

MEDIA RELEASE

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First sod turned on SA's largest disability support precinct

The beachside suburb of North Brighton is set to be home to South Australia's largest disability precinct following a partnership between Minda, as SA's leading non-government disability support organisation, and AEIOU Foundation for children with autism.

The alliance between AEIOU Foundation and Minda was celebrated today with a turning of the sod event at the King George Avenue site, to mark the start of construction of a community hub that will offer support and services for pre-school age children right through to their adult years and beyond.

The \$2.3m AEIOU centre, which has been made possible through a \$891,000 grant received through the National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) and donation of land by Minda under a long-term lease, will provide leading evidence-based early intervention for South Australian children with moderate to severe autism.

The 720m² purpose-built centre will house four classrooms, therapy rooms, a motor skills room, parents' retreat, and 160m² roofed outdoor play facilities, all of which will play an important role in the development of a child's communication, social and behaviour skills. The centre will be run by a transdisciplinary team of therapists and skilled educators.

Stage 2 of Minda's Master Plan will see construction of 11 single-story group dwellings, four single-storey residential flat buildings, and two three-storey residential flat buildings as replacement accommodation for people Minda support. The stage will also see construction of a lifestyle precinct consisting of four buildings, which will offer a range of employment-generating enterprises, medical suites, day programs, child care and recreational facilities.

AEIOU CEO Mr Alan Smith, said the precinct will respond to calls by South Australian families for greater access to vital early intervention, in order to create positive lifelong outcomes.

"With 1 in 100 children diagnosed with autism, the clock is ticking on the short-term development window where we know a true permanent difference can be made.

"Since opening our first AEIOU centre in Adelaide in 2014, we have provided affordable and effective autism early intervention to more than 40 South Australian families. Our new centrally located Brighton centre will ensure even more children will have access to life-changing early intervention programs each year and receive the ongoing support they need.

"AEIOU sincerely thanks the National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) for its significant financial contribution to this project, and to disability support partner Minda for their generous donation of the parcel of land on which we will be located."

Minda CEO, Ms Cathy Miller, welcomed the start of construction of the AEIOU Centre and Stage 2 of its broader \$160m+ Master Plan development.

"Minda's Master Plan aims to create a vibrant community hub that offers leading edge accommodation and support for South Australians of all ages with disability, and we are pleased to align with AEIOU Foundation because it shares very similar values and opens up the prospect of future collaboration in areas such as research, training and development," Ms Miller said.

"With the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme it is now more critical than ever to establish partnerships with other sector-leading organisations like AEIOU to complement our own support model, and ensure that South Australians and their families receive whole-of-life support over time if they need," she said.

AEIOU Foundation's centre is expected to be complete in late 2017, with long-time supporters Hutchinson Builders and Buchan Group architects engaged for the project, while SARAH Constructions was recently announced as the builder for Stage 2 of Minda's Master Plan, which is expected to take about 18 months.

About AEIOU Foundation

Established in 2005, AEIOU Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation and a leading Australian provider of affordable and effective evidence-based early intervention for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Its program develops essential life skills, independence, confidence and inclusion for children aged 2 – 6 years with moderate to severe needs. The program ensures children are prepared for their next educational setting and provided with the best opportunities to achieve optimal lifelong outcomes. For information about AEIOU Foundation visit aeiou.org.au.

About Minda

Established in 1898, Minda is the largest non-government disability support organisation in South Australia that assists people with disability to thrive in their local environments as valued members of their communities by offering residential and lifestyle services, employment and respite support. Minda is a major employer of more than 450 supported workers across its highly successful range of commercial enterprises. Across seven businesses, Minda provides the community with a broad range of services that include manufacturing, design, packing solutions, commercial laundry and catering. For information about Minda visit <https://www.mindainc.com.au/>

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