

To: Preventative Health Taskforce Secretariat
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From: Giddy Goanna Children's Charity

Date: 26 February 2009

Contact Details

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**Giddy Goanna TV Series:- a comprehensive approach
to effectively reduce obesity throughout all
communities of Australia**

Having just read the National Preventative Health Taskforce's discussion paper, Giddy Goanna is very keen to join with you in the challenge of making Australia the healthiest nation by 2020.

Giddy Goanna is innovatively designed to be an awesomely fun and effective way to inspire children and families to live healthier and safer lifestyles, including healthy eating and physical activity.

After reading your paper in detail, we believe Giddy Goanna can be extremely useful in assisting you to tackle the obesity epidemic, and potentially also favourably impacting the tobacco and smoking challenges, as well a whole range of health and safety issues.

Apologies for not responding by 2 January 2009. As we have been focusing all our energies on developing the content of a TV series, which the Dept of Health and Ageing funded the pilot of, we were not aware of the strategy until a few weeks ago.

However, the good news is that the pilot of the Giddy Goanna TV series has proven to be unbelievably popular and effective and now we are ready to move into the production phase of the TV series, and we are keen for the Dept of Health and Ageing to be involved.

Giddy Goanna has proven to be a highly effective "tool" to approach an incredibly wide range of issues in a surprisingly wide range of communities, including the disadvantaged sectors of low-income, remote areas, indigenous and cultures of non-English speaking

backgrounds (such as middle eastern, Pacific Islanders, Asian, African...)

You can't believe how excited we were to read your discussion paper last week. The timing, ethos and direction your strategy aligns unbelievably with Giddy Goanna's.

Before I proceed, I apologise for the length of this letter, but we wanted to provide you with a clear and comprehensive outline of how we believe Giddy Goanna can help you achieve the goal "Australia: the Healthiest Country by 2020".

How can Giddy Goanna assist with the Obesity Challenge

- Giddy Goanna is an **innovative, comprehensive, long-term, integrated** approach to risk factor reduction. It's messages are delivered in an interactive manner, are cumulative in nature and proving to have generational appeal and longevity.
- Giddy Goanna is already **very well-recognised and regarded positively** throughout communities and homes in all areas of Australia. Such recognition can take years to develop and greatly increases the chance of success of a program. Having a character that children love, greatly increases their desire to want to participate in that program (eg Dora the Explorer). Kids will demand it and parents will be keen to provide and encourage it. Not only is it keeping the children happy and amused, their health and education are being improved at the same time. Thus being a double win for parents.
- Giddy Goanna's next major strategy, the **TV series, is ready to implement NOW**. This enables urgent and sustained action on the obesity epidemic. The TV series will provide the core strategy of the Giddy Goanna program, from which the multi-faceted program can then impact children, families and communities with an integrated range of education tools (books, DVDs, games, school programs...). Research shows that Giddy Goanna needs to have a regular TV series to enable the other products to benefit children more effectively.
- **Research has proven that good TV shows are an effective means of educating and influencing the behaviours** of children, families and communities, particularly in regional and remote areas which are often difficult and expensive to deliver

health initiatives. Similarly, TV is much more accessible and effective medium for low-socio-economic, indigenous and other "cultural" families, than many other health promotion approaches.

