



Annual Report 2025

15 years of impact. A future full of possibilities.



**We're for children,
not for profit**



About the artwork

'The Heart of Reconciliation' by David Williams, a proud Wakka Wakka man and Executive Director of Gilimbaa, was commissioned to celebrate Goodstart's Stretch RAP 2024-2027. The artwork reflects children at the heart of everything we do – growing stronger and prouder when stories and culture are shared. At its centre is Harriet's Heart, created by Goodstart alumnus and the artist's daughter, Harriet Williams, symbolising that every child can find a welcoming heart at Goodstart.

What's inside

Special feature: Celebrating 15 years of impact	4	Our purpose in action.....	16
Goodstart at a glance	6	Our change-makers.....	28
A message from our Chair.....	8	Policy, research and advocacy.....	33
CEO message.....	9	A look ahead: a future full of possibility	38
Financial highlights.....	10	Our governance.....	40
FY25 impact by the numbers.....	14	Consolidated financial statements.....	46

Acknowledgement of Country

Goodstart Early Learning acknowledges all Traditional Owners across Australia and recognises all First Nations peoples' continued cultural and spiritual connection to the land, sky and waterways that surround us. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.



Goodstart's national support office is in Murarrie, Meanjin / Magandjin (Brisbane), and we acknowledge the Yuggera and Turrbal people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands. We pay our respect to the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples and their Elders past, present and emerging. Goodstart acknowledges that these lands have been places of teaching and learning for thousands of years and home to the longest continuing culture on earth.

Through our work with children, families and communities we seek to listen, learn and deepen our understanding and respect of First Nations cultures, tell the true stories of Australia's history, and to care for the land on which we live, work, play and learn.

Celebrating 15 years of impact

For 15 years we've been for purpose, not for profit – reinvesting every dollar we've earned into improving outcomes for children.

Our story began in 2010 when four of Australia's leading charities turned crisis into opportunity. From the collapse of for-profit ABC Learning came Goodstart Early Learning – a not-for-profit with a bold vision: to give every child in Australia the best possible start in life.

We partner with Social Ventures Australia to quantify the difference we make year after year. From improving attendance and inclusion to strengthening children's learning and development, our social impact study helps us understand, demonstrate and strengthen the value we deliver – especially for children experiencing disadvantage.

We've made a real impact for Australia's children, families, and communities – and we're just getting started.

Key Fact

Over the past 15 years, we've supported 154+ million child attendances in our high quality early learning, kindergarten and preschool programs

Our Goodstart story



Discover more about our 15 years of impact: www.goodstart.org.au/celebrating-15-years



Behind Goodstart

Our founders brought decades of experience in social impact and a shared commitment to invest in the early years – changing the course of children's lives through a not-for-profit model that reinvests in children, families and communities.





Key milestones

15 years
of impact

PEOPLE • PURPOSE
POSSIBILITIES

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2010 | A new era begins: Goodstart launches with a not-for-profit mission to give every child the best possible start in life. |
| 2011 | Our first strategy: Inaugural five-year strategy launches focused on quality, inclusion and financial stability – setting the foundation for impact. |
| 2012 | Backing our people: \$8.5 million invested to upskill over 1,000 educators as we prepare for the new National Quality Standard (NQS). |
| 2013 | Quality matters: Significant progress is made in improving early learning quality in our centres, and Goodstart delivers a surplus – much of it reinvested into educator development, social inclusion and research to keep improving child outcomes. |
| 2014 | Every dollar reinvested in quality: Goodstart repays all outstanding external debt ahead of schedule – allowing more funds to be reinvested directly into quality and inclusion. |
| 2015 | People, Influence and Evidence: Our second strategy adds new pillars – People, Influence and Evidence – and we open our first purpose-built centre in Melbourne Central – La Trobe Street. |
| 2016 | Advocacy that delivers: Inaugural Goodstart Practice Guide launched and Goodstart is part of a sector push which helped secure \$3 billion in Federal Government funding. |
| 2017 | Maturing with purpose: In our seventh year, Goodstart deepened its impact – embedding our Practice Guide, expanding our flagship social inclusion program Family Connections, and investing in upgrades across 400 centres, with 92 percent of centres Meeting or Exceeding the NQS. |
| 2018 | Innovation for families: We lead the sector introducing flexible early learning session options to improve accessibility and meet families’ changing needs. |
| 2019 | Purpose in action: 23 early learning centres operated by Mission Australia become part of the Goodstart family – securing long-term early learning access for vulnerable children and communities. |
| 2020 | We’re all smiles for Big Fat Smile: Two of Australia’s leading not-for-profit early learning and care providers join forces with a merger bringing Big Fat Smile under the umbrella of the wider Goodstart family. |
| 2021 | Quality uplift continues: Our drive to improve our quality continues with the introduction of the world class Quality Rating Scales and Birth to 3-year-old Framework. |
| 2022 | Measuring our impact: All quality early learning makes a difference, and at Goodstart – we deliver even more impact for children, families and communities. In a sector first, an independent study by Social Ventures Australia shows Goodstart delivers more than \$5 in social return for every \$1 invested. |
| 2024 | Walking the talk on reconciliation: Our third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) – second expanded Stretch RAP – is launched and all centres are actively on their RAP journey with Reconciliation Australia’s Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education. |
| 2025 | Our most ambitious chapter yet: Our new five-year strategy launches focused on Inclusion, Quality, People and Advocacy – and a future where no child misses out. |



Goodstart at a glance

The Goodstart Early Learning Group



Our scale and reach

677
centres
nationwide

64,000
children
supported

53,000
families
engaged

16,500 employees including
2,000 teachers

**Around
one third**
of centres support
children living
in regional and
rural areas

**One third
of centres**
are in low socio-
economic areas
(SEIFA 1-3)

**More than one
in three children**
in our centres
are experiencing
vulnerability*

Our vision

For Australia's children to have the best possible start in life.

[Read more](#)



What makes Goodstart different

Our focus is human potential. The first five years of life are a critical period where 90 percent of brain development occurs and the foundations for school and life are laid.

As Australia's largest not-for-profit early learning provider and the biggest non-government provider of kindergarten and preschool, Goodstart reinvests every dollar we earn to make the biggest difference to children's learning, development and wellbeing.

With no shareholders or private investors to pay, every dollar goes where it matters most to children:

- **our people** – investing in educators and teachers, because high quality teaching drives better outcomes
- **strengthening safety and safeguarding** – meeting our first and most important responsibility by ensuring the safety of the children in our care
- **our centres** – improving environments and resourcing to support children's learning

- **access and inclusion** – championing participation in early learning and removing barriers that prevent children from attending
- **evidence-based curriculum** – ensuring our best practice teaching and learning are grounded in research
- **evidence and advocacy** – building the case for better policies, especially for children with the most to gain from early learning who are the least likely to attend early learning.

Every decision we make comes back to one question:
What is best for children?

While all early learning makes a difference, at Goodstart, we go further.

[Read more](#)

Goodstart's scale and reach comprises data of both Goodstart and Big Fat Smile (see page 12). All other data in this report refers to Goodstart only unless otherwise specified. The Goodstart Early Learning Group includes Goodstart Early Learning Limited as the parent entity, and Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) registered Big Fat Smile Group Limited and Goodstart Early Years Limited as 100% controlled entities.

**Children experiencing vulnerability are children who identify with one or more risk factors including children at risk of abuse or neglect, children identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, children from low income families, children with disability/developmental delay and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.*

A message from our Chair

This year, as every year, the safety of every child in our care has been Goodstart's highest priority.

As the sector undergoes long-overdue reform, the focus on child safety has never been more important – and never more closely aligned with our purpose. We work and invest every day so families can be confident that children are safe, well and thriving in our centres.

This safety culture underpins our impact. In 2025, we celebrate 15 years as Australia's largest not-for-profit provider of early learning. Over this time, our educators and teachers have shaped countless young lives, across more than 154 million attendances. Our scale continues to reflect the trust families place in us – and the deep responsibility we carry to deliver the highest standards of quality, safety, care and child outcomes.

The early education and care sector is undergoing important and overdue reform. Goodstart welcomed the recent \$189 million commitment by federal and state education ministers to establish a national educators register, improve regulator funding and surveillance and establish mandatory training in child safety for every educator. Goodstart is already ahead of the curve on these issues, through our award-winning safeguarding training and above-regulation commitments in staffing and professional development. We know that well trained and well supported educators are essential to creating and maintaining child safe environments. We are listening to educators and families as we continue embedding child safety into everything we do – from how we create our learning environments to how we recruit, train and supervise our people. Active supervision, thoughtful environmental design, rigorous recruitment processes and our Look, Do, Tell Framework are all vital to keeping children safe in our care.

Despite the challenges of the last year, Goodstart remains energised by a growing body of evidence that demonstrates the transformative power of early learning, and by Australian governments' commitments to building a truly universal early learning system.

Goodstart's role as a not-for-profit social enterprise is central to our response. With no shareholders or private investors to pay, we reinvest every surplus into children, in our teams and in ensuring that every dollar goes where it matters most. This year, we've invested \$65.5 million in our social purpose – a 14 percent increase on last financial year.

As the only major provider who measures our social impact each year, we track, evaluate and strengthen the impact of our work, ensuring children have the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes they need for school and life. We are Australia's largest non-government provider of kindergarten and preschool, and I am particularly proud that this year we rolled out a new evidence-based learning framework that defines the child outcomes we expect from our kindy and preschool graduates. This helps our people and our families to understand our goals.

I want to thank our 16,500 staff for the fabulous work that they do every day providing quality, safe and caring learning environments for our 64,000 children. And our families for their continuing support for us.

I also want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our departing Directors, June McLoughlin AM and Lynelle Briggs AO, who will retire after completing their maximum terms on the Goodstart Board. Their wisdom, leadership and dedication have been invaluable in shaping Goodstart's journey. At the same time, we warmly welcome our new Directors, Emeritus Professor Deb Brennan AM and Mark Woodland, appointed from 17 September 2025, whose complementary strengths and expertise will be critical as Goodstart continues to deliver on our purpose.

Quality early learning changes the trajectory of children's lives, and this is the heart of our mission. We are committed to meeting the needs of our families and our team, but our main focus is ensuring that each and every child thrives in our care every day.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Robertson'.

Paul Robertson AO
Chair

CEO message

I am so proud to be Goodstart's CEO.

Our organisation came into being as the result of a crisis in the sector and 15 years on, our contribution to our communities as a not-for-profit service offering high quality early learning has never been more important. This year has shone a light on why safe, high quality early learning takes investment and commitment.

While our \$28.9 million surplus is modest, it means we can continue to invest in children, families and communities, and in our centre network. This result reflects both careful stewardship and the strength of our not-for-profit model, which reinvests every dollar of surplus, to deliver greater safety, quality and impact for children. Results we can and do measure.

Quality, of course, depends on our educators, the hardworking, committed early learning professionals who build child safe environments where every child is able to explore, learn and have fun. As I travel around the nation meeting and learning from our extraordinary teams in such a myriad of communities – large, small, vulnerable or thriving – I am in awe of the intelligent, compassionate humans who are helping to educate our youngest citizens.

Rightly, our investment in our people has never been greater – a 19 percent increase in funding for professional development and qualifications to help our teams maximise their knowledge and skills. This, along with sector-leading training in mandatory safety and safeguarding, is building everyone's capabilities.

We know that children thrive when they have consistent, trusted teachers and educators, which makes our improving retention rate so important. We are almost twice as likely to keep our educators compared with the sector average for-profit provider, meaning children benefit from more experienced educators.

And we continue to provide new, purpose-built centres in areas of need – this year in Elara (NSW), Clarinda (VIC), Boronia (VIC), Prospect (SA) and Narimba (QLD), with a further nine new centres planned for 2026.

We have always been passionate advocates for all Australia's children, sharing the experience of our teams along with the data only we can produce due to our scale. With our sector partners, we use our knowledge to explain, promote and sometimes demand urgent reform and it is heartening to see governments across the country swiftly implementing much needed change. Goodstart already rosters staff above the National Quality Framework ratios in crucial rooms to help ensure every educator is in line of sight or sound of another educator and we have been trialling CCTV since 2022 in some of our centres and are keen to explore being part of the proposed national trial on making the best use of technology to enhance safety in a cost effective way.

