

# Sleepwear dream a comfortable fit

**Claire Heaney**

NECESSITY, they say, is the mother of invention. And when Melanie Grant had her first child and she could not find any sleepwear that she liked or was functional, she decided to do something about it.

"The flannelette' jammies used to twist and ride up over their tummies, their arms and their legs, they looked really uncomfortable," she said.

Ms Grant, who now has two girls, said friends living overseas were sending her sleepwear as gifts. "They were so much nicer than the repetitive patterns that were available here," she said.

She said when Simone Morgan, one of the overseas friends, relocated back to Melbourne they started talking about creating a business around sleepwear fit for kids. They undertook a fair bit of market research among friends and family as to whether there was a market for 100 per cent cotton knit sleepwear.

Ms Morgan, an architect, agreed to join Ms Grant in the business. Ms Grant, who has a background in marketing and communications in

the banking/finance area, said they worked on a business plan.

When it became clear they could not get what they were after manufactured locally, they had friends who gave them contacts to get them made in China.

Ms Grant said after nearly two years of planning, their first shipment of Snugglebum sleepwear - including all-in-ones, jumpsuits and longjohns - arrived in February.

In the meantime, they managed through another friend to get a contact at a boutique Sydney children's wear outlet.

"I rang Bonza Brats and the woman I spoke to said she was finalising orders and if I could get to Sydney by the Monday she would see me," Ms Grant said.

She said the appointment of agents in Australia and New Zealand also got more retailers on board. Snugglebum is now available in about 70 outlets nationally.

Ms Grant said through friends and friends of friends they were lucky enough to get access to a lot of practical advice about marketing, retailing, branding and manufacturing.



**Colorful:** Snugglebum outfits.

A contact through a mother's group helped to develop the label Snugglebum and a cute hippo icon.

Ms Grant said they decided to pitch for a middle price market with stock retailing at \$39.95 with sizes from 00 to 5. This month they have taken the enterprise a step further, launching an online business. Ms Grant said while servicing retailers was a priority the internet ensured they could get customer feedback and move excess stock. She said it was proving rewarding with good feedback from stockists and customers.

Net link: [www.snugglebum.com.au](http://www.snugglebum.com.au)