

ANNUAL REPORT

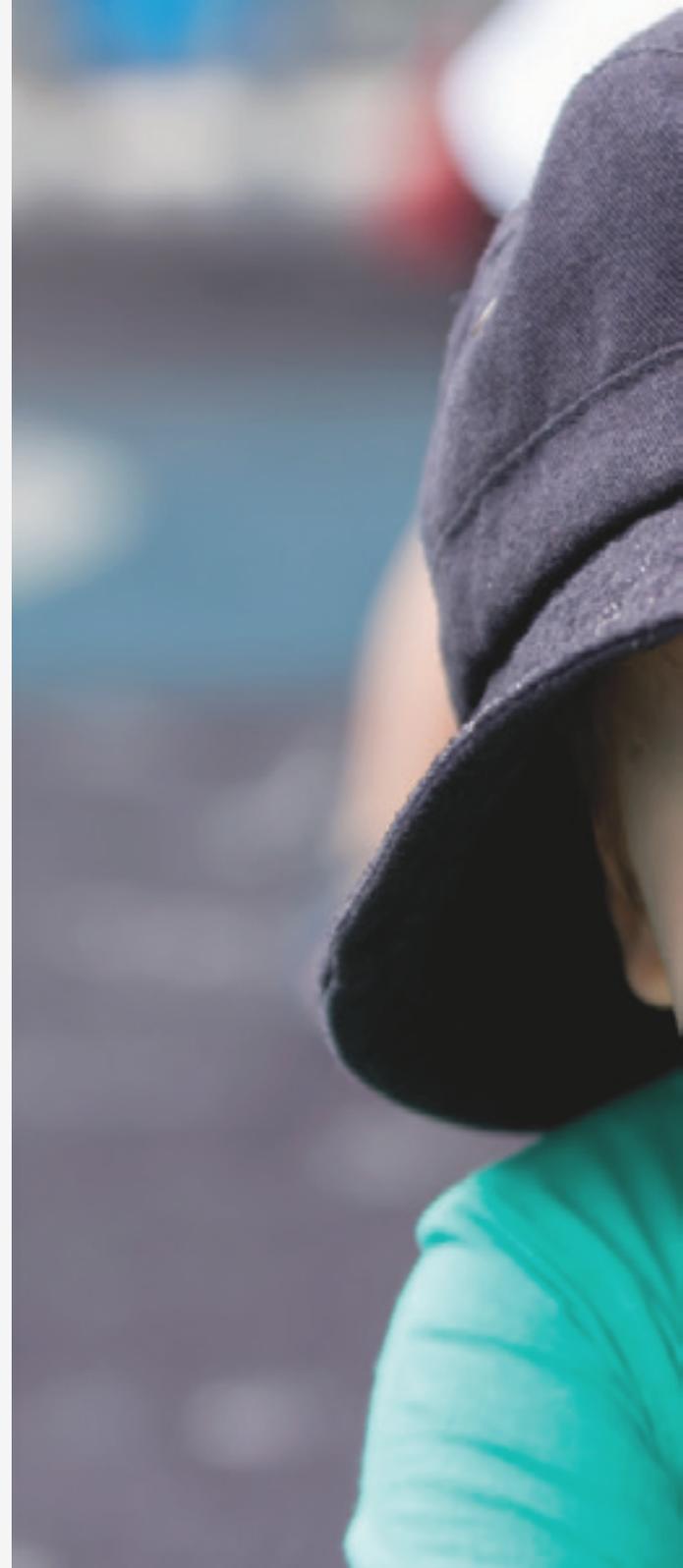
2016-2017 | AEIOU Foundation

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FOUNDATION
for children with autism



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WELCOME TO AEIOU FOUNDATION - EMBRACING CHANGE

Since establishing in 2005, AEIOU Foundation has become a leading provider and advocate 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 160 people across nine centres, including central office, who all work to deliver a program that gives children and their families opportunities for optimal lifelong outcomes.

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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 eighth annual report submitted by AEIOU Foundation, documenting AEIOU's financial operational and community performance for the financial year ending 30 June 2017. Your feedback is welcome. Please email communications@aeiou.org.au

ABOUT AEIOU

WE SUPPORT

This year, more than
220 children with
autism received
early intervention



WE EMPLOY

122 full-time staff
43 part-time staff
90 casual staff

Each child receives: a minimum
of **20** hours specialised group
early intervention per week

Volunteers

142



PREVALENCE OF AUTISM

1 in 100 Australians
diagnosed with autism*

*The Open Paediatric Medicine Journal, 2012

Autism affects
4 boys to
every **1** girl



FOUNDATION

What is Autism

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

Autism is part of a spectrum 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 established cause or cure for autism, however evidence demonstrates early intervention, delivered within a program that meets the Guidelines for Good Practice 2012, 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.

“Receiving therapy and education in the early years leads to lifelong outcomes, which improves the quality of life, and the opportunities, for not just the child, but their entire family and the community they live in. Helping them access that therapy and care is rewarding. It helps them, and I have a whole lot of job satisfaction.”

Katrina Ives, AEIOU NDIS Support Coordinator

Our Values

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 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 balance 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

This year, we have continued to steer AEIOU Foundation on a steady path during a period of growth and change. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has provided a prudent opportunity to review our service, the cost of its delivery and how we will ensure the continued delivery of high quality early intervention which is accessible to all families.

It has also shown us we need to further invest in supporting families during this transition. Challenges include discrepancies in funding between families under the NDIS, particularly in different states such as Queensland and South Australia. As such, advocacy has become increasingly important and we do this by working directly with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and relevant Government departments. We also support families directly and advocate on their behalf with expert guidance from our skilled team.

The challenges presented to not-for-profit organisations are not insignificant. How these are addressed will define the next generation of care and disability support. AEIOU is poised for this change, and we will continue to support children with autism, ensuring they have the best therapy and education to reach their full potential.

In June, there was controversy when One Nation Leader Senator Pauline Hanson raised the issue of support for children with autism in mainstream schools, when she told The Senate, “we should get rid’ of autistic children from mainstream classrooms” (The Courier-Mail). This comment was broad and provocative; however there is a problem around a lack of investment in early intervention, there is under-investment in teacher training and a lack of resources in schools.

Many children with autism, particularly those who attend AEIOU Foundation, will succeed in a mainstream setting.

However, I see risks in a global view which prioritises mainstream schooling above the safety and wellbeing of a child and their ability to learn in that environment.

Beyond ensuring the NDIS appropriately invests in children in their early years, we need to better support the school environment. In the next year, it’s our goal to share knowledge and talk to students studying education at university. We will also scope how AEIOU may work with the Department of Education to contribute toward a program that will see better transition support for children entering mainstream school environments, relieving some of the burden experienced by both families and schools.

Last year, we brought you news regarding AEIOU’s growth in Queensland and South Australia. It’s been pleasing to see the construction commence on our new, purpose-built centre in Brighton, commencing with a Sod Turning event with the support of our partners at Minda in March this year. We will wait until 2017/2018 to construct the new service in Logan, with an expected opening date of July 2018, to coincide with the rollout of the NDIS in the region.

Training and supporting our own staff remains a priority, and this year I was pleased to see the launch of a new AEIOU Foundation e-learning platform. Our commitment to research and assessment continues. We have re-branded our Research Advisory Group to become the AEIOU Research and Innovation

Committee (ARIC). This scientific collaboration between AEIOU’s Research and Assessment Department and individuals from external agencies with expertise in autism and an interest in research relating to the condition. AEIOU is also an essential partner of the Autism Cooperative Research Centre, a world-first initiative.

I’d like to thank our Board of Directors, who volunteer their time and unique skill set to advise and steer AEIOU Foundation. I also thank my wife Louise Morton and the committee who comprise the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund, which provides bursaries to families who need financial assistance.

Finally, I thank our donors, those who have helped to build AEIOU Foundation and remain our good friends and supporters. Whether you’re a long-term friend or new to supporting our organisation, I’d like you to know your investment is greatly appreciated: not only by our team, but the families we enrol across our centres. We’re all proud of what we deliver at AEIOU Foundation, and your investment makes an impression upon a lifetime. There is nothing more valuable than that.