A child's future should never be defined by their postcode or their family's circumstances. So, over the next five years we will remain focused on providing safe, high quality, inclusive early learning.

It's only possible with empowered educators and leaders working in early learning systems that continue to focus on improving.

We look forward to continuing to be part of that work – from within Goodstart and in all the reform conversations to come.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, belonging to Dr Ros Baxter.

Dr Ros Baxter
CEO



Financial highlights

As financial year 2025 (FY25) tested the sector, Goodstart stayed the course with strength and purpose. Guided by disciplined delivery and thoughtful decisions – always underpinned by our commitment to children – we ended the year in a stronger financial position and with greater capacity to deliver impact. At the same time, we recognise there is still more to do operationally to sustain and grow our social impact.



As a not-for-profit social enterprise, every surplus is reinvested into improving outcomes for children. This year's result gives us greater confidence and capacity to keep doing just that – scaling what works, improving access for those who need it most, and investing where the need is greatest.

Navigating a dynamic environment

Our centre leaders continue to navigate the challenges of a shifting environment – shaped by declining birth rates, uneven demand, localised oversupply, workforce pressures, changing family preferences, and state reforms to funded kindergarten and preschool.

By December 2024 network performance had strengthened before demand softened in early 2025. Despite these headwinds, we delivered a solid – albeit modest – surplus of \$28.9 million, which will be fully reinvested into our social purpose and delivery of our five-year strategy.

The government's educator wage subsidy is delivering clear benefits – improving retention, reducing vacancies and allowing centres to reopen previously capped rooms to support more children. At the same time, our centre teams' focus on workforce planning and operational discipline helped manage our longer-term labour costs and ensured we could continue to meet demand without compromising children's outcomes. Through strong local marketing, disciplined cost management to direct resources where they matter most, and an unrelenting focus on safety and quality, our centre teams played a pivotal role in consolidating Goodstart's financial position by year-end.

Some centres continue to face localised issues, but our overall occupancy held steady in a challenging market. While there is room for growth, occupancy performance remained ahead of estimated sector averages – reflecting the strength of our not-for-profit model and our commitment to quality and family engagement.

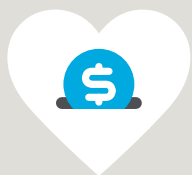
Investing in our people and our social purpose

- Wages remained our largest investment, representing 71 percent of total expenses, with all educators paid at least five percent above award rates.
- \$29 million was invested in professional development and qualifications – to build capability above minimum standards – a 19 percent increase on FY24.
- Goodstart was the first major early learning provider to pass on the government's 15 percent educator pay rise, with the first 10 percent delivered in December 2024, driving improved retention and reduced vacancies.

Throughout the year, our total social purpose investment was \$65.5 million to improve outcomes for children – spanning professional development, quality improvement initiatives, reconciliation, research, and inclusion. Investment in inclusion-related programs and initiatives, including allied health and intensive individual support plans, increased by 28 percent reflecting increasing demand to support children and the reducing value of government investment. In particular, the government-funded Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) has not kept pace with the true cost of delivery, with Goodstart absorbing these additional costs to ensure no child misses out on access to high quality early learning.

Our \$28.9 million surplus ensures we can continue to invest in children, families and communities – including ongoing investment in our centre network. In a year where many providers remain under pressure, this result reflects both careful stewardship and the strength of our not-for-profit model, which reinvests every dollar of surplus, to deliver greater impact.

Total social purpose investment



\$65.5m*

invested in our
social purpose

Up 14% from FY24

Area of investment	Year ended 30 June 2025 \$000	Year ended 30 June 2024 \$000
Professional development and qualifications	29,050	24,413
Above ratio educators for children with additional needs	12,341	6,730
Increasing access and affordability	3,917	3,518
Evidence based inclusive practice above minimum standards	7,955	10,203
Equity, inclusion and impact enablers ¹	9,618	9,906
Embedding reconciliation in everything we do	974	938
Impact for all Australia's children ²	1,666	1,753
	65,521	57,461

Goodstart's total social purpose investments are reflected in total expenses in the consolidated financial statements (see page 46). Each year, our Social Impact Study measures the return on this investment – helping us track, evaluate and strengthen the impact of our work, ensuring children have the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes they need for school and life.

¹Our equity, inclusion and impact enablers investment includes allied health, Intensive Individual Support Plans and practice uplift in complex communities and targeted inclusion programs.

²Our impact for all Australia's children investment includes social policy, advocacy, philanthropy, partnerships and strategic research.

Big Fat Smile

FY25 marks five years since the not-for-profit Big Fat Smile joined the Goodstart Early Learning Group, while continuing to operate under its own strong local brand in the Illawarra region across 35 long day care, preschool and outside of school hours services. As part of the Group, Big Fat Smile's financial results are consolidated into Goodstart's financial statements (refer to page 46).

In focus: centre network



\$77.6m

to upgrade our current
centre network and open
five new centres



65 centres

upgraded to improve
their indoor and outdoor
learning environments



220 centres

received rectification
following storm and
flood damage

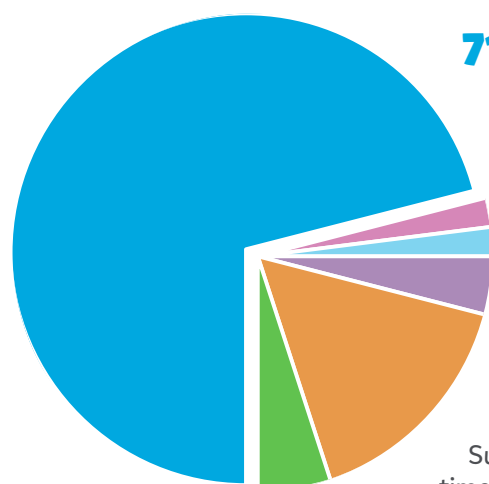
Our network continues to evolve,

with five new purpose-built centres opened in Elara (NSW), Clarinda (VIC), Boronia (VIC), Prospect (SA) and Narimba (QLD), and nine more planned for 2026. As part of this renewal, 12 centres were closed in FY25.



Annual operating investments snapshot (FY25)

Our investments in safe, inclusive and high quality early learning.



71% Wages

We pay our educators, teachers and centre teams above award rates and conditions to recognise their vital role in delivering quality learning

2% Professional development

Continuous learning and training for our people builds a confident, skilled and capable workforce that delivers safe and high quality early learning, including specialist training to support children with additional needs

2% Targeted inclusion support

Supporting children with additional needs through targeted programs, people time and expertise in centres, and initiatives to improve access and affordability

4% Consumables and educational resources

Essentials for well-resourced, high quality early learning environments

16% Rent, facilities and maintenance

Investment in maintaining safe, thoughtfully designed, well-equipped centres

5% Depreciation, impairment and financing

Sustained investment in centre buildings, playgrounds, fit-outs and infrastructure for long-term quality



Goodstart Nirimba, located on Kabi Kabi Country on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, is a new state-of-the-art centre offering 132 much-needed places for the growing population of Stockland's Aura – Australia's largest master-planned community.

Fast Fact

Victoria's Goodstart Hampton Park – Somerville Road was one of 10 centres to share in \$1.6 million from the Victorian School Building Authority's Inclusion Grant program. The funding enabled new access ramps and inclusive sensory play spaces, allowing children of all abilities to explore, play and learn together – supporting their development and sense of belonging.

FY25 impact by the numbers



All early learning makes a difference – but Goodstart magnifies the impact.

We work to reach and support children who need early learning the most, while strengthening safeguarding and safety, and improving quality and inclusion in every centre to benefit every child. We measure what works, scale the initiatives that have the greatest impact and use our data and evidence to influence policy and drive system change. In doing so, we help create better outcomes for every child in Australia. This year, with Social Ventures Australia, we've updated our methodology to incorporate new evidence and new data sets.*

Delivering positive social and economic benefit

For every \$1 invested in our social purpose, a social return of \$5 benefits Australia's children, families and communities.

Social dividend*
\$321m

Social and economic value generated from Goodstart's targeted social purpose investments validated by Social Impact Study by Social Ventures Australia.

→ Delivering safe, high quality, inclusive early learning

10.3 million+

child attendances in our inclusive and high quality early learning, kindergarten and preschool programs across Australia



Received the Queensland Child Safe Organisation Award for the second year running

Sector-leading quality

99% of centres Meeting or Exceeding the National Quality Standard (NQS) – compared to 91% (long day care average)



100% Goodstart centres on their reconciliation journey

with Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali

3 – 5 Outcomes Framework launches

a national approach giving teachers a clear, evidence-based pathway to ensure every child aged three to five thrives in our programs including preschool and kindergarten



Workforce stability and experience well above for-profit benchmarks

Less than 6% of Goodstart teachers are newly graduated compared with around 50% in for-profit, and employee-initiated turnover was 18% in FY25 – less than half reported by for-profit providers

→ Supporting children living in our nation's most disadvantaged areas

37% of our network

are located in SEIFA 1-3 areas where early learning has the greatest impact

Goodstart has the strongest not-for-profit footprint in these communities

Targeted investment in professional supervision to 218 centre directors working in the most complex communities

**The social purpose methodology takes Goodstart's total social purpose investment and removes costs partially replicated in other providers and applies a multiplier to account for costs not captured such as higher facilities costs to keep all centres operating and serve diverse communities. For more information see [here](#).*

→ Tracking attendance for stronger child outcomes

39% of Goodstart children identified with risk factors



7 in 10 children experiencing vulnerability at Goodstart attend at least two consecutive days a week in the two years before school – giving them the consistency needed to make a real difference to their school and life outcomes

Closing the participation gap

children experiencing vulnerability participate at the same rate as their more advantaged peers

Attendance is rising

On average children including those experiencing vulnerability attend 3+ days per week but children at risk of abuse or neglect attend 4 days per week on average, well above the sector average of 3.4 days



→ Reaching children who need some extra support

Children we support by risk factors

Note: Some children are represented in more than one risk category.

7.8%

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children

9%

Children with diagnosed condition or disability

6.6%

Children at risk of abuse or neglect

32.4%

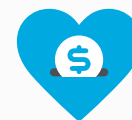
Children from regional and remote areas

24.6%

Children from non-English speaking backgrounds

22%

Children from low income families



9,500+ children

received Goodstart funded targeted support and/or government funded support

Fact: Goodstart supports significantly more children from underrepresented groups – including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability/developmental delay and those in regional or remote areas – compared to the national average

→ Building the case and advocating for systemic change

First large early learning provider

to pass on the government funded 15% pay increase for educators – with the first 10% delivered in December 2024

2 Centre of Excellence research partnerships

and long term investment in data linkage projects to track children into school

Sector stewardship

Goodstart's impact evidenced by being cited 151 times in the Productivity Commission Final Report (Vol I and II, Sept 2024)



Our purpose in action

In FY25, we focused on lifting quality, supporting educators and teachers, and reaching more children who benefit most from early learning.



Investing in people and practice

Providing high quality early learning, our educators and teachers are the heart of our organisation. In FY25, we invested \$37 million in quality improvement initiatives, up six percent on FY24. This included \$29 million in professional development and qualifications – a 19 percent increase on the previous year. Investing in our people – giving them more time for planning, professional development and to focus on quality – has lowered turnover and strengthened retention across our centres.

Evidence-based curriculum – 3-5 Outcomes Framework launches

In January our teachers and educators began learning about and implementing a new curriculum framework designed to support the learning and development of children aged three to five. The 3-5 Outcomes Framework provides a clear, outcomes-based approach to early learning. The research-informed curriculum complements the framework we previously developed for children from birth to age three. Together, they give our educators and teachers clear, practical guidance to deliver intentional, high quality learning.

To ensure the new framework was well understood, every centre director and educational leader participated in face-to-face training, while teachers benefited from four weeks of in-centre coaching with practice partners. This hands-on approach provided real-time modelling and strategies to bring the framework to life. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with teacher engagement continuing to strengthen over the past year.

Foundational teaching and learning for quality

Goodstart's quality is built on consistent, evidence-based practice. This year, we have focused on embedding our frameworks into everyday practice alongside the foundational programs that drive quality across all age groups – including All Children Communicate!, Key Educator Relationships, and Supervision – which remain central to improving practice.

