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The Amazing Brain

Program Plan by Marinda – March 2021

INTRODUCTION

As a parent raising children in Tasmania, I am passionate about the importance of our next generation being loved and safe, having material basics, being healthy, learning, participating and having a positive sense of culture and identity.

My vision for our children and young people is one where every child has what they need to become the happiest and best they can be; to reach their full potential; to positively engage in all aspects of life through into adulthood, to build a rich, strong, positive community for all.

We know the importance of the first 1000 days for our children and the value of parents as the most important primary carers and first educators of our future generations. The Government provides and supports a plethora of programs and services aimed at improving child and youth wellbeing though these are not always well communicated or connected and are often aiming to fix problems once they have occurred rather than prevent the harm from occurring in the first place.

I have chosen to document a Program Plan, called The Amazing Brain, as an avenue to convey how I envisage multigenerational, whole of society enhancements in child and youth wellbeing could be progressed economically.

THE PROGRAM

The Amazing Brain is an early intervention program designed to educate all parents across a broad range of societal health and wellbeing topics, **from the perspective of the positive and negative short and long-term effects on their unborn child's developing brain.**

Approximately 15 engaging modules (1 – 2 hours each) are delivered to parents either face-to-face (F2F) or via online platform(s) from the start of the second trimester of pregnancy, at times which suit the parent. A list of relevant support services, programs and resources is issued with each module for future reference.

This education is to inform parents' actions, behaviours and decisions through an educated health and wellbeing lens for themselves and their unborn child (multigenerational) as parents have the largest impact on their child's health and wellbeing in the early years.

The Amazing Brain empowers and supports all parents with knowledge, skills, tools and resources for their role as the primary carers and educators of Tasmania's next generation in the vital early days (before birth).

The program is delivered flexibly to meet the needs of expecting parents and does not stigmatise with delivery to any one specific cohort, rather delivering broadly to *all* expecting parents in order to make a generational impact on the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanian children now and into the future across all wellbeing domains.

MODULE SUGGESTIONS

Delivered either F2F or online (majority): 1–2 hours each.

Note:

- ❖ all through the lens of the effect (positive and negative) on a child’s developing brain short and long-term, including behavioural impacts.
- ❖ all able to be delivered in a consistent manner by a presenter/facilitator who is not an expert in the field.
- ❖ all with handouts (summary, list of relevant services and supports and references) emailed for future reference and available online (suitable for the lowest literacy levels).

Module	Additional Information
Brain Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including positive and negative effects which parents have influence over. • In a non-scientific manner easily grasped by the lay person.
Child Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milestones/Variations/Delays/Concerns – areas which parents have influence over.
Communication with baby/child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits for language/education, being loved, security etc.
Early Learning (from birth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of parents as first educators. • Understanding of play-based learning and not having to be a ‘teacher’ to ‘teach’. • What is occurring in the brain while talking, singing and playing. • Long-term benefits of children on the front foot educationally when starting school.
Family Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What it is and what it looks like (including anger, coercive control, financial control etc.). • Family units – variety. • The effects of FV on children. • What supports are available.
Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What it is, what it does to the brain and the effects on children.
Mental Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What it is, effect on the brain and how to promote it for self and child.

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Physical Health and Wellbeing (including living with disability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What it is, effect on the brain and how to promote it for self and child.
Healthy Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For self and baby/child.
Technology Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distracted parenting – effects on children. • Recommendations for screen use for babies and young children.
Parenting Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settling, sleep, shaking, tantrums, 123 Magic (overview, not program) etc.
Cultural Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal history and cultural connection as First Nations people. • Migrant families • LGBTIQ+ • The effect of having a positive sense of culture and identify on children.
Financial Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tips, tricks, services and supports to make the most of available finances.
Services and supports available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarising and reiterating <i>all</i> (after relevant services and supports being provided with each individual module). • Including useful easy access references (journal articles, websites etc.).
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to consult with community, experts etc. to ensure the most relevant topics are covered to ensure the maximum benefit on child and youth health and wellbeing now and into the future.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Task	How actioned
Modules developed (approx. 15) (see module suggestions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with UTAS and other experts in their field, based on accepted evidence-based research. • Presented in a stimulating format suitable for those with the lowest levels of literacy (eg. Video segments). • 1 – 2 hours each when delivered.

