

# TBS Evaluation Framework

## Project Scoping Paper

### Background

Over the past three years TBS has undertaken a wide range of activities to build evaluation capacity. Commitment to this was set out in the *TBS Strategic Plan 2006-2009* under outcome 1.8 “rigorous evaluation of what we do (service by service and as an organisation)”. The foundation for this work was the development of the TBS log frame which describes how our services contribute to the organisational purpose of “creating caring and inclusive communities and a just society” by working to achieve a number of outcomes for individuals and their communities.

TBS’ evaluation work has drawn on Mark Friedman’s Results Based Accountability model which focuses on measurable outcomes for clients and communities and answers three key questions:

- 1 How much did we do?
- 2 How well did we do it?
- 3 Is anyone better off?

The first of these questions is answered through the administrative data TBS programs collect about their clients and the services they receive. The TBS client satisfaction survey is an example of how we are answering the second of these key questions, *How well did we do it?* Answering the question, *Is anyone better off?* has been the driver for an increased focus on measuring outcomes. Further examples of how these three questions are being answered by TBS services are given in Appendix 1.

TBS has been developing an evaluation approach through work across a number of its services (see Appendix 2). One of the earliest of these evaluation projects was with TBS’ three Scarba services, which since January 2007 have been using a number of tools to measure client outcomes. Through this work we have learned important lessons about designing, implementing and sustaining useful evaluation and the proposed evaluation approach set out in this document builds on these lessons.

This document sets out the direction of our evaluation work over the three years of the next strategic plan (2009-12).

### Scope of this strategy

Evaluation of client focussed services operated by TBS. Evaluation of internal TBS departments or processes e.g. Finance /Human Resources is not included in the scope of this strategy.

### Deliverables

This document sets out the strategic direction for evaluation. A number of other projects will be initiated to implement this strategy.

## What is evaluation?

“Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgements about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming” Patton (1997).

Evaluation involves more than just counting how much of a service is provided (how many/how often /how long) and also answers the questions “How well did we do it?” and “is anyone better off?”. For further definition of evaluation and other key terms used in this document, see the Glossary at Appendix 3.

## Goal of evaluation at TBS

The overarching goal of evaluation at TBS is to inform the ongoing development of the organisation and its services through exploring the extent to which they are meeting their intended outcomes for clients and communities.

## How do we use evaluation at TBS?

- To explore the impact of our work.
- To inform the ongoing development of effective services.
- To identify gaps in service delivery for the purpose of developing new services.
- To inform stakeholders including funders, clients and communities about the nature and results of our work.
- To set targets for improving the quality and outcomes of our work (long term).

## Evaluation Values

Building on the TBS values of optimism, integrity, respect, collaboration and effectiveness, the following values will guide the evaluation strategy.

### Evaluation at TBS.....

#### **Will help us know if we are meeting our organisational purpose**

Evaluations will predominantly take place at the service level but will all contribute to building a broader picture of TBS’ success in achieving its overall purpose as outlined in the log frame.

#### **Is useful**

Evaluation results can be used to enhance service delivery.

#### **Focuses on outcomes and process**

Evaluation of outcomes helps us answer the question “Is anyone better off?”. Evaluation of process (How much did we do? How well did we do it?) provides important context for interpreting these findings.

#### **Gives voice to clients**

The experiences and suggestions of our clients are integral to understanding the impact of what we do. Innovative and tailored approaches are used to ensure we hear from children, older people and other populations who are often overlooked in evaluation.

#### **Is realistic**

Evaluation strategies need to be pragmatic and sustainable, will build on existing reporting requirements and be integrated into day to day practice.

#### **Is collaborative**

Evaluation activities will be developed in close consultation with staff, clients and, where relevant, other external stakeholders.

#### **Adopts high ethical standards**

Evaluation tools will be designed to reflect high ethical standards, mindful of the need to promote positive self-views in clients and to minimise harm (and will be undertaken in line with *National Statement on Ethical conduct in Human Research* – see Appendix 4)

## Striking the balance in evaluation

Our experience has demonstrated that there are a number of key decisions to make in prioritising resources around evaluation. Articulating and considering each of these decisions has helped us to develop an approach to evaluation. Experience has demonstrated that there is no one right position to adopt on any of these and the approach set out in this document uses elements of all of them. The key decisions are illustrated below.

Should all services be continuously evaluated or should services only be evaluated periodically or selectively?



