

*Creating Opportunities*

**deiou**  
FOUNDATION  
for children with autism

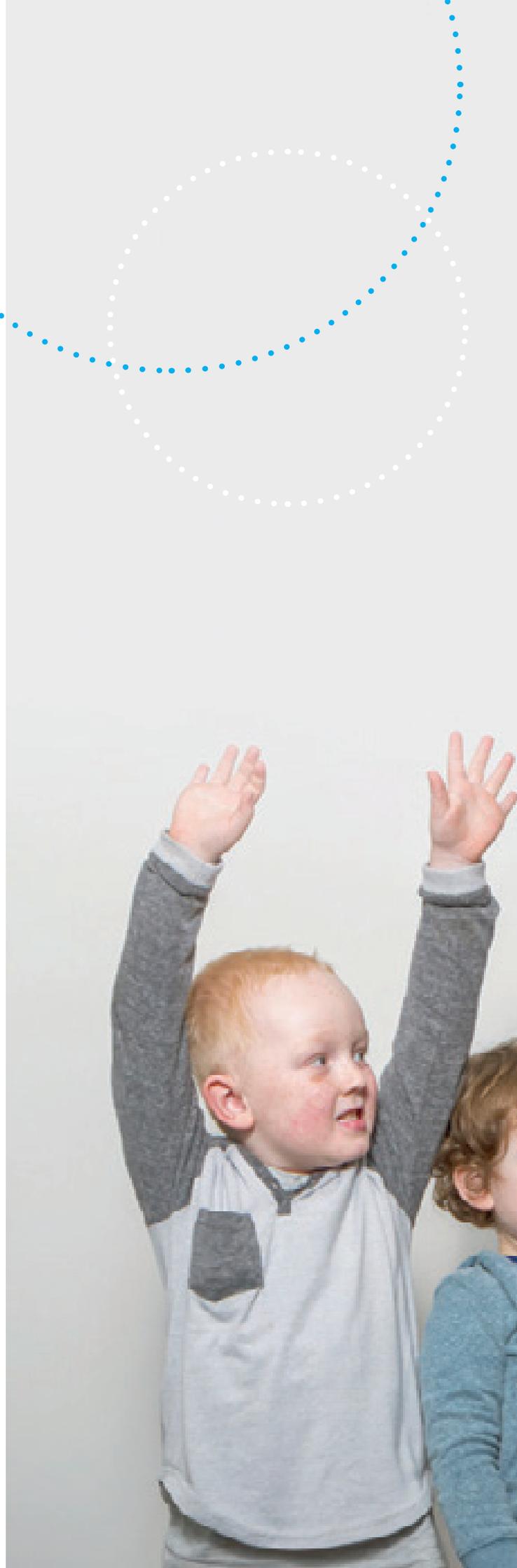


# *Annual Report*

**2015-2016**  
AEIOU Foundation

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# Welcome

## to the AEIOU Foundation – Boosting Opportunities

Since establishing in 2005, AEIOU Foundation has become a leading provider of evidence-based early intervention to children with autism and their families. Our organisation, headquartered in Queensland, supports more than 220 children aged 2 – 6 and their families, with centres in Queensland and South Australia. It has long been our vision that every child with autism in Australia will have access to evidence-based early intervention, unparalleled in both quality and affordability.

AEIOU Foundation employs more than 140 people across nine centres, including central office, who work to deliver a program which gives children and their families opportunities for optimal lifelong outcomes.

### Registered office:

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Nathan, Qld, 4111  
Telephone: 07 3320 7500  
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Email: [admin@aeiou.org.au](mailto:admin@aeiou.org.au)  
Website: [www.aeiou.org.au](http://www.aeiou.org.au)  
ABN: 19 135 897 255

AEIOU Foundation is a registered charity (CH1818) under 'The Collections Act' of 1996 and is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient under the Subdivision 30-BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

### Our Reporting Process:

This is the seventh annual report submitted by AEIOU Foundation, documenting AEIOU's financial operational and community performance for the financial year ending 30 June 2016. Your feedback is welcome. Please email [communications@aeiou.org.au](mailto:communications@aeiou.org.au)





# About AEIOU Foundation

## Numbers

**220** children  
with autism  
receive early  
intervention at AEIOU



## Staff

**111** full-time staff

**37** part-time staff

**140** casual staff

## Take A Hikers

**747**



## Volunteers

**142**



## Centres

**9** 

## Therapy hours

A minimum of **20hrs**  
per week per child

**1 in 100** Australians  
diagnosed with autism\*

\*The Open Paediatric Medicine Journal, 2012

Autism affects

**4** boys to  
every **1** girl



# What is Autism

Autism is a lifelong neurological developmental disorder which, according to research published in The Open Paediatric Medicine Journal, 2012, is 1 in 100. Research also indicates autism is four times more likely to be diagnosed in males than females.

Autism is part of a spectrum that is often referred to as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). While no two people with autism are the same, they generally share two main areas of difficulty, commonly referred to as the 'dyad of impairments'. These include:

- Social and communication, including difficulty with body language and verbal communication, reciprocal conversation, emotional and social reciprocity and managing structured parts of the day.
- Thought flexibility, including difficulty with hyper, or hypo-sensitivity to sensory input, routines, repetitive behaviours and rituals.

There is no cure for autism, however evidence shows early intervention, delivered within a program that meets the 2012 Guidelines for Good Practice, will provide children with the best opportunity to reach their full potential.

## Our mission

To enhance the lives of children with autism and their families and benefit the community through early intervention learning, along with practical and caring support.

## Our vision

To be recognised as the leading provider of quality early intervention for children with autism and to ensure every child is given the best opportunity to reach their full potential in life.



## Our Values

To mark 10 years of establishing the organisation as a leader of providing early intervention for children with autism, AEIOU Foundation engaged with staff to re-evaluate our values. Through a consultation process, staff came up with values they believe to best articulate our identity, encourage our conduct and inspire our purpose.

### S.T.E.P.

#### Support

You can rely on AEIOU for expert guidance and a commitment to each member of the Foundation's family.



#### Teamwork

A collaborate, inclusive team working together to create bright futures.



#### Excellence

Driven to be the best, we are leaders in the delivery of quality, evidence-based early intervention.



#### Passion

We're inspired by the difference we are making in young lives. We love what we do.



## Our Philosophy

AEIOU Foundation believes early intervention should be a right, not a privilege.

AEIOU Foundation believes all children with autism:

- Can learn and have the right to an education
- Benefit from a program based on individual needs
- Learn using different learning styles and at different rates
- Are individuals, with differing personalities, needs, wants, interests and levels of ability
- Require flexible routines in their daily program to cater for their individual needs
- Should receive evidence-based early intervention and access to appropriate assessment
- Are entitled to a balanced program that bridges the gap between the home, AEIOU Foundation and the community; and
- Benefit from families and staff working together.

# Message from the Chair



## It is a pleasure to report on AEIOU Foundation's activities over the 2015/2016 calendar year.

Since our inception over a decade ago, we have seen considerable evolution in the scope of this service and particularly the quality of the program. When writing, I am particularly proud of the work of our staff in developing the AEIOU curriculum, a unique piece of Australian work that focuses on the individual aims of each child and is producing substantial gains in their development, as evidenced by the very positive results we have seen. We will continue to improve our program as part of our commitment to high quality early intervention.

The other change that we have seen in the program is development of the staffing model, based on building the trans disciplinary team. The aim is to incorporate program managers qualified in behavioural analysis, which brings substantial fidelity and consistency to the program.

There is a large burden of unmet need of young children with moderate to severe autism, who cannot access high quality early intervention. Previous barriers to this have primarily been financial and I am extremely proud of the role AEIOU is taking in negotiating with the National Disability Insurance Scheme to ensure optimal outcomes for children with autism.

We are very pleased that the NDIS has chosen to visit AEIOU and feel positive in the negotiations as they move forward. While this is challenging for children and families at transition sites, ultimately I think the NDIS will be a wonderful initiative for the next generation of children and it is very important we are strong advocates on their behalf. In saying this, the NDIS has a limited pool of funds and we all have a responsibility to use the money well and be reasonable in our expectations.

In this regard, the National Guidelines for Good Practice provide a clear set of tenets around what should be received for a young child with autism and we need to ensure this is available to all children with moderate-severe autism going forward. In expanding services, AEIOU's challenge in the future will be developing facilities where there is demand. In this regard, we are delighted to announce a partnership with Griffith University at Logan to develop invaluable facilities on that site. This is a particularly exciting project which will create an autism hub that will deliver intensive early intervention, alongside tiered learning and care, through partnerships with local childcare centres, kindergartens and preschools to ensure continuity of service as children develop skills to transition and function well in their next educational setting.

This program will also increase opportunities for training the next generation of local professionals to work with children in the Logan area, and beyond. Excitingly, Griffith is proposing to develop Australia's first program in behavioral training and this facility, along with the AEIOU network, will allow supervision of trainees I would like to acknowledge the key role played by local Member of Parliament, Cameron Dick, the Chain Reaction Foundation, and the support of the Wantz committee, in addition to the wonderful partnership we have with Griffith University.

