

# Media release

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18 September 2024

## Productivity Commission recommends ambitious universal early learning for all Australian children

Goodstart, Australia's largest not-for-profit provider of early learning and care, has celebrated the final report of the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care.

The Government set the Productivity Commission the ambitious task of charting a path to a universal early learning system on par with the introduction of Medicare and superannuation, and the PC has delivered.

"This report provides a blueprint to deliver historic reform for our nation - a truly universal early learning and care system that puts children first," CEO Dr Ros Baxter said this morning.

"The Albanese Government now has a roadmap which lays out a clear path for a once-in-a-generation reform that will improve access, inclusion and affordability for Australian families.

"As a not for profit we are thrilled that a universal entitlement for all children is recommended as the basis for reform.

"It is so exciting to see deep recognition of the importance of early learning, not just for its long-recognised benefits for workforce participation for parents, but of the immeasurable benefits for children.

"Implementation of the recommendations will build on the Government's successful Child Care Subsidy reforms and the ground-breaking commitment to fund a 15 per cent wage increase for early childhood educators.

"The government must move quickly to act on the Commission's recommended removal of the activity test for families, which has further disadvantaged the children who most need access to early learning.

"The clear recommendations for increased investment in inclusion should also be implemented as soon as possible, to allow all children to access early learning, regardless of their family's work or study status.

"The report recognises that a truly universal early learning and care system would be a gamechanger for Australian children and families."

Goodstart also welcomes other key recommendations including:

- Affordability improvements for all families, and especially for low-income families and families with two or more children, which will be invaluable for families given the current cost of living pressures.
- Establishing an independent ECEC Commission to steward the ECEC system and ensure supply, quality and inclusion, as well as monitor costs, fees and fee increases.
- Making sure 'universal' means the children who will benefit the most are able to access the days and

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## Media release (continued)

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quality they need to be ready for school and life.

Dr Baxter thanked the Productivity Commission for the report, recognising the extraordinary amount of work required to provide such a detailed and insightful report.

"We are thankful that the consultation process was thorough and inclusive and that it enabled open collaboration and discussion throughout the sector.

"This is an ambitious reform blueprint, and we look forward to working with the Government and our sector partners to ensure it can truly deliver the universal early learning and care system Australia needs," Dr Baxter said.



### For more information

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### Notes for editors

Goodstart Early Learning is Australia's largest early learning provider with 655 centres nationwide. It is a not-for-profit social enterprise committed to improving the lives of Australia's children and their families. For more information, visit [goodstart.org.au](http://goodstart.org.au).

*Goodstart 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.*