Another foundational resource, the Inclusive Teaching, Learning and Support Guide (released in 2024), is grounded in the latest research in inclusive early childhood education and aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework v2.0. It is strengthening educator confidence and capability in delivering high quality, inclusive learning and knowing when to call on targeted and intensive support for children with additional needs.

Our educators and teachers benefit from the expertise of our 90-member Teaching and Learning Support Team who coach, model best practice and drive peer learning. Supported by our social inclusion and allied health experts, centres can better meet the needs of children with additional needs.

The internationally recognised, world class Quality Rating Scales (QRS) continue to provide clear, measurable ways for centres to reflect, plan and improve – validating strong practice. The QRS set a higher benchmark for teaching and learning than the NQS – and seven in 10 of our centres are already achieving a strong rating. This year our Teaching and Learning Support Team deepened their expertise through an intensive week-long QRS workshop with Professor Iram Siraj, a leading international early childhood education researcher. Goodstart also proudly supported Professor Siraj to showcase the QRS as an international keynote sponsor at the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) national conference, where several Goodstart educators, teachers and experts also presented – including on safeguarding children.

Sector leading quality

Goodstart continues to set the benchmark for quality in early learning in the long day care sector. According to the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) National Quality Standard (NQS) Snapshot released in May 2025, 91 percent of services meet or exceed the National Quality Standard (NQS). At Goodstart, that figure is 99 percent, with one in four rated Exceeding. This reflects sustained investment in educator capability, evidence-based curriculum and continuous practice improvement.

Over the past year, eight centres achieved the remarkable milestone of being assessed as Exceeding in all seven quality areas. We congratulate the centre teams at Tuggerah (NSW), Newstead (QLD), Browns Plains – Redgum Drive (QLD), Little Mountain – Mark Road West (QLD), West Pymble (NSW), Blue Haven (NSW), Cessnock (NSW), and Corrimal Community Preschool (NSW) on this achievement.

Achieving an Excellent rating is the sector's highest accolade, recognising centres that set new benchmarks. Only 28 services nationwide currently hold this status, including Goodstart Red Hill (QLD). In recent years six Goodstart centres have achieved an Excellent rating – the most of any early learning provider.

Compared to the long day care average of nine percent, only one percent of Goodstart centres are currently rated Working Towards. This overall rating determines a "service provides a safe education and care program, but there are one or more areas identified for improvement". In 2024, we recorded the lowest proportion of Working Towards centres in our history. In 2025 we reduced this number even further, while continuing to provide targeted teaching and practice support to help all remaining centres progress from Working Towards to Meeting – and ultimately Exceeding – the NQS. Over the past year, six centres progressed from Working Towards to Meeting.





Goodstart's quality exceeds the sector average

	Exceeding	Meeting	Working Towards
Not-for-profit Goodstart and Big Fat Smile centres	25%	73%	1%
Long day care sector	18%	72%	9%
Private for-profit managed services	11%	78%	10%
Private not-for-profit services (not community managed)	20%	73%	6%

Source: ACECQA NQS Snapshot, May 2025. Sector percentages reflect ACECQA reporting and may not total 100% due to rounding.

Preschool and kindergarten

Goodstart is Australia's largest non-government provider of preschool and kindergarten, educating more than 25,000 children in our non-government approved programs in FY25.

Our programs are play-based and evidence-informed, supported by expert designed curriculums. From 2026, all families will receive a 'What and When Guide' – a resource connecting everyday child development with the Early Years Learning Framework and the experiences children have in high quality early learning environments.

The guide will help families understand seven key areas of learning, what their child's development looks like at each stage and how families can extend that learning at home.

To continue their own learning, our Thriving Teachers program supports over 2,000 Goodstart teachers with tailored professional development.

In FY25, major state reforms for preschool programs for three and four-year olds continued to expand access to early learning. In South Australia, our centres are preparing for the introduction of preschool for three-year-olds from 2026.

Goodstart's ongoing practice improvement

Centres Meeting or Exceeding the National Quality Standard since 2018.

8%
quality uplift
change

91%

2018

93%

2019

96.4%

2020

98%

2021 - 2023

99%

2024 - 2025



Reaching and supporting more children who need early learning the most

Goodstart is reaching more children experiencing vulnerability than any other early learning provider in Australia. Our strong presence in low socio-economic communities makes Goodstart a critical driver of inclusion and equity in early learning.

- In FY25, 39.8 percent of enrolled Goodstart children were identified with one or more risk factors that increase the likelihood of starting school developmentally vulnerable – up from 38.3 percent in FY24.
- With 37 percent of our centres located in low socio-economic areas (SEIFA 1 – 3), Goodstart has the strongest presence of any provider in Australia's most disadvantaged communities.
- The 2024 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data shows children in the most disadvantaged communities are twice as likely to start school developmentally vulnerable (33 percent) than those in the least disadvantaged (15 percent).
- Vulnerability, however, is not limited to location. Our census data shows we continue to support a higher proportion of children with risk factors nationally than the sector overall.

Nationally, only one percent of children in early learning receive the inclusion support they need. At Goodstart, we support at least three times that proportion – through record-high use of the Inclusion Support Program (2,378 children in FY25 up from 2,273 children in FY24) and by directly funding additional educators to plug critical gaps where the system falls short.

In FY25, we invested \$9.6m in equity, inclusion and impact programs for:

- speech pathologists in every state
- continued investment in our network of state-based inclusion coordinators, child and family practitioners and allied health specialists
- more professional development and extra programming and planning time for educators, and access to best practice tools and resources for inclusive practice
- rolling out the Inclusive Teaching, Learning and Support Guide to assist centre teams to reflect, enact practices and draw upon support systems as needed to ensure that the needs of all children and families are met in each centre
- targeted and intensive support for children with additional needs
- professional supervision to strengthen leader capability and resilience in areas with high numbers of children experiencing vulnerability.

Making attendance count

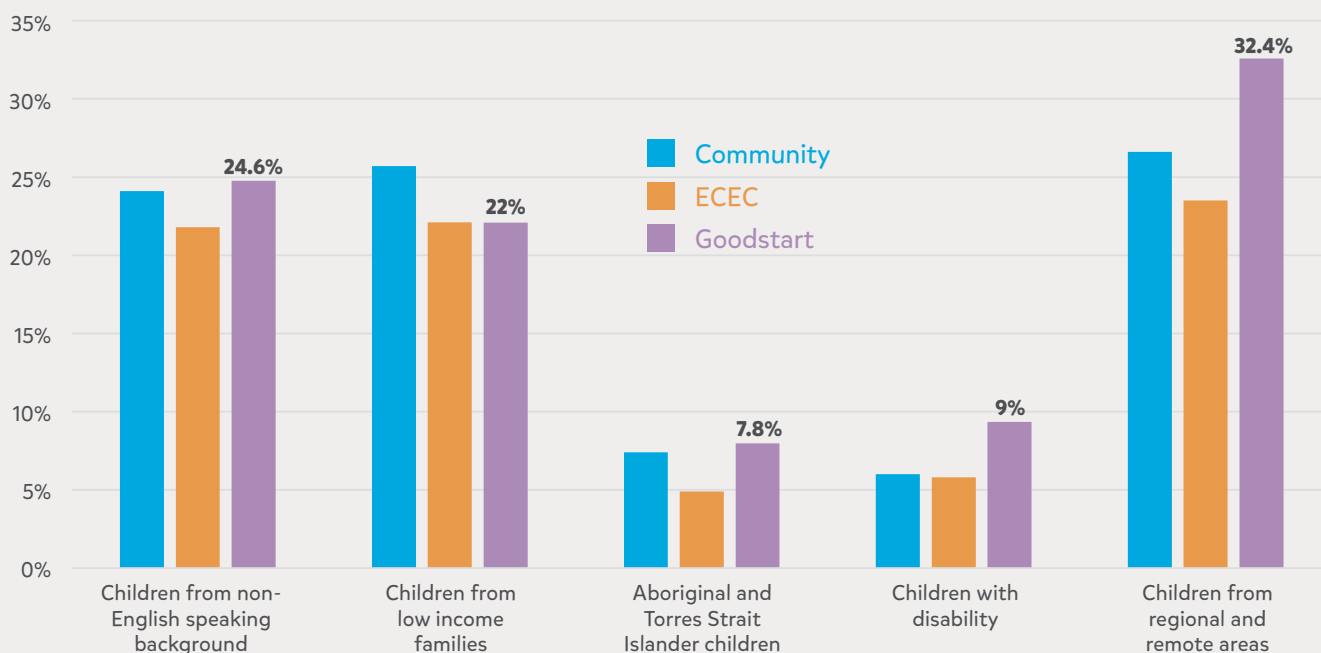
Children attending at least three days of high quality early learning are more likely to attend enough to make a difference. At Goodstart, children experiencing vulnerability attend an average of three days per week, on par or slightly above their more advantaged peers. Children at risk of abuse or neglect attend four days on average, compared to the sector average of 3.4.

We address cost and non-financial barriers through fee relief, family partnerships and individualised, targeted support. Our advocacy over many years played a key role in securing the introduction of the Three Day Guarantee set for January 2026, which abolishes the Activity Test that long prevented many families from accessing early learning.

Our detailed centre level analysis helps our centre teams ensure we support all children to attend enough to make a difference – but especially for children likely to experience vulnerability. Over the last few years our sustained effort has yielded results. Seven in 10 children at Goodstart with identified risk factors attended a minimum of two consecutive days of early learning in the two years before school – setting them up to start school on track. Looking ahead, Goodstart is participating in two data linkage projects to measure the long-term impact of early learning, with the first children who participated due to sit NAPLAN in Year 3 in 2026.



Making a difference to children likely to be experiencing vulnerability



Proportion of children (0 to 5 years) from selected equity groups attending Goodstart centres (2025 data) compared with their representation in Australian Government CCS-approved ECEC services and the community (most recent publicly available data: ROGs, part b, section 3a, early childhood education and care data tables, June 2025).

Snapshot: forms of support for access and access

- ✓ **Intensive Individual Support Plans** **144 children** received tailored plans to support trauma recovery or complex needs, enabling them to participate in early learning
- ✓ **Inclusion support and allied health services** **271 children** across 58 centres benefited from allied health services in-centre under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- ✓ **Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS)** **1,979 children** received targeted funding through the Inclusion Development Fund to support participation
- ✓ **Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)** **6,725 children** across 624 centres received ACCS, helping families experiencing vulnerability and children at risk of abuse and neglect maintain access to early learning, up 7.5% on FY24
- ✓ **ACCS (Child Wellbeing)** **5,633 children** at risk of abuse and neglect across 605 centres received support
- ✓ **ACCS (Grandparent)** **246 children** in the guardianship of their Grandparents received support
- ✓ **Early Learning Fund (ELF)** Goodstart provided fee relief for two days per week to 562 children attending **204 centres** who were at risk of missing out on early learning once government support ended, ensuring continuity of learning
- ✓ **Inclusion reach** **93% of Goodstart centres** sought guidance from our Inclusion Support Helpdesk, enabling more children with higher support needs to fully participate in quality early learning
- ✓ **The Smith Family partnership** Using Goodstart's extensive reach, we identify and connect eligible families to the program before their child transitions to school. This ensures continued support for children already receiving Goodstart's assistance, including allied health services and fee relief.

Snapshot update

Child and Family Health Service Partnership

In June 2025, Goodstart partnered with the Child and Family Health Service (CaFHS) to deliver Child Health and Development Checks (CHDC) across all metropolitan centres in South Australia. This two-year initiative, funded by the Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD), builds on a previous pilot with Goodstart and Flinders University's Caring Futures Institute. In the first five weeks, 80 clinics were held across 45 centres, completing 300 CHDCs. Notably, 23 percent of children had not previously engaged with CaFHS, and 31 percent required referrals. Early results show the value of health-education collaboration in identifying needs early and connecting families to support.