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<p>Complementary resources developed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts suitable for those with the lowest levels of literacy which summarise the key information of each module. • List of relevant services, supports, groups and references.
<p>Delivery locations and platform(s) determined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine schedule of delivery (approx. 18 sessions/day, 7 days/week to meet demand of 6000 births annually). • Determine locations for F2F delivery (eg. Child & Family Learning Centres, Child Care Centres, Schools, Libraries etc.) • Determine platform(s) for online delivery (eg. Telehealth, Zoom etc.) - Majority
<p>Create referral pathway of pregnant women upon commencing the second trimester</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to how the Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS) currently receives referrals of all births. • All pregnant women referred regardless of previous births – broad approach taken for broad education of the population for maximum benefit.
<p>Create booking system and attendance register</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using existing systems such as what CHaPS uses, existing commercial systems like EventBrite or the creation of new.
<p>Recruit and train staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill set required for delivery would include: ability to present to a group clearly and confidently, friendly and inclusive approach, supportive and interested in imparting knowledge (not patronising), administrative skills to record attendance and email follow-up resources. • The flexibility of service delivery would suit a workforce looking for flexibility.
<p>Deliver modules</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F2F - In collaboration with Child Family & Learning Centres, School, Libraries, Neighbourhood Houses etc. • Based on 6000 births per year and 15 (2 hour) modules being delivered – 18 sessions (majority virtually) required per day 7 days per week (average 14 participants per session) – 10 x FTE staff.
<p>Annual review of module content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All modules and related resources (summary handout, services and resources lists) reviewed and updated annually.
<p>Annual review of outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most outcomes would be expected longer term but initially, an increase in the proportion of children meeting or exceeding developmental milestones could be measured. • A more connected community, with increased engagement of parents with young children with CFLCs, libraries, schools (Launch Into Learning) etc. • A reduction in the incidence of family violence and child abuse and neglect would require review in trend terms. • Review participant feedback and attendance. • Within 5 years assess literacy and numeracy of children starting Kinder

EXPECTED BENEFITS (SHORT AND LONG-TERM)

Being Loved and Safe

- **Reduced rates of child abuse and neglect**
- **Reduced incidents of family violence**

How achieved	Relevant Wellbeing Domain(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child abuse and neglect from the perspective of a child’s brain development and its behavioural manifestations is taught (in lay terms). - Tools are given for fostering a safe environment for children. - Support services and resources are promoted. 	Being Loved and Safe Having material basics Being healthy Learning Participating Having a positive sense of culture and identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family violence (and all its subtle nuances) is taught, including from the perspective of a child’s developing brain. - Strategies to receive support and strengthen own networks are given. - Support services and resources are promoted. 	Being Loved and Safe Having material basics Being healthy Learning Participating Having a positive sense of culture and identity

Having Material Basics

- **Financially literate households**

How achieved	Relevant Wellbeing Domain(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial literacy to maximise available income is taught. - Support services are promoted. 	Having material basics Being healthy Learning Participating Having a positive sense of culture and identity

Being Healthy

- **Healthier parents and children (physically and mentally) – reduction in health costs long-term**

How achieved	Relevant Wellbeing Domain(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The effects of healthy eating (in pregnancy and for babies and children), mindfulness, alcohol and drug use are taught, from the perspective of a child’s developing brain and its effects on behaviour. - Support services are promoted. 	Being Loved and Safe Having material basics Being healthy Learning

Learning

- **Increased proportion of children meeting or exceeding developmental milestones**
- **Children commencing Kinder as keen learners with higher literacy and numeracy skills**

How achieved	Relevant Wellbeing Domain(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brain growth and development is taught (in lay terms). Skills to enhance through love and play are gained by parents. - Support services are promoted. 	Being Loved and Safe Having material basics Being healthy Learning Participating Having a positive sense of culture and identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents fully understand and appreciate their role as their child’s first educator, the importance of education as part of bonding and playing and the rapid rates of growth and development in children in the years before reaching school. - Support services are promoted. 	Being Loved and Safe Having material basics Being healthy Learning Participating Having a positive sense of culture and identity

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Participating

- **A more connected community**
- **Less children entering the Youth Justice system**

