



*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.*

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Goodstart Early Learning welcomes the opportunity to make this submission in response to the *Interim Report to the Australian Government: Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process January 2021*.

Goodstart is Australia's largest not-for-profit social enterprise and Australia's largest ECEC provider. With 671 centres located in all states and territories, we provide early learning and care for more than 70,700 children from 59,200 families with a team of 14,900 employees. Founded on a vision of giving Australia's children the best possible start in life through access to quality early learning.

Our purpose is to ensure all children have the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes they need for school and life. We acknowledge that 'reconciliation is everyone's business' and we are incredibly proud of the work our centre network and their support teams do in supporting the advancement of reconciliation.

Our vision for reconciliation is for Goodstarters to engage with reconciliation on both a personal and professional level, creating the conditions that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social justice, equality and equity. Through this vision, we are laying the foundations to grow future generations that value and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of a shared identity.

An important part of this shared identity is recognising the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our country's history by acknowledging their stories, traditions and their original sovereignty. Our First Nations peoples are the custodians of the world's oldest continuous living cultures, which should be revered and celebrated.

The Uluru Statement is a call from Australia's First Peoples to be consulted about decisions that impact on their lives – in the spirit of the old saying, "Nothing about us, without us".

Goodstart unreservedly supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We believe that a Voice enshrined in the Constitution is a fair, practical and safe proposal that will afford First Nations people real representation on matters that affect them and help unify our nation. Along with other Australians, we call for:

1. The Government to honour its election commitment to a referendum, once a model for the Voice has been settled;
2. Enabling legislation for the Voice to be passed in the next term of Parliament after a referendum has been held; and
3. The membership model for the National Voice to ensure previously unheard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the same chance of being selected as established leadership figures.

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

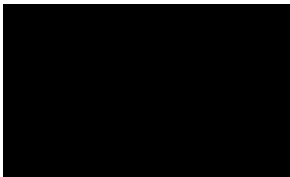
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Legislation alone will not suffice. To endure, the Voice to Parliament needs the protection of the Constitution so that it cannot be simply de-legislated by an incoming Government. Embracing the Uluru Statement in its fullness is fair, just, practical and safe.

Kind regards,



Julia Davison  
**Chief Executive Officer**



## Together We Grow

The Painting tells a story of the onward journey in Reconciliation at Goodstart Early Learning. We focus on Children as central to all we do, by being inclusive and understanding of the communities we work in, valuing our educators in the work that they do in Centre's and acknowledging that each person in Centre Support Offices plays an important role in making Goodstart's vision happen. All this on this Aboriginal artwork, representing embedding First Nations culture, history and perspectives in all that is done at Goodstart Early Learning. We grow children by immersing them in quality early childhood programs to give them a better start to life.

As Goodstart Early Learning walks this Reconciliation journey, we walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to get it right for the next generation.

### **Elizabeth MALONEY**

Born Tamworth, NSW, 1981  
Kamilaroi woman of Gunnedah, NSW

### **Together We Grow**

2018, Redland Bay – Quandamooka Country  
Acrylic on canvas

This painting was commissioned by Goodstart Early Learning to commemorate the Goodstart Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2022.