

# Media release

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14.12.2022

## Leading Australian education executive appointed as CEO of Goodstart Early Learning

Dr Ros Baxter will join Australia's largest, not-for-profit, early learning and care provider in March 2023.

Chair Paul Robertson said the Board had conducted an extensive search after founding CEO Julia Davison announced her intention to leave the organisation after more than 11 years at the helm.

"Goodstart supports more than 63,000 children with annual revenue in excess of \$1.3 billion and plays a crucial role in advocating for funding and policy reform to benefit all children. As a social enterprise the demands it places on its leaders are multifaceted, operating with business discipline to deliver social purpose outcomes," Mr Robertson said.

"Dr Ros Baxter will leave her role as Deputy Secretary, Schools in the Federal Department of Education to join us.

"Ros is a senior executive with 25 years-experience as a public sector leader, policy analyst, academic, tribunal member and consultant.

"She started her career as a child protection social worker and senior practitioner. Ros has led large teams of people and had oversight on multi-billion dollar budgets.

"Ros has also previously undertaken a range of roles focused on children and families, including as head of Families Group Commonwealth Department of Social Services and as Deputy Secretary with responsibility for early childhood and child care. As a result, she brings a strong understanding of issues affecting children, families and the sector.

"In addition, her vocal advocacy for reconciliation and support for Indigenous education made her the perfect fit for the role.

"I know the teachers and educators who work to improve the learning and life outcomes of the children who attend our centres will be very excited to welcome Dr Baxter."

Dr Baxter said she was thrilled to be joining a team with such purpose and reach.

"I believe in partnering closely with the families, educators and services who know and understand children best. With four children of my own, I believe that every person is different and differently capable, and that everyone has right to a great start in life."



## Media release (continued)

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"I'm conscious of the incredible legacy Julia has left, and looking forward to getting to know the children, families and Goodstarters who have shaped this important organisation.

Dr Baxter holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Law) and degrees in law, social work and arts (government). She is also a published author.

Prior to joining the Department of Education in February 2020 she was the Deputy Secretary of Integrity and Information at the Department of Human Services; and also led policy functions across several departments including the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Social Services.

On behalf of the Board and the entire Goodstart family Mr Robertson thanked out-going CEO Julia Davison for her leadership and vision over the past eleven years. Ms Davison welcomed Dr Baxter's appointment.

"I can't think of a better person to take on the role at this time, Ros brings a deep understanding of the value of early learning and is deeply committed to Goodstart's vision in ensuring all children have the best possible start in life", she said.

"As a for-purpose organisation Goodstart has always advocated on behalf of all Australia's children, especially the most vulnerable and I know Ros will continue this important work with great skill and vigour."



### For more information

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### Notes for editors

Goodstart Early Learning is Australia's largest early learning provider with 661 centres throughout the country. The not-for-profit social enterprise exists purely to improve the lives of Australia's children and their families. For more information, visit [goodstart.org.au](http://goodstart.org.au).

### Acknowledgement of country

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