How achieved	Relevant Wellbeing Domain(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children are raised in homes aware of positive and negative effects on brain development and its links to behaviour, are in safer environments and better educated when commencing school so have more opportunity to develop a positive identity in society and have hopes and aspirations in life which are achievable for them. - Support services are promoted. 	Being Loved and Safe Having material basics Being healthy Learning Participating Having a positive sense of culture and identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Succinct, accessible information of relevant local support services and groups is provided with each module undertaken. - Parents may be exposed to Child Family and Learning Centres, Libraries and Schools before their child is born (and will be encouraged to continue the relationship after birth). 	Being Loved and Safe Having material basics Being healthy Learning Participating Having a positive sense of culture and identity

Having a positive sense of culture and identity

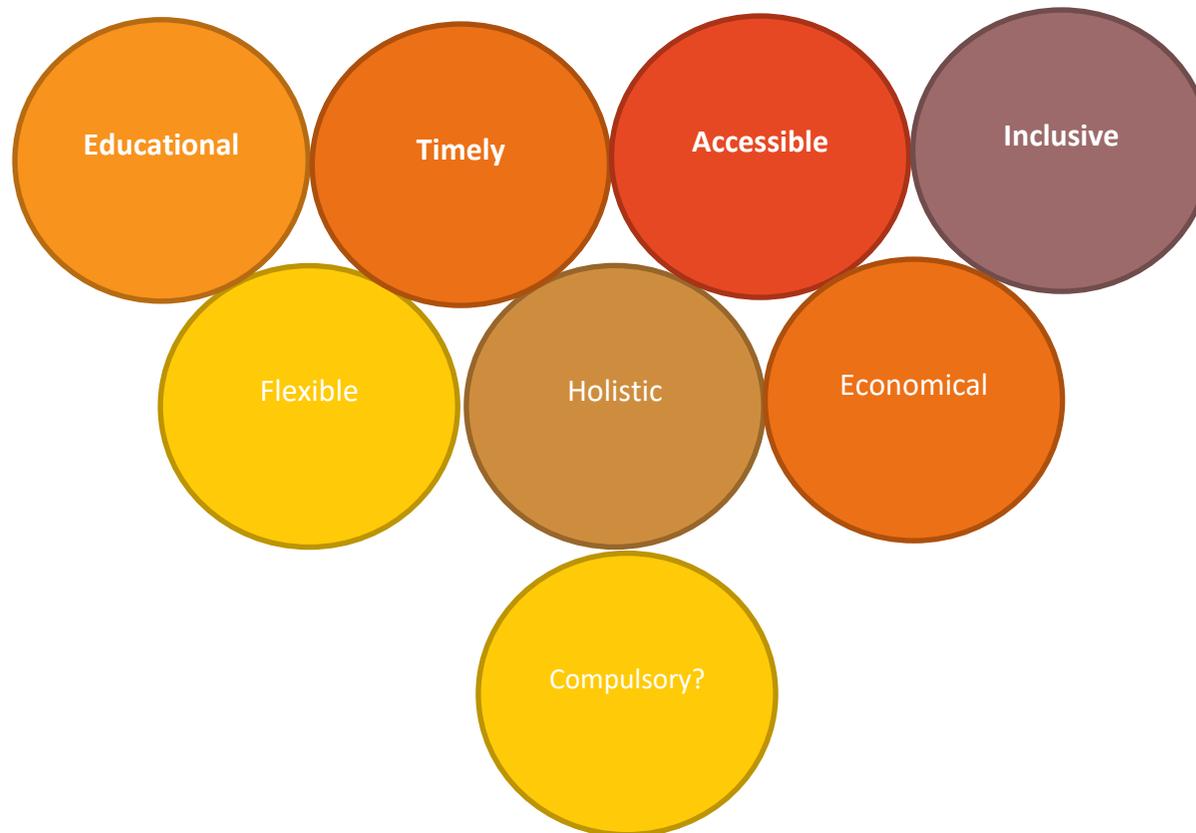
- **More children receiving quality parenting**
- **Increased cultural awareness**

How achieved	Relevant Wellbeing Domain(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents are educated on evidence-based parenting practices. - Support services are promoted. 	Being Loved and Safe Having material basics Being healthy Learning Participating Having a positive sense of culture and identity

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<p>- Cultural awareness (aboriginal, LGBTQIA+, migrant etc.) is taught across this broad adult population giving space for children to understand and identify with culture while growing up.</p>	<p>Being Loved and Safe Having material basics Being healthy Learning Participating Having a positive sense of culture and identity</p>
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KEY PROGRAM ELEMENTS



