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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Breaking the silence on shame

We all experience shame. It is not like guilt – the feeling that we’ve done something bad. Shame is the secret feeling that we *are* bad - that we are not good enough, and we don’t belong. The more secret the shame, the more destructive it becomes and the more pain and isolation it causes.

Beyond Empathy (BE), a not-for-profit community arts and cultural development organisation, is launching it’s *No Shame: Free to be Me* campaign to break the silence on shame.

The campaign, which runs until December 16th, is not about denying that shame exists. It’s about bringing it out into the open, naming it and having the courage to talk about it. Shame thrives on silence so the best way to defeat shame is to talk about it.

According to No Shame Ambassador and Aboriginal Hip Hop artist, Nate Weatherall, “Shame takes joy out of things. It blocks the moment for u to really shine.”

*“No Shame: Free to be Me* gives us the chance to show our true potential and personality.”

When children and young people experience shame time and time again, layer upon layer it can change the way they think about themselves, undermine their potential, sabotage the possibilities available to them and causes life long damage to self.

No Shame Ambassador (and coordinator of BE’s Moree Projects), Jess Duncan stated, “For me it’s important to confront Shame because it stops us from living life to the fullest and seizing all of the opportunities presented to us.”

“Shame can stop us from doing a lot of things in life so this campaign raises awareness of the concept of shame and presents participants with the opportunity to celebrate being shame-free.”

“For me it’s important to celebrate being shame-free because it celebrates our uniqueness, our talents, our abilities and our freedom to be ourselves!”

During December, No Shame Ambassadors including poet/writer guy, Steven Oliver, hip hop artists, Jimblah and Nick Lupi (One Day/Spit Syndicate), will be campaigning to reach as many young people across the country by December 16th to ‘out’ shame in our communities.

According to BE Executive Director, Kim McConville “Across all of our community projects, shame comes up over and over as one of the biggest barriers for young people. We have found that when we acknowledge our feelings of shame and push through them, what we achieve can be astounding.”

To coincide with the campaign, BE has published a blog about Shame and the ways it can impact our lives along with a short film of Steven Oliver reciting his powerful poem “Me I Am” to encourage young people to love the labels that are used to shame them.

*(Photo and links below)*

**Let’s break the silence on shame**



*Photo by Emma Korhonen. Young people celebrate the launch of No Shame: Free to be Me at Coomaditchie. (You are welcome to publish the image in this media release).*

END

**Links:**

[No Shame Facebook](#)

[Blog - Breaking the Silence: why we need to talk about shame](#)

['Me I Am' by Steven Oliver](#)

[Beyond Empathy Facebook](#)

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**About Beyond Empathy:**

Beyond Empathy (BE) uses the arts to influence change and enrich the lives of individuals and communities experiencing recurring hardship. BE began its Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) work in remote NSW. Today BE works in urban and suburban, regional and remote communities across Australia. BE works where multiple disadvantage is found: social and economic, individual and community. In BE's experience, change is only possible over the long haul. Multiple interventions over many years are required to break cycles of disadvantage and embed new skills and attitudes among the individuals with whom we work.

Using art forms that resonate with our participants, we aim to disrupt old ways of thinking and empower marginalised people to re-engage with their communities, create new narratives and shift perceptions. Disparate groups in our communities are drawn together by their exposure to and involvement in the inspiring art projects, dissolving entrenched generational and demographic attitudes.

Our projects strive for culturally ambitious art works that are built from the contributions of many, diverse individuals and the stories that evolve from their relationships with community.

<http://be.org.au/>