

**On Request:**

Sample Images Available

Interviews Available with ACOCP President, participating families, photographers

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## **MOVING PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION BRINGS TO LIGHT EVERY PARENT'S TABOO FEAR**

No one likes to see or hear of very sick children – it's a universally-common horror that most people try not to contemplate in everyday life, yet **Heartfelt**, a photography exhibition by The Australian Community of Child Photographers (ACOCP) is about to shed new light on the subject.

ACOCP is an entirely-volunteer service that provides family portraits of children that have been stillborn; died neo-natally; are terminally ill; or have been born very early.

Members of ACOCP's nationwide network of photographers go on location at any time of the day and night to various hospitals to do the shoots. They also supply prints and albums to the families **free of charge**.

**On Monday 22 June 2009, ACOCP will open its Heartfelt Exhibition which will run for two weeks at MLC Gallery in Ultimo.** Free to the public, the showing features 20-30 images of the best of 153 pictures submitted by proud ACOCP photographers with the blessings of the children's families.

Dawn and Shane Johnson's twin girls were born early at 27 weeks in April 2008. Sadly, their daughter, Ava was stillborn and daughter, Briana passed away at seven days old. ACOCP president, Jessie Broome photographed both girls at Monash Medical NICU. Since then, Dawn and Shane have been strong supporters of ACOCP and will also attend the exhibition, where Dawn will speak about their experience with the ACOCP.

"It means so much to me to have those pictures and the memories of both girls and it's wonderful to have the pictures of Ava as we didn't get to spend as much time with her as Briana." Dawn said. "It was hard to look at them the first time as it was almost like reliving the last few hours of the day we had to say goodbye, but I am so glad that we were able to get them done and I cannot thank ACOCP enough."

Said Jessie Broome, "Above all else, these photographs represent beautiful memories of beautiful babies. Their pictures tell a thousand stories. Despite being taken at often sad times, the pictures we produce are often uplifting and are always treasured."

This exhibition draws together family portraits, which display the emotional sensitivity and awareness of these highly skilled and proficient photographers. The images, often taken under

difficult circumstances, both technical and personal are warm, beautifully detailed accounts of family love. Photographers are careful to balance the importance of representing the events these families are enduring, whilst minimising the many interventions and difficulties these children are facing.

Cristina Garduño Freeman, curator of the exhibition, urged people to support the exhibition by taking the time to visit. "These photographs are more than just images, each one tells the story of a young life, at times tragically short, at times endured, but always loved. These photographs are not documentaries, but rather tangible memories that help families both grieve and delight in their children. These photographs show the significant role that photography plays in creating a sense of family for all of us."

"The ACOCP exhibition is a chance for those who appreciate photography; who want to see pictures of precious children; or who are interested in finding out more about ACOCP services. I hope the community will visit the exhibition and support us," Broome said.

**There will be a silent auction and celebration event auctioning custom portrait sessions from some of the leading lifestyle and custom portrait photographers in Sydney, and press night on Thursday, 25 June at 6pm. ACOCP members and photographers will be available to meet visitors and to give media interviews.**

**The exhibition is open to the general public on:**

**June 22nd to 4th July 2009**

**Monday to Friday 11am to 6pm**

**Saturday 12 to 4pm**

**Location: MLC Gallery, 449 Harris Street, Ultimo 2007 (go to Heartfelt website for map).**

For more information [www.heartfelt.org.au](http://www.heartfelt.org.au) or [www.acocp.org.au](http://www.acocp.org.au)

**ACOCP** is an Australian community organisation giving the gift of photographic memories to children in need and their families. We specialise in giving the gift of photographic memories to families who have had a stillbirth, premature baby, infant in the NICU or child with serious or terminal illnesses. Participating photographers will come to the hospital or your home at a time convenient to you and will help supply you with cherished photographic memories. There will be no charge for this service.

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