Yours sincerely,



Dr James Morton, AM
AEIOU Foundation Chairman and Founder



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.....

For AEIOU Foundation, the past 12 months were remarkable. We embedded our values and continued working towards our mission of delivering high-quality intervention, all the time embracing change both planned for, and unexpected.



As John F Kennedy once said: "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future".

It is with this notion, we embrace the most significant adjustment our nation has made to funding disability: the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). While we have gathered knowledge through our experience operating in South Australia, an NDIS trial zone, we also understand the NDIS is yet to mature before becoming a national system. In 2016/17, Townsville and Toowoomba families transitioned to the NDIS, providing new challenges, experiences and outcomes. While readjusting our understanding of the process, we continued to prioritise the needs of our families as they sought fair and reasonable funding for their child with autism to access our early intervention program.

To boost our capacity to gather information and provide support, we employed a full-time National Disability Support Coordinator. This was a worthwhile investment for AEIOU and our families, increasing our knowledge, advocacy and results.

Throughout The NDIS process, we remain committed to creating a lifetime of opportunities for children with autism, through embracing our values of STEP (Support, Teamwork, Excellence and Passion). Our full-time program continues to undergo constant review and evaluation for evidence-based practice and achieving successful outcomes. We are focused on

our mission to provide all children access to early intervention and have begun construction on a new expanded service in South Australia, while securing funding for a new centre in Logan, Queensland.

As a family-centred service, we embarked on providing a more comprehensive parent training program, introducing more workshops, which are regularly and consistently delivered across all centres.

We continued our robust research program, which not only underpins our evidence-based program, but priorities research and assessment both internally and through external partnerships. The AEIOU Research and Innovation Committee (formerly the Research and Assessment Group), is a scientific collaboration between the AEIOU Research and Assessment Team and individuals from external agencies who have expertise in autism, and an interest in research relating to autism. We remain proud to be a key funding partner of the Autism Cooperative Research centre and a founding partner of Griffith University's Autism Centre of Excellence.

We also looked to improve operational efficiencies by merging three locations of support staff into a centrally located office. With a building secured, and refurbishment underway, we are close to realising this aim.

Personally, I am pleased to be in good health while undergoing treatment for Acute Myeloid Leukemia, following a

diagnosis in 2015. I give my sincere thanks to AEIOU Chairman Dr James Morton AM for the excellent clinical care he provides as my oncologist and the care and support he gives my family and me.

I acknowledge the Board of Directors, and welcome Susan Rix as our newest board member. Susan's business acumen, which includes vast experience on not-for-profit boards, adds depth to our governance.

I also acknowledge all staff at AEIOU who work to ensure we create a lifetime of opportunities for children with autism and their families. Your commitment is inspirational and I thank you for embracing the changes implemented to our program and operations, which ensure we achieve successful results.

Lastly, and importantly, I acknowledge our supporters, donors, volunteers and strategic partners for their generous and ongoing support. AEIOU Foundation sincerely values your commitment to helping us continue to be an affordable and effective autism early intervention provider.

Alan Smith
CEO
AEIOU Foundation

A family story



“AEIOU – GIVING ETHAN THE LIFE HE DESERVES” – *The Fardell Family*

For Zoe and Mitch Fardell, learning their son Ethan was diagnosed with autism was not the absolute shock they expected.

“Our biggest fear for Ethan at the time wasn’t that he might have a disability such as autism. “We were more scared for him that he wouldn’t have great school years; he wouldn’t have the life he deserved,” Zoe says.

“I knew from about five or six months of age, there was something different about Ethan,” she remembers. “He didn’t babble, look for toys or seek my attention. “His sister Mia, who is just a year older, excelled at all the milestones, whereas Ethan wasn’t meeting them. “His 12-year-old brother Joel was also a warm and social child.

Having an understanding of autism, through her mother’s occupation, and family members who had disabilities, Zoe and Mitch sought advice early. By nine months, and after several attempts for assistance through their GP and local hospital, Ethan, was referred to a paediatrician who specialises in diagnosing a range of learning disabilities.

“She was wonderful,” Zoe says. “She was hesitant at the beginning to say Ethan had autism; he didn’t meet all the criteria. “However, after regular appointments, several assessments, and keeping routine notes, he was diagnosed at two and a half.”

During this period, Zoe saw a television program featuring AEIOU Foundation, which prompted her to attend an open day and place their details on the waiting list. In January 2016, Ethan started full time at AEIOU Nathan.

“It was a nervous time waiting for a placement. “Getting in was fantastic. “We had tried other autism programs, which were part time, and not the intense intervention we understood

would give Ethan the best chance to reach his potential, and so this was the news we wanted.”

The first goals AEIOU worked towards with Ethan were social skills and language. “Communication was very important to us,” Zoe says. “Without it, we didn’t believe Ethan would have the best life he could.”

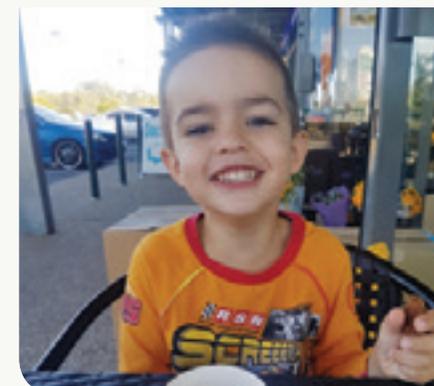
“Now,” Mitch adds, “he talks, he interacts with others and he has come out of his shell. “He’s great with his siblings, too, and they are great with him. “They know to take it a little easier with Ethan; Mia in particular has gained more patience than other children her age.

“Just yesterday, we were on our way to the shops and Ethan made a comment which took us all by surprise. “He was using wit and humor and we all thought it was terrific.”

“As parents,” Zoe says, “it’s easy to try and teach your children, but it’s also easy to go off target. “At AEIOU, the staff work so hard and are very dedicated to Ethan’s program. “He meets all his goals very quickly, and every three months we update them. “He wants to learn and is eager to be successful. He really persists with a task and he’s come such a long way.”

Ethan, will spend another year at AEIOU Foundation, honing his fine motor and communication skills in preparation for transition to school.

“We are exciting for Ethan’s school future and feel AEIOU has given him the best chance to attend a mainstream school,” Mitch says.



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

I have to say, the few months I have worked at AEIOU have been fantastic. It is a wonderful to be part of a team of dedicated professionals who are making a difference in the lives of children with autism, and their families; and I am genuinely impressed with the quality of our people and the service they provide.

I have had the opportunity to visit all our centres and, seeing the program in action has given me a greater understanding of the supports required for each child to reach their full potential.



