



Children grow from good beginnings

## Why we think *Good Beginnings* is making a difference to children, families and the community

### INTRODUCTION

Presenter: Barbara Wellesley  
Title: National Director, *Good Beginnings*  
Topic: Overview of *Good Beginnings* (Introduction)  
Time: 2 minutes

#### OHT #1 - Introduction

The three papers will focus on partnerships developed by *Good Beginnings* to achieve our vision to build a society that gives all children a good beginning.

The *Good Beginnings* program was initially endorsed in 1995 as a project of the Lions Club of Greater Sydney, now joined with the Lions Club of Sydney. In 1997 the Commonwealth Department of Family Services funded *Good Beginnings* to develop a national approach to parenting education and support built around the creation of a network of *Good Beginnings* Volunteer Home Visiting & Parenting Programs.

#### OHT #2 - Model

The rapid expansion of *Good Beginnings* has provided a challenge to test and develop alternative models that are cost effective without jeopardising quality. These include responsibility for family assessments and supervision of volunteers to be shared with local health/welfare/community services and provision of an outreach model, particularly in rural/remote areas; development of parent group support for high dependency families by Coordinators; community education and joint ventures with other community agencies for Non-English speaking background communities.

Due to the diverse range of activities undertaken within the National Parenting Project. *Good Beginnings* is developing service strategies based on known best practices that assist in building collaborative community partnerships to ensure children and their parents have access to a range of services in their local community and ideally in the same locations, to enable valuable resources to be shared and to increase the capacity of the partnerships to attract corporate funds.

*Good Beginnings* has established a strong framework based on principles which allow services to be developed following priorities identified by the local community. The framework also provides best practice examples of prevention and early intervention services to give all children a good beginning.

*Good Beginnings* home visiting program has continued to receive and increase in the number of referrals that require intense professional support due to the complex nature of the issues the families are experiencing. Examples of such cases are often found in referrals from 'child protection', community health or hospital social workers, corrective services and even child health.

Professional support is commonly available for families with complex needs in the very short term. It is a reality that few services, if any, are equipped with the resources to provide such families with the support they require over an extended period of time.

Providing a professional worker and trained volunteer, visiting in tandem, *Good Beginnings* sites in Victoria, South Australia and Hobart are experiencing significant outcomes in working with families with complex issues.

## **PAPER I**

Presenter: Paul Prichard  
Title: Coordinator (Tasmania) / Deputy National Director, *Good Beginnings*  
Topic: The relationship between volunteer and professional workers in providing support to families with young children who are experiencing difficulties  
Time: 20 minutes

## **PAPER II**

Presenter: Jenny Scharer Smith  
Title: Lewisham / *Good Beginnings* Connector  
Topic: The importance of using a community development model when considering service delivery in high needs communities - *Good Beginnings* Connect Projects  
Time: 20 minutes

## **PAPER III**

Presenters: Barbara Wellesley  
Title: National Director, *Good Beginnings*  
Topic: The strategies that in our experience, are critical to program sustainability  
Time: 20 minutes

*Good Beginnings* believes in developing relationships at all levels in a community from the government and community agencies through to the families who join the program. The breaking down of 'silos' and valuing each other's contribution to children, families and communities is essential if we are to sustain community based programs.

### **OHT #3 WHAT HAS MADE THE DIFFERENCE?**

### **OHT #4**

#### **(A) How Do We Know It Works?**

Many agencies including *Good Beginnings* are struggling with the difficulty of developing suitable outcome measures for their programs and have stated they have the same need to determine what is the best way to convince themselves and others that they are making a difference to the families (and communities) with whom they are working (Bullen 1998)

The development and implementation of an accurate and robust information system that comprehensively meets the information needs of *Good Beginnings* can only be achieved through a process of thorough system requirements identification and specification. A system development plan has been developed that sets out the required steps and milestones to ensure achievement of this objective. The result of this plan will be a database that will be able to provide:

#### OHT #5

- Stronger evidence of the outcomes for families and communities of the rapidly expanding *Good Beginnings* programs required by the Commonwealth
- A detailed report of *Good Beginnings*' diverse activities identifying impact not only on families but the communities in which they live
- An opportunity for *Good Beginnings* services to validate the recommended data collected at a local service level and
- Because of the robustness and flexibility of the database, enable *Good Beginnings* to continue to meet their information needs
- An opportunity to provide the same database for other Commonwealth funded parenting/community development programs

#### OHT #6

##### (B) Community Ownership

The planning, development and implementation of *Good Beginnings* programs is based on needs identified by local communities and agencies. The process used is clearly documented in our Policies manual and includes:

#### OHT #7

- Meeting with *Good Beginnings* representatives
- Establish a local task force to promote *Good Beginnings*
- Conduct community consultation to assess need and seek support
- Identify and meet with key stakeholders including local authorities to seek support
- Call a public meeting to launch the program
- Establish a Local Advisory Committee to advise the Coordinator
- Development of an implementation plan and timeline
- Establish a Community Relations Committee for sustainability

*Good Beginnings* National Parenting Project is managed by the Board of Directors of *Good Beginnings* Australia Limited. The management structure for *Good Beginnings* National Parenting Programs can be adapted according to social and demographic characteristics, specific local needs and existing community resources.

