



Goodstart Gender Pay Gap Employer Statement 2024

Goodstart is a not-for-profit social enterprise and Australia's largest provider of early childhood education and care (ECEC). We have 654 centres located across every state and territory, educating 61,000 children from 52,000 families, employ nearly 16,000 Australians and have a turnover of over \$1.3 billion a year.

Our purpose is to ensure all Australia's children have the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes they need for school and life. All children should be supported to participate in quality early learning and care, regardless of where they live in Australia, their family circumstances, their inclusion support needs, or their early learning setting. Our unique purpose and structure as a social enterprise means we work in partnership with the sector, Governments and the community to improve outcomes for all children – not just the children who attend a Goodstart service.

By its very nature our organisation makes a significant contribution to supporting the continuing growth of women's participation in the workforce. High quality early learning, offered in convenient locations with flexible hours ensures women have the support they need to engage in paid work or study.

In FY2023, our targeted social purpose investments of \$47 million delivered a "social dividend" valued at \$336 million. Our social dividend is calculated using a social return on investment methodology and represents the unique social and economic value delivered for children, families, Government and the broader community.

We offer highly rewarding, flexible employment for teachers, educators, cooks and expert support services, and a wide array of career pathways. Currently more than 97 percent of our national team of 15,800 people are women.

Goodstart offers six weeks of paid parental leave along with a range of meaningful benefits such as child care discounts, a health and wellbeing program, salary packaging and an employee assistance service. Goodstart takes pride in listening to our people through our regular surveys and providing benefits based on their feedback.

In the past few years Goodstart has been focussed on ensuring our in-centre teams have the systems to support them, leading to an uptick in the employment of experts in technology, facilities and finance (all of whom are traditionally male dominated). With the key infrastructure and projects now delivered and maturing, the organisation's focus has shifted, and our Centre Support Team has been resized with less emphasis on these areas.

Our senior management ranks reflect our forward priorities with the recent appointment of three executive women in the roles of Chief Executive Officer, Chief People and Culture Officer and a new Chief Operating Officer. Our executive team is female dominated, reflecting our organisation's workforce and our Board is evenly represented. The leadership is focused on ensuring Goodstart's new gender equity plan is a key part of our 2024 People Strategy.

Nevertheless, the data in the report indicates there is still much to do.

The last three years have been extremely challenging for Goodstart and for the entire ECEC sector. ECEC has been recognised by Governments as an essential service, and the dedicated professionals who deliver ECEC deserve to be recognised as part of the education system. Yet, as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and the Productivity Commission (PC) have recently acknowledged, workforce shortages are impacting right across the sector, reducing supply and increasing costs.

In a period of unprecedented focus on ECEC Goodstart has made several recommendations to Governments and to various inquiry processes about the need for more proactive workforce policies to address these challenges, backed by substantial investments to improve wages and conditions, rebuild pipelines of new educators and build the capability of the workforce through access to more professional development.

Goodstart's retention of its workforce is well above sector averages (not-for-profit ECEC organisations have attrition rates 20 percent lower than large private providers), we are creating more of our own educators (more than 1000 trainees joined us last year) and our educators benefit from wage rates at least 5% above award rates.

However, these rates are not competitive with other sectors (both within education and other unrelated industries) offering higher wages. Our exit surveys show that most educators who leave Goodstart do not stay in the ECEC sector, with sectoral wage rates, a lack of professional recognition and burnout are cited as key reasons contributing to this result.

While we continue our advocacy for government support for fairer wages, this year Goodstart will also continue our involvement in multi-employer bargaining and negotiating our current Enterprise Agreement.

In the next twelve months we will focus on key actions to address the gender equity indicators to:

- chart a course on all six gender equity indicators to ensure continuous improvement, particularly around remuneration.
- increase investment on diversity and inclusion to increase male participation across our network of centres.
- actively reviewing our current policies around flexible arrangements to ensure Goodstart is competitive in its employee value proposition.
- ensure our talent acquisition and retention strategies address the disparities currently apparent in some levels of our management team.

We look forward to reporting on the efficacy of this approach in our statement in 2025.