What is the right balance for TBS between measuring how much we do (e.g. occasions of service) and conducting evaluations which focus on outcomes?



Should unique outcome measures be identified by each service tailored specifically to the work they do or should TBS strive to establish common measures which can be used across similar programs to measure overarching TBS aims?

Unique measures allow a tailored approach to evaluation. Shared measures allow the organisation to gather larger and possibly more meaningful data sets, build expertise and enable more global reporting to occur on what TBS services achieve.



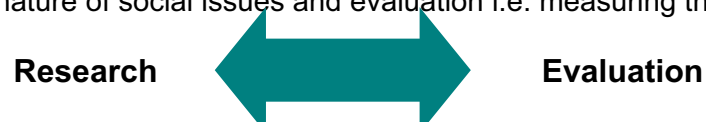
Should evaluation be managed and conducted at the service level or should it be undertaken by the SPAR team at Paddington House ?



Should TBS build its capacity to conduct its own evaluations or should they be outsourced to external evaluators?



What is the right balance for TBS between conducting research i.e. answering questions about the nature of social issues and evaluation i.e. measuring the impact of what our existing programs do?



## **TBS Evaluation Approach**

The following section sets out our approach to evaluation at TBS. This approach draws on the successful elements of our evaluation work to date and has been developed by Social Policy and Research in collaboration with an Evaluation Strategy Reference Group with representation from across the organisation.

### **How do we count how much work we do?**

Although individual services collect considerable data on their work and many are involved in extensive reporting to funders, there are no consistent counting rules for clients and/or occasions of service across the organisation and this can lead to gaps in measuring the extent of our work. Work will be undertaken to develop consistent counting rules across services and to explore the feasibility of a common client database so that this information is readily accessible.

### **Which services are evaluated?**

Criteria will be agreed to decide which services implement the evaluation framework. These services will collect minimum data on client numbers and demographics as well as the extent of (number/frequency/length) services provided. In addition, they will collect data on client outcomes. Ongoing reporting of data around these outcomes will be built into current operational planning and annual reporting processes.

### **What tools should be used to measure outcomes?**

Building on our evaluation work to date, and in close consultation with services and relevant experts, SPAR will identify a number of appropriate and robust outcome measures and tools that meet the TBS evaluation values. The priority will be to locate tools that are not burdensome for staff or clients and provide meaningful data that can be compared to other populations. Possibilities for collecting data from other relevant agencies e.g. school attendance / hospital admissions will be explored. The idea is to consolidate the measures and tools used across TBS into a single agreed selection. These will include agreed tools for measuring community connectedness and client satisfaction.