We also have funding from the Commonwealth to develop a centre on land at Minda in Adelaide that will provide a new purpose-built facility.

I would like to acknowledge our CEO, Alan Smith, who through this year has been diagnosed and battled with leukaemia. We look forward to seeing Alan on his return in the next year and I would like to acknowledge the role all the staff in our Executive Management Team has taken in covering Alan during his absence. Our very best wishes are with Alan and his family through this journey.

Finally, we cannot provide universality of access to all children at need without the wonderful support of all our donors. Philanthropy is an increasingly competitive area, however, investing in AEIOU changes the lives of young children with autism and their families and I cannot think of a better investment.

**Dr James Morton**  
AEIOU Chairman and Founder

# Message from the CEO



**Last year saw AEIOU celebrate the major 10-year-milestone of making a difference for children with autism and their families. In 2015-16 we are tracking a new course, embedding our program and forging ahead with our vision to be recognised as a leading provider of quality early intervention learning for children with autism.**

We remain committed to ensuring every child is provided with the maximum opportunity to reach their potential, and with that in our sights, we forged ahead with our strategy for growth.

Demand for our service in Adelaide, which opened in October 2014, encouraged us to build a purpose-built facility offering double the placements for children with autism, aged 2 to 6. We were fortunate to secure National Stronger Regions Growth Funding (NSRF), as well as a peppercorn lease for land at Minda's Brighton site. Our successful working partnership with Buchan and Hutchinson Builders has put us in a good position to complete construction in 2017. We also continued negotiations with stakeholders in Logan, Melbourne and the ACT.

To sustain growth, we rely on dedicated, experienced and qualified staff. I praise every member of the AEIOU team for their input into ensuring all children in our care get the very best support and opportunity to successfully transition to their next learning environment, and beyond.

In recognition of our vision and mission, we embedded new values into the organisation this year, STEP; Support, Teamwork, Excellence and Passion. These were launched at our staff conference in March and are continually referenced in the workplace, internal and external communications, and our program.

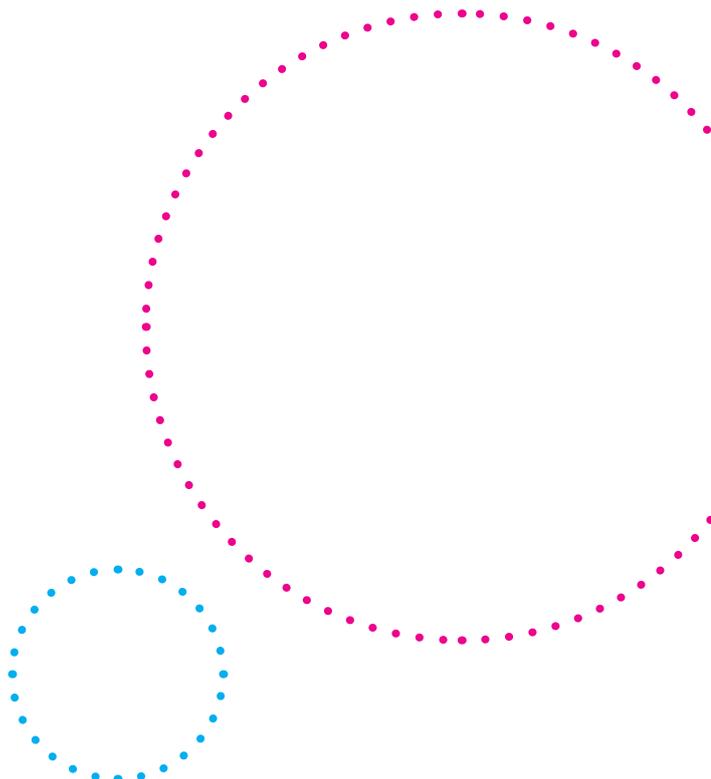
AEIOU Foundation is also committed to a robust research program, which not only underpins our evidence-based program, but helps provides world-class information which benefits families and the wider community.

For me personally, this has been an extremely difficult year, having been diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia in November 2015. The stress this has placed on myself, and my family, has been immense, however I have been extremely fortunate to be under the care of our chairman, oncologist Dr James Morton. James has provided me with world-class clinical care, which puts me in a strong position to physically beat this disease. On a more personal note, his friendship and support has boosted me in the most difficult of times, and also provided my family with confidence and reinforcement. It is also reassuring to know that James' strong leadership as Chairman of the Board of Directors has seen AEIOU maintain its course. I thank them for their steadfast commitment.

I recognise the Executive Management Team for continuing the operations at AEIOU Foundation during this time. They have shown their dedication and professionalism is exemplary. I also commend newly-appointment Chief Operating Officer Kerrie Mahon for taking on a leadership role, particularly navigating AEIOU through the transition to NDIS.

Significantly, I give heartfelt acknowledgement to our supporters, donors, volunteers and strategic partners for their generous and loyal support. AEIOU Foundation sincerely appreciates the backing they provide which enables us to create a lifetime of opportunities for children with autism.

**Alan Smith**  
CEO  
AEIOU Foundation



# Message from the Acting CEO



**Since joining AEIOU as the Acting Chief Executive Officer, and Chief Operations Officer in February 2016, I have gained rapid insight into the organisation's unique program and the impact it has on children with autism, and their families.**

AEIOU Foundation is undergoing significant change. This year has seen the embedding of our new curriculum throughout our nine centres. Staff and families have been impacted by the change in the way our program is delivered, and while this has at times been challenging, it will ensure our program is based on evidence-based research which centres on the core features of autism, social communication and behaviours that challenge. Our aim is to develop confidence and inclusion so children and their families live to their full potential.

To deliver this curriculum, there has been change in our service delivery model. Centres now employ program managers, alongside centre managers, as part of their transdisciplinary team. With qualifications in behaviour therapy, the program team are responsible for overseeing all aspects of a child's individual program.

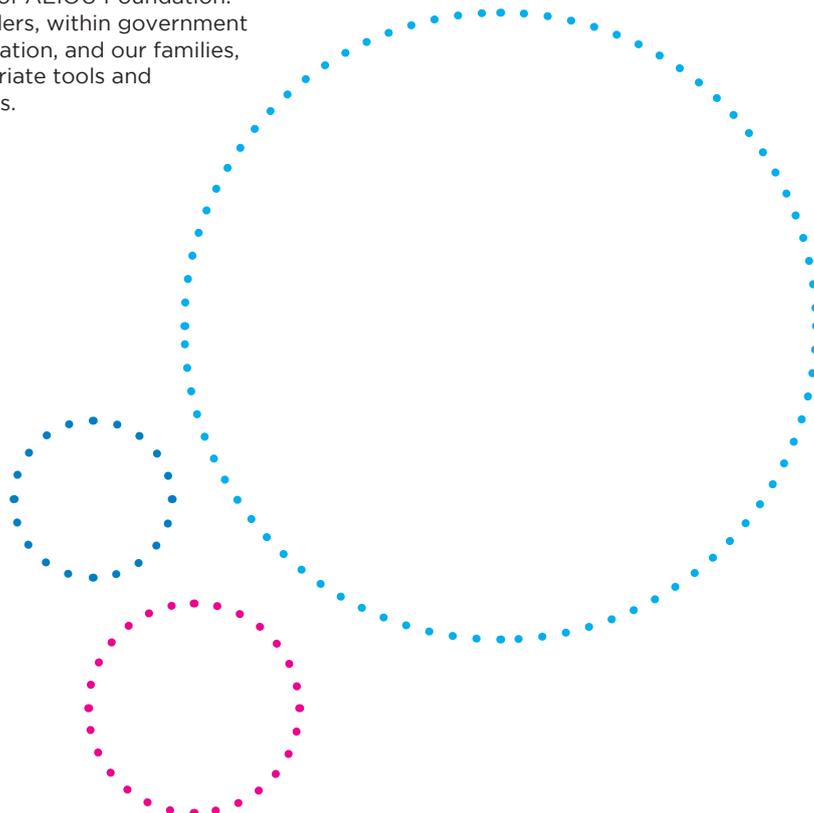
Another significant change for families, particularly in Adelaide and Townsville, has been transition to the NDIS. Navigating this change is a priority of AEIOU Foundation. I have met with many key stakeholders, within government and the NDIS, to ensure our organisation, and our families, are equipped with the most appropriate tools and information, in the transition process.

I acknowledge the efforts of all staff, centre based and in central office, who work with passion to meet our mission to enhance the lives of children with autism and their families, and benefit the community through early intervention learning along with practical and caring support.

Couple that with the support of our families, volunteers, donors and partner organisations, and we really are an organisation that is making a difference.

## **Kerrie Mahon**

Chief Operations Officer and acting Chief Executive Officer  
AEIOU Foundation



# 2015/16 year in review

## July 2015

Our new state-of-the-art integrated payroll and human resources information management system went live.

## August 2015

AEIOU Founder and Chairman Dr James Morton recognised with a prestigious University of Queensland Alumni Award.

A sea of yellow made its way through the Brisbane CBD as the amazing students and staff of St Laurence's College embarked on their 46th annual 15km Walkathon. AEIOU Foundation was incredibly privileged to be one of the charity beneficiaries again in 2015.