Stories of change

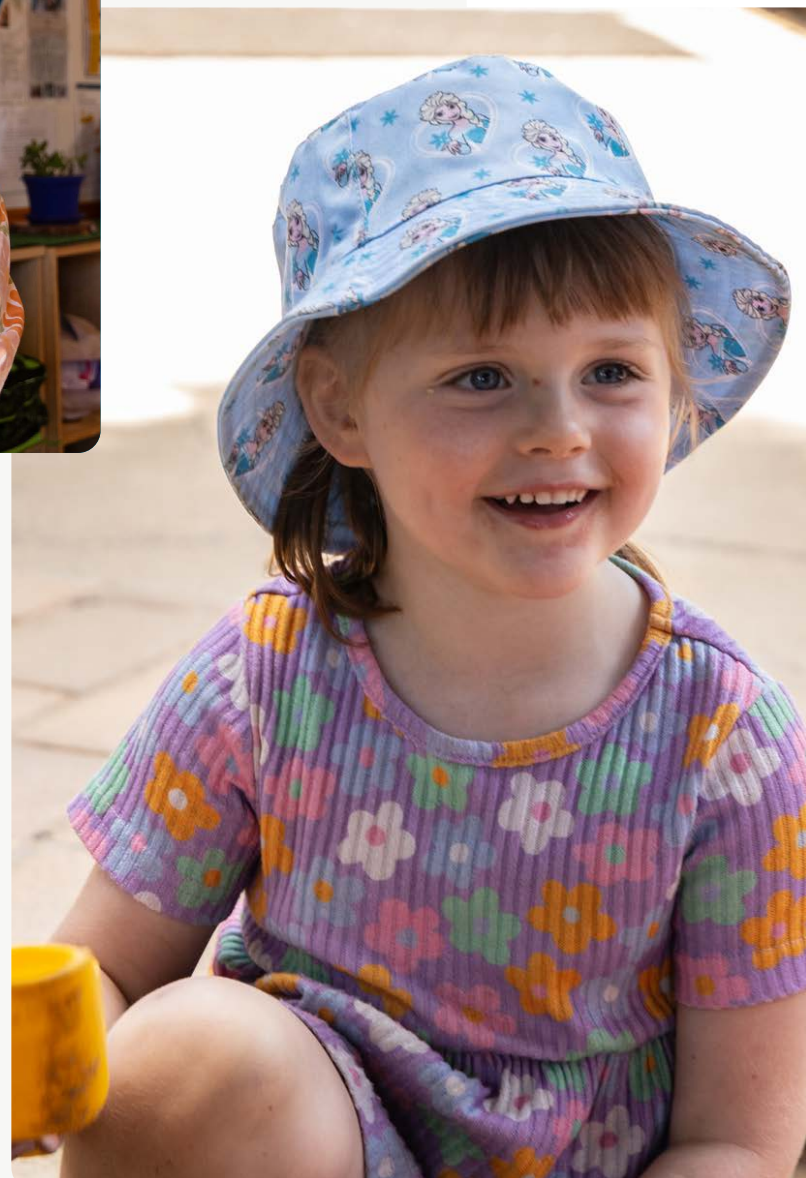
Single parent Cyndel's story



When Cyndel became a single parent, she was determined to create a better life for her children – but financial hardship – and the now abandoned Activity Test – threatened to keep them from early learning.

Through Goodstart's Early Learning Fund (ELF), we removed the financial barriers by providing fee relief – first for her son and now for her three-year-old daughter.

As a single parent restricted by the Activity Test, Cyndel needed additional support to change her circumstances. The results speak for themselves as both children are now thriving in their learning and development, and Cyndel has returned to work, improving her family's financial security.



Inclusion at the heart for Goodstarters like Sonya



For nearly 20 years, Sonya Smith has been a cornerstone of the Browns Plains community, first with ABC Learning and now with Goodstart. She has seen first-hand the shift to a not-for-profit model where inclusion drives every decision.

“We all quickly realised the shift in purpose that came with Goodstart and that we would be inclusive of everyone with all money invested back into the centres, the families and children.”

“It wasn't just everyone in a box anymore, it was about inclusion of all families, all children...and it has just expanded since.”

Working in Logan, one of Australia's most underserved regions for quality early learning, Sonya knows the impact of inclusive practices.

“Inclusion is everything in early learning - we don't expect families to adapt to us we will adapt to them... if that means we need to go and do additional learning ourselves to build our knowledge for that child or that family, we will do that.”

Goodstart's reinvestment model ensures that every dollar goes back into centres, families, and children helping educators like Sonya make early learning truly accessible for all.

[Read more](#)

Andrew faced exclusion before arriving at Goodstart

For Lina, a single mum living in one of Sydney's most disadvantaged areas, moments of calm with her four-year-old son Andrew mean everything.

Andrew has Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD and developmental delays. At his previous childcare centre, Lina was regularly called to collect him early because staff could not meet his needs.

Finding Goodstart Prairiewood – deeply committed to inclusion – changed everything. Andrew now attends two days a week, thriving in a safe supportive environment.

Goodstart never excludes children with additional needs, but the cost of inclusion is rising, and the number of children needing support continues to grow. Current government funding falls short.

We know the cost of exclusion is far greater – for children, families and society – than the government investment required to ensure every child has the chance to thrive. That's why Goodstart continues to advocate for stronger inclusion funding so that no child is ever turned away.





In focus: Safeguarding children and their safety, health and wellbeing

There is no greater responsibility than protecting children's health, wellbeing and protecting them from abuse, neglect or harm.

Safeguarding children

In FY25, Goodstart continues to strengthen our safeguarding culture. Building on our deep commitment to ensuring every child feels safe, is safe and is heard. We have completed our third organisational Safeguarding Plan and launched the 2025–2029 Safeguarding Children Strategy. The strategy provides a roadmap to prevent, identify and respond to abuse, neglect and harm.

FY25 at a glance

- All centres completed Child Safe Self Assessments identifying improvement actions to embed the state-based Child Safe Standards and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Released the free, evidence-based Feel Safe, Be Safe Protective Strategies Kit to the wider early learning sector to benefit all Australia's children – empowering educators to teach children how to recognise and respond to unsafe situations. The kit was showcased at the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) national conference and in a national webinar with the Daniel Morcombe Foundation.

Scan to read about our commitment to safeguarding children, including our policy and practice in action.



- Awarded the Queensland Child Safe Organisation Award for the second year running, recognising Goodstart's sector-leading approach to mandatory safeguarding training and innovative foundational learning program for all Goodstarters. Also a finalist in the Australian Institute of Training and Development Awards and the South Australian Child Protection Awards.
- Expanded the Child Protection Advocate Program to 100+ Goodstart volunteers across the network.
- Strengthened child safe recruitment practices at every stage of hiring. Position descriptions, selection criteria, interview questions and referee checks now explicitly reflect our commitment to child safety. Specialised training provided to all talent acquisition partners and a new Child Safe Recruitment Training Package, supported by webinars, scenario-based learning and a train the trainer program, now in place for all hiring managers.
- Extended mandatory annual child protection training to all visitors working or volunteering directly with children.
- Demonstrated sector leadership by proactively implementing the National Model Code – developed by ACECQA in partnership with all governments – on the safe use of devices for capturing, sharing and storing images of children, well ahead of sector-wide legislative reforms.
- Maintained active advocacy and consultation with governments and peak bodies to influence child safety legislation and best practice.



Goodstart's award-winning foundational learning program – featuring a storybook, interactive micro-modules and a personalised capability assessment – is mandatory for all 16,000 employees and designed to empower them to prevent, identify and respond to child abuse, neglect and harm.



Safety, health, and wellbeing

Safety starts with each of us. In FY25, improved systems, an active Safety Champion network and a range of targeted initiatives all contributed to building safer workplaces across Goodstart.

FY25 at a glance

- Goodstart continues to strengthen its approach to child safety, with targeted analysis and interventions in place to reduce the risk of injuries. Slips, trips and falls remain a key focus area.
- Introduced machine learning analysis to identify centres at greatest risk of adult injuries. A “Focus 30” group received targeted support, achieving close to a 50 percent reduction in Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate (TRIFR).
- Implemented ServiceNow’s Health and Safety Incident Case Management System to improve safety response and proactively identify and mitigate risk – streamlining reporting, automating workflows and improving risk visibility.
- Strengthened and revitalised our safety champion network, including an updated monthly safety champion check, enhanced induction, new resources and increased collaboration.
- Coordinated 10 safety committees, state safety champion leads, and network collaboration that feeds essential safety information to states and Goodstart’s national safety council.
- Completed a range of operational program redesigns – improving oversight, approach, and reporting of child attendances and absences; enhancing procedures, documentation, and risk management for transport and excursions; and simplifying policies and procedures for a better user experience.
- Continued to enhance, and are planning further improvements to, Goodstart’s visitor management system to improve centre-level ease of use and oversight.
- More than 8,000 Goodstarters accessed our free annual flu vaccination program delivered in partnership with Australian Vaccine Services.
- Delivered mental health first aid training to 24 Goodstarters across our network.
- Launched ‘Compassionate Leaders – Supporting a Thriving Workforce’ – a series of educational videos promoting the value of optimising mental health at Goodstart.
- Successfully launched Fitness Passport offering heavily discounted gym memberships to Goodstarters and their family members.
- Continued our partnership with Synergy First Aid to provide bespoke training for centres enrolling children with complex needs.
- Maintained partnerships with Axis, Bupa, Synergy First Aid, and Telus Health to provide Goodstarters with early intervention care, counselling, coaching, discounted healthcare and wellbeing resources.



In focus: Reconciliation in action

In FY25, we strengthened our focus on ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and Goodstarters felt a deep sense of belonging – choosing to come, stay, and share with us



Our third RAP launches

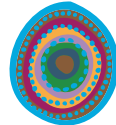
This year we launched our third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) – our second Stretch RAP (2024-2027) – setting ambitious goals in governance, partnerships, truth telling, cultural capability and centre-based learning. It also introduces new commitments, including increasing First Nations representation in leadership roles and building stronger partnerships with First Nations businesses, suppliers and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations.

The RAP was launched in October 2024 through national gatherings that brought together Goodstarters, First Nations leaders and community members, including Gaja Kerry Charlton, a respected Yuggera Elder, and Torres Strait Islander Elder Auntie Ruthie Ghee. The event featured cultural performances and the unveiling of 'The Heart of Reconciliation' artwork (see page 2 for details) to represent our journey and path forward.

The Stretch RAP marks a milestone in our 10-year reconciliation journey – celebrating progress to date while setting out ambitious commitments for the years ahead, all focused on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.



'The Heart of Reconciliation' artwork by David Williams of Gilimbaa.



Stronger representation and support for First Nations children and families

We proudly completed year one of our expanded Stretch RAP. This was also the first full year of the national policy providing all First Nations children with access to a minimum of two days of subsidised early learning. Supported by our significant investments in centre RAPs and cultural learning, participation of First Nations children in Goodstart centres increased on the prior year. Importantly, there is now no gap in attendance between First Nations and non-Indigenous children in our centres – ensuring equitable access to quality early learning.

Today, 7.8 percent of children enrolled at Goodstart identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, exceeding both national population representation (7.4%) and the ECEC sector average (4.9%).

Our annual child census helps us understand the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, ensuring centres are supported to welcome families, address barriers such as cost, and maintain strong cultural connections and stable relationships for children at risk. Looking ahead, we are preparing for 1 January 2026, when all First Nations children will have access to up to five days of subsidised early learning.



Building a strong First Nations workforce

Goodstart now employs 432 First Nations educators, teachers and early learning professionals. In FY25 we also welcomed 50 First Nations trainees and four school-based trainees, supported through mentoring and tailored centre-level support.

To better support and grow our workforce, we created two dedicated roles:

- A First Nations Employment Lead, focused on culturally safe attraction and onboarding.
- A First Nations Engagement and Support Specialist, appointed in July 2024, focused on retention, professional development and career progression.

We also deepened our commitment to weaving Torres Strait Islander history, culture and perspectives across our centres through our dedicated Torres Strait Islander Cultural Liaison role. Our long-standing partnership with CareerTrackers provided six paid internships at Centre Support Office and one in centres, with two graduates moving into full-time employment at Goodstart.

Embedding reconciliation in every centre

All Goodstart centres continue to engage with Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education platform, with 290 centres publishing RAPs in FY25.

Our internal Communities of Practice also grew, with 31 centres participating in a newly redeveloped six-month program designed to lift and deepen cultural knowledge. Centres were supported with tailored resources, coaching and community connections to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in everyday practice.