## OHT #8

### (C) Partnerships

*Good Beginnings* has developed several management models. Below are described two of these models developed by *Good Beginnings* which demonstrate this local ownership and strong partnerships

## OHT #9

### *Good Beginnings Program managed by an auspicing body*

An auspicing agency can manage and operate a *Good Beginnings* Volunteer Home Visiting & Parenting Program. The program can be integrated into the established service system, using contacts of the auspicing body. The program coordinator is employed by the agency and recruits, trains and supervises volunteers and expands program activities to compliment other services provided by the auspicing agency.

A Branch Office agreement between the auspicing agency and the *Good Beginnings* National Office will ensure integrity of the program.

## OHT #10

### *Good Beginnings Program linked to a local child health service*

The program coordinator works together with the local child health nurse. Such structure might be of particular interest in rural areas, as an outreach model.

Suggested role of the child health nurse:

- Assist in recruitment of volunteers
- Assessment of families
- Assist in matching families with volunteers
- Supervision of volunteers (as appropriate)
- Participate in monitoring and evaluation

## OHT #11

In its endeavours to encourage local partnerships, support is available from the *Good Beginnings* National Office in the initial implementation phase, as well as for ongoing maintenance of the program. The ongoing relationship between proposed new programs and the *Good Beginnings* National Office will be described in a contract depending on the nature of the auspicing body and/or funding arrangements.

## OHT #12

### (D) Promotion & Marketing (Sustainability)

A key component of *Good Beginnings* is the creation of a marketing/fundraising strategy that will enable the continuation and expansion of *Good Beginnings* Parenting Programs.

## OHT #13

### *The Concept*

The concept of CLUB 200, supporting *Good Beginnings*, has been developed as an appealing, community inclusive fundraising strategy which will contribute to maintenance of existing programs and provide seed funding for new planned *Good Beginnings* programs. Membership by invitation will be required to donate \$200.00 per annum and the target is 200 members (more or less!) per CLUB 200.

## OHT #14

### *Incentives*

An attraction for CLUB 200 is the tax deductible \$200.00 per annum donation from all members representing a broad cross section of the community. There is no differentiation between corporate and individual members other than an expectation that the former may be better positioned to generate additional funds throughout the year.

An additional appeal for CLUB 200 members is the comprehensive list of incentives and entitlements – the former including tax deductions for donations, eligibility for annual awards and networking opportunities at regular social activities in addition to the usual benefits of such membership (badge, newsletter, etc).

***CLUB 200 Foundation and Good Beginnings Australia***

Tax deductibility for donations to CLUB 200 Foundation is assured with recent advice from the Australian Tax Office. Similarly *Good Beginnings Australia*, a company limited by guarantee, has been granted status as a public benevolent institution, with tax deductibility for all donations \$2 and over.

The aim for CLUB 200 Foundation is to create a capital fund of \$10 million within 10 years and support *Good Beginnings* expansion on interest earned.

***Membership***

CLUB 200 will have an "exclusive" membership encouraged by personal recommendation.

Membership will be nurtured by local ad hoc CLUB 200 coordinating committees and supported by the *Good Beginnings* National Office.

***Fundraising***

In addition to the annual individual membership donation of \$200.00, each CLUB 200 will be encouraged to generate additional funds throughout the year. Fundraising ideas are prepared for each CLUB 200 and distributed to the sites.

***Awards***

An awards program is a unique aspect of CLUB 200, designed to:

- Provide incentive for both membership and fundraising/promotional activities
- Acknowledge the contribution of CLUB 200 members supporting *Good Beginnings* in a tangible way

An annual CLUB 200 National Awards Dinner will be held in Sydney in October - the inaugural dinner to be held in 2001.

Essentially, CLUB 200 reflects the philosophy of *Good Beginnings* with its whole of community approach to fundraising for the support of local programs.

***Media Promotion***

The importance of the media in influencing community attitudes has been acknowledged for some time. A strategy to inform the media about the importance of strengthening families and neighbourhoods and promoting the role of parenting is being developed for testing. *Good Beginnings* has developed good relationships with several media personnel resulting in positive promotion of the purpose and activities of *Good Beginnings*.

*Good Beginnings* staff have also had some basic training to assist in working with the media. Media releases are prepared by the National Office and distributed to appropriate media personnel before any major event.