### **How will we select outcomes to measure?**

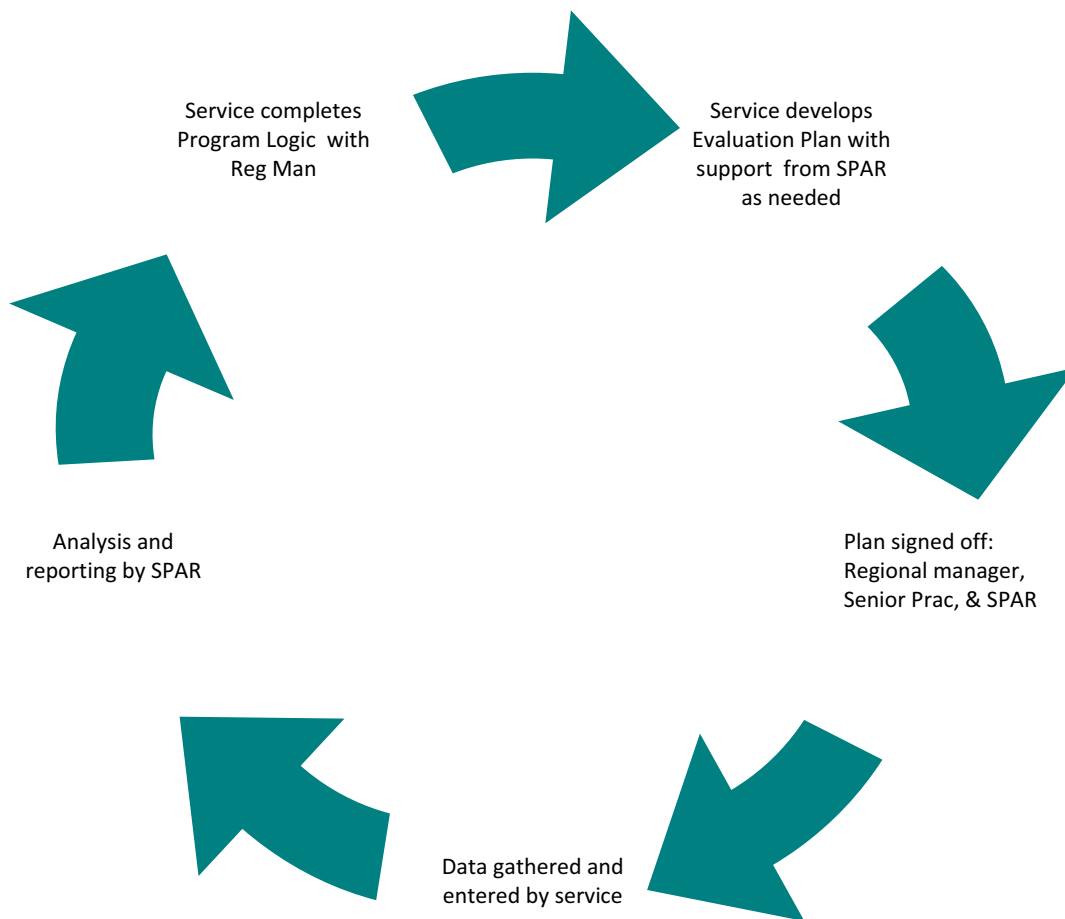
All TBS services will collect data from clients to measure community connectedness and client satisfaction using tools identified by SPAR. In addition each service will apply the program logic planning process to identify two additional outcomes appropriate to the nature of their work and client group around which they intend to collect data. Tools to measure these outcomes will be identified from the TBS selection. In this way each service will be collecting data around a minimum of four outcome measures. Services may identify one additional measure not included in the TBS selection if it can be demonstrated that the measure is integral to the meaningful evaluation of the service. The analysis of data collected through this measure will be undertaken at the service level.

### **What qualitative data will we collect?**

Although the focus of the evaluation framework is on quantitative tools and measures the rollout of the framework will also develop tools for services to collect qualitative data around the impact of services on clients and communities. This will include tools to develop case studies and guidance on how to undertake interviews and focus groups.

### **Who should do the work ?**

Identifying service outcomes (through a program logic process) and selecting appropriate outcome measures will be undertaken by services, led by the relevant Senior Practitioner with support as needed from SPAR. An evaluation plan will be developed for each service and signed off by the Regional Program Manager, Senior Practitioner and SPAR. The collection and entry of data from outcome tools will in most instances be conducted at the service level. Managers will be responsible for ensuring all staff are undertaking evaluation activities. SPAR will take responsibility for managing the analysis and reporting of results. Detailed roles and responsibilities will be developed as part of a policy and procedures document.



### **How much work should be outsourced?**

A small number of TBS evaluation projects may be outsourced where there is a particular need for this or it is a non-negotiable aspect of a funding agreement. This work will be coordinated by SPAR in partnership with the Regional and Service managers.

### **What is the balance between research and evaluation?**

Both evaluation of services as well as the broader TBS research agenda are important. The organisation is well placed to contribute to initiating and supporting research projects on its own or working in partnership with other organisations including other NGOs and universities. There is an important interplay between these two activities as evaluation can drive the research agenda and research identifies new areas for TBS work.

## Components of the strategy

### **Minimum Data Set**

A minimum data set for use across TBS services is required to enable consistent measurement of service outputs (e.g. number and characteristics of clients) and to answer the first question in implementing the Results Based Accountability framework “how much did we do?”. The work needs to be undertaken with a view to ensuring that data entry is kept to a minimum and duplicate counting and reporting is avoided. The possibility of this data set being designed with the capacity to measure outcomes as well as outputs will be explored in order to minimize burden to staff and assist reporting.

### **Suite of Outcome Measures and Tools**

A project will be undertaken in consultation with TBS services and drawing on national and international literature to identify a suite of approximately 20 measures and associated tools/instruments which can be applied across the organisation. The project will be guided by review of tools proven useful in evaluation work to date, those already required to be collected for other reporting and also those for which data exists on other populations.

### **Policy and Procedures**

Services will require support to ensure that evaluation plans and measures are adopted in a consistent and planned way. A policy and procedures document will clarify roles, responsibilities and processes and reporting timeframes. It will also address process issues such as consent and privacy and contain relevant planning and reporting templates. Separate reporting templates will be included for the range of audiences including internal, funders, stakeholders and service users.