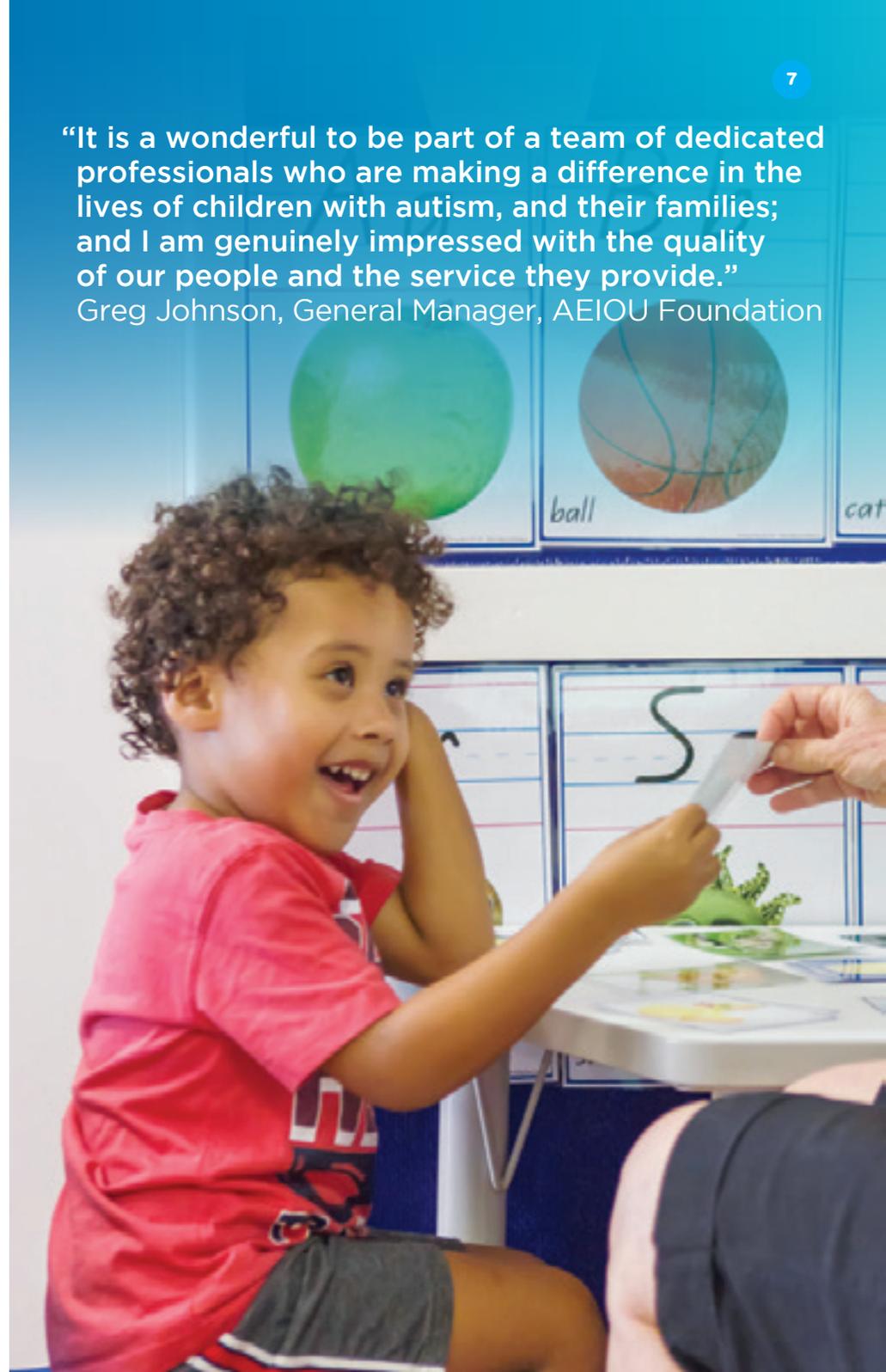
As General Manager overseeing operations, human resources, finance and corporate affairs, there is a lot on the agenda. A major focus for our organisation is transition to the NDIS and it is important we keep abreast of the impacts this is having on our families, our staff and our service. We have employed an NDIS Support Coordinator to assist in this strategy, are attending NDIS networking and workshop events, and hosting information sessions for families and the community.

In NDIS speak, we must deliver a program that is reasonable and necessary. Our high staff-to-child ratio and evidence-based curriculum means we must be vigilant to remain cost effective and at the same time, be at the forefront with our research. While our full-time model is unique, we are experiencing increased competition and there is no more important time to ensure our profile remains strong.

Since taking on this role, I have had fabulous support from CEO Alan Smith and the Executive Management Team. I also thank the Board of Directors for their strong guidance and governance. Their passion is inspirational and I look forward to supporting them in vision for AEIOU Foundation and children with autism.

Greg Johnson
General Manager
AEIOU Foundation

“It is a wonderful to be part of a team of dedicated professionals who are making a difference in the lives of children with autism, and their families; and I am genuinely impressed with the quality of our people and the service they provide.”
Greg Johnson, General Manager, AEIOU Foundation



2016/17 YEAR IN REVIEW

July 2016

Chief Operations Officer Kerrie Mahon appointed Company Secretary

AEIOU's second Enterprise Bargaining Agreement approved by the Fair Work Commission

August

AEIOU attends Queensland Disability Conference, Toowoomba

Annual WANTZ dinner

September

Chain Reaction thankyou event

Alan Smith returns as Chief Executive Officer, after extended leave, to focus on fundraising, research and capital projects.

AEIOU sponsors and attends the ABAA 2016 Conference in Victoria

AEIOU attends Options Day 2016, Bundaberg

October

Susan Rix appointed as company director

AEIOU Huntfield Heights attends inaugural Kyd-ex expo for youth with disability in South Australia

AEIOU Sippy Downs attends Sunshine Coast Health and Education Expo 2016

AEIOU Townsville attends Careers in Disability Expo in Townsville

AEIOU Foundation receives a \$1 million investment to construct a purpose-built Logan Autism Centre as part of the Federal Government's National Stronger Regions Fund

Launch of the AEIOU Foundation's new video series Autism: The Early Years

AEIOU Parent survey released

November

Thank you event for supporters

Toowoomba Centre manager Gemma Moore and AEIOU Chair James Morton host an exclusive information session for local paediatricians and psychologists

AEIOU attends Blair Disability Links event in Ipswich

December

Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Mascot Borobi meets star-struck fans at AEIOU Gold Coast

AEIOU Executive Assistant Hayley Hadfield appointed Company Secretary

AEIOU 20 Question parent survey released

AEIOU Research and Assessment Manager Dr Madonna Tucker attends Australian Society for Autism Research (ASFAR) Conference

AEIOU Townsville attends North Queensland Disability Conference 2016 (Townsville)

January 2017

NDIS stakeholder Kathryn Harris visits AEIOU Nathan

AEIOU launches 2017 comprehensive parent workshop calendar

February

AEIOU Foundation lodges submission in to the Productivity Commission's Review into the costs of the NDIS.

AEIOU Board/EMT Strategic Planning Day

March

Sod turning at AEIOU Brighton

Chain Reaction launch

AEIOU Parent Conference held at Griffith University

April

AEIOU General Manager Greg Johnson joins the team

Broncos visit children at Nathan Centre

Take A Hike Toowoomba

Inaugural meeting of the AEIOU Audit and Risk Committee

Appointment of NDIS Support Coordinator

AEIOU Gold Coast attends Kids Expo, Gold Coast

AEIOU Huntfield Heights attends Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expo, Adelaide

AEIOU employs an NDIS Support Coordinator to work with families

May

Chain Reaction ride from Sydney to Brisbane

AEIOU Gala Ball

Rotary Art Spectacular (beneficiary)

AEIOU Research and Innovation Group renamed from AEIOU Research Advisory Group

Board member Peter Kelly appointed as Deputy Chair

Human Services Quality Standards audit commenced

AEIOU Camira attends Marketplace NDIS Ipswich Expo

June

Lease signed on new central support office, bringing together Operations, Finance, Corporate Affairs, Human Resources, Fundraising, Research, and the Program Coordinators, with the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer

AEIOU launched the AEIOU Learning Centre which provides staff with easy access to online training modules specifically designed around AEIOU's programs

TAH Townsville - Sunday 11 June

Inaugural Let's Get Awesome for Autism day (Friday 16 June)

AEIOU Research Advisory Group renamed to Autism Research Innovation Committee

AEIOU passes the Workplace Gender Equality survey

AEIOU audited under the National Quality Services Framework

A close-up photograph of a young child with light blonde hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The child is wearing a blue t-shirt. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with a blue structure.

“Our journey with AEIOU may have just begun, but already we have achieved so many goals. The staff have helped us to realise we are not alone. We have support and are surrounded by people who understand what our family is going through. Because of all this, we are so confident about what the future holds for our son Bruce and based on his progress, can see him attending school next year.”

Elizabeth Asher, AEIOU parent

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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 Nicolaidis 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.

Ms Susan Rix Director



Susan is a chartered accountant and partner at BDO (Qld) Pty Ltd. She has more than 30 years' practice experience, specialising in business advisory services. During the past 20 years Susan has

served on a number of government owned corporation boards and statutory authorities and has extensive experience in governance and risk. Susan currently serves on a variety of committees, advisory boards, and boards in the not-for-profit sector.