- A TV series is **easily accessible & actively sought by children**. It is non-threatening to parents, and like it or not, is regularly used as a babysitter device. Thus, it is important to provide good, educational material on the "babysitter TV". Giddy Goanna's TV series will be backed up with Class-room resources, web-site activities and a myriad of other platforms. DVDs will be provided free to children in isolated areas that don't receive TV.
- Giddy Goanna has **successfully worked with the Dept of Health and Ageing on 10 projects** and is keen to continue this collaboration, which has resulted in the development of a such a incredible program.
- An **integrated approach** is utilised with:-
 - Giddy Goanna products designed for use in homes, schools and community (eg GP waiting rooms, fetes, events...)
 - A wide range of modalities:- books, DVDs, music, games, toys, web, school touring shows, community health events, concerts, TV messages...
- The **interactive style** gets children making decisions about health and safety choices, so when in the 'real world' they are used to making such choices
- Proven very effective health promotion tool in **disadvantaged communities**, including ATSI, low-socio economic, remote and other cultures...
- **Primarily targets children 2-6 yrs**, being the age group when most of our life learning occurs and attitudes are formed. However, we have found Giddy Goanna to be very useful up to 9yrs/Year 3 and appears set to have generational appeal. An additional point of interest:- Grandparents are some of the key purchasers of the Giddy products.
- All aspects of the program are **well-researched, continually monitored** and improved. A key strategy to effect this is Giddy's extensive range of partnerships and collaborations with individuals and organisations, including:-

- relevant state & federal govt depts (health, education, emergency services, transport, consumer affairs, police, primary industries, workplace health & safety...) & local govt...
 - Non-govt agencies such as Kidsafe, GP Associations, Royal Lifesavers, FarmSafe...
 - Consumer & community groups such as CWA, School P&Cs, IPCA (Isolated Parents & Citizens Association), National Farmers Federation, Playgroups, Child care centres...
 - Academie and research institutions, including Monash Injury Research, UQ Public Health, QISU, Early Childhood Faculties....
 - Heaps of children, parents, grandparents and other relevant individuals
- Giddy Goanna provides effective delivery of **evidence-based illness prevention/health promotion** programs, that are accessible to all Australians.
 - Giddy Goanna is an **independent children's charity**, so all proceeds from the sale of products and programs are utilised to develop and distribute more programs to benefit children, families and communities.
 - The Giddy Goanna program is designed to be **financially self-sustaining, thus not requiring substantial long-term funding** from the Dept of Health and Ageing. In previous grants, Giddy Goanna has received much praise from the Dept of Health and Ageing concerning the amazing amounts we achieved for the dollar-amount of the grant.
 - Giddy can assist to **increase the effectiveness of obesity-reducing strategies put in place by other organisations**, mentioned in the discussion paper. For example, Giddy will increase the desire of children and families to:-
 - Purchased and eat the fruit and vegetables make more accessible
 - Use the infrastructure put in place by local govt etc to enable physical exercise
 - Embrace and appreciate the healthy food served at school canteens and tuckshops

- **In the city, in the bush and in very remote areas**, children love Giddy Goanna.

What has Giddy Goanna achieved to date

- **Evaluation and feedback** on all of Giddy Goanna's products and programs have been extremely positive
 - Pre & post testing showed a significant improvement in safety awareness in 76% of students for the Schools Touring Show.
 - Regular unsolicited feedback is received from parents with stories of how Giddy has influenced the behaviour of their children, with the following themes frequently reported:-
 - The children automatically do the healthy/safe option before any suggestion from the parents, with the children telling the parents that "Giddy Goanna said..... helmets, long sleeves, sunscreen..."
 - Parents overhearing siblings saying to each other is one when being unsafe/ unhealthy:- "Don't do that, that's not cool. Only a Careless Cousins would do that!"
 - Children request a Giddy book is read every night
- **Products & Programs released**
 - **6 books** (over 200,000 copies distributed)
 - **1 DVD & 1 CD**
 - **TV CSAs** (Community Service Announcements) aired for FREE on all TV networks Australia wide. Currently Giddy is given millions of dollars worth of TV air time annually, often receiving a \$3000 prime-time slot.
 - **Demo Days** in Primary Schools:- over 65,000 students benefitted
 - **School Touring Show**:- 48,000 students & 420 schools in regional & remotes areas of SA, WA, Qld, NSW, ACT & Vic, totally 55,000km travelled.
 - **Kids Club**:- regular Activity Sheets & membership of 65,000
 - **Web-site**:- free activity sheets for children & teachers
 - **Teacher's Resource Kit**

- **TV Series Development**
 - **2 pilot episodes produced & excellent feedback received** from children, parents & teachers
 - **Developed the draft contents for the 13 week/ 65 episode TV series**
 - **ABC TV response** to Giddy's pilot:- It looks great. As ABC do not fund the production of any new children's TV shows, Giddy needs to find production funding for the first series and get it aired on one of the commercial networks (Ch 10, 9, 7 or SBS). After review of the series, ABC would then consider airing future Giddy Goanna series.