## September 2015

The inaugural Jurassic Jam in September gave music lovers the chance to rock out to some of Brisbane's best cover bands while helping children with autism at AEIOU.

AEIOU Foundation celebrates expansion of its Adelaide service, just one year after opening at Huntfield Heights.

Results from a summary of outcomes of evaluation of the AEIOU program between 2010-2015 were presented at the Asia Pacific Autism Conference.

## October 2015

AEIOU Foundation's signature fundraising event, Take A Hike kicked off its sixth consecutive series in Brisbane. The event was launched by Team Jacob at a Boutique Beer Luncheon.

## November 2015

AEIOU Bundaberg benefits from a new outdoor activities board created and supplied by Bunnings Bundaberg. The board is a valuable tool in helping children develop vital life skills.

Dr Jessica Paynter, AEIOU Research and Psychology Manager, attended the international Meeting for Autism Research in China and presented on evidence-based practices, including barriers and enablers to implementation (in collaboration with Dr David Trembath and Professor Deb Keen).



## December 2015

AEIOU Foundation received an NSRF Grant for construction of a purpose-built centre in Adelaide.

AEIOU acknowledged the invaluable support provided by generous business, organisations and individuals at a prestigious thank you event hosted by valued supporters Mary-Jeanne and Scott Hutchinson.

## January 2016

2016 kicked off with preparations for the NDIS roll out in Townsville.

AEIOU introduced the upgraded evidence based curriculum throughout our nine centres.

## February 2016

Queensland State Government supports bid for new purpose built centre in Logan.

## March 2016

Biannual staff conference.

Launch of new staff Values STEP (Support, Teamwork, Excellence, Passion).

## April 2016

The Lynn Wright Memorial Fund hosted the 10th annual Lynn's Lunch event. This year's event at Victoria Park Golf Complex raised a record \$70,000.

Take A Hike Toowoomba – for the first time, Toowoomba hikers were able to choose from three distances; 10.5km, 21km and 42km. The change in format saw record numbers pound the streets.

A number of top Queensland business leaders took part in the inaugural Great Corporate Caper, revealing their superhero alter egos while facing a number of challenges around Brisbane's CBD.

Brisbane corporates swapped suits for lycra to tackle a 1000km cycling initiative in the Adelaide Hills, raising significant funds for AEIOU Foundation as part of the annual Chain Reaction Challenge.

## May 2016

AEIOU met with key NDIA management to advocate for families transitioning to the NDIS.

AEIOU Operations Manager Yolanda Borucki and Operations Project Officer Diane Keating attend the Applied Behaviour Analyst International Convention in Chicago.

AEIOU was the major beneficiary of Queensland's most prestigious annual art exhibition the Brisbane Rotary Art Spectacular for the third consecutive year.

## June 2016

Our second Enterprise Bargaining Agreement was negotiated with employee and union representatives and subsequently approved by the majority of voting staff.

The inclusion of more than 350 soldiers from the Australian Army resulted in Townsville Take A Hike participants collectively hike more than 15,000kms to support the AEIOU Townsville centre.



# Corporate Governance

## Our board

### Dr James Morton (AM) Chairman and Founder



Dr James Morton (AM) and his wife Louise established AEIOU Foundation following their own experience when their son Andrew was diagnosed with autism. Together, they had a vision to ensure more Queensland families would have access to life-changing early intervention. James is an active Chairman of the Foundation

and is committed to creating a national program that will provide unprecedented support to Australian children with an autism diagnosis.

James is an accredited specialist in Haematology & Oncology. He is Medical Director, Icon Cancer Care and Senior Specialist, Leukaemia and Bone Marrow Transplant Service, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

In addition to being the Chairman of AEIOU Foundation, James is also a Board member of Icon Cancer Care and a previous Board Member of the Leukaemia Foundation QLD (2000 - 2007). James was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2015 Australia Day Honours in recognition of his outstanding achievements and service to fellow citizens through his work as an Oncologist and founder and Chairman of the AEIOU Foundation for children with autism. In August 2015, he was acknowledged by the University of Queensland with a prestigious Alumni Award.

### Mr Peter Kelly Director



Peter Kelly is a business communications strategist experienced in operating in high profile environments. As an Executive Director at Three Plus Pty Ltd he specialises in media and government relations, community engagement, branding and marketing to a broad range of Queensland and national businesses.

Peter is a former broadcast reporter, presenter and Chief of Staff with Channel Ten in Brisbane and Communications Manager for Queensland Rugby Union and the Queensland Reds. He was Queensland Public Affairs Manager for the 2003 Rugby World Cup and provided media advice to the Australian Paralympic team at the 1996 (Atlanta) and 2000 (Sydney) Paralympics. He is a former Board member of the Australian Paralympic Committee (1996-1998).

Peter has two nephews who have an autism diagnosis, and both were unable to access full-time early intervention. He is delighted to support AEIOU's development, and to see the difference the Foundation's program is making to so many children.

### Mr Euan Morton Director



Euan has been a key supporter and a Director of AEIOU Foundation since its inception, inspired by his nephew Andrew, his brother James and his family. Euan has led AEIOU Foundation's productivity commission submission, and a peer reviewed study into the cost-benefit of autism and early intervention.

Euan is Principal of Synergies Economic Consulting where he consults on a wide range of economic and policy issues.

Euan's expertise was recognised when he was appointed by the Ministerial Council on Energy to an Expert Panel to review regulatory arrangements associated with the ongoing reforms to energy markets. He is an Independent Expert under the National Electricity Rules and a member of the Trade Practices Committee of the Law Council of Australia. He is also a Director of Ecofund (Queensland).

### Mr Scott Reading Director



Scott Reading has been a member of the AEIOU Board of Directors since 2007. His son William attended AEIOU Foundation's program at Moorooka shortly after it was established.

Scott is also a Board Director for the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Autism CRC). The CRC will receive \$31 million dollars from the CRC Program and \$70 million dollars in kind from participants to improve the lifetime prospects for people with autism and their families. The CRC brings together a large collaboration of universities, state governments, international organisations, community groups and industry.

In addition to these roles Scott is CEO of SwingVoters.org a lobbying organisation which specialises in marginal electorates. Scott holds Masters Degrees in Commerce and Business.

### Dr Bev Rowbotham Director



Dr Bev Rowbotham joined the AEIOU Board of Directors in 2015. She is Director of Haematology with Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology. She currently holds the positions of Federal Councillor for the Australian Medical Association (Pathology craft group) and Clinical Lead of Pathology for the National E Health Transition Authority. She

is the past President of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (2007-2009) and past President and Chair of the Association for Childhood Language and Related Disorders (2001-2012). Other notable positions include Director Avant Mutual Group and Director RCPA QAP Pty Ltd.

## Executive Management Team

### Alan Smith CEO



After completing a Bachelor of Education and Higher Diploma in Education in Zimbabwe, Alan started his career as a secondary school teacher and senior master before working in the clothing manufacturing industry for 10 years in production planning and marketing. He has been Managing Director in the engineering sector and Regional Manager in the food industry before immigrating to Australia with his family in 2000.

He held management roles in Greening Australia for a decade - the last two years as Chief Executive Officer.

Alan joined AEIOU in April 2009 as CEO. He was motivated to join the organisation after witnessing the challenges experienced by his wife's cousin, who has autism. Alan makes the time to visit each centre on a regular basis, and is constantly impressed by the progress achieved by the children in AEIOU's program. He is committed to leading his team to deliver a national program, and is striving for a day where autism-specific early intervention is equally accessible to all children living with a diagnosis in Australia.

### Kerrie Mahon Acting CEO and Chief Operating Officer (COO)



Kerrie joined AEIOU Foundation in 2016 as the new Chief Operating Officer (COO).

She brings 22 years of experience in leadership and management of health and human services including hospitals, community care, community mental health, oral health, subacute and aged care facilities. Her broad range of experience as a senior executive in these settings includes corporate governance, operations, strategy, finance, risk, quality management, and IT projects.

Kerrie's most recent roles include Interim CEO and Chief Operations Officer of the Metro North Hospital and Health Service, and a sponsored executive role in strategy, governance and risk to study an Masters of Philosophy at the Queensland University of Technology Business School. This funded research is exploring how risk management and corporate governance can be enhanced when implementing strategy during complex change and reform.

Kerrie has a Bachelor of Business, Health Administration from Queensland University of Technology, and in 2015 attended Oxford University to study leadership.

Kerrie holds a non-executive directorship at Relationships Australia, Queensland Branch; a not for profit community provider of counselling, support and mediation to communities.

Kerrie's long-term focus is service to the community, innovation and research, which build programs that create health and wellbeing. With this vision, Kerrie is motivated to work at AEIOU is to be part of its mission to enhance the lives of children with autism and their families through early intervention; coupled with practical and caring support.

### Yolanda Borucki Operations Manager



Yolanda has more than 20 years' experience in the delivery of childcare/disability services both within Australia and internationally. She holds multiple qualifications in Children Services and Teaching and has worked in a variety of childcare and special needs settings in Australia and New Zealand. Yolanda has been with AEIOU since 2010, and has worked across the organisation, including as a manager at one of our largest centres.