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 was a Managing Director in the engineering sector and Regional Manager in the food industry before immigrating to Australia with his family in 2000.

He also held management roles at 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.

Greg Johnson General Manager



Reporting to the Board, Greg oversees AEIOU Foundation's Finance, Operations, Corporate Affairs and our People and Culture departments. He is responsible for the delivery of strategic goals

related to these areas and responding to the operational needs of the organisation.

A financial services professional with extensive experience in the corporate sector, Greg also has more than 10 years of Board experience in the Healthcare (not-for-profit) sector. Most recently, Greg was the Queensland Divisional Director at Macquarie Bank.

On a personal level, Greg is community-minded, being on the Board of the Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital Foundation and is a volunteer with the '139 Club', which provides meals for the 'at risk', among other community enterprises.

He is committed to supporting AEIOU Foundation's growth and development and is committed to ensuring every child enrolled at AEIOU both now and in the future receives excellence in therapy and care.

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 program, staffing and issues management. 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 more than ten years' experience in the not-for-profit and early childhood education and care sectors.

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.

Karen Descovich Fundraising Manager



Karen has more than 15-years' experience as a fundraising specialist in the children's disability sector. Prior to moving into the not-for-profit sector, Karen delivered events internationally for

a number of corporate organisations. She made the decision to bring her experience with events into an area where she felt she could make the biggest difference.

As the former AEIOU Events Manager, Karen has the skills to lead the fundraising team as we embrace the changes with...

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 more than a decade's 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 immigrating 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 has over 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.



AEIOU RESEARCH

Research and Assessment

The Research and Assessment Team is responsible for conducting assessments and undertaking research to increase knowledge in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). AEIOU Foundation is one of the few non-government organisations that has a dedicated research team with strong collaborations within the ASD field.

Assessment Outcomes

Assessments are an integral part of our practice at AEIOU. Assessments are conducted at intake to our centres, then at 12 monthly intervals, and when children exit AEIOU. In order to “capture progress” of the children, we conduct these standardised assessments. The Research and Assessment team conducts standardised assessments which have been designed to measure children’s abilities compared to children of a similar age. We conduct assessments to:

- provide an indication of children’s progress for comparison over time
- contribute to improving the AEIOU curriculum
- use child outcome data in research.

This year, our assessment team has had many changes. Dianna Lee was employed as our Assessment Co-ordinator replacing Sandra Lariviere, and Mira Levis Frenk and Ned Chandler-Mather were employed as Research Assistants conducting assessments and being involved in various research activities and projects. We have also had a number of volunteers join

our team, to gain experience in working with children with ASD and conducting research.

Research Outcomes

The AEIOU Research Advisory Group (RAG) rebranded to the Research and Innovation Committee (ARIC) in May 2017. ARIC is a scientific collaboration between AEIOU and individuals from external agencies who have expertise and interest in undertaking research in autism. It oversees and facilitates sustainable research that has the potential to provide benefit to children with autism and their families.

Members of ARIC in 2016 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
- Dr Wendi Beamish, Lecturer, Griffith University
- Dr Madonna Tucker, Research and Assessment Manager, AEIOU Foundation

We welcomed a new member to ARIC in 2017, Prof Christel Middeldorp, who has a conjoint appointment with the Child Health Research Centre (CHRC), UQ, and Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS), Children’s Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service (CHQ HHS). We also said goodbye to some longstanding ARIC members and thank them for their support of the AEIOU Foundation, and in particular, our research work over many years: Associate Professor Helen (Honey) Heussler and Dr Dixie Stantham.

This year, the group examined ten project applications, of which two were approved to be conducted within AEIOU and three were approved to be advertised within the organisation. The proposals covered a range of topics, such as *The Australian Autism Biobank Study*, *Supporting Best Practice in the Assessment and Treatment of Minimally Verbal Children with Autism*, and *Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD): What works in the classroom?*

Over the last year, ARIC has undertaken an examination of previous research undertaken at the Foundation. Over the past six years, AEIOU has been involved in 49 research projects. Of those, 32 have been directly conducted through AEIOU and 17 have been advertised through one of our centres. The research topics were analysed and a workshop held to ascertain future research priorities for AEIOU going forward. The following research priority areas were identified:

1. Evaluation of AEIOU curriculum
2. Transition to school projects: understanding specific child and family issues and matters related to prospective teachers and schools that a child is transitioning to.
3. School readiness research: Identifying and examining critical skills that are needed to enable a child to make a successful transition from an early intervention setting to a school setting.
4. Early intervention (EI) program essentials: e.g., level of intensity and type of EI program to deliver the best outcomes for children at different stages of their developmental trajectory.
5. Specific EI practices: Research that examines specific early intervention practices relevant to the delivery of the AEIOU curriculum.

It is very exciting for AEIOU Foundation to be deciding upon its own directions for future research within the field of ASD.

Research Project Involvement

Participation in various research projects shows how AEIOU is contributing to increasing Australia's knowledge of ASD:

- *National Diagnostic Guidelines for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)*. Presently, a diagnosis of autism is gained in different ways depending on the state of Australia you reside. The aim of this project is to gather a broad range of perspectives from around Australia, including families, professionals, service providers and more, to inform the development of a consistent guideline for diagnosing autism at a national level. The launch of the Guidelines is due in early 2018.
- *The Legal Regulation of Behaviour as a Disability*. This project is being completed by the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and investigates how Australian laws, regulations, and policies effect and respond to individuals with challenging behaviour, including those with Autism.

Adjunct Position with Griffith University

AEIOU has another official association with Griffith University as Dr Madonna Tucker has gained the position of Adjunct Senior Research Fellow in the Griffith Institute for Educational Research. This is a further valuable link between Griffith University and the AEIOU Foundation.

Department of Social Services (DSS) Funding

The Queensland Autism-Specific Early Learning and Care Centre (ASELCC) (i.e. for AEIOU, Nathan) is one of six federally government funded community based intervention centres providing specific support to children with ASD. DSS funded the following two research proposals this year:

- *Debunking, Autism Treatment Myths*. Paynter, J., Keen, D., Trembath, D., Fordyce, K., Joosten, A., DeBlasio, A., Hoppenbrouwers, G., Ecker, U., Imms, C., **Tucker, M.** \$229 462.74.
- *Supporting Best Practice in the Assessment and Treatment of Minimally Verbal Children*. Trembath, D., **Tucker, M.**, Hudry, K., Pye, K., Muckett, C., Fordyce, K., Hoppenbrouwers, G., DeBlasio, A., Webb, S., Joosten, A., Grove, R., Paynter, J., Westerveld, M., Mahler, N., Rose, V., Keen, D., Eapen, V., Reilly, S., Iacono, T., Dissanayake, C. \$232, 961.

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- *Supporting Best Practice in the Assessment and Treatment of Minimally Verbal Children*. Trembath, D., **Tucker, M.**, Hudry, K., Pye, K., Muckett, C., Fordyce, K., Hoppenbrouwers, G., DeBlasio, A., Webb, S., Joosten, A., Grove, R., Paynter, J., Westerveld, M., Mahler, N., Rose, V., Keen, D., Eapen, V., Reilly, S., Iacono, T., Dissanayake, C. \$232, 961.

Other Successful Grants

- *Novel Examination of spoken Language in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. School of Allied Health Sciences Strategic Research Grant. Trembath, D., Westerveld, M., Sulek, R., Rose, V., Paynter, J., **Tucker, M.**, Keen, D., Vivanti, G. \$15,000.

Collaborations

The Autism Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) conducts research across three programs: Program 1 (Diagnosis), Program 2 (Education) and Program 3 (Adulthood). AEIOU is currently involved in a number of projects across Program 1 and Program 2 including studies into ASD subtypes, longitudinal outcomes, transition, and diagnosis. These studies are progressing well and important findings with practical applications are emerging.

In May 2017, Dr Tucker attended the CRC's Research and Development Committee Meeting and was involved in the review of project applications, decisions around funding rounds, and updates on CRC milestones. Being part of this collaboration, allows AEIOU to provide input into the future direction of research in ASD.