### **Capacity Building**

SPAR will provide training to staff and managers to support implementation of evaluation strategies. Specialist training will also be required for a team of key TBS staff well placed to take on the task of Program Logic facilitation on an as needs basis across TBS.

## Appendix 1 - Sample measures using Results Based Accountability model

### HOMESHARE

<p><b><i>How much did we do?</i></b></p> <p>How many homeshare matches were made?</p> <p>How long did the matches last?</p>	<p><b><i>How well did we do it ?</i></b></p> <p>What was the median length of homeshare matches?</p> <p>How satisfied were clients with the homeshare process?</p>
<p><b><i>Is anyone better off? (count)</i></b></p> <p>How <b>many</b> householders experienced an increase in community connectedness ?</p>	<p><b><i>Is anyone better off? (in percentage terms)</i></b></p> <p>What <b>proportion</b> of householders experienced an increase community connectedness ?</p>

### SCARBA SERVICES

<p><b><i>What did we do ?</i></b></p> <p>How many families were seen?</p> <p>How many Protective Planning meetings did we attend ?</p>	<p><b><i>How well did we do it ?</i></b></p> <p>What proportion of parents felt they had a say in the services they received?</p>
<p><b><i>Is anyone better off ? (count)</i></b></p> <p>How <b>many</b> parents increased the number of safety behaviours they were practicing after six months of intervention?</p>	<p><b><i>Is anyone better off ? (in percentage terms)</i></b></p> <p>What <b>proportion of</b> parents increased the number of safety behaviours they were practicing after six months of intervention?</p>

### BRIGHTER FUTURES

<p><b><i>What did we do ?</i></b></p> <p>How many home visiting hours were provided ?</p> <p>How many supported play groups hours were received.?</p>	<p><b><i>How well did we do it ?</i></b></p> <p>What are the reasons for case plan closures ?</p> <p>What proportion of families are from culturally diverse backgrounds ?</p>
<p><b><i>Is anyone better off ? (count)</i></b></p> <p>How <b>many</b> parents families are re-reported to DoCS ?</p>	<p><b><i>Is anyone better off ? (in percentage terms)</i></b></p> <p>What <b>proportion of</b> families are re- reported to DoCS ?</p>

## Appendix 2 – Evaluation and research projects TBS – August 2008

Child and Family	Key issues	Reporting
<p>Scarba services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program logic undertaken</li> <li>• Service model documented</li> <li>• Outcomes based evaluation framework developed</li> <li>• Outcome measurement tools developed</li> <li>• Tools used with all new clients from 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2007</li> <li>• New caseworker forms developed to capture process data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low numbers of referrals into service has slowed down reporting timeframe</li> <li>• Staff changes have also had impact on the process</li> <li>• Early Intervention Program withdrew from outcomes evaluation as tools not applicable to their client group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First report on outcome data in December 2008</li> </ul>
<p>Early intervention Program Bondi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program logic undertaken</li> <li>• Service model – in process</li> <li>• Currently exploring tools to measure agreed outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works with very young babies and challenge to find outcome tool sensitive enough to measure change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation framework agreed and tools piloted from February 2009</li> </ul>
<p>Transform (National Illicit Drugs Strategy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program logic undertaken</li> <li>• Outcomes based evaluation framework developed</li> <li>• Outcomes measurement tools developed</li> <li>• Tools being used with new clients from early 2007</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff changes have meant some delays in implementing the evaluation</li> <li>• Collecting information from schools around attendance – will use this to test proxy data collection for the future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First report on outcomes in December 2008</li> </ul>
<p>Volunteer Home Visiting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service model documented</li> <li>• Review of current data collection forms to rationalise and link to program outcomes</li> <li>• New forms rolled out 1/7/07</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding cut for 2 of the 3 programs in 2008/09</li> <li>• Will be important to do analysis of findings to date to support future funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First report on analysis of data from new forms – December 2008</li> </ul>
<p>Strengths Based Practice in Children's Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program logic undertaken</li> <li>• Evaluation framework developed</li> <li>• Data to be captured during project</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation reported in August 2008</li> </ul>