Yolanda ensures the smooth running of all operational matters across AEIOU centres including the program, staffing and issues management, with all Centre Managers reporting to her. She is committed to making a difference to children with autism and their families, and leads by example in embracing AEIOU's values.

### Amber Simpson Director of People and Performance



Amber Simpson has enjoyed more than 20 years as a human resources professional across the manufacturing, health care, hospitality and community sectors. Amber also brings to AEIOU considerable experience in the not-for-profit sector and in particular, the early childhood education and care sector, having worked for The Creche & Kindergarten Association (C&K) for nearly 10 years. Amber holds a Bachelor Business (Human Resources Management) from QUT and is a Certified Professional Member of the Australian Human Resources Institute. Amber's work history includes a number of awards for excellence in human resource management, customer service and employer of choice recognition from the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency three years in a row.

Amber chose to join the team at AEIOU Foundation because she is passionate about supporting the futures of children, and also the team across the organisation who deliver AEIOU's program and ensure each child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

### Jenni Heenan Director of Fundraising



Born and bred in Melbourne, Jenni has worked for two of the world's largest advertising agencies and corporate giant BMW, before committing herself to making a difference in the not-for-profit sector. Having worked in the not-for-profit sector for fifteen years, Jenni is proud of the achievements made through fundraising and awareness to better the lives of those marginalised by disability or disaster.

A creative thinker, she is the recipient of two Gold Lion awards from the Cannes Film and Advertising Festival in 2006, together with many local and international awards for her work in fundraising.

A proud Rotarian, Jenni was recognised in 2009 as a Paul Harris Fellow for her fundraising and community work and more recently with a 'Service Above Self' award.

**Petrina Smith**  
Corporate Affairs Manager



Petrina has more than 25 years’ experience in the field of media and communications. She has worked as a journalist and editor for a number of publications and has held senior marketing and communications roles across a number of industries.

At AEIOU, Petrina shares her role with Deborah Whiteoak and is responsible for all corporate communications activities, including the management of the Foundation’s brand and reputation, media relations, government and client relations and corporate publications.

**Deborah Whiteoak**  
Corporate Affairs Manager



With 10 years of experience as a communications professional, Deborah has managed campaigns and delivered results across a variety of sectors, both as a consultant within public relations agencies, and in-house as the Corporate Affairs Manager at South Bank Corporation.

At AEIOU, Deborah job-shares with Petrina Smith, and together they are responsible for all corporate communications activities, including the management of the Foundation’s brand and reputation, media relations, government and client relations and corporate publications.

Seeing the impact of AEIOU’s program first-hand, and how it changes the lives of young children with autism and their families is one of the most satisfying aspects of Deborah’s role, and she is committed to supporting AEIOU to achieve its goals and maintain excellence in service delivery.

**Louise Hargrave-Smith**  
Finance and Administration Manager



Louise joined AEIOU Foundation in 2008, and manages the organisation’s budget while also leading her team to coordinate accounts receivable and payable, enrolments, parent fees and all administration requirements.

After an initial career working for Vidal Sassoon in London, Louise shifted her focus to the corporate sector upon emigrating to Australia. Starting as an accounts clerk in the travel insurance industry, Louise specialised in Office Management, Human Resources and Financial Management for a pioneering medical research company in Brisbane before joining AEIOU.

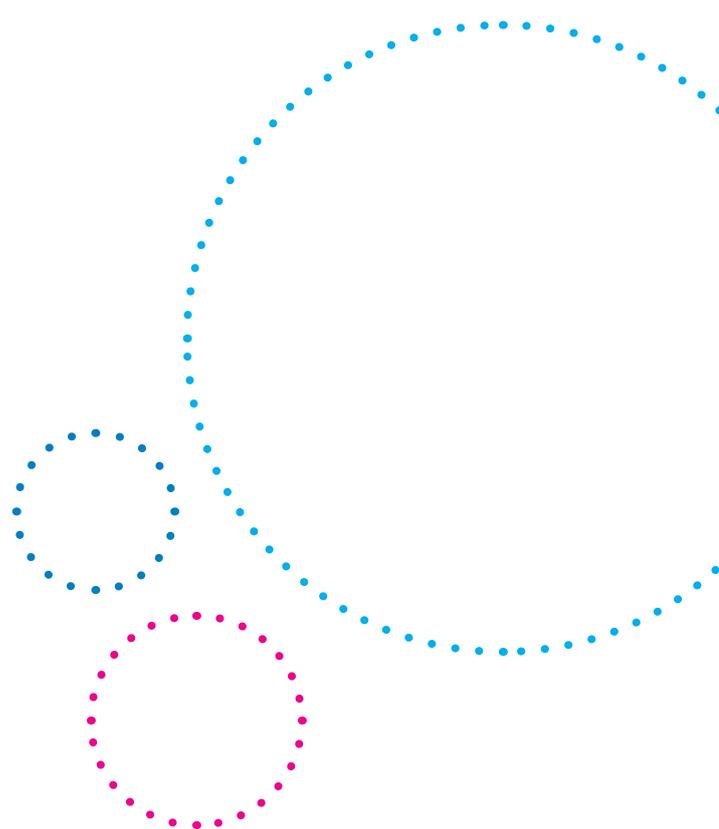
Louise plays an integral role in the growth of AEIOU Foundation and enjoys supporting new families as they enrol in the program and witnessing the growth and development each child achieves before transitioning to their next education setting.

**Dr Madonna Tucker**  
Research and Assessment Manager



Dr Madonna Tucker joined AEIOU in June 2016, bringing with her 25 years’ experience working as a psychologist and researcher in the disability field. She has worked with a range of clients, from children with learning disabilities to children, adults and staff in the intellectual disability field, including those on the

spectrum. Dr Tucker brings to the organisation experience in research and in clinical practice. Her doctorate was in the applied behaviour analysis field and this will allow her to not only provide expert advice in the research realm, but also contribute to the evidence-based curriculum delivered by AEIOU Foundation.



## Research Advisory Group

The Research Advisory Group (RAG) is a scientific collaboration between AEIOU and individuals from external agencies who have expertise and interest in undertaking research in ASD. The AEIOU RAG oversees and facilitates sustainable research that has the potential to provide benefit to children with ASD and their families.

Members of the RAG in 2015-16 were:

- Mr Alan Smith, Chief Executive Officer, AEIOU Foundation
- Dr Beth Siggers (Chair), Senior Lecturer, Queensland University of Technology
- Dr Dixie Stantham, Senior Lecturer, University of the Sunshine Coast
- Dr David Trembath, NHMRC ECR Fellow, Menzies Health Institute Queensland, Griffith University
- Associate Professor Helen (Honey) Heussler, Paediatrician, Mater Children's Hospital & The University of Queensland
- Professor Jacqueline Roberts, Chair in the Autism Centre of Excellence, Griffith University
- Dr James Scott, Child Psychiatrist, Queensland Health & The University of Queensland
- Mr Scott Reading, AEIOU Board Member Representative
- Mark Bowles, Chief Operating Officer, Mater Medical Research Institute
- Yolanda Borucki, Operations Manager, AEIOU Foundation
- Wendi Beamish, Lecturer, Griffith University
- Kerrie Mahon, Acting CEO and COO, AEIOU Foundation
- Dr Madonna Tucker, Research and Assessment Manager, AEIOU Foundation
- Dr Jessica Paynter, Research and Psychology Manager, AEIOU Foundation

## Lynn Wright Memorial Fund

The Lynn Wright Memorial Fund was inspired by the powerful story of woman who was a tremendous support to families of children with autism and, through her legacy, continues to be so.

Lynn encouraged and supported her daughter Louise Morton, and son-in-law James, when they took on the challenge of establishing AEIOU Foundation. The Morton's, inspired by their own son with autism, have built an organisation which has grown to nine centres, and is recognised as a leader in evidence based early intervention.

The Lynn Wright Memorial Fund was established to recognise Lynn's encouragement and support. Led by a volunteer committee including Louise Morton, Jane Harris, Belinda Power and Karen Catsoulis, the Fund is designed to ensure all families have equal access to early intervention at AEIOU Foundation and provides financial assistance to those in need.

Each year, the committee organises Lynn's Lunch, an event which not only raises much-needed funds, but also raises awareness for AEIOU Foundation.

In 2015-16 the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund assisted 31 families, bequeathing more than \$39,000.





## Our People

**AEIOU Foundation is proud to employ highly-qualified and experienced staff across all our centres and we are committed to maintaining and improving skills and knowledge through a rigorous professional development program.**

The AEIOU staff conference, held every two years, is an opportunity to learn new skills, reinforce previous learnings and share ideas and knowledge. It's also an important component of our staff engagement program.

This year, more than 170 staff gathered at RACV Noosa Resort to participate in workshops and network with colleagues. Included in the program were sessions on the AEIOU Program, teaching strategies, behaviour support strategies, IT tips and tricks, dealing with difficult conversations, and the National Quality Framework.