The QUT School of Psychology and Counselling Enhanced Head of School Advisory Committee (EHOSAC) meetings were attended by Dr Tucker in October 2016 and in May 2017. This committee engages external government and non-government stakeholders with QUT staff and psychology students. Outcomes of this meeting include possible collaborative research projects and networking opportunities.

Publications

Eapen, V., Grove, R., Aylward, E, Joosten, A., Miller, S., Van Der Watt, G., Fordyce, K., Dissanayake, C., Maya, J., **Tucker, M.**, DeBlasio, A. (in press). Transition from early intervention program to primary school in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *World Journal of Clinical Pediatrics*.

Fulton, A., **Paynter, J.**, Trembath, D. (2017). Gender Comparisons in children with ASD entering early intervention. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 68, 27-34.

Paynter, J., Davies, M. & Beamish, W. (In Press). Recognising the "Forgotten Man": Fathers' experiences in caring for a young child with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*. doi:10.3109/13668250.2017.1293235.

Paynter, J., Ferguson, S., Fordyce, K., Joosten, A., Paku, S., Stephens, M., Trembath, D., & Keen, D. (2017). Utilisation of evidence-based practices by ASD early intervention service providers. *Autism*, 2, 167-180, doi: 10.1177/1362361316633032-

Taylor, L. J., Eapen, V., Mayberry, M. T., Midford, S., **Paynter, J.**, Quarmby, L., Smith, T., Williams, K., & Whitehouse, A. J. O. (2016). Diagnostic evaluation for autism spectrum disorder: A survey of health professionals in Australia. *BMJ Open*, 6, e012517. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2016-012517

Conference Attendances and Presentations

Dr Tucker attended The Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASFAR) Conference in Perth in December 2016. There were many informative presentations on topics such as genetics and ASD and early identification of ASD symptoms in very young children.

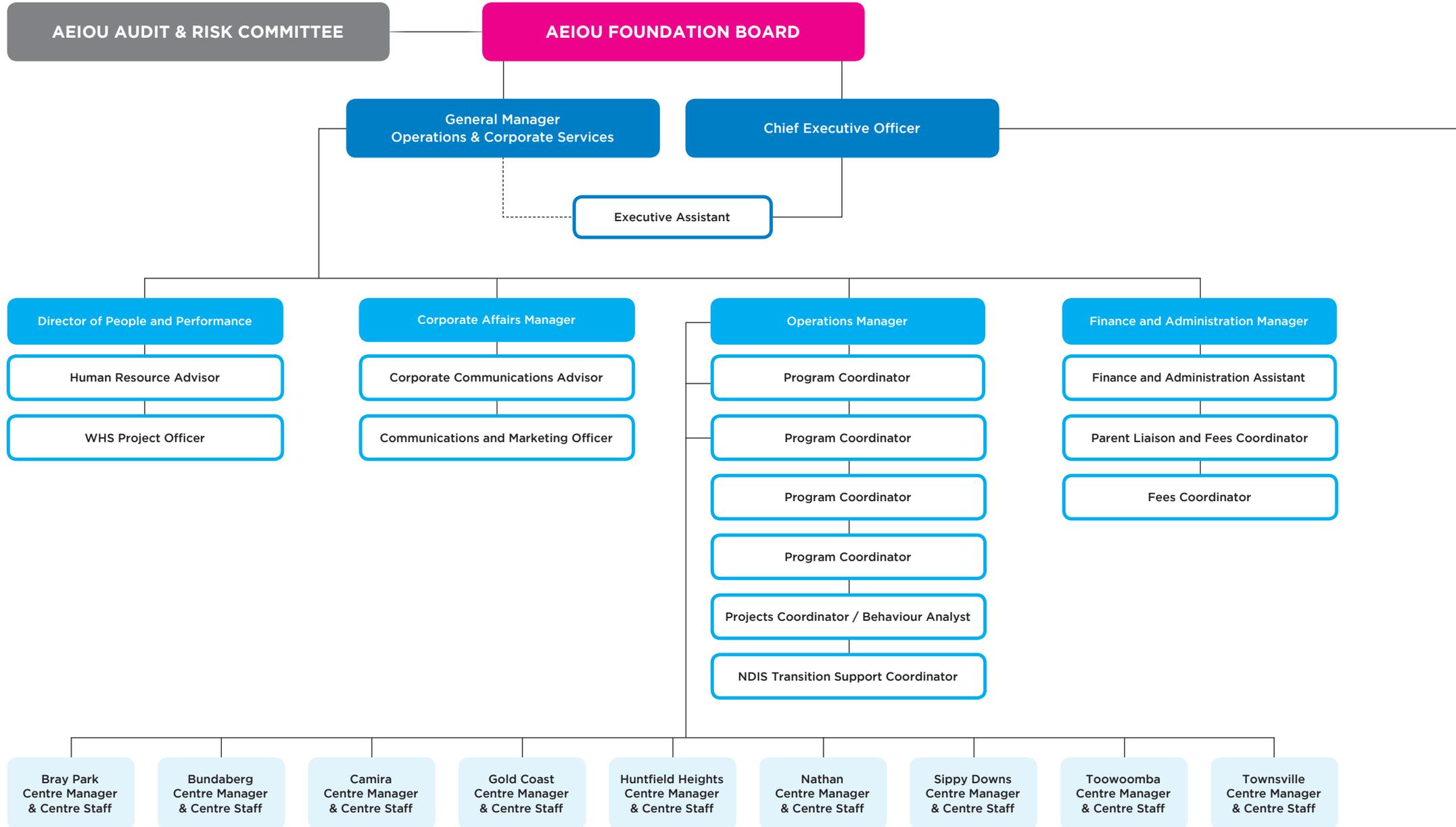
'The Autism CRC Participants Day' was also attended in accordance with the ASFAR conference. This was very worthwhile, as input was provided from AEIOU's perspective into the future strategic directions for autism research in Australia.

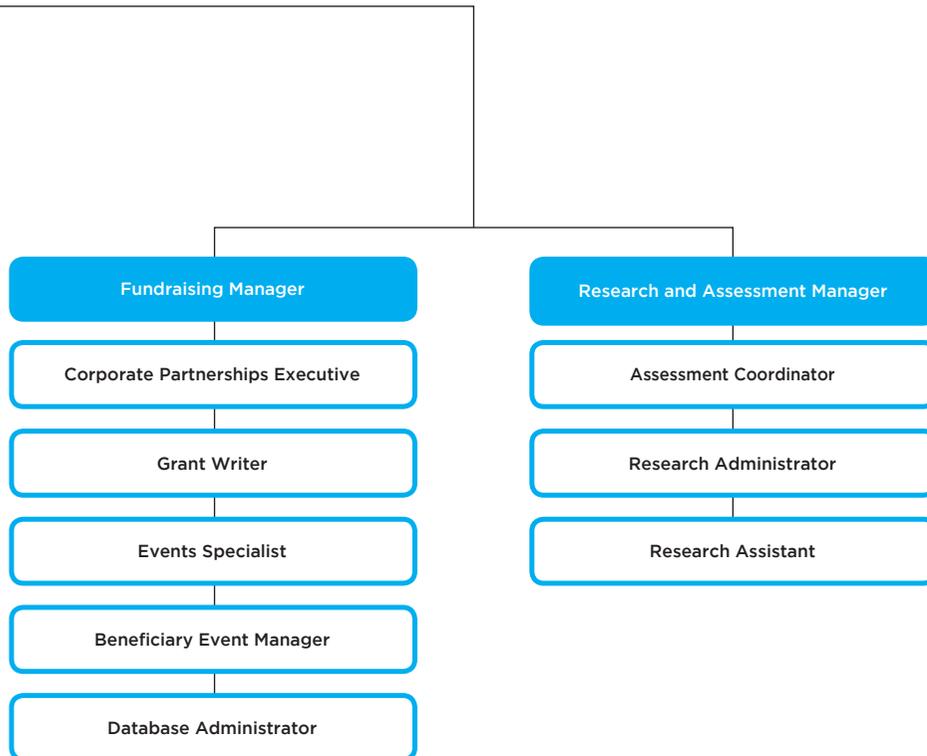
Dr Tucker presented at the AEIOU Parent Conference in February 2017, on the 'Significance of Research'.



