revenue	\$124,379*	\$1,370,500	232%
Participants**	310	553	33.5%

\* Commenced operations November 2004

\*\* Involved in intensive interventions. If periodic interventions are included (where young people turn up once or twice or to one week of a program) then this figure would be 25-30% higher.

In addition, there has been a 70 per cent increase in sustained connection between the young mums, their mothers and health professionals.

- Interviews conducted with 105 participants in the *Message in a Bottle* program showed that 30 per cent indicated that they wanted to change their drug and alcohol use and that they were starting to talk to people about it, while another 35 per cent indicated that they were trialling changes to better manage their drug or alcohol use as a result of participating in the project.
- In BE's early childhood project *Connections*, of the families who were school age this year, 100 per cent started school on day one, compared to 13 other families at the local pre-school who still had not started school six weeks after the first term started.

### Why Beyond Empathy is graduating

SVA believes BE's journey of growth from start up to its present form has been impressive. The organisation's proven ability to deliver innovative artistic intervention programs with strong, evidence-based social impact, securing sustainable long-term funding relationships and partnering with a high-performance board leaves little room for SVA to continue to contribute to BE's growth journey in its engaged way, combining funding with expertise and networks.

### Looking ahead

BE recognises that the sustainability of its model lies in its ability to skill other artists, community-support workers and larger NGOs to use the arts as a non-welfare intervention. To address this need, the *BE wAy Tool Kit*, will be launched in 2009. BE has also developed a Pre- and Early Parenting (PEP) support model – an integrated service model that will deliver pre-parenting, parenting and early childhood development support services in regional and remote Indigenous communities. BE intends to pilot PEP in NSW, WA and NT over the next two years.