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Element	Rationale
Educational	For parents to make informed decisions about their and their child's lives and have knowledge of supports - enhancing all wellbeing domains.
Timely	Parents are educated at the time they can make the most impact or make positive changes – before the child is born. Parents are conscious of the responsibility they have and support available to them early.
Accessible	Delivered either F2F or via online platform(s).
Inclusive	Does not discriminate – <i>all</i> parents-to-be participate regardless of number of previous children, race, gender, socio-economic status, income etc.
Flexible	Delivered at a variety of times (could be midnight) and could be completed anonymously at home online or in a group F2F.
Economical	Cost effect method of reaching a broad population to make a generational, community-wide impact.
Holistic	Covers the key topics for child and youth wellbeing across all domains providing not only practical education and information but also referral pathways to the plethora of Government and Non-Government services and supports which exist but are not always widely known. Aims to influence two generations at once.
Compulsory?	To reinforce that we as a state and we as a community truly value all children having the best possible start to life and understand that start begins in pregnancy. To clearly demonstrate the importance the Government places on the health and wellbeing of Tasmanian children and a parent's responsibility primarily for achieving this (with full Government partnership support). A minimum percentage of modules required to be attended by partner/support person also. To have the content delivered as broadly as possible through the Tasmanian population for the maximum positive impact. Incentivise and reward by supplying a voucher for baby products upon completion of all modules. Lead the way for National roll-out.

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RISKS

Risk	Mitigation
Miscarriage/Stillbirth during program	Commence program in the second trimester of pregnancy. Grief and loss resource pack and support service list made available.
Topics triggering own trauma	Referral resources and contact details are provided with every module.
Online sessions (anonymously) – parents log in but do not engage	Flexible delivery offering sessions outside business hours. Person-centred – parents attend when convenient for them. Short, engaging modules (1-2 hours each and a variety of media). Initial marketing – promote ‘we’re all in this together’ and the importance of raising a society together. Follow up resources (summary, services list etc.) are emailed as a future resource.
Strong backlash if compulsory	Compulsory training is required to gain a Gun Licence... Ensure entire community understands the outcome is to increase the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanian children generationally, reducing harm before it occurs, and is research-supported and evidence-based. Program is designed to empower parents and value their role in society above all other roles. Short-term – approx. 15 x 1-2 hour modules. Flexibly complete in 1 week to 4 months, but an investment in the future of Tasmanian childrens’ health and wellbeing. Flexibility of delivery reduces impost on parents’ time. Promote the interesting content and ‘there’s always something to learn’.
Breach of Privacy (online)	Webinar style delivery – individual participants are not visible.

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COST BREAKDOWN (EXAGGERATED ESTIMATE)

Item	Description	Estimated Cost (\$)
Capital expenditure		
Module Development	15 x 6 months (\$100k ea)	\$1,500,000
Resource Kit Development	15 x 6 months (\$120k ea)	\$1,800,000
Recruit and train staff	20 staff (1 st year. 10 staff subsequent). 2 weeks training (\$90K pro-rata)	\$ 200,000
Ongoing costs		
Registration/Attendance System	EventBrite equivalent annual licence	\$ 100,000
Online Platform(s)	Zoom equivalent annual licence	\$ 50,000
F2F Locations	2/day x 7 dpw @ \$100 ea	\$ 100,000
Staffing (module delivery)	20 staff (\$90K)	\$2, 200,000
Annual Review of Content	15 x 1 month (\$20K ea)	\$ 300,000
	15 x 1 month (\$25k ea)	\$ 375,000
Total 1 st Year:		\$5,950,000 (\$1000/birth)
Total Subsequent Years		\$3,225,000 (\$500/birth)

SCOPE

- Creation of engaging, accessible, evidence-based, educational resources
- Flexible, person-centred delivery of training sessions
- Resource lists for future reference
- Managing bookings and attendance

Does not include:

- Case Management
- Direct referrals (though information is provided for self-referral)

CONCLUSION

The Amazing Brain is a cost-effective program designed to educate, influence and support every expecting Tasmanian parent, to impact two generations at a time, across a broad range of subjects to ensure not only the future health and wellbeing of our precious young citizens, but also a stronger community as a whole.

The program promotes other programs and services with accessible, relevant and current information resources. COVID-19 has demonstrated that services can be delivered in an innovative and flexible manner and The Amazing Brain capitalises on these learnings.

Cost savings in the health, education, child safety and judicial systems over time would be expected and would further strengthen the value of this program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on Tasmania's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.