“It is very exciting for the AEIOU Foundation to be deciding upon their own directions for future research within the field of ASD.”
Madonna Tucker, Research and Assessment Manager, AEIOU Foundation

AEIOU Organisational Chart





OUR CURRICULUM

The AEIOU Foundation autism-specific early intervention curriculum is designed to provide a framework for teaching every child the necessary skills to reach their full potential. With a commitment to best practice, we regularly monitor and review the curriculum to ensure it is built on high-quality evidence-based research which aligns with the Guidelines for Good Practice (Prior and Roberts, 2012).

The AEIOU curriculum addresses the guideline's 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 curriculum addresses the following skills:

- 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 that enables a child 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 being 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 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/hairdresser.
- 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.

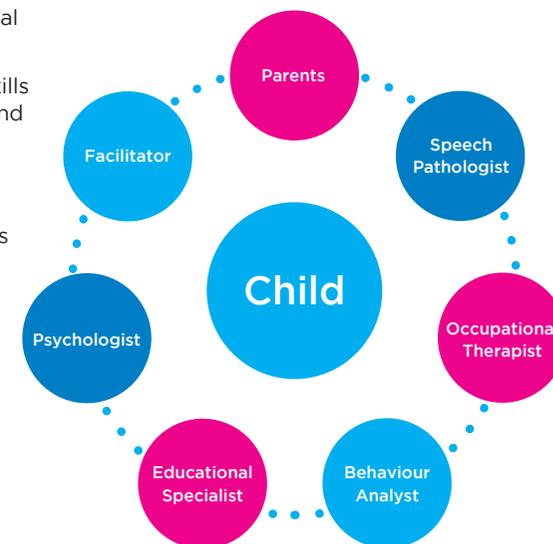
Data is collected and reviewed in all of these areas to demonstrate each child's progress and inform the individual strategies. A vital element in this review, is collaboration with the children's family to ensure goals are agreed.

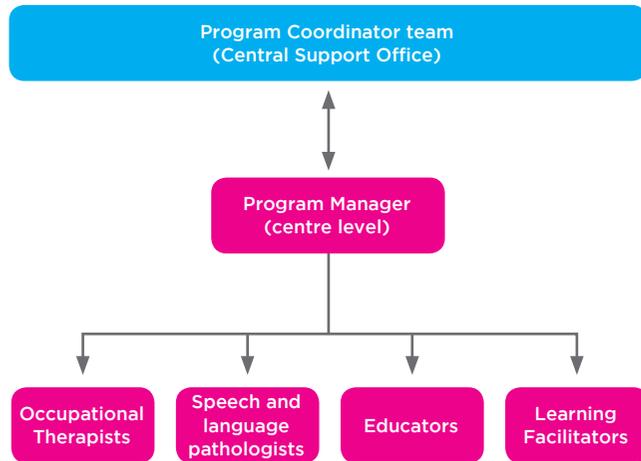
Implementing the curriculum

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 National Disability Insurance Agency in February 2016.

The transdisciplinary team includes Program Manager, Behavioural Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, educators and learning facilitators. All disciplines have input into each child's individual program.

Operationally, each centre's program manager is responsible for each child's individual program, with input provided by the centrally located program coordinator team.



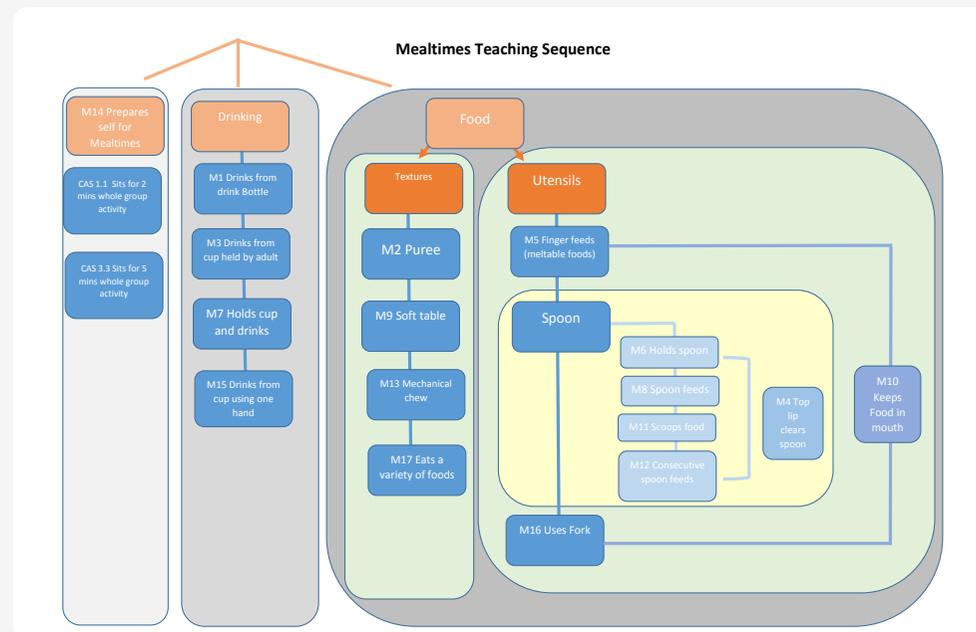


Curriculum Assessment

The AEIOU curriculum contains over 300 skills, which is a large number of skills to assess. This year, AEIOU developed the AEIOU Curriculum Assessment Booklet*, which is a tool designed to facilitate the transdisciplinary team in assessing each child's skills within each domain. The AEIOU Curriculum Assessment Booklet streamlines the assessment process and allows for the assessment to be conducted within a shorter time frame.

Teaching sequences diagrams

AEIOU has also developed a 'Teaching sequence booklet' which is a supplementary resource to the AEIOU curriculum, which provides information in a visual format for staff on the appropriate sequence to teach skills within the AEIOU curriculum.



OUR PEOPLE

In order to remain leaders in the delivery of early intervention it is important we accept and embrace change in our organisation. With the introduction of the NDIS, alongside the ongoing development of our AEIOU curriculum, we understand there is a real requirement to adapt and evolve, to remain at the forefront of what we do.

Fostering leadership

We remain focused on offering valuable and relevant professional development to the 122 full-time, 43 part-time, and 90 casual staff across the organisation. As part of this commitment, all centre and service managers were provided leadership training in 2017, to give them the knowledge and expertise to inspire their people to engage with AEIOU Foundation's mission and vision and move forward with our strategic plan.

Central and centre management staff also participated in professional development workshops to better prepare for the competitive NDIS environment our organisation now faces.

Embracing e-Learning

As part of AEIOU's commitment to delivering a quality, evidence-based program, we have launched an exciting eLearning initiative to enhance our staff's

professional development - the AEIOU Learning Centre. Funded with contributions from the Queensland State Government's Long Day Care Professional Development Fund, the AEIOU Learning Centre will benefit our service delivery in a number of ways. It will:

- Enhance understanding of how to apply evidence-based teaching strategies
- Support staff in teaching goals from the AEIOU Curriculum
- Provide opportunities for professional development for staff trying to upskill their knowledge in evidence-based practices, both within their own disciplines and within a trans-disciplinary model
- Improve our induction processes
- Allow us to track various mandatory refresher trainings in one, centralised location

The AEIOU Learning Centre features courses divided into the following areas:

- Curriculum - eLearning modules related directly to the implementation of our program. These courses include content related to the structure of our program and classrooms, how to apply evidence-based practices, and how to teach specific skills
- External Training - modules collated from external sources, such as government departments
- Induction - material that all staff are provided with when beginning employment at AEIOU

- Inservice - additional trainings provided to staff within our service, typically on a needs basis
- Mandatory & Refresher Training - courses that all staff are required to regularly update and review their knowledge in, such as information related to child protection
- Miscellaneous - modules that do not fit any of the other categories, including a series updating staff on the process behind the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Surveys - a way in which to gain feedback directly from staff
- Workplace Health & Safety - courses that keep staff up-to-date on their obligations regarding providing a safe workplace for clients, staff and stakeholders alike

While this project is ongoing, the uptake from staff so far has highlighted how in-demand the content is, and the benefit it will have on our service.

