

Goodstart Gender Pay Gap Employer Statement 2025

The nation's largest provider of early childhood education and care (ECEC), Goodstart is a not-for-profit social enterprise which has provided high quality early learning and care for Australia's children for the past 15 years. We have 653 centres located across every state and territory, educating 61,000 children from 51,000 families, employ nearly 16,000 Australians and has a turnover of \$1.51 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 those who attend our centres.

Our investment in our social purpose through targeted initiatives exceeded \$57.4 million which delivered a "social dividend" valued at \$387 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.

The ECEC sector, particularly not-for-profits like Goodstart, provide significant positive economic effects as we help get women, back in work and improve Australia's productivity. 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.

We know that access to quality affordable early learning and childcare is crucial for parents, and it is gratifying to see mothers' workforce participation has risen rapidly in Australia, from around 60% twenty years ago to close to 80% - which puts us on a par with countries like Canada and the UK, but still behind the 90%+ rates achieved in Scandinavian countries.

More than 97 percent of our team of 16,000 employees are women and we offer highly rewarding, flexible employment for teachers, educators, cooks and expert support services, and a wide array of career pathways. In October 2024 a new Enterprise Agreement was finalised which offers significantly increased wages; improved parental leave with enhanced paid parental leave, including new stillbirth and pregnancy loss leave provisions; and gender equity leave to support Goodstarters with reproductive health leave and gender transition leave

After a national workforce crisis in the entire sector, the vacancy rate for teachers and educators are now at their lowest levels in three years, although still above pre-pandemic levels, with vacancies for educators down 17% and vacancies for teachers down 32% year on year (Jobs and Skills Australia national Internet Vacancy Index (IVI)). Vacancy rates began falling in May 2024 after the federal government announced it would fund a retention subsidy of 15% for educators and teachers. Goodstart's 16,000 educators were among the first in the sector to benefit from the Wages Subsidy, in addition to the industry leading wages they already experience. Workforce shortages however remain an issue in many regional and rural communities.

Goodstart continues to provide a pipeline of new educators through our training programs (more than 1500 since the program began) and to improve the capability of the workforce through access to more professional development. As a result, our retention of our workforce is well above sector averages (not-for-profit ECEC organisations have attrition rates 20 percent lower than large private providers).

Our executive team is female-dominated, reflecting our organisation's workforce. Goodstart's gender equity action plan forms part of our broader People and Culture Strategy 2025-2029.

We will focus on the following key actions to address the six gender equity indicators:

- Delivering our action plan across each of the gender equity indicators to ensure continuous improvement, particularly around remuneration.
- Enhancing diversity and inclusion activities 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.

As a data-informed learning organisation we will continue to focus on improving our position in the coming year.