Work also began on the design of a Goodstart Elders Advisory Group to provide national and local cultural guidance, ensuring Elders' voices shape our reconciliation journey into the future.

National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week were celebrated in every centre, honouring First Nations voices, histories and cultures. In addition, 2,200 more Goodstarters completed Arrilla Cultural Competency Training in FY25, bringing the total to 15,500.

Investing in reconciliation and community leadership

In FY25, we invested \$974K in embedding reconciliation across everything we do through initiatives and programs. Spending with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses increased to \$1.5 million, up \$100,000 on the previous year, under our First Nations Procurement Strategy - Grow with Us.

Our nine-year partnership with the Baya Gawiy Early Learning Unit in Fitzroy Crossing continued, with eight Goodstart educators undertaking the cultural immersion secondment in the remote community, bringing valuable insights back to their centres.

We also supported delegations to key sector events including the ECA Reconciliation Symposium and Reconciliation Australia's National RAP Conference, ensuring First Nations voices guide our journey. Cultural Liaison Melody Ingra was appointed to the Investment Dialogue First Nations Leadership Council and featured on national panels to share Goodstart's experiences.

Looking ahead

We've made strong progress, but reconciliation is a journey. As we enter year two of our Stretch RAP, our focus remains on walking alongside First Nations communities to embed truth-telling, cultural knowledge and inclusive practice in every part of our work.

In August 2025, our CEO will lead a delegation to the Garma Festival, listening deeply to First Nations leaders and strengthening partnerships with those who know their communities best.

Strong First Nations engagement

In 2025, 7.8% of children at Goodstart centres identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, exceeding both the national population representation (7.4%) and the ECEC sector average (4.9%).



Our change-makers

Children are at the heart of everything we do – and it’s our people who make the difference.

We invest in our educators and teams because high quality early learning, which delivers better outcomes for children, is intrinsically linked to a highly skilled and engaged workforce. The ACCC Childcare Inquiry endorsed this approach, finding not-for-profit providers like Goodstart consistently invest more in their people, pay higher wages, provide stronger professional support, and are more likely to retain highly skilled staff.

Growing and recognising our talent

In the first year of our five-year strategy we:

- finalised a new Enterprise Agreement, making Goodstart one of the first major providers to deliver the wage subsidy
- launched a new induction program to strengthen how we welcome and support new Goodstarters
- lifted engagement scores, reflecting stronger culture and connection
- celebrated our people through You Make the Difference, Years of Service and the Goodies Awards
- completed a new five-year People Strategy to launch alongside our strategic plan.

FY25 highlights

\$29 million	invested in professional development and qualifications – around \$1,800 per Goodstarter – supporting them to make a difference while upholding our stringent safeguarding and safety standards
428 new trainees	joined Goodstart , with over 1,050 trainees completing qualifications in our centres
702 Goodstarters	supported in our Certificate III Traineeship Program and Diploma Upskill program , with 323 Goodstarters completing their studies in FY25
423 Goodstarters	provided teacher study support with 81 graduating with their Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
Accelerated pathways	in partnership with Australian Catholic University and University of Wollongong to build a strong teacher pipeline to meet state and national early learning reforms
35% reduction	in permanent vacancies (July 1) compared to last year and 54 percent reduction over two years.

Goodstart, in collaboration with the South Australian Department for Education, established two new partnerships with Heights Technical College and Mount Gambier Technical College to strengthen early childhood education and care career pathways within local communities. This complements the work already underway supporting Findon Technical College with school-based traineeships.

Investing in our people

The Goodstart Early Learning Enterprise Agreement 2024 was formally approved on 22 November 2024, delivering sector-leading wages and conditions.

- Incorporated the Federal Government's 15 percent funded wage increase over two years, with Goodstart the first provider in the sector to have this approved.
- Wages pegged at least five percent above award for educators, and we pay teachers on par with state primary school teachers.
- Enhanced leave provisions, including parental leave for stillbirth and pregnancy loss, unpaid grandparent leave, and new gender equity leave for reproductive health and gender transition.
- Workload support for teachers via dedicated working groups, helping to manage planning and documentation expectations.
- Six weeks of paid parental leave for all permanent employees after 12 months of continuous service.

These initiatives reflect our commitment to retention, wellbeing and professional growth – ensuring Goodstart remains an employer of choice in a competitive sector by valuing and supporting the critical work of our people. Between May 2024 and April 2025 Goodstart's employee-initiated turnover dropped to its lowest 12-month rate in more than three years.

Highlights

Educators and cooks receive at least **5% above the award rate**

We pay **teachers** on par with state primary schools. Graduate teachers receive **\$91,300 starting salary** (including the 10% Government wage subsidy)

Assistant directors receive at least **7% above the award rate**

We pay **centre directors 12% above the award rate**

Our **Thriving Teacher Program** supports teachers on their professional development journey, helping more teachers achieve and maintain proficient status

Building on this momentum, our 2025-29 People Strategy focuses on:

- empowered leaders through targeted induction, blended learning, professional supervision and leadership coaching
- thriving teachers and educators with continuous development and clear career pathways
- a safe, inclusive and rewarding workplace that reflects our purpose and values
- supporting our people – giving key roles, like nominated supervisors, the time and support to uphold the highest standards in safety, safeguarding and quality.



Advocating for educators

- not just children Goodstart has led the sector in advocating for better pay for educators – sharing data and evidence with government for years. Our people's voices and stories of their life-changing work helped secure the historic 15% Federal Government pay rise in 2024.



“Early educators shape lives and change lives. We can never thank them enough for what they do – but we can make sure they are properly valued and fairly paid.” – Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese

Change-makers in action

Rising Star - Kellese Woods

Goodstart's Kellese Woods started her career as a trainee at Canning Vale – Campbell Road, combining paid, hands-on experience with her Certificate III studies.

In just a year, she's made a real impact for children and was named the 2024 Rising Star at the Goodies Awards. Kellese is now completing her Diploma and aims to become an educational leader, inspiring the next generation of educators.

[Read more](#)



Fast facts

- **800+ centre leaders and support teams** joined state conferences nationwide, headlined by CEO Dr Ros Baxter, with guest speakers including former tennis champion Jelena Dokic on resilience and a neuroscience based leadership masterclass.
- **Centre teams rallied behind big causes** – from Children's Ground 'Wear it Yellow' Day, Bravehearts Day, National Pyjama Day to the World's Greatest Shave for the Leukemia Foundation, Red Nose Day, Second Bite and OzHarvest.
- **22 Goodstarters** celebrated 25+ years of service.
- **Early Educators' Day** was marked with funded morning teas for every educator.
- **15 years of Goodstart** celebrated with storytelling, a CEO-led webinar, and morning teas thanks to Woolies at Work.
- **Goodstarters raised \$300K for the Early Learning Fund**, gifting fee-relief for children to attend early learning.
- **More than 30 networking forums** supported First Nations employees, male educators, LGBTQIA+ staff, and team members with diverse abilities.





Discovering 'next' Practice in Singapore



Six exceptional educators and teachers travelled to Singapore for Goodstart's second international 'Next Practice' professional learning experience, awarded through the 2024 National Goodstart Goodies Awards.

Joined by Chief Children's Officer Sue Robb, they spent a week exploring world class early learning spaces. The group explored centres ranging from a 70 place service to a 1,000 place mega-centre – this diversity offered insights into different approaches and scales of education.

The tour built on the success of the inaugural New Zealand study tour and reflects Goodstart's commitment to continuous improvement and educator growth.

"I am so thankful to Goodstart for this incredible opportunity. I can't wait to continue sharing what I've learned not only with my team, but also with the children, families, and other services." – Nicole Roberson, Educational Leader
– Goodstart Virginia (QLD) – Educational Leader of the Year

[Read more](#)





Educator serves as inspiration to centre and wider community

A proud member of the Goodstart Ballina team since 2016, Numoil Smith has been on an inspirational journey as an educator. Before moving to Australia, Numoil worked as an educator in Thailand for 10 years.

Starting over in a new country, she studied English (Certificate II and III), followed by a Certificate III and Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care at TAFE. Balancing work, study and professional development effectively, she was nominated and recognised as the 2025 NSW Government Vocational Education and Training Awards winner for the NSW North Coast and Mid North Coast region.

“Winning this award is a proud moment in my life. Australia has given me a new beginning, and TAFE has provided the opportunity to build a future here. I’m especially thankful to Goodstart Ballina and the families in our community for their belief in me and ongoing support,” Numoil said.

Fitzroy Crossing Secondment - Strengthening cultural capability

In FY25, Goodstart educators continued to take part in our long-standing secondment program at Baya Gawi Buga yani Jandu yani u centre in Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia. Since 2016, educators from across Goodstart have spent a term at the integrated early childhood education, care, health and wellbeing centre, deepening their understanding of First Nations culture and connection to Country.

This year, Stella Chalkias, Teacher at Goodstart Mentone and Michele McAllister, Senior Educator at Goodstart Richlands, returned from their second and third 12-week secondments. Both describe the experience as life-changing, with practical lessons they are now applying back in their own centres – from embedding cultural perspectives into curriculum, to slowing down and allowing the natural environment and seasons to guide practice.

“Working at Baya Gawi has been the best professional experience I’ve had in the 27 years I’ve worked in our industry,” Michelle said.





Policy, research and advocacy

Over the past 15 years, Goodstart has focused on sector efforts to elevate the importance of the early years to improve outcomes for all of Australia's children. Advocates have celebrated significant progress this year as early learning received unprecedented investment and the attention of national and state governments.



Driving national reform

The changes to educator wages, the new Three Day Guarantee and the \$1 billion Building Early Education Fund are the result of years of advocacy work by Goodstart and sector leaders committed to positive change. These are significant step-by-step reforms on the roadway to building a universal early learning system for Australia.

The final Productivity Commission report, delivered in late 2024, outlined an achievable roadmap toward universal early learning. Goodstart welcomed the report, with the impact of our submissions to the inquiry reflected in the 151 citations of Goodstart in the final report (Volume I and II, September 2024).

While there has been progress on workforce and access pillars this year, we remain focused on the next steps needed to build a truly universal early learning system. This requires a long-term commitment to fair wages for educators, expanding supply in underserved areas and by high quality providers, reforming inclusion funding, and improving quality, safety and affordability – delivered through a staged approach with government as an active steward of the system.

Engaging with governments

In the lead-up to the 2025 Federal Election, Goodstart actively engaged with all major parties and welcomed candidates to visit our centres, as early learning was an important topic for all parties throughout the campaign. More than 30 MPs and candidates visited, including the Prime Minister on three occasions. We also welcomed the Premiers of Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland, as well as the Deputy Premier of New South Wales.

Goodstart works in close partnership with state governments on preschool and workforce initiatives, including the South Australian Government's roll-out of three-year-old preschool program and the Queensland Government's Kindy Uplift and Workforce Partnerships programs.

Building strong collaborations

Collaboration with governments, universities, philanthropists and other community organisations enables us to test ideas, scale what works, and ensures we're listening to – and learning from – diverse voices and perspectives. We also draw on the expertise of global and Australian thought leaders, our founding syndicate and our sector partners. With this broad base of support, drive and credibility we demonstrate what is needed to support children through their early years.

Strengthening the evidence base

Our evidence base is a crucial element in securing increased investment in early learning and improving understanding of how we can improve children's outcomes. Goodstart continues to strengthen its data and analytical capacity to provide evidence of what works, while partnering with leading researchers to build a robust evidence base.

Goodstart's partnership with the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Children and Families Over the Life Course and the Queensland Brain Institute includes flagship research on the sector's workforce, access to early learning, quality and child outcomes. This partnership has delivered evidence and advice that have informed Goodstart's engagement in driving sector reform.

Tracking long-term outcomes

Our partnership with The South Australian Data Linkage project through the Better Start Group at the University of Adelaide allows researchers to examine how early learning experiences at Goodstart influence long-term outcomes for children.