The event was also the launch of the Foundation's new values STEP - Support, Teamwork, Excellence and Passion, which articulate our company's identity, encourage our conduct and inspire our purpose

This reporting period also saw the implementation of a new senior staffing structure, with the introduction of a program coordinator team, consisting of a senior occupational therapist, speech pathologist, behaviour analyst and behaviour analyst/project officer, to oversee the program in all centres. These positions report directly to the Operations Manager.

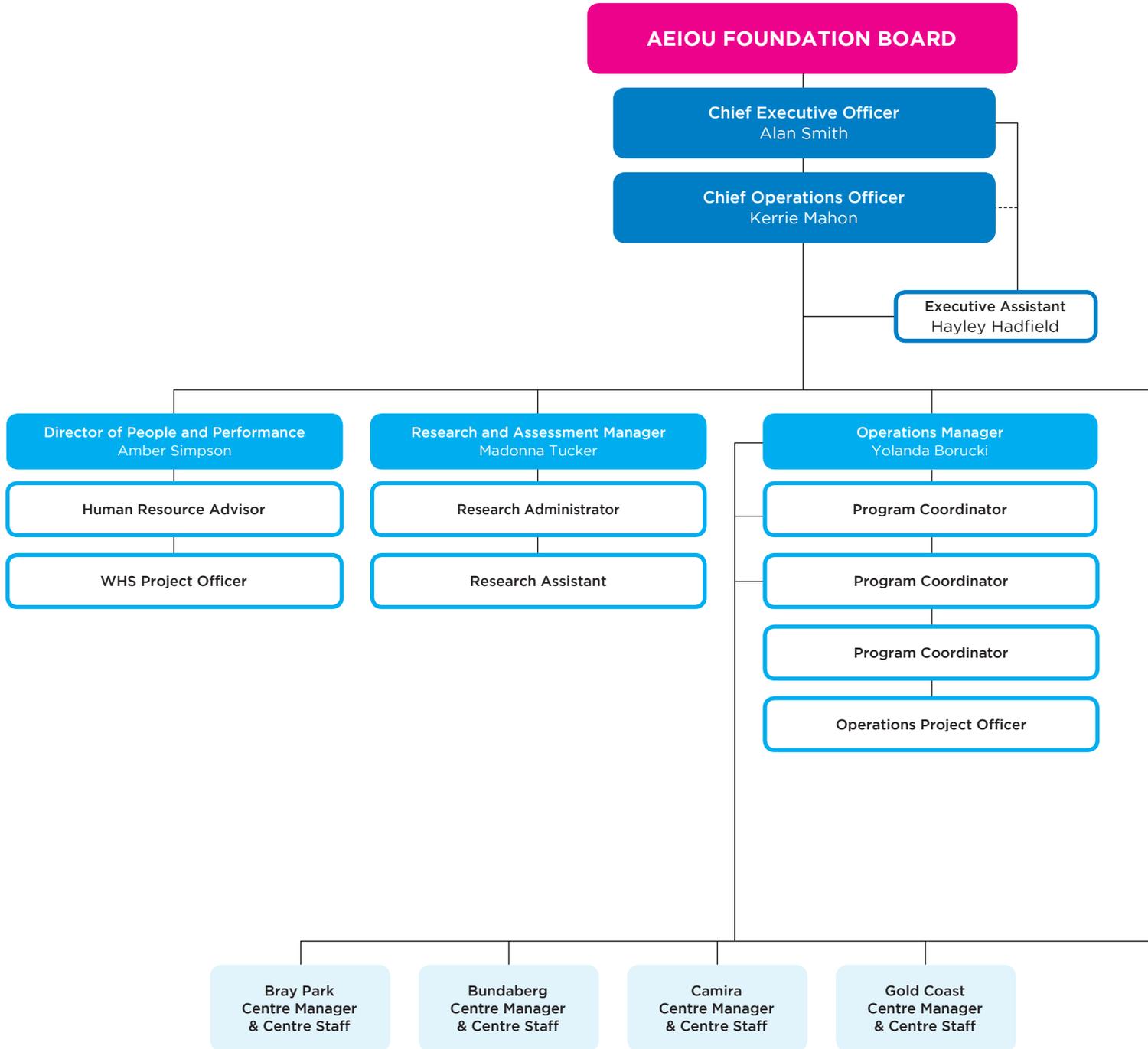
Nathan, Camira, Townsville, Gold Coast, Adelaide and Bray Park centres also employed a program manager, qualified in Behaviour Analysis, to be responsible for each centre's program. The new structure ensures the AEIOU evidence based curriculum is consistent across all centres and is an added strength to the transdisciplinary approach to our therapy component. Centre managers are now focussed on the administrative and operational tasks and childcare requirements to run each centre resourcefully.

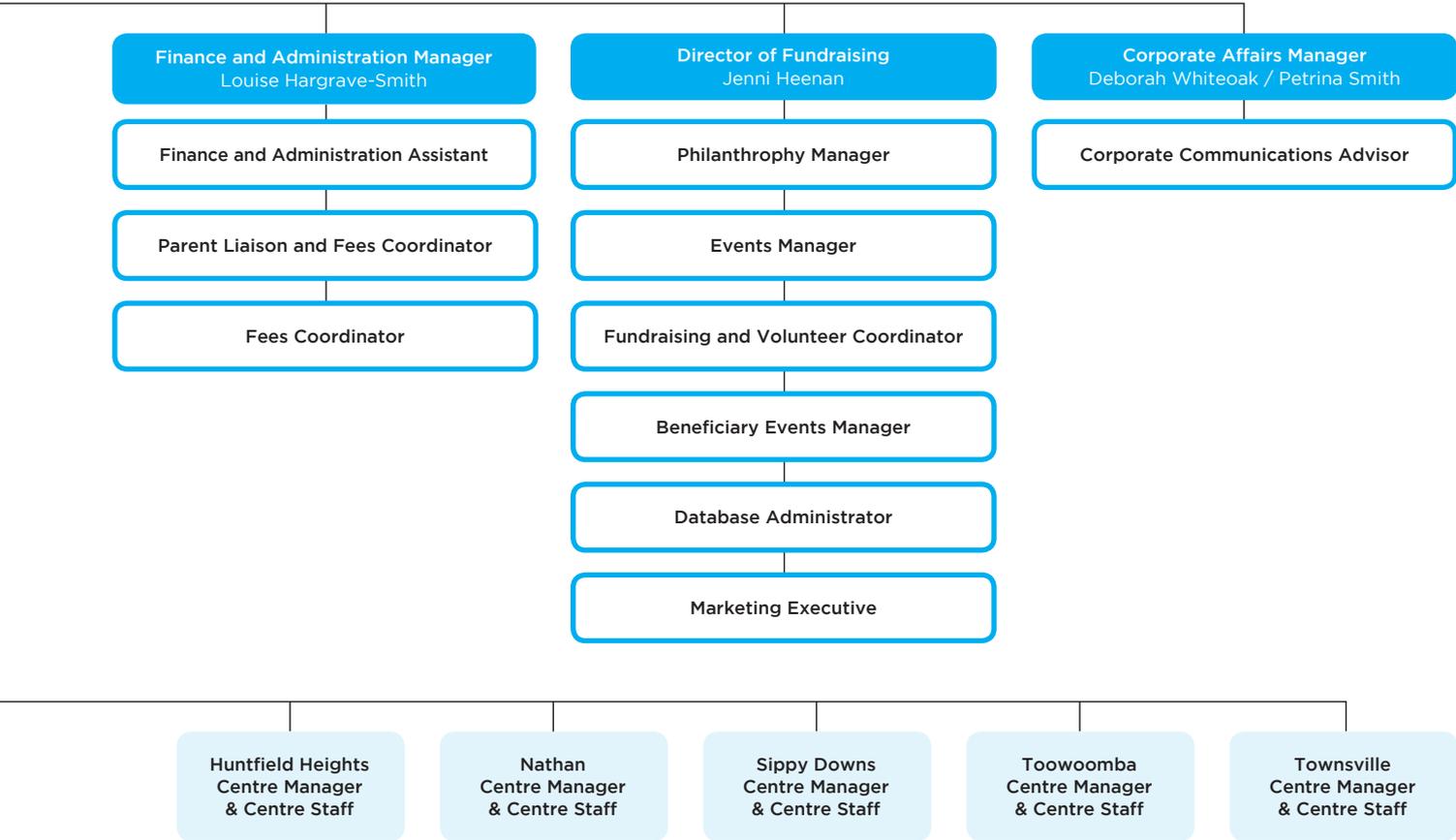
To establish a platform of efficient and effective systems, two major projects were completed during the year. The first of these involved the introduction of a cloud-based integrated payroll and human resources information system. This new system provides all employees and managers with easy to access, real-time information and has eliminated the need for paper based systems such as timesheets, leave applications, etc. The second of the systems projects focused on upgrading AEIOU's computer infrastructure and software systems - with all computers now utilising current operating systems.

A second enterprise bargaining agreement was negotiated and supported by the majority of staff. The 2016 Enterprise Bargaining Agreement was designed to support changes necessary for the NDIS environment; to provide fair wage increases & conditions; to recognise social issues; to focus on professional development and career opportunities; to provide the best outcomes for children; and to be financially sustainable.