Providing resources

To enable all staff access professional development from their workplace, AEIOU has specifically allocated resources, including laptops and data projectors, to each centre. These have been set up in dedicated learning spaces.

Our volunteers

Every year, AEIOU Foundation is fortunate to be supported by individuals and companies who give their time and effort to volunteer.

As well as helping sell raffle tickets and assist participants at AEIOU and beneficiary fundraising events, they work in our centres, helping prepare learning materials and assisting with administration tasks.

AEIOU volunteers are all over the age of 16, hold a Blue Card, and assigned a 'buddy' to support them in their tasks.

We would like to give special mention to

- BDO
- Suncorp
- Griffith University
- QLD Volunteering



EMBRACING THE NDIS

Arguably, the biggest change AEIOU Foundation has undertaken operationally in 2016-17, is the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Townsville and Toowoomba.

Recognising this new funding model impacts our families as much as our organisation, we employed an NDIS Support Coordinator to work directly with parents who are navigating the system. The NDIS Support Coordinator liaises with the National Disability Insurance Agency to ensure we are working with the most up-to-date information, and assists families with the information they require to receive necessary and reasonable supports to access our early intervention program.

Families and members of the community were also provided access to a series of new workshops which provide information to assist families to access reasonable and necessary funding for our early intervention program. The workshops have been met with positive feedback and will continue to roll out as further centres move to the new funding model.

EMBRACING THE COMMUNITY

With centres across Queensland and in South Australia, AEIOU Foundation is informing communities through local media and awareness events.

All centres have been successful in attracting open-day attendance through local media coverage. There has also been coverage of centre events, including excursions and special visitors. A highlight was a visit by Commonwealth Games Mascot Borobi, who spent time with children in our Gold Coast Centre, leading to prime time exposure on Channel Nine.

We also received coverage for funding received for the Logan Centre, as well as the sod turning of our new Brighton Centre.

The launch of our new video series, Autism: The Early Years, was broadcast across AEIOU regions, as well as further afield.

In Bundaberg, we received television coverage for the roll out of the National disability Insurance Scheme, and how it impacts families of children with disabilities.

In the fundraising sector, all events including Take A Hike, Awesome for Autism and Chain Reaction were covered by the media.

Many centres have also participated in expos, including:

- North Queensland Disability Conference (Townsville)
- Sunshine Coast Child Health and Disability Expo (Sippy Downs centre)
- Carers Queensland Disability Conference (Toowoomba)
- Kyd-X Kids and Youth Disability Expo (Adelaide)
- Options Day (Bundaberg)
- Disability Links (Camira)
- Careers in Disability Expo (Townsville)
- Kids Expo (Gold Coast)
- Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expo (Adelaide)
- ABAA Conference (Program Coordinators, Melbourne)
- NDIS Ipswich Expo (Camira)
- Sunshine Coast University Market Days (Sippy Downs)

When Pauline Hanson spoke in parliament about children with autism in mainstream classrooms, media went into a frenzy.

We were proud to be given a voice in this debate with AEIOU Chairman Dr James Morton addressing the topic. The release of an AEIOU media statement resulted in James being featured in several news articles, interviewed on several radio programs, and appearing on ABC 24 Live TV.

Dr Morton's response brought the issues of a lack of investment in early intervention, underinvestment in teacher training and a lack of resources in schools, to the forefront. Our Facebook post attracted more interest and comment than any other post we have published.

"THANK YOU! So glad to see people are addressing the real issues, not just jumping on a hate band wagon!

"100% agree, good on Dr Morton for speaking common sense.

"I was listening & so pleased that I caught this interview. Thank you Dr Morton for putting the discussion into perspective."

"Congratulations James on a very well articulated response to focusing on what support students need to flourish. A coordinated holistic response that puts children above all other interests is what is required. I just hope the government is listening to your reasoning!!!"



CREATING AWARENESS AND RAISING FUNDS



For the fundraising department, the objective for 2016-2017 was not only to raise funds to support the growth and development of the AEIOU program, but to play an increasing role in raising awareness of AEIOU's early intervention program.

The fundraising team underwent great change in 2016/17. The resignation of Fundraising Director Jenni Heenan saw events manager Karen Descovich step into the role. Karen has built a team with broad expertise, focusing on all genre of supporters.

AEIOU is embraced as a charity of choice for many small and large philanthropists, building confidence that we are leaders in what we do.

Jurassic Jam 10 September 2016

Jurassic Jam 2 on September 10, was a sell-out event, seeing some of Brisbane's leading corporate identities return to the stage to support children with autism.

Our special thanks to everyone who attended and to our great volunteers who spread the word and sold raffle tickets for the best prize in town - the choice of one of the performing bands to play at a venue of choice! Congratulations to Graeme Wikman from BDO. Thank you to our auctioneer Ian Cuneo and to Mary-Jeanne Hutchinson for the incredible auction prizes sourced.

A very special thank you to John Wilson, APH, and Mary-Jeanne and Scott Hutchinson for once again being the driving force in one of Brisbane's best musical venues, The Triffid.

The roof of the Triffid rose that night and so did the total raised - \$50,000!

Rotary Art Spectacular 15-19 May 2017

The 2017 Brisbane Rotary Art Spectacular, regarded as one of Queensland's most prestigious annual art exhibitions, made AEIOU Foundation its major beneficiary for the fourth consecutive year.

Hosted by the combined Rotary clubs of Brisbane High-Rise, Hamilton and Stones Corner, this year's event was held at the stunning Central Plaza One, in Brisbane's central business district. More than 400 guests enjoyed Craggy Range Wines, canapés from Bar Pacino and entertainment aplenty, including a spectacular opening by Brazilian dancers. Award winning and internationally renowned painter and cartoonist Brett Lethbridge returned in 2016 as curator, once again delivering a first-class exhibition.

This year's event raised \$30,000 and we are proud to announce that the Rotary Art Spectacular has named AEIOU Foundation as its major beneficiary for 2018.

Take A Hike Series

Take A Hike has been 'run' again in Brisbane 2016 and both Toowoomba and Townsville in 2017.

Last year's Take A Hike Brisbane saw a record number of attendees with 660 participants.

On Sunday 23 April in Toowoomba approximately 200 people enjoyed a beautiful autumn morning either running, jogging or walking around the lovely streets of Toowoomba. Lions Club Wilsontin again provided a sausage sizzle in Queen's Park.

The Townville Esplanade offered the perfect track for the 42km, 21km and 10.5km distances on Sunday 11 June with 80 people taking part.



Chain Reaction

This year's Chain Reaction Corporate Bike Challenge exceeded expectations and raised an incredible \$1,115,000, of which \$376,000 was donated to AEIOU as a major beneficiary. This is a great boost to the funds required to construct our Logan Centre, which is planned to open in 2018. A big thank you to all at Chain Reaction Foundation and the 49 riders for their efforts on the ride and for their fundraising.

“Love kids, love family, love it all. To help those less fortunate than ourselves, we just need to keep riding and raising money for the kids.”
Peter O’Keeffe, 2016 and 2017 Chain Reaction rider



AEIOU Gala Dinner

On Saturday 13 May, A Gala Night with the Stars at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre was held and hosted by AEIOU Ambassador Ian Skippen. Attendees included the Hon Cameron Dick and Jane Prentice and the event was well enjoyed by sponsors, supporters and guests. AEIOU parent Elaine Dionysius shared her personal story about son William, touching on his diagnosis and how attending our Camira centre has ensured William is a “very happy little boy”. Through live and silent auctions and raffles, we raised over \$135,000.

Let's Get Awesome for Autism

This year, we were pleased to launch our Let's get awesome for autism campaign! We asked corporates and schools to show their support by raising awareness of AEIOU and autism and helping raise money for the AEIOU program. Funds generated from this national fundraising initiative are vital for us to expand our reach of this important early intervention service to more children with autism across Australia. We have big plans for Let's Get Awesome for Autism in 2018.