Fast facts

\$4.8 billion in new Federal ECEC funding commitments secured

10 research partnerships and collaborations to improve Australia's evidence base and deliver better child outcomes

Supporter of 6+ peak bodies and grass roots campaigns seeking reform including Thrive by Five and The Parenthood

55 state and federal politician centre visits to demonstrate early learning impact

A seven-year research collaboration with University of Queensland's Life Course Centre – to better understand how early learning transforms life outcomes, especially for children experiencing vulnerability

Important role of not-for-profit providers

The ACCC Child Care Inquiry and Productivity Commission Inquiry found that not-for-profit providers generally deliver higher quality, are more affordable, have lower fees and are better paid, more stable workforce than the rest of the sector. Not-for-profit providers like Goodstart also invest more in inclusion and are more likely to operate in less profitable, more disadvantaged communities.

Yet, despite this, virtually all recent growth in the sector has been in private provision. The share of centres provided by not-for-profits has fallen from 40 percent to 30 percent in the past decade.

As Australia transitions to a universal early childhood and care (ECEC) system, Goodstart advocates that policy should actively encourage the growth of high quality providers (such as not-for-profits) and discourage the growth of poor quality providers. We, along with other sector leaders, have called for:

- a **National ECEC Commission** to hold providers and regulators to account on safety and quality
- the **Building Early Education Fund** to prioritise high quality not-for-profit providers to grow in communities with the greatest need
- **adequate funding** to ensure children with additional needs receive the support they deserve.

Without these changes, too many children experiencing vulnerability will miss out on the support they deserve.

“A universal system will require planned and supported expansion of services, as well as transparency about costs, fees and profits. Governments will need to address the imbalance between for-profit and not-for-profit providers and ensure that the business models and employment practices of all providers are aligned with the National Cabinet vision. In the simplest terms, this means public supports for expansion of not for-profit services and substantially increased financial accountability and transparency for all.”

Professor Deborah Brennan, Associate Commissioner, A Path to Universal Early Childhood Education and Care (Productivity Commission, Final Report, September 2024), p. 339



SA State Premier Peter Malinauskas visits Goodstart Elizabeth Vale



What Australia has achieved in early childhood education and care in the last three years

Benchmark	Change	Dec 2021	Dec 2024
Net childcare costs (after subsidies)¹	-5.3%	165.1	156.3
Workforce participation rate of women with children aged 0-4 years	+3.4%	67.2%	70.6%
Participation rate of children aged 0-5 years in ECEC²	+2.7%	55.3%	58.0%
Number of children enrolled in ECEC²	+2.3%	1,053,267	1,077,734
Number of centre-based day care places	+15.0%	604,411	694,975
% Not-for-profit/public share of centre-based day care places	-3.5%	30.5%	27.0%
Centres with vacancies for (% May)	+19.0%	40.5%	59.5%
Number of centres meeting the National Quality Standard	+3.0%	87%	90%
Number of First Nations children in ECEC (Mar 2025)	+19.0%	37,813	45,059
Number of children with a disability (Mar 2025)	+9.4%	41,615	45,530

¹ The figures shown for December 2021 and December 2024 represent index results - not daily costs - calculated by the ABS for net child care costs (after subsidies), which contribute to the calculation of the Consumer Price Index.

² ECEC includes centre-based day care, family day care and sessional preschools. Sources: ABS Consumer Price Index, ABS Labor Force, Productivity Commission Report on Government Services, Dept of Education Quarterly Child Care Statistics, ACECQA NQS Snapshot, National ECEC Workforce Census, JSA Monthly Internet Vacancies Index.





A look ahead: a future full of possibility

Over the next five years, we're doubling down on what matters most:

- safe, high quality, inclusive early learning
- empowered educators and leaders
- partnerships and policies that build a fairer early learning system
- reaching the communities too often forgotten.

Because a child's future should never be defined by their postcode or circumstance.

We're not just imagining what's possible – we're making it real.



2025-2029 Strategic Goals

World class early learning outcomes, delivered at scale

We will uplift quality across every service, build greater capability to support children with additional needs and monitor and evaluate the impact of our work to deliver better outcomes for all children

A team of the very best, united by purpose

We will invest in capability, nurture wellbeing and grow the professionalism of our people in the knowledge that boosting our people strength will have a positive flow-on effect and lead to improved outcomes for children

A strong and reliable operational foundation

We will improve performance across every function and service to strengthen our business so we can invest more into children, families, our people and our social purpose

Every child, in every place, thriving

We will develop scalable, integrated approaches and secure funding sources to deliver more wrap-around services for those children who need it the most

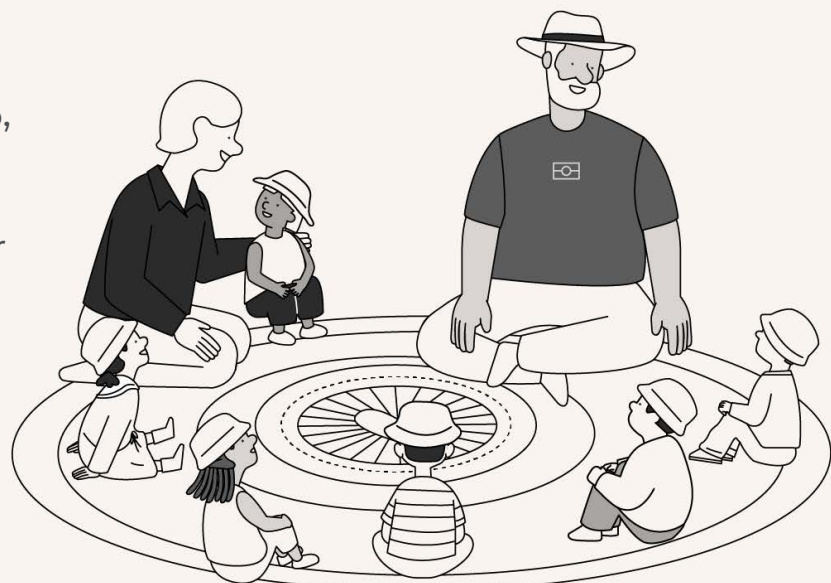
Every family able to access high quality early learning

We will ensure more families have the choice of a high quality provider by growing our own footprint in areas of greatest need and advocating for more favourable policy settings that enable broader not-for-profit growth

Our safety aspirations and reconciliation ambitions are embedded in everything we do, underpinning each of our objectives.

As we look ahead, these commitments guide us – reflecting who we are, what we stand for and the actions we’re taking.

- [Our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2024 – 2027.](#)
- Our [Safeguarding Commitment](#), underpinned by our 2025-2029 Safeguarding Children Strategy.



Our governance

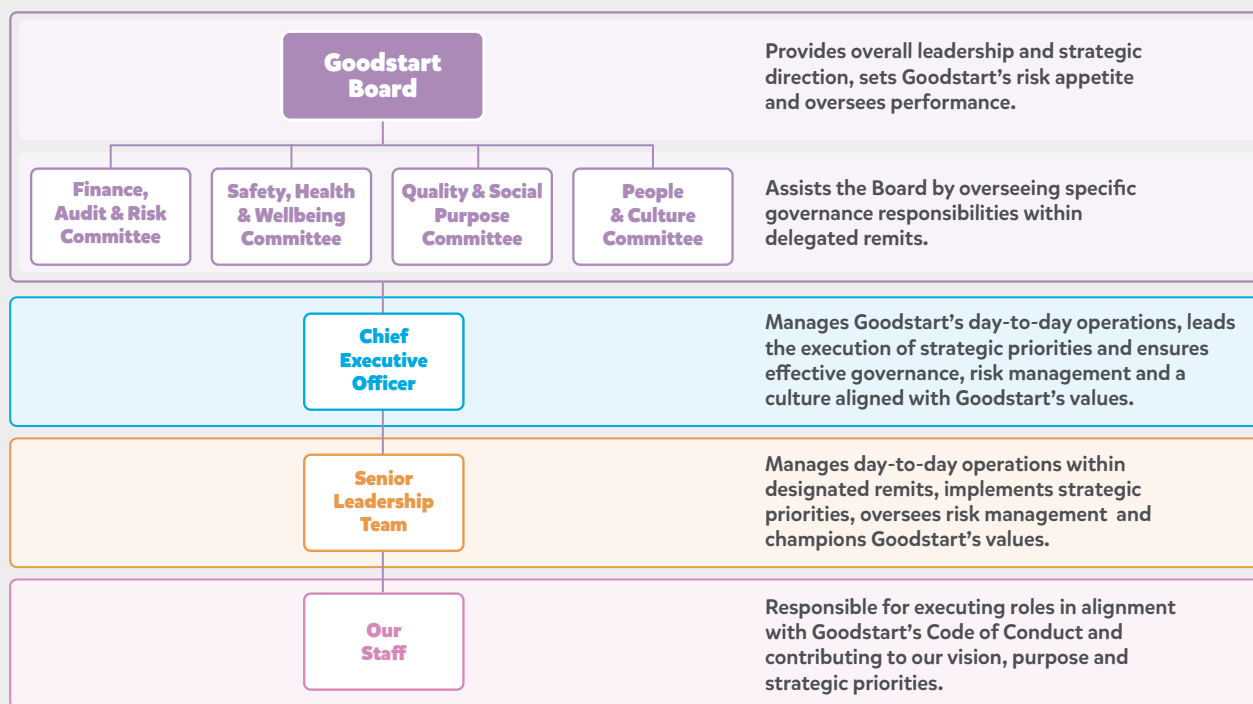
Our corporate governance framework

The Goodstart Board is responsible for overseeing our corporate governance framework. It provides leadership and strategic direction, ensuring strong stewardship, accountability and performance across our organisation.

The Board plays a vital role in monitoring the effectiveness of risk management and ensuring that our performance, direction and internal controls are aligned with Goodstart's vision, purpose, strategic priorities and risk appetite. It also provides constructive challenge and support to the CEO and senior management.

To support its work, the Board is assisted by four specialised committees that provide focused oversight in key areas – Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee, Quality and Social Purpose Committee, and People and Culture Committee.

Our corporate governance framework ensures clear accountability, effective controls, and robust oversight. The key components of this framework are outlined below.



Direction and control

Throughout the financial year, the Board met six times: four multi-day Board and Committee meetings and two shorter Board meetings. In addition, Directors participated in out-of-session briefings, strategic planning sessions, professional development activities, and visits to Goodstart centres.

Directors also attended committee meetings, with each Board Member serving on at least two committees. The full Board sits on both the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee and the Quality and Social Purpose Committee.

The Board, either directly or through its committees, regularly receives reports and presentations from senior leaders and managers on strategic opportunities, financial and operational performance, risks relevant to Goodstart, and key measures to track our progress in creating meaningful impact for children, families, communities and our people.

The Board's work is guided by the Goodstart Constitution and its Board and Committee Charters, which are reviewed annually.

Board composition

The Board recognises the importance of a balanced mix of skills, experience, and diversity to support effective governance and decision-making.

As at 30 June 2025, the Board comprised of nine Directors, including eight independent Non-Executive Directors and the Chief Executive Officer. The Board's composition reflects a breadth of expertise across key areas such as industry knowledge, governance, finance, risk management, and leadership.

During the financial year, the Board welcomed Ms Belinda Hutchison AC, who was appointed as a Non-Executive Director on 28 November 2024.

There were no Director retirements or departures from the Board during the year.

Directors

Goodstart's directors during the financial year are set out below:



Paul Robertson AO

B Comm; FCPA

**Goodstart Board Chair,
Non-Executive Director**

Chair of People and Culture Committee;
Member of Finance, Audit and Risk
Committee; Member of Quality and Social
Purpose Committee; Member of Safety,
Health and Wellbeing Committee.

Appointed 1 December 2019

Paul Robertson has extensive experience as a non-executive director and chair in a wide variety of commercial and not for profit organisations across Australia. He is the immediate past Chair of Social Ventures Australia, St Vincent's Health Australia, and Alzheimer's Australia (NSW). He was also a Non-Executive Director of Dementia Australia, Sydney Theatre Company Foundation, and Telco Together Foundation.

Paul currently serves as Chair of Humanity Health Group, Tonic Media Network, SIPfHER Precinct Council, and Grace Papers. He is also the Founder and Executive Director of the Financial Markets Foundation for Children. He has broad experience in finance, including 27 years as Global Treasurer and Executive Director at Macquarie Bank.

Paul was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2018 for distinguished service to the community through ethical leadership and management of, and philanthropic contributions to, health, social enterprise, research, education, and arts organisations.