- ✓ 170 staff at biennial conference
- ✓ New values launched
- ✓ Integrated payroll and human resources information system adopted
- ✓ 2016 Enterprise Bargaining Agreement signed
- ✓ New senior staffing structure

## AEIOU Organisational Chart





# Our Curriculum

## AEIOU's Unique Curriculum continually strives for best practice and measurable outcomes

**As leaders in early intervention for children with autism in Australia, AEIOU's transdisciplinary team of program coordinators, therapists and teaching staff is continually striving for best practice and measurable outcomes.**

AEIOU has developed and implemented an autism-specific early learning curriculum designed to provide a framework for teaching every child foundational skills necessary to become fully participating members of their communities. The AEIOU curriculum is continually reviewed to align with best practice, with the most recent revision completed in December 2015.

Our curriculum is built on evidence based practices which create a holistic framework for intervention. It aligns with the Good Practice Guidelines (Prior and Roberts, 2012) which recommends curriculums address five basic domains:

- ability to attend to elements of the environment (targeted through the AEIOU curriculum domain of classroom attending skills)
- ability to imitate others (targeted through the AEIOU curriculum domains of imitation and echoics)
- ability to comprehend and use language or alternative communication (targeted through the AEIOU curriculum domains of expressive language skills, receptive language skills, intraverbals and echoics)
- ability to play appropriately with toys (targeted through the AEIOU curriculum domain of play skills)
- ability to engage socially with others (targeted through the AEIOU curriculum domain of social skills)

The AEIOU curriculum also contains other important skills including self-help, academic, and visual perception skills. These all combine to create a framework which provides opportunities to achieve optimal lifelong outcomes.

In setting goals, we work collaboratively with families, taking into consideration data collected through our curriculum assessment, standardised assessments and family priorities.

Our curriculum areas include:

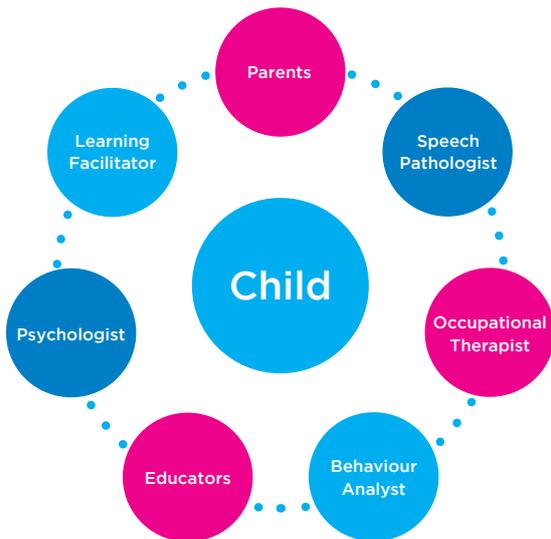
- Classroom Attending - focuses on vital skills such as waiting and turn taking as well as the ability to progress from learning 1:1 to learning within a group, as they will in their next education setting.
- Echoics - focuses on sound imitation, which is critical to language development. The ability to be able to echo spoken words/sounds is a fundamental skill which enables a child to functionally communicate.
- Visual Perception - focuses on the ability to understand visual information and see patterns, which is important for language development and is a pre-academic skill.
- Social Skills - focuses on teaching children to interact with peers and adults, which improves community access.
- Play Skills - focuses on teaching children how to play, which is a vital skill for social development.
- Expressive Language - focuses on children being able to understand language as a speaker so that they can request items, increase their vocabulary (say the name of items), and comment on their environment.
- Receptive Language - focuses on teaching children to be able to use language as a listener and be able to following instructions.
- Intraverbals focuses on teaching the next stage of expressive and receptive language to further develop communications skills at an advanced level.
- Self-help - focuses on children acquiring adaptive skills needed for independence such as toileting, managing mealtimes, dressing, and hygiene tasks such as tooth brushing and handwashing, going to the dentist/hairstylist.
- Imitation - focuses on children being able to copy what they see which allows them to learn from the natural environment.
- Academic - focuses on acquiring skills useful for school including letters and numbers which introduce them to reading, writing and maths.

Data is collected in all of these areas to show each child's progress or indicate a need to modify strategies. Collaboration between the children's family and the AEIOU team is vitally important to each child's progress.

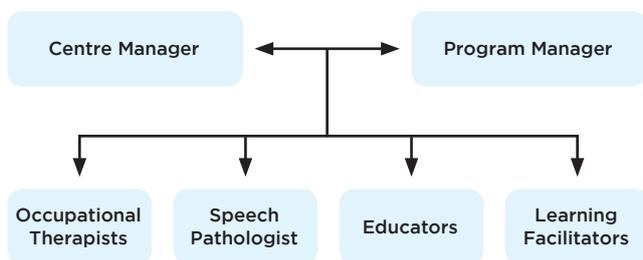
## Implementing the curriculum

The AEIOU curriculum is implemented through a transdisciplinary staffing model, which ensures all children in our service receive at least 20 hours of therapy per week, as recommended in a report by Roberts, Williams, Smith & Campbell (2015) and released by the NDIA in February 2016.

The transdisciplinary team is made up of Behavioural Analysts, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, educators and learning facilitators. All disciplines have input into all children's programs, and each child's goal has a number of transdisciplinary team members involved in its implementation.



With the AEIOU curriculum built on the practice of behavioural therapy, the organisation structure was enhanced in 2015-16 to include staff qualified in behavioural therapy. Each centre employed a program manager to ensure the curriculum consistency is maintained, and to oversee each child's individual program. Centre managers focus on administrative tasks and responsibilities.



- ✓ Autism specific
- ✓ Evidence based
- ✓ References Australian Guidelines for Good Practice (2012)
- ✓ Implemented by a transdisciplinary team
- ✓ Creates a lifetime of opportunities

## Working with the NDIS

The NDIS is described as a 'once in a generation change to how disability services and supports will be provided in Australia'. At AEIOU Foundation, our major priority is to ensure our organisation and our families are prepared for this adjustment.

It is vital we fully understand how the NDIS is being funded and ensure our service meets key criteria. As part of this process we have been engaged in conversation through implementation in Adelaide and as active members on the Queensland Transition Advisory Group. We have also met with key stakeholders in Government, including the National Disability Insurance Agency, and will continue to advocate for our organisation and families.

For families, the transition is not a simple process. We are doing our utmost to support them with information and resources that will aid them in understanding the impacts of the NDIS on the future of their children. We are engaging with them in the planning process by conducting training sessions, assisting with review processes and providing up-to-date details on our website and through parent communiques.

We are continuing the process in Adelaide and further developing our strategies with implementation in Townsville. Toowoomba is the next region to focus on, followed successively by Camira, Bundaberg, Logan, Brisbane suburbs and the Gold Coast.

- ✓ Planning for transition
- ✓ Meeting NDIS criteria
- ✓ Advocating for families



# Building Opportunities

## Advocacy

**On behalf of our children in our service, those on our waiting list, and the wider autism community, AEIOU advocates to ensure every child is given the best opportunity to reach their full potential in life.**

This commitment continued to drive our strategy in 2015 and 2016. To meet our objectives, AEIOU Board members and senior staff engaged with key state and federal government departments, including the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to advocate for early intervention for pre-school aged children.

The benefit of specialist early intervention, when looked at over the lifetime of a child with moderate to severe autism is significant. Our key messaging focused on the importance of formal diagnoses, objective assessment and regular reviews. Early intervention must also be evidence based, individualised, and delivered by a transdisciplinary team to build functional capacity, address behaviours that challenge and improves children's health for the long time.

AEIOU Foundation also advocates for 20 hours of early intervention per week, as recommended in a report by Roberts, Williams, Smith & Campbell, released by the NDIA in February 2016.

## Community Engagement

**AEIOU's goal is to provide our early intervention program to every Australian child diagnosed with autism. We believe this should be a right and not a privilege. To achieve this, we engage with the community to raise awareness of our program, and to raise funds which ensure our early intervention is the most affordable and effective in Australia.**

Providing our life-changing services would not be possible without the exceptional support from our private and corporate donors, sponsors, parent fundraising committees, volunteers and the grants we have been awarded to achieve important goals.

Without this support, we could not meet our vision to be recognised as the leading provider of quality early intervention for children with autism and to ensure every child is given the best opportunity to reach their full potential in life.

## 2015 - 16 Events

### The Great Corporate Caper

Queensland business leaders revealed their superhero alter egos while facing a number of challenges around Brisbane's CBD all in the name of AEIOU children.

It was an exhilarating day full of fun challenges; Spiderman (aka Ipswich Mayor, Paul Pisasale), Lacey Lane co-owners Bec and Nikki Bowling, Peter Fenton, Bartercard SE Qld GM, Bruce Wolfe MD at Conrad Gargett and Samies Girl Seafood owner Kristina Georges all dressed as their favourite crusader. Batman, Green Lantern, Bat Girl, Superwoman, Thor, Aqua Woman and Ironman all met their challenges during the day as they considered the immense challenges children with autism and their families face every day.

