

Gidget Foundation Australia announces pro-bono lawyer Emma Maple-Brown as newest Board Director

IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Gidget Foundation Australia today announces the appointment of corporate and pro bono lawyer **Emma Maple-Brown GAICD**, as Non-Executive Director of the Board - adding to the not-for-profit's strong Non-Executive Team. Emma's appointment will add specialist expertise to the skilled and passionate board who are creating opportunities for crucial mental health supports for expectant and new Australian parents.

As a leading pro bono lawyer, Emma's experience ranges from defamation law through to her most recent role as Director of the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous UNSW, Professor Megan Davis following a secondment at the Indigenous Law Centre at UNSW.

During her time at UNSW, Emma worked closely with Pat Anderson AO and Professor Megan Davis at the Uluru Dialogue following the gift of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* to the Australian people in May 2017.

"I was honoured to work at UNSW and alongside the Indigenous Law Centre (ILC) following the work that has been done over many years to address Indigenous disadvantage and inequality in Australia," Maple-Brown says.

Since then, Emma has continued to support work being done to progress the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and its call for all Australians to walk together to build a future.

And prior to her roles at UNSW, Emma led and managed the Australian Pro Bono practice of Herbert Smith Freehills, a leading global commercial law firm. Emma has over 20 years' experience as a lawyer working with and supporting a diverse range of pro bono clients including not for profit entities, charities, social enterprises, and vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals.

Of her appointment to the Gidget Foundation Australia Board, Ms Maple-Brown adds, "As a mother of four, I know firsthand just how important emotional wellbeing is for parents. To be joining the Board of Gidget Foundation Australia is an honour. I am excited for the opportunity to collaborate with a team of varied and experienced leaders and help drive the Foundation's national expansion forward."

Emma joins the established Board alongside Simone Short, Chairperson, Founder and Gidget's youngest sister; Jarrod Bowditch, Founding Board Member; Lindsay Cane AM, not-for-profit sector leader; Jessica Davis, Partner at KPMG; Strephon Billinghamurst, CEO of St John of God Healthcare Hawkesbury District Health Service and Company Secretary and Mirela Leko, Group Senior Legal Counsel at Ramsay Health Care.

Gidget Foundation Australia, Chairperson Simone Short says, "Emma's skills, experience and caring approach further bolster our skillset across the organisation. She has supported us for a long time and we are excited to have her officially on board as we approach our next phase of growth."

"Emma has significant expertise and experience in corporate governance, access to justice, working with First Nations people, fundraising and philanthropy, and we are thrilled to have Emma's knowledge at the table."

Gidget Foundation CEO, Arabella Gibson says, "Emma's work with First Nations communities, and in the pro bono and legal sectors will be an incredible addition to our strategic leadership as we prepare to expand across central and western states."

The appointment comes following the NSW Government pledge of \$10,000 towards funding an innovative platform that will provide specialist perinatal mental health training across the allied health, nursing and midwifery sectors. The bespoke training program will allow those in rural and remote areas to better understand and support expectant and new parents living with perinatal depression and anxiety.

Gibson continues: “The \$10,000 pledge from the NSW Government to enable more healthcare practitioners to access specialist perinatal mental health training, will be a major development for both our organisation and the sector. I am looking forward to working alongside our Board as we continue our growth as the National leading provider of perinatal mental health services.”

Parents who are struggling can visit their GP for a referral to access Gidget Foundation Australia’s free face-to-face or telehealth counselling services, with short wait times.

For Australians wanting to learn more about PNDA or hear stories of those with lived experience, head to gidgetfoundation.org.au to listen to *1 in 5 mothers*, *1 in 10 fathers*, a new podcast created by the Foundation.

About Emma Maple-Brown

Emma is a corporate and pro-bono lawyer with over 20 years’ experience working with and supporting a diverse range of pro bono clients including not for profit entities, charities, social enterprises, and vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals.

Emma’s most recent role was at the University of New South Wales where she was the Director of the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous, Professor Megan Davis. Prior to this, she led and managed the Australian Pro Bono practice of Herbert Smith Freehills, a leading global commercial law firm.

Emma has significant expertise and experience in corporate governance, access to justice, working with First Nations clients, fundraising and philanthropy.

Emma has a BA (Hons)/LLB (Hons) from the University of Sydney and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and brings her personal experience as a mother to four children.

About Gidget Foundation Australia

Gidget Foundation Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to support the emotional wellbeing of expectant and new parents, to ensure they receive timely, appropriate and specialist care.

As the national leading provider of perinatal mental health services Gidget Foundation Australia offers year-long, free, specialist perinatal mental health psychological services, via face-to-face and telehealth; and invests in retention, engagement, and development of its 120+ clinicians through an innovative training, mentoring and supervision workforce development program.

About Gidget

Gidget was the nickname of a vibrant young mother who tragically took her own life while experiencing postnatal depression, a diagnosis she kept close to her heart.

Together her loving family and friends created Gidget Foundation Australia determined that what happened to *Gidget* would not happen to others.

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