Brighter Futures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program logic undertaken</li> <li>Client database (DMS) implemented across services</li> <li>Contract with SPRC and DoCS to receive regular reports on outcomes for TBS families from state-wide evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DoCS imposing constant changes on rules of data collection has been problematic for development of DMS</li> <li>Significant staff resources used to implement state-wide evaluation so difficult to do much more than this</li> <li>Brighter Futures funded evaluation project officer not funded in 2008/09</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing reporting of DMS data to managers and teams</li> <li>TBS Family Survey data reported six monthly since June 2008</li> </ul>
Partnerships in Early Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External evaluation by Social Policy Research Centre</li> <li>Ongoing data collection and reporting back to services</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final evaluation report - June 2008</li> <li>Presentation of findings at AIFS conference</li> </ul>
Communities for Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contracted external evaluator of both sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contract with external evaluator terminated August 2008</li> <li>Identifying resource to undertake remaining work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interim evaluation report due July 2008 - delayed</li> <li>Final evaluation report June 2009</li> </ul>
Camden Communities 4 Kids – Little Steps to Big School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program Logic undertaken</li> <li>Tools developed to measure outcomes</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report of evaluation findings - June 2008</li> <li>Program brochure produced incorporating evaluation findings</li> </ul>
PARC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early discussions with team to explore evaluation strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff changes have delayed starting evaluation work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation framework will be agreed by December 2008</li> </ul>
Nerang Early Years Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early discussions with Queensland Government to develop Program Logic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queensland Govt. planned to commission external evaluation but nothing happened yet.</li> </ul>	
<b>Centre for Women's Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program logic undertaken</li> <li>Current evaluation tools being revised in light of refined outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jessica Lopez now working as South West Sydney research and evaluation officer and driving this work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New tools piloted July – September 2008</li> <li>New tools rolled out from January 2009</li> </ul>

<b>Community Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program logic undertaken</li> <li>Evaluation framework developed</li> <li>Measurement tools developed and implemented from July 2007</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for the Program has been withdrawn by SVA – will complete evaluation for current matches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report of data collected to date in October 2008</li> </ul>
Ocean Street Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External evaluator commissioned to evaluate feasibility and do preliminary design</li> <li>Program logic undertaken</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delay in DA application means additional evaluation work has not been undertaken at this stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation planning will commence if DA approved</li> </ul>
Community Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program logic commenced</li> <li>Pilot areas selected for evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No history of outcome evaluation in these services – starting from a low base</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation framework will be developed and piloted in 2 sites in 2008-09</li> </ul>
<b>Centre for Social Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of Program done</li> <li>SPAR reviewed 2007 Sydney Leadership Program</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft report completed</li> <li>Final report and presentation to Strategy Group in July 2008</li> </ul>
<b>Client SatisFACTion survey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed and piloted organisational wide client satisfaction survey</li> <li>Survey undertaken October 2007</li> <li>Overall and individual service reports produced</li> <li>Report on qualitative data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single survey yielded consistent organisation wide data including demographics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual reports sent to services April 2008</li> <li>Full report and one pager for clients published and uploaded to website</li> </ul>
<b>Bridging the Gap</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation framework developed</li> <li>Application for funding for baseline data collection and 3 year ARC linkage grant</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on baseline data early 2009</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3 TBS GLOSSARY (selected excerpt)

### Data

Factual information, especially information organised for analysis or used to reason or make decisions.

### Evaluation

The process of determining the value of something – how worthwhile a particular effort is. There are many different elements to evaluation.

#### **Evaluation: effectiveness and efficiency**

Measuring effectiveness is measuring the extent to which we are meeting our aims and objectives, also known as results-focused or outcomes-focused evaluation. Effectiveness measures whether an intervention was worth doing; efficiency measures how economically something is done – getting the best value out of our resources.

#### **Evaluation: process**

An evaluation of the internal dynamics of an organisation, service or program – such as policies and procedures, service delivery mechanisms, management practices etc.

### **Evidence-informed practice (EIP); also known as evidence-based practice**

A way of finding out how we can get better outcomes for the people we work with, and understanding the different options that are available. The process involves searching for and making use of the best available evidence to help make informed decisions. Evidence (see below) might be used to change our work practices, guidelines, policies and procedures. This approach complements - **but is not the same thing as** - our internal evaluation data, service user feedback and practitioner wisdom. EIP requires the integration of both individual expertise and the best available evidence - not one or the other.