### Take a Hike series

The Take A Hike series kicked off its sixth consecutive series in Brisbane in October, followed by Toowoomba in April and Townsville in June. With the event transformed to offer three distances (10.5km, 21km and 42km) this year recorded the highest participation in all three locations.

Take A Hike is an opportunity for community and business leaders, to join with our parents and staff to face a physical and mental challenge while raising much-needed funds and awareness for our children attending AEIOU.



## Beneficiary events

### Lynn's Lunch

In April, the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund hosted the 10th annual Lynn's Lunch event. This year's event at Victoria Park Golf Complex hosted by Seven News presenter Sharyn Ghidella raised a record \$70,000.

The Lynn Wright Memorial Fund is an essential service providing financial assistance and bursaries to AEIOU families in need.

Since inception in 2006, the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund has raised enough funds through Lynn's Lunch and philanthropic supporters to assist more than 160 families, allowing children with autism from all backgrounds the opportunity to reach their full potential.





### Rotary Art Spectacular

Rotary is about 'service above self' and the Rotarians from Stones Corner, Brisbane High-Rise and Hamilton have for the past three years shown that characteristic in bucket-loads.

As the major beneficiary of Queensland's most prestigious annual art exhibition, the Brisbane Rotary Art Spectacular, the 37th exhibition featured a diverse and impressive collection of local and interstate work and raised vital funds and awareness to assist our children and centres.

### St Laurence's College Walkathon

A sea of yellow made its way through the Brisbane CBD as the amazing students and staff of St Laurence's College embarked on their 46th annual 15km Walkathon in August.

The community-minded students at St Laurence's also volunteered at AEIOU hosted events and functions throughout the year.

A big thanks to 'Laurie's' for again helping us to make a positive difference to the lives of children with autism and their families.



## A family story

### Jayden's story

**I was at a routine paediatrician appointment for my eldest son, who has ASD, when I knew in my heart we would soon be going down the same path with Jayden. He was just one-year old at the time.**

We received confirmation a year later, and although I was suspecting the diagnosis for quite some time, hearing the words was very surreal. I was now the mother of two beautiful children with autism.

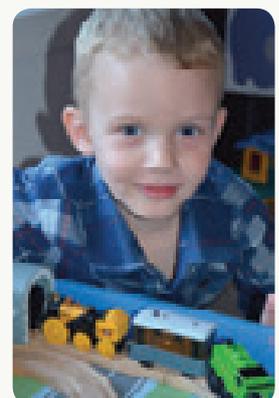
Jayden was attending a mainstream daycare at the time, but could never settle into their routine and was always distressed at drop-off and acting out towards other children due to the high sensory input of the daily activities. It was the director of this centre who first made the suggestion of switching to AEIOU Foundation. I spent countless hours researching ABA methods and the recommended hours of early intervention for children with atypical development and all my research pointed to the benefits of evidence-based early intervention in improving development and independence.

When we started with AEIOU Townsville, the major challenges Jayden faced were in the areas of self-help, communication, behaviour and social interaction. He was not toilet-trained, despite a year of trying and was also non-verbal, making little sound unless he was upset. He showed no interest in interacting with me or anyone else and could not follow simple instructions. In addition, he was acting out when experiencing a sensory overload or desired an item another person was holding.

It took only two months of a collaborative effort with staff for Jayden to experience success in toileting. Over the past 10 months, Jayden has started using words spontaneously. He now sings along to songs and is more interactive with adults. Probably one of the most treasured developments for me is that he now calls me 'Mum' and notices when I am around. He is able to follow some simple instructions and is beginning to share with others. When he walks into the centre each day, he packs his belongings away, walks outside to the playground, gives me a kiss and waves goodbye.

With every little development Jayden makes through AEIOU, life gets a little bit easier not only for Jayden but our whole family. We celebrate each one of these new skills and it is wonderful to see his siblings share in the joy. I truly believe with the right support and assistance; the sky is the limit for Jayden.

I don't believe you can ever know too much about your child and their diagnosis. There is no such thing as a silly question, especially when it comes to your family's wellbeing. And who better to ask than the countless specialists and trained professionals you will encounter in those early years at AEIOU. The knowledge and skills you gain will help you advocate not only for your child, but other families in similar situations.



By Desley Redman

## Stafford City Brook Run

In July, runners and walkers enjoyed a lovely Sunday morning following the Kedron Brook for the Stafford City Brook Run in support of AEIOU. We are proud to be chosen once again as the charity beneficiary for this fun, family event.

## Chain Reaction

Seven long days riding 1000km up and down the steep hills around Adelaide was the challenge 42 cyclists took on for this year's Chain Reaction Queensland Challenge in support of AEIOU and Starlight Children's Foundation.



The sheer determination was evident on the faces of the riders as they tackled the testing hills of Adelaide and surrounds, including the infamous Corkscrew Road climb and iconic Willunga Hill, which feature in the Tour Down Under. It was an extreme physical and mental challenge with cyclists admitting it was nothing compared with the daily struggles faced by children with autism and their families.

AEIOU was on hand during the event, providing logistical and moral support – the camaraderie, encouragement and team spirit among the riders was electrifying.

We are incredibly grateful to partner with Chain Reaction Challenge Foundation and thank the courageous riders and their supporters for their determination to make a real difference to the lives of children diagnosed with autism.

## Jurassic Jam

The inaugural Jurassic Jam in September gave music lovers the chance to rock out to some of Brisbane's best cover bands while helping children with autism at AEIOU. Most of the bands came out of retirement and left their business suits and wigs at home!

Our sincere thanks to Mary-Jeanne and Scott Hutchinson for their undying commitment to make a difference; to the Triffid for allowing us to use their iconic venue and to John Wilson for organising all the bands – donating their time to entertain the packed crowd – you have made a lasting difference and we could not do what we do, without you.

## Brisbane Broncos Community Fund

Through their Charity Fund, our long-term friends at the Broncos have been with us from the beginning. Each year, the Broncos select charities of their choice to assist financially, through awareness and provide opportunities for media exposure.



We are proud to be a longstanding partner and especially through the 50:50 raffle initiatives at Broncos home games, where our team of dedicated volunteers sell raffle tickets.

Our children are always pleased to have a visit from present day players and of course from our beloved Ambassador, Corey Parker.

## Melbourne Cup

A sea of colour and finery from both the ladies and gentlemen could be seen on the river frontage at Brisbane's Watt Bar as they hosted a fabulous Melbourne Cup lunch in support of AEIOU.

This partnership was forged by a past parent of AEIOU who simply wanted to give back and say thank you for the care and positive outcomes for his son who attended one of our centres.

The event was a sell-out and guests were treated to a bespoke three course luncheon in the venue's new food concept, the New Farmer's Kitchen.

## AEIOU and Victoria Park join forces

AEIOU has forged an exciting partnership with Victoria Park, which sees AEIOU as its charity partner for 2016. The partnership kicked off with a Mother's Day brunch attended by hundreds of families celebrating the wonderful women in their lives.

Guests enjoyed a gourmet buffet breakfast and bought hundreds of raffle tickets sold by AEIOU volunteers, hoping to win some of the great prizes provided by our sponsors.

Channel 9 News captured the action for its Mother's Day story and included a glowing report on AEIOU thanks to one of our wonderful parents, who spoke of the positive differences our program had made to her son.

## Workplace Partners

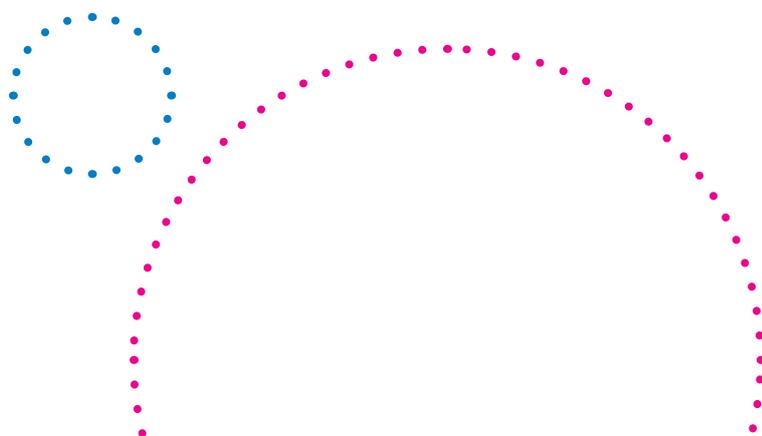
Every day we have many reasons to be grateful. The BDO family of employees chose AEIOU as a charity of choice for their newly created workplace giving program.

So committed are the team at BDO to making a difference, the team has enthusiastically volunteered at many of our major events, run their own in-house fundraising campaigns and this year will see a BDO team enter Take A Hike Brisbane.

## Alex Perry Hotels

Our longest serving Ambassador, Alex Perry has opened his heart to assist our children by donating an agreed amount per room night to AEIOU. Also the team at APH encourage all visitors to donate through our collection piece on Reception but also through valet parking.

Many a winner of one of our raffle prizes will attest to the magnificent hotel as APH provide us with prizes at each of our events.



## Centre fundraising

AEIOU is incredibly grateful for the immense support AEIOU families give to fundraising initiatives throughout the year. Not only do families donate time and energy to AEIOU's events, they also conduct local activities to raise funds for learning materials, technology resources and centre upgrades.