Dr Ros Baxter

PhD; LLB; BSW; BA

**Executive Director and
Chief Executive Officer**

Member of Quality and Social Purpose
Committee; Member of Safety, Health and
Wellbeing Committee.

Appointed 20 March 2023

Ros Baxter is a leading Australian education executive who has spent the last 30 years working and partnering around the idea that early intervention and education are the keys to addressing intergenerational disadvantage. Since starting her career as a frontline social worker in child protection, Ros has worked across government and with partners in the community and research sectors to maximise understanding, investment, and effective early interventions for children and families. She has first class honours degrees in law and social work, a degree in government, and a doctorate of laws from the University of Sydney.

Before joining Goodstart, Ros was the Deputy Secretary for the Australian Government Department of Education and former First Assistant Secretary, Social Policy Division, of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. She has been a Non-Executive Director of the Boards of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and for Our Watch, Australia's leader in the primary prevention of violence against women.

Ros was awarded a Public Service Medal (PSM) in the Australian Honours System in 2019 for her work developing the national redress scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.

In designing solutions, Ros is an advocate of partnering closely with families, educators, and services who know and understand children the best. With four children of her own, she believes that every person is different and differently capable, and that everyone has the right to a great start in life.



Natalie Walker

BA (Psych); LLB

**Goodstart Deputy Chair,
Non-Executive Director**

Member of Quality and Social Purpose
Committee; Member of People and
Culture Committee; Member of Safety,
Health and Wellbeing Committee.

Appointed 1 December 2018

Natalie Walker is the founder and Managing Director, of Inside Policy, a privately held boutique public consultancy and data analytics firm that advises government, corporates and not-for-profits on a range of social and economic policy matters. Natalie is a committed advocate for reconciliation and was previously the Chief Executive Officer of Supply Nation, a start-up greenfields company focused on increasing the participation of Indigenous business in the supply chain of Australia's largest companies.

She is a Non-Executive Director of NRMA, the Paul Ramsay Foundation, Life Without Barriers, and the Climate Council of Australia. Natalie has previously held roles at KPMG Australia, the Australian Human Rights Commission, and in the Queensland Government.



Lynelle Briggs AO

B Econ; GAICD

Non-executive Director

Chair of Safety, Health and Wellbeing
Committee; Member of Finance, Audit and
Risk Committee; Member of Quality and
Social Purpose Committee.

Appointed 15 December 2015

Lynelle is currently Co-Chair of the Review of Coastal Shipping Legislation, Lead of Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency's Compliance Review into the Australian National University, and serves as a Non-Executive Director of the NSW State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA). She was a Commissioner on the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and led a review for the Australian Government on reducing the politicisation of government board appointments.

Lynelle has formerly held roles as Chair of Maritime Super, Chair of NSW's Planning Assessment Commission, Chair of the General Insurance Code Governance Committee, Councillor of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Board, and a Non-Executive Director of the Australian Rail Track Corporation. She is a former Australian Public Service Commissioner and former Chief Executive of Medicare Australia. Lynelle has extensive experience in the Australian Public Service, working in a wide range of fields, including social security, health and community services, transport, external territories, employment, and labour market support and veterans' affairs.

Lynelle became an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia in 2013 for distinguished service to public administration, particularly through leadership in the development of public service performance and professionalism.



Philip Coffey

BEc (Hons); GAICD; SF Finsia

Non-executive Director

Member of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee; Member of Quality and Social Purpose Committee; Member of Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee

Appointed 6 December 2021

Philip Coffey is a highly regarded senior executive leader who has deep financial services experience. For over 20 years, Phil worked at Westpac Banking Corporation including three years as the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Westpac Group. Prior to this role, Phil held a number of executive positions at Westpac including Chief Financial Officer and Group Executive. A passion for education led to Phil's involvement in the Westpac Scholars program and his appointment as the inaugural Chair. Phil has over 30 years of senior executive experience – from leading significant investment decisions, large technology projects, to mergers and acquisitions. Phil began his career at the Reserve Bank of Australia, and he has also held executive positions at Citibank.

Phil is a Non-Executive Director of Macquarie Group Limited and LendLease. He was formerly a Director of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation Board.



Professor Sir Kevan Collins

Ed.D

Non-executive Director

Member of Quality and Social Purpose Committee; Member of People and Culture Committee; Member of Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee

Appointed 1 December 2018

Kevan Collins has had a long career in education and public service. After stepping down from full time work as the Chief Executive at the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), he now supports a range of UK and international child and youth focused organisations. Prior to joining the EEF in 2011 as its first Chief Executive Officer, he was Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Kevan is now a Board Member of the EEF. Kevan started his career teaching in east London. He went on to lead schools in Yorkshire and London and became the National Director of the Primary National Strategy in 2002.

Kevan is a Non-Executive Board Member of the UK Department for Education, Non-Executive Director of EEF, and Executive Vice Chair of Learning by Questions.

Kevan completed his doctorate in 2001 and is a visiting professor at the University College London Institute of Education. He was knighted for his services to education in 2015.



Chris Harrop

MBA (Hons); B Comm (Hons)

Non-executive Director

Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee; Member of Quality and Social Purpose Committee; Member of Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee.

Appointed 1 January 2019

Chris Harrop is an Advisory Partner at the Sydney office of Bain & Company where he has worked for over 30 years across the US, UK, and Australia. Bain is a global strategy consulting firm, employing over 14,000 staff across 65 offices in 40 countries. Chris has specialised in the services sector and on projects addressing corporate strategy, customer experience improvement, and broad-based transformational change.

He formerly served on Bain's global Board of Directors, and was a long-serving Board Member of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. Chris is currently a Non-Executive Director of Tennis Australia, and a Non-Executive Director of Social Ventures Australia. He is a cofounder of Restacking the Odds, a not-for-profit partnership between Bain, Social Ventures Australia, and MCRI working to address inter-generational disadvantage in Australia, and is a strategic advisor to For Purpose Investment Partners.

Chris holds an MBA with Honours from IMD in Lausanne, Switzerland, and a Bachelor of Commerce with First Class Honours in Marketing from Otago University in New Zealand.



Belinda Hutchinson AC

BEcon; FCA; FAICD

Non-executive Director

Member of Quality and Social Purpose Committee; Member of Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee.

Appointed 28 November 2024

Belinda Hutchinson AC is a non-executive director with extensive experience across business, education, and philanthropy. She currently serves as a Director of Australian Philanthropic Services, Qantas, and Thales Australia, and is a Trustee of the St Vincent's Curran Foundation. In 2020, she was appointed as a Companion of the Order of Australia for her significant contributions to business, tertiary education, scientific research, and philanthropic efforts addressing social disadvantage.

Previously, Belinda was the Chancellor of the University of Sydney from 2013 to 2024, and chaired Thales Australia, QBE Insurance Group and Future Generation Global Investment Company. Her board experience includes serving as non-executive director of Telstra Corporation, Coles Myer, Energy Australia, AGL Energy, TAB, Snowy Hydro Trading, Sydney Water, Crane Group, and St Vincent's Health Australia. She also held executive positions as an Executive Director at Macquarie Group, Vice President at Citibank, and a Senior Manager at Andersen Consulting (now Accenture).

Belinda holds a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Sydney and is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She is a former president of Chief Executive Women and chairs her family's charitable foundation.



June McLoughlin AM

M.Ed

Non-executive Director

Chair of Quality and Social Purpose Committee; Member of Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee.

Appointed 15 December 2015

June McLoughlin was formerly Principal Advisor of Our Place, a Colman Foundation Initiative. She has extensive experience in policy and service development, research, and practice within early childhood, family support, and children's services fields. This has given her a broad and deep understanding of issues relevant to the needs of parents and their children.

June has managed many state and national projects designed to refocus early years services to provide more integrated support for families with young children, with a particular interest in vulnerable children.

In 2023, June became a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to child advocacy and early learning.

Company secretaries

The company secretaries are accountable to the Board, through the Chair, on all matters relating to the proper functioning of the Board.

Gavin Bartlett LLB

Gavin Bartlett was appointed Company Secretary on 28 May 2010. Gavin is a solicitor admitted to the Supreme Court in Queensland and Victoria and to the High Court of Australia. Gavin has over 20 years' experience in legal practice, both in private practice and in managing in-house legal teams across Australia and New Zealand.

Nadine Fiers LLB (Hons); GAICD

Nadine Fiers was appointed joint Company Secretary on 20 May 2024. Nadine has over 15 years' experience advising senior management and boards on best practice corporate governance. Nadine's experience encompasses not-for-profit, publicly listed, and government organisations, holding company secretarial and senior management positions.

Our executives

Goodstart's executives during the financial year are set out below:

Dr Ros Baxter

Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
PhD; LLB; BSW; BA

See page 41 for complete biography of Dr Ros Baxter.



Jeff Harvie

Deputy Chief Executive Officer
BBus; FCPA; MAICD

Jeff provides both a strategic and day-to-day focus over our operational functions and the delivery of our strategic goals, purpose and vision. Jeff joined Goodstart in 2014 as the Chief Financial

Officer bringing many years of experience in

senior commercial finance roles across not-for-profit, private and public sectors. During his tenure at Goodstart, Jeff has secured our financial sustainability to help us achieve maximum social impact – with our social purpose investments increasing from \$12.5M to more than \$47.3M in 2022. Jeff has been instrumental in leading our centre growth strategy and executing sector-leading capital projects, to helping establish our charitable cause the Early Learning Fund and overseeing the strategy and implementation of our child safeguarding framework.

Jeff became the Chief Operating Officer in early 2019 and led the transformation of a new way of working at Goodstart, placing centres at the centre of everything we do. In early 2023 Jeff was appointed Deputy Chief Executive Officer, a role to which he brings his strong leadership focus to create a thriving organisation where all children and Goodstarters feel a strong sense of belonging.



Myra Geddes

Chief Impact Officer
BEd; BBus

Myra oversees Goodstart's social impact strategy, policy, measurement, research and evaluation and social inclusion programs and initiatives such as EChO (Enhancing Children's Outcomes) and Family Connections. Myra and her team amplify the delivery of Goodstart's social purpose and impact across the country.

Myra brings significant experience to Goodstart, as a driving force of social policy and reform that has helped transform and improve the quality of life of Australians. She has been the senior social policy advisor to two Australian prime ministers and has worked across early childhood education and care, schools, community services and health policy at state and national levels. Myra's career began as a teacher in the northern suburbs of Brisbane. She is deeply committed to supporting those Goodstarters working closest with children and is a passionate believer in the power of early learning to transform children's lives. Myra co-wrote *Preschool – Two Years are Better Than One* with Dr Stacey Fox at the Mitchell Institute which aimed to help compel Australia to pursue a national commitment to ensuring all three-year-olds have access to high-quality early childhood education by offering a second year of preschool. Myra has also been a Goodstart mum, with her children attending Goodstart Kedron.



Peter Gunn

Chief Financial Officer
GAICD, BCom, FCPA, MAppFin

Peter is an experienced Chief Financial Officer who enjoys working in a "for purpose" environment and is passionate about shaping a stronger future for Goodstart, bringing a strategic focus to financial sustainability, risk and assurance and the longer term success of Goodstart.

Peter is an accomplished finance and commercial leader with a diverse corporate and operational based career across health, aged care, retirement living, not-for-profit, financial services, engineering, construction/projects and mining/energy. With expertise in finance, commercial operations, funding, procurement, IT, property, and governance, he excels in strategy, delivery and change. Peter's ability to lead high-performing teams, navigate complex change and employ broad financial skills in listed and non-listed entities sets him apart. Recent roles have included working with a distributed network of services across 400+ locations and developing a deep understanding of diverse operations. His strategic financial and risk leadership is instrumental in shaping a stronger future for Goodstart, ensuring stability, growth and the ongoing provision of nation-wide high quality early learning. Peter's dedication to excellence drives sustainable success and reinforces Goodstart's vision and purpose.