Generally, the evidence-informed practice approach involves following these steps:

1. formulate an answerable question - it could be about assessment, prevention, intervention etc.
2. search for the best evidence to answer the question
3. evaluate the evidence for its validity, relevance and applicability
4. integrate the evidence with your practice experience and client strengths, circumstances, preferences etc
5. implement your evidence-informed decision
6. evaluate the outcome of the decision

### Evidence

Evidence can be gathered from a range of sources including (but not limited to) academic journals, statistics, research and evaluation reports, and systematic reviews of research. Evidence can vary in quality - you need to make a judgement about the validity, relevance and applicability of evidence in informing your practice, and therefore the weight you would give it.

### Goals

Broad statements of what you intend to achieve. We would generally not know whether we have achieved our goals – objectives are more specific and measurable.

*Similar term:* Aims.

### Inputs

The resources we need to carry out activities, eg staff, funding, equipment etc.

### LogFrame

The Benevolent Society's outcomes framework (known as the LogFrame) is a hierarchy of outcomes, starting with the overall purpose of The Benevolent Society and breaking this down to explore how each service's outcomes for individuals, families and communities are helping us meet our purpose. It is one of our evaluation tools.

### Measurement tools

The instruments and tools we use to measure our performance indicators and outcomes. Examples include questionnaires, surveys, staff observation, self-report etc. (See also Performance indicators.)

### **Milestone**

A critical point in the life of a project by which time identified activities should have been completed and/or targets reached.

### **Outcomes**

Outcomes are essentially the 'end result' of your work. They are the impacts or consequences caused by an activity or intervention beyond its outputs. Outcomes are often long term, may be intended or unintended, positive or negative. Unlike an output, an outcome can be beyond the direct control of an intervention.

*Similar term:* Results.

### **Outputs**

The products or services which are produced and delivered by an activity in order to achieve its outcomes. Outputs are tangible goods and services, usually expressed in units of service, eg number of clients visited, published books etc. Outputs generally don't indicate anything about the actual impact of a service on clients (see also Outcomes).

### **Program**

The Benevolent Society's term for a group of services that are categorised by type eg Community Options or Child Protection. A service is a subset of a program (see also Service).

### **Program logic**

A process of agreeing service outcomes to inform planning and evaluation. It involves planning activities, required resources, outputs and outcomes.

### **Research**

Interested, practical enquiry to discover or interpret facts, events, behaviours or theories.

Researchers are interested in systematically understanding how things or events work and happen, and why.

#### **Research: action research**

A multi-stage type of research, in which a problem is researched, changes are made, the problem is researched again, more changes are made, and so on until the problem is solved.

#### **Research: qualitative research**

Usually interview-based research, in which questions are open-ended, and results are expressed in non-numerical terms.

#### **Research: quantitative research**

Usually survey or questionnaire based research, in which findings are reported in numerical terms.

**Results:** see Outcomes.

### **Service**

The Benevolent Society's term for an individual service running in a particular location, eg ESOP or South West Sydney Scarba. (See also Program.)

## **Appendix 4 ~ National Statement on Ethical conduct in Human Research**

### **Respect for individuals and groups**

You must respect the autonomy of individuals to make decisions for themselves, including consenting to research (or not) and use of information about them. You must explore and respect the beliefs, customs and cultural practices of relevant parties ( in particular not the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres St Islander Health Research). You must respect privacy and confidentiality and comply with the Information Privacy Act, the Commonwealth Privacy Act and the Health Records Act ( if relevant)

### **Benefits must justify risks**

You must maximise benefits and minimise risks of your research. Benefits including ensuring that the research is used to improve things, while risks include: **harm**- eg physical or psychological harm , devaluation in personal worth, social economic or legal harms: **discomfort** – eg anxiety induced by an interview or minor physical discomfort: and **inconvenience** – eg filling in a form or completing a research task. Reflecting on risks and benefits requires you to consider the welfare of participants as well as the broader social and cultural implications of the research.

### **Justice and equity**

You must consider who receives the benefits of research and who bears the burden of being researched. For instance, one group may be “over-researched” because they are easy to access, while others may be rarely researched because they are considered “too difficult”. Ensure that all people are treated fairly in your research procedures.

### **Integrity**

You must ensure your research is a legitimate search for knowledge that follows recognised principles of conduct. Research should be conducted by qualified and competent professionals and there should be a commitment to disseminating the findings.

### **Research Merit**

You must ensure your research will contribute to knowledge. Make sure that the research question can not be answered using existing data and that the best method is being used. In assessing merit, respect for the well-being and dignity of people take precedence over benefits to knowledge.