Parent fundraising committees work tirelessly throughout the year to host a number of events, including trivia nights, BBQs, bake sales, movie nights, morning teas, book drives, chocolate drives, raffles and more.

We acknowledge the astonishing efforts of our dedicated families in helping AEIOU achieve fundraising targets and raise awareness of the importance of our early intervention program. Families are often our most passionate advocates on the ground, spreading the word throughout the community about the great work AEIOU is doing.

## Volunteers

AEIOU Foundation's extraordinary army of volunteers, who comprise of philanthropic parents, corporate friends and special individuals all gave generously and honourably of their time, energy and passion this year in a wide range of disciplines to maximise funds and boost awareness of AEIOU; an invaluable feat. Volunteers, including corporate supporters EY, BDO and Westpac have supported us at events, in our centres and in the community with everything from sausage sizzles to centre makeovers. Their ongoing support and generosity is making a life-changing difference to our children at AEIOU.

## Sponsors / Partners

## Private philanthropists / Supporters

Bec and Nikki Bowling (Lacy Lane)  
 Franklyn and Bobbie Brazil  
 Porsche Cheung  
 Dr Ross and Margot Forgan-Smith  
 Scott and Mary-Jeanne Hutchinson  
 Dr James and Louise Morton  
 Hazel Orton  
 Terry and Mary Peabody  
 Beverley Power  
 Dr Beverley Rowbotham  
 Kristina and Harry Georges - Samies Girl  
 Michael and Ann Williams  
 Team Jacob / Steve Williams

## Community / Trusts / Foundations

## Ambassadors

Alex Perry      Ian Skippen      Corey Parker

Tim Sharp      Lee Holdsworth

# A volunteer's story

"When I set out to take part in volunteering, I saw a call out from AEIOU Foundation on the Volunteering Qld website. I was interested in volunteering at events and the Take A Hike event sounded like a fun day. Not knowing much about AEIOU and after speaking with a parent on the day, I learnt about the work being done in AEIOU centres and the impact the Foundation has had on so many families. I was utterly impressed and inspired and there began my friendship with AEIOU.

Since then, I have volunteered for Take a Hike, Mother's Day in the Marquee at Victoria Park Golf Club, and Griffith Sport Logan Fun Run.

I like volunteering with AEIOU because the events are always well organised and I enjoy supporting not only the Foundation but the AEIOU staff and volunteers on the day. It feels good to work with a team that is motivated to make a difference to the lives of others. I always have fun and a laugh and meet such magnificent, supportive people.

If somebody was thinking about volunteering, without hesitation I would encourage them to give it a go. Not only are you supporting your community but it's good for the soul and your health!"

## Catherine Hoey



## Meeting Need

**It has long been our vision that every child with autism in Australia will have access to evidence-based early intervention, unparalleled in both quality and affordability.**

That dream is becoming a reality through our national expansion program, which took a great leap forward in 2015-16 with the award of a National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) grant from the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development towards the construction of a purpose-built centre in Brighton, Adelaide. Land for the new centre has generously been provided through a peppercorn lease by Minda, a partner not-for-profit organisation supporting South Australians with intellectual disability.

In Queensland, we are excited to be expanding our services through the building of a purpose-built centre which will be part of the innovative Meadowbrook Health and Knowledge Precinct in Logan which is transforming a suburb into an integrated centre for health, education, research and community. Being a key stakeholder in this precinct, which is the first of its kind in Queensland, AEIOU will achieve a number of strategic objectives:

- improving education outcomes for children with autism
- improving transition to an inclusive educational setting
- supporting students with complex and challenging behaviours and supporting teachers and schools to better manage and support children with autism and their families
- providing safe and orderly learning environments
- create training pathways for disciplines including behaviour therapy, speech and language pathology, occupational therapy and medicine

Through the connected model, AEIOU will also will provide knowledge and tools to educators in mainstream settings, which will assist children and families to integrate in the community and transition to their next educational environment.

This project took a giant step with Griffith University providing land within the proposed Meadowbrook Health and Education Precinct in Logan. In June 2016, the Queensland State Government, through the Minister for Health Cameron Dick, provided a grant of \$xxx,xxx for the building. Complemented by a generous donation from the Chain Reaction Foundation, and the support of the WANTZ committee, we aim to have this centre constructed by 2017/18.

In Melbourne, we continue to build an alliance with Monash University to secure land at its Berwick Campus. Demand for services in the region is high, with statistics showing there are at least 2000 children who would benefit from access to early intervention services in the region.



## A family story

### *William's story*

**My husband and I travelled a long road to be blessed with our little man. When he was diagnosed with autism shortly before turning two, we cried with fear for what the future may hold. A year later, we have absolute confidence William will have a fulfilling, independent life and be a proud contributor. We credit AEIOU for unlocking the happy little boy within.**

After many years of fertility treatment, we were consumed with joy when William was born. However, I vividly remember thinking something was different for our son as early as his six-week paediatrician appointment. William spent his early years living on the periphery. At playgroup he was reserved; never explored; was not interested in interacting with other children; never clapped or gestured and had minimal eye contact. One could have easily described him as a clumsy child, lacking the co-ordination and confidence of his peers.

Around his first birthday, William became obsessed with spinning items and wheels. He also engaged in repeated rocking; hand flapping and tapping the back of his head against walls. It was at this time I asked for a referral to a specialist, but my concerns were dismissed and I was informed William was simply 'quiet and reserved'. However, in the coming year, he became completely non-verbal and extremely distressed when in public.

I again raised my concerns and was referred to a developmental paediatrician, where William was diagnosed with moderate to severe autism shortly before his second birthday. My husband and I sat in the consultation room and cried for all the opportunities we feared our son would miss and the belief he was now more vulnerable.

From my first contact with AEIOU, I was certain it was the best option for our son. William started at the Camira centre at 2 years 8 months. We were relieved to discover the certainty of routine and how well-equipped the staff were to ensure a smooth transition. We also learned we had joined an amazing cohort of families who shared our experiences, held the same concerns and asked the same questions.

In the following months, William's eye contact increased to 95%; he now follows instruction; has become increasingly independent with self-care and routine tasks; has increased his variety of diet; is more tolerant to change and, aside from the occasional accident, is fully toilet trained.

He has approximately 200-300 words in his vocabulary and is structuring up to five word sentences. We continue to be amazed on a weekly basis with his development and new words spoken. In addition, his increased social awareness and interaction means he will now happily offer to make us cups of tea, coffee and cupcakes during play time.

AEIOU staff have given our son a sense of security, which in turn has allowed his beautiful personality to come to fruition. He has now blossomed into a happy, cheeky and vibrant toddler who will excitedly greet his friends by name. His advancements have further given us the confidence to broaden William's experience and expose him to new environments.

With our amazing achievements to date and the continued work of AEIOU, we have every confidence William will likely attend mainstream school and while he may have a few idiosyncrasies, truly believe his opportunities have no bounds.

To the future families of AEIOU, I encourage you to reach out, ask questions and don't feel disempowered. Take your beautiful children out and engage in the community. While these outings at times can be made more challenging due to the intolerance of others; they are by default raising ASD awareness.

By Elaine Dionysius



# Summary financials

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2016

	Note	2016 \$	2015 \$
Revenue	3	11,317,911	10,449,082
Other revenue	3	1,947,424	1,901,444
Employee benefits expense		(9,971,211)	(8,887,316)
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment expense		(440,466)	(424,415)
Classroom and education		(81,878)	(101,193)
Event costs		(217,151)	(212,864)
Professional service fees		(246,195)	(138,515)
Motor vehicle expenses		(36,592)	(39,953)
Printing and stationery expense		(125,993)	(114,973)
Occupancy expense		(265,075)	(273,356)
Repairs and maintenance expense		(451,685)	(349,901)
Telecommunications expense		(131,735)	(129,572)
Travel expense		(63,624)	(48,896)
Insurance expense		(138,498)	(133,743)
Other expenses		(561,042)	(484,734)
Finance costs		(716)	(19,750)
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>533,474</b>	<b>991,346</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>			
Other comprehensive income for the year		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>533,474</b>	<b>991,346</b>

## Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2016

	Note	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	1,764,804	1,526,128
Trade and other receivables	6	272,235	165,035
Other assets	7	114,080	104,269
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		2,151,119	1,795,432
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	8	9,448,401	9,517,291
Intangible assets	9	38,091	24,609
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		9,486,492	9,541,900
TOTAL ASSETS		11,637,611	11,337,332
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	10	796,324	987,981
Borrowings	11	7,851	-
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		804,175	987,981
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Borrowings	11	18,817	57,851
Long-term provisions	12	190,778	201,133
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		209,595	258,984
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,013,770	1,246,965
NET ASSETS		10,623,841	10,090,367
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Reserves	15	4,473,181	4,447,950
Retained surplus		6,150,660	5,642,417
TOTAL EQUITY		10,623,841	10,090,367



**aeiou**  
FOUNDATION  
for children with autism

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**ABN:** 19 135 897 255 | Registered Charity CH1818