Meegan McLauchlan
Senior Executive Officer
Ass. Dip (Social Science)

Meegan brings over two decades of experience in early learning and leadership at Goodstart. Beginning her career as a student in a regional Western Australia early learning

service, Meegan has built a diverse skillset

across roles – from operations, including Centre Director, to acquisitions management and critical incident management. She now serves as a trusted advisor to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

As Senior Executive Officer, Meegan is known for her strategic insight and deep understanding of Goodstart’s social purpose, focused on delivering positive social impact for Australia’s children, families, and communities. She plays an invaluable role in uniting and guiding the SLT, strengthening its focus on Goodstart’s vision and purpose. Known as the “beating heart and brains” of the team, Meegan amplifies Goodstart’s social impact by ensuring SLT remains aligned with Goodstart’s long term goals, championing a culture of reflection, proactive decision making and continuous improvement across the organisation.

Passionate about advancing outcomes for children, families, educators and the broader community, Meegan is committed to Goodstart’s vision and purpose. She works closely with leaders to navigate challenges and drive initiatives that bring Goodstart’s strategy and vision to life across more than 650 communities.



Sue Robb OBE
Chief Children's Officer
BEc; FCCT

Sue leads a range of work and initiatives to bring our ambition of becoming a world leader in early years pedagogy and practice to life.

This sees Sue and her colleagues on any given day working closely with educators

in our centres, the sector, academics and national and international thought leaders to translate and embed early learning evidence into practice.

Sue is an international thought leader in early childhood pedagogy and OBE (Order of the British Empire). Prior to joining Goodstart, Sue was the Head of Early Learning at Action for Children in the United Kingdom (UK). As a complement to her role at Action for Children, Sue provided specialist advisory services on early years and childcare policy and quality to the UK Government and relevant Ministers. In her early career, Sue spent 14 years as a teacher, including three years in the British School, Athens, and six years as Early Years and Infant Lead in the British School in Manila, Philippines. She has also been a school principal and held the regulatory role of lead inspector for the Early Years Foundation Stage (the UK version of Australia’s Early Years Learning Framework).



Barbara Shapland
Chief Family and Centre Services Officer
BEc

Barbara is a strategic leader dedicated to ensuring Goodstart delivers high quality early learning experiences for children and families while creating a great place to work for our people and teams.

As Chief Family and Centre Services Officer, she plays a key role in shaping and executing Goodstart’s strategic plan, ensuring the organisation’s vision and purpose are brought to life across its national network of centres. Barbara oversees critical areas including marketing, talent acquisition, workforce planning, procurement, and centre readiness, ensuring Goodstart’s people, resources and operations are aligned to support success.

With a strong background in change management, transformation and operational leadership, Barbara has led large scale projects and business improvements across early learning, transport and media. She is known for her ability to drive positive change, strengthen teams and create impact at scale.

Passionate about making a meaningful difference, Barbara is committed to helping Goodstart’s people and centre teams thrive – so every child can benefit from the best possible early learning experience.



Melinda Smith
Chief Operating Officer
BEc; BRM; MBA; GAICD

Melinda is instrumental in supporting Goodstart’s 654-strong centre network and empowering our centre leaders and their wider teams each and every day to maximise the potential of every child through high quality early learning.

Melinda is a dynamic leader, who fosters innovation, is results driven and has extensive leadership experience in operations management, cultural change, business transformation and customer service.

With over 30 years of senior leadership and executive experience, Melinda brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to Goodstart. Her background includes leadership roles at Woolworths Ltd and the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), leading national service delivery and major change and transformation projects.



Natalie Townsend
Chief People & Culture Officer
BBus; MAICD

Natalie excels in maintaining a great balance between organisational requirements and nurturing an exceptional employee experience to support our people to thrive.

Natalie leads our people and learning teams which maintain an unwavering focus on ensuring Goodstart provides an inclusive and thriving environment for both Goodstarters and the children we serve. Natalie brings significant HR expertise to Goodstart, with her career spanning across several roles within the Queensland Public Service, including Queensland Treasury and Queensland Audit Office. Prior to joining Goodstart, Natalie served as the Chief People Officer, leading a major HR transformation at Residential Tenancies Authority, where she also held acting positions as Chief Executive Officer and Chief Customer Experience Officer.

Our controlled entities

As at 30 June 2025, our 100% owned and controlled entities include ACNC-registered Big Fat Smile Group Limited and Goodstart Early Years Limited, both of which provide early learning and childcare services.

Big Fat Smile's directors during the financial year are set out below:

- Jeff Harvie, Board Chair
- Kim Bertino, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member
- Gavin Bartlett, Board Member
- David Campbell, Board Member
- Myra Geddes, Board Member
- Dr Marina Papic, Board Member.

Big Fat Smile's financial accounts are audited by Goodstart's external auditors and consolidated into Goodstart's annual financial statements.

Directors' meetings

The table below outlines the number of meetings held by the Goodstart Board and its Committees during the financial year, along with attendance by each Board member.

	Committees									
	Board of Directors		Finance, Audit and Risk Committee		People and Culture		Quality and Social Purpose Committee		Safety Health and Wellbeing Committee	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Paul Robertson	6*	6	4	3	3*	3	4	4	4	4
Natalie Walker	6	3			3	3	4	2	4	3
Ros Baxter**	6	6	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4
Lynelle Briggs	6	6	4	4			4	4	4*	4
Philip Coffey	6	6	4	4			4	4	4	4
Kevan Collins	6	4			3	3	4	4	4	3
Chris Harrop	6	6	4*	4			4	3	4	3
Belinda Hutchinson	4	3					3	2	3	2
June McLoughlin	6	5					4*	4	4	4

Column A Number of meetings held while the director was a member of the Board or Committee.

Column B Number of meetings attended by the director while the director was a member of the Board or Committee.

*Denotes the Chair of the Board or relevant Committee Chair as the case may be.

**The Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer is a member of the Quality and Social Purpose Committee and the Safety Health and Wellbeing Committee, and attends the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and People and Culture Committee.

A woman with blonde hair in a bun, wearing a blue patterned shirt, is smiling and looking at a young girl. The girl, wearing an orange polo shirt, is holding up her hand with three fingers extended. They are sitting at a wooden table with various toys, including dice and a blue toy. The background is a classroom with shelves and educational materials.

Consolidated financial statements

Goodstart Early Learning Ltd

ABN 69 139 967 794

For year ended 30 June 2025

Our consolidated financial statements are an authorised extract from our audited accounts, providing a high-level summary of our financial performance. The full version of Goodstart's consolidated financial statements will be available on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Charity Register.

Income Statement	2025	2024
For the year ended 30 June 2025	\$000	\$000
Revenue from early learning centres	1,514,290	1,420,770
Government grants and other income	154,880	90,342
Total revenue	1,669,170	1,511,112
Employee costs	1,176,395	1,071,489
Property expenses	125,822	105,746
Depreciation of right of use assets	77,392	79,313
Catering and consumables expenses	69,749	67,416
Depreciation and impairment expenses	78,370	55,870
Other expenses	54,887	49,453
Total expenses	1,582,615	1,429,287
Operating surplus	86,555	81,825
Net finance (cost)	(57,674)	(69,076)
Net Surplus for the year	28,881	12,749
Total comprehensive Surplus for the year	28,881	12,749

The above reports are an authorised extract from the audited accounts.

Goodstart Early Learning Ltd

Balance Sheet	2025	2024
For the year ended 30 June 2025	\$000	\$000
Assets		
Cash and term deposits	142,059	166,897
Trade receivables and other assets	62,874	62,699
Property, plant and equipment	393,798	321,021
Right of use assets	657,866	693,059
Total assets	1,256,597	1,243,676
Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	108,229	94,921
Loans and borrowings	15,082	47,669
Lease liabilities	878,079	903,855
Employee benefits	137,548	119,964
Provisions	40,267	40,883
Contract liabilities	56,552	44,425
Total liabilities	1,235,757	1,251,717
Net assets / (liabilities)	20,840	(8,041)

The above reports are an authorised extract from the audited accounts.

Goodstart Early Learning Ltd

Cash Flow	2025	2024
For the year ended 30 June 2025	\$000	\$000
Cash flows from operating activities		
Receipts	1,690,280	1,535,369
Payments	(1,421,955)	(1,304,135)
Net cash from operating activities	268,325	231,234
Cash flows from investing activities		
Net purchases of property, plant & equipment	(137,026)	(65,538)
Payments to term deposits	(10,000)	(1,500)
Net cash used in investing activities	(147,026)	(67,038)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Proceeds from borrowings, net of borrowing costs	(33,000)	(908)
Payments of lease liabilities	(66,142)	(53,295)
Net interest paid	(56,995)	(68,834)
Net cash used in financing activities	(156,137)	(123,037)
Net (decrease) / increase in cash and cash equivalents	(34,838)	41,159
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 July	121,097	79,938
Cash and cash equivalents at 30 June	86,259	121,097

The above reports are an authorised extract from the audited accounts.

Celebrating milestones of service

We recognise the dedication of Goodstarters who reached significant service milestones in FY25. Their long-standing commitment reflects a deep passion for early learning, Australia's children and Goodstart's social purpose.

30 years of service

Coral Hoare

Senior Educator - Goodstart Eltham

Jodie Howard

National Quality Framework Manager

Janine Ludwig

Centre Director - Goodstart Gawler South

Narelle Sward

Senior Educator - Goodstart Blackmans Bay

25 years of service

Tammy Agius

Centre Director - Goodstart Trinity Beach

Karen Anderson

Teacher - Goodstart Dapto

Sharon Bennett, Senior Educator - Goodstart

Narellan Vale

Michelle Botei

Teacher/Teacher Accreditation & Registration Partner -
Goodstart Hope Valley

Shannon Davis

Assistant Director - Goodstart Melton - Centenary Avenue

Patricia Fernandez

Senior Educator - Goodstart Bray Park - Kensington Way

Lisa Franklin

Teacher - Goodstart Ballina

Valentina Hlinovsky

Senior Educator - Goodstart Narre Warren North

Amy Hume

Centre Director - Goodstart Carindale

Sabina Jackson

Educator - Goodstart Osborne

Rosemary Kurtz

Centre Director - Goodstart Tannum Sands

Danielle Malone

Centre Director - Goodstart Carlton

Angela Mery

State Performance Lead - South Australia

Kim Morris

Senior Educator - Goodstart Golden Square

Manoja Pathirana

Educator - Goodstart Coorparoo - Tiber Street

Aziza Sofic

Senior Educator - Goodstart Carindale

Louise Waghorn

Senior Educator - Goodstart South Nowra

Tracy Wales

Teacher - Goodstart Tatton





Behind Goodstart

Goodstart was created by a partnership of organisations who saw the potential of early learning to transform Australia. They wanted to address one of the key sources of many future problems – poor early childhood experiences.

It made perfect sense for these groups to pool their energy and investment in early learning to fix the root cause of so many social problems.

The Benevolent Society

Formed in 1813, The Benevolent Society is Australia's first charity. It is a not-for-profit and non-religious organisation that helps people, families and communities achieve positive change through support and education.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence

The Brotherhood is a not-for-profit organisation that works to alleviate and prevent poverty through research, services and advocacy. It is a non-government, community-based organisation that supports people experiencing disadvantage at all stages of life to build a better future for themselves and their families.

Mission Australia

Mission Australia is a non-denominational Christian community service organisation that aims to reduce homelessness and strengthen communities across Australia. It works to help people secure jobs, receive an education, find housing and develop important life skills.

Social Ventures Australia

Social Ventures Australia is a non-profit organisation established to improve the lives of people in need. It focuses on keys to overcoming disadvantage including great education, sustainable jobs, stable housing and appropriate health, disability and community services.

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- Australian Capital Territory Government
- New South Wales Government
- Northern Territory Government
- Queensland Government
- South Australia Government
- Tasmania Government
- Victoria Government
- Western Australia Government
- Paul Ramsey Foundation
- Australian Council for Education Research Limited
- Cancer Council Queensland
- Cleverpatch Pty Ltd
- Charter Hall
- Coles for Business
- Educating Kids
- Educationall Australia
- Employers Mutual Limited
- Kids Gourmet Food Pty Ltd
- Kimberly-Clark Pty Ltd
- Modern Teaching Aids Pty Ltd
- National Australia Bank
- National Indigenous Australian Agency (NIAA)
- Optus
- The Buckner Group Pty Ltd
- The Salvation Army
- Uniting (VIC & TAS) Limited
- Winc Australia Pty Ltd
- Woolworths at Work
- Workplace Giving
- Yooralla Kindergarten Inc
- Seek Australia
- Transgrid Community Partnerships Program