- **Giddy Goanna has achieved incredible nation-wide recognition** and positive opinion with nearly EVERY person in Australia.

Giddy Goanna's Current Plan

- **Secure production funding for TV series**
- **Obtain a contract with a National TV network** to air the series
- **Extensive Consultation Strategies**
 - *with*
 - Experts & relevant players
 - Kids, parents...
 - Conferences
 - Health Promotion
 - ATSI
 - CWA
 - Early Childhood Educators
 - GP
 - Playgroup
 - *to*
 - Ensure the content & scripts of the TV series are great
 - Promote the up-coming TV series, thus ensuring higher audience numbers right from commencement

(Giddy Goanna has always consulted widely during all stages of development of all products/programs, but we want to conduct another round of consultation on the draft contents of the TV series, before filming it)

- **Finalise content** of TV series and scripts
- Organise **University monitoring**, research, and evaluation to commence prior to TV series being aired
- **Merchandising** Development
 - Compete in International MipCom Merchandising Competition, as successful merchandising is imperative to the long-term continuation of Giddy Goanna, and participation in this competition will provide invaluable advice & insight
- **Produce and Air nationally**
 - the TV Series
 - A range of TV CSAs (Community Service Announcements, which are aired for FREE)
- **Deliver a free set of DVD's** to children in remote areas that do not have TV reception. The DVDs will contain the whole TV series.
- **Upload the TV series onto www.giddygoanna.org** so children can access all episodes at any time.

Giddy Goanna's Longer Term Plans (after the TV series commences)

- **Release a Giddy book on healthy eating and physical exercise**, which was drafted several years ago, but has been held for release until after the TV series commences, as this is deemed to be a more effective strategy.
- Provide **free access for all children**, families and communities to all Giddy's books, DVDs and music CDs via:-
 - Giving a copy to all:-
 - libraries in Australia (school, public, university & remote libraries)
 - Children's wards in hospitals
 - Child care centres & day care providers
 - Enable free download of DVD, CD and activities from www.giddygoanna.org
- Ensuring Giddy's books, DVD etc. are **easily accessible for purchase** via
 - The most commonly used retail outlets (newsagents, bookstores and dept stores such as Target, Kmart, Big W...)
 - Giddy's web-site
 - Special outlet & information services designed for disadvantaged communities (such as the Drought Bus...)
- Develop and distribute a **wide range of merchandise** that enables frequent reinforcement the Giddy's health messages (such as clothing, Crocs, toys, school bags, bicycle helmets, bed-covers...)
- With funding generated from the sale of books and other merchandise, implement a **range of free programs** to benefit all children in Australia
 - Demo Days
 - School Touring Show
 - Fruit & Vege Platters in schools
- Develop a **new TV series annually** and encourage the TV network to repeat the previous series, so Giddy can be on TV every morning and afternoon all year. Each new series enables

more health and safety messages to be incorporated. Children have an insatiable desire to learn lots if provided in an effective manner.

So in closing, Giddy Goanna is very keen to work with the Dept of Health and Ageing to reduce Australia's obesity epidemic, improve overall health and make Australia the healthiest national by 2020.

We gladly welcome your support and involvement in the production of the Giddy Goanna TV series. I am sure it will be lots of fun for everyone.

We look forward to hearing from you and providing whatever details you need.

Kind regards

Pam Brown

Manager

Giddy Goanna Children's Charity

www.giddygoanna.org