A family story



“AEIOU GAVE OUR DAUGHTER HER VOICE” – *The Cornish Family*

Autism is undoubtedly the biggest life change we, as a family, have ever experienced. It has changed our views on how we look at life and what is important. Living with autism is very much a day-by-day process and each day can differ from the last. However, our time at AEIOU has gifted us the ability to communicate with our daughter Ivy and to give her the help she wants and needs.

As parents, all we wanted was to hear the words “Mum and Dad”. Now we hear these words, and hundreds more, on a daily basis. We credit AEIOU for giving Ivy her voice and we will be eternally grateful.

We had an inkling Ivy might have autism when the speech pathologist providing therapy at the time realised she did not have the tools to assist her progress. Ivy was referred for assessment and it was then we heard the word autism spoken in relation to our child for the first time. It’s a day we will never forget.

We worried for the challenges Ivy was going to face and the unknown of what the future held for her. Would she ever talk? Would she ever get a job? Would she be bullied? What if she never falls in love? Could we have done something differently? These thoughts, along with many others, ran through our heads; it was a whirlwind for both my husband and I.

Once we received Ivy’s diagnosis, we found a speech pathologist who had experience working with children with autism and started seeing an occupational therapist privately. We soon realised Ivy needed more support and so we researched providers specialising in autism and quickly came across AEIOU. The thought of putting our child into someone else’s care was frightening, even more so for a child with special

needs. But, we were also clutching at straws trying to get the best help possible. Looking back, the number one piece of advice we would pass on to other families – go in with an open mind!

When Ivy first started at AEIOU in Adelaide, she was non-verbal, not toilet trained and could not sit in one place for more than a few seconds. She is very much a sensory seeker and would constantly be on her head or seeking sensory input to calm her. She did not make eye contact and would hit herself or scream due to being unable to communicate. I admit, the first few weeks were very difficult, as Ivy didn’t like being separated from us. It was the unknown for both her and for us as her parents.

Over the past two years, AEIOU has exceeded our expectations by far and has given Ivy opportunities we never thought would happen. Without fail, her speech and communication progress has been the biggest achievement to date. She can now count, sing songs, say her ABCs, ask for items, and the list goes on. Her vocabulary is changing and improving on a daily basis and it is surreal to watch.

AEIOU has also helped Ivy with toileting, brought out her cheeky and happy personality, taught her self-help and independence skills, cultivated a willingness to learn, developed increased attention to stick to a task, and helped her begin to understand emotions.

Ivy is a very determined personality and we are very optimistic for her future. She has an eagerness to learn and we are excited to say she will be heading off to mainstream school in 2018. We truly believe anything is possible and we credit AEIOU for helping Ivy in her journey.

By Casey Cornish



SUPPORTERS

Corporate Partners



Community/Trusts/Foundation

- Coopers Brewery Foundation
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust
- The Bryan Foundation
- Duke Family Foundation
- Queensland Community Foundation
- Bennelong Foundation
- Easternwell
- The Flannery Foundation
- Whitehouse Foundation
- Perpetual
- E Robert and Alison L Hayles Charitable Trust

Private Philanthropists/supporters

- Jane & Rob Francis
- Beverley Power
- Dr Ross Forgan Smith
- Dr James & Louise Morton
- Dr Beverly Rowbotham
- Brazil Family Foundation
- Scott & Mary-Jeanne Hutchinson
- Hazel Orton
- Terry & Mary Peabody
- Michael and Ann Williams
- Team Jacob/Steve Williams
- Freedom Bathrooms Kitchens Renovations
- Lagos Cold Stores

Ambassadors



Alex Perry



Corey Parker



Ian Skippen



Tim Sharp



Lee Holdsworth

QUEENSLAND PELOTON INSPIRED TO RIDE FOR YOUNG FUTURES

When 50 Chain Reaction Queensland Challenge riders arrived in Brisbane on 5 May, their spirits were buoyed by the proud faces of the children and families they fundraised so tirelessly for.

After enduring 1000km from Sydney to Brisbane over the course of seven days, the riders were surprised with a welcoming party to celebrate their achievement, reaching their \$1 million fundraising goal.

Among those present were representatives from major charity beneficiaries AEIOU Foundation and Ronald McDonald House South East Queensland.

Chain Reaction Queensland Chair Michael Byrom said: "It doesn't matter if it's your first ride or if you're a veteran with this event - nothing beats meeting the families we're supportingd.

"The challenge of the ride itself is no easy feat. Neither are fundraising efforts which take place in the months prior, with the riders achieving their \$1 million target on the ride.

"Each rider is passionate about supporting children's charities which secure young futures, especially charities which also provide much needed support for the families who carry an enormous load day-in-day-out for the most special people in their lives."

About Chain Reaction: The Chain Reaction Challenge Queensland 2017 was the seventh since the Foundation was founded in 2007. Chain Reaction has raised close to \$19 million for children's charities since the first event, and conducts rides across Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria each year.



"The thought of challenging myself ,getting out of my comfort zone and being able to play a small part in helping autistic children and their families has been my inspiration. I'm very humbled to be asked to be a team AEIOU member, captained by my good friend Dr James Morton who has devoted endless time and energy to AEIOU."
David Chiang, Chain Reaction 2017 rider

Centre fundraising

Each year, AEIOU families donate time and effort to support local activities at their centres. Their endeavours, which include trivia nights, Bunnings barbecues, lunches, morning teas, book drives, chocolate drives, raffles and more.

With their commitment to secure the best outcomes for their children in the early years, AEIOU families are authentic ambassadors for our program. Their fundraising efforts not only secure extra classroom resources, but are a bonding activity for parents who share a common journey.

We are also very proud of the centre staff who assist, support and inspire our parent's fundraising activities, going outside their roles to promote AEIOU Foundation and

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 Mortons, 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, Jayne 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 2016-17 the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund assisted 14 families, bequeathing more than \$22,500.



A family story



“EARLY INTERVENTION GIFTED US OUR FIRST FAMILY HOLIDAY” – *The Mizzi family*

Our journey with AEIOU has taken us from helplessly watching our son have daily multiple meltdowns to a successful first camping trip as a family. We love the outdoors but even one night away with Sam and our daughter was something we'd never thought would be possible before AEIOU. It's amazing to think how far our family has come through early intervention.

Sam was always an unsettled baby, but from around 12 months, he screamed most of the time and was very hard to settle. He never slept well and watching the TV was the only thing he would engage in. My younger brother has mild Asperger's, so I was a little more open to the idea Sam had autism, but it was more difficult for my husband Steve to come to terms with.

When we received a diagnosis, I felt relief as I knew it meant we could start getting more help.

We looked into so many different options in Bundaberg, but found AEIOU was suited to our needs as their complete focus was on children with autism. At that point, Sam was so out of control he was making himself sick with all the screaming. We were spending a fortune on occupational and speech therapy, making it a major relief when he started AEIOU in 2016 aged two and a half.

When we first started, Sam hated us leaving of a morning so much he screamed the place down for about a month before he settled. It was very difficult, but looking back the progress we have made is just amazing.

Sam's communication has always been our biggest challenge and AEIOU has turned it into his greatest improvement. He can communicate most of his needs verbally now, such as 'wee wee' for toilet, 'issue' for tissue and 'drink'. The staff have shown Sam he can communicate with us without needing to scream.

He is a very smart boy and once he figures out he can communicate verbally, I think we will be in lots of trouble!

The Bundaberg team has taught us so many valuable skills about how to deal with Sam to make life easier for everyone. We can go out in public, to a friend's house or to the beach without worrying about what might happen. Sam is now toilet trained, a skill he picked up fairly quickly, thanks to AEIOU's effective methods.

AEIOU has given us hope for Sam's future. He has changed so much since starting last year and we're always receiving comments on it. It's the best decision we ever made.

To future AEIOU parents, I would say, as hard as it is in the beginning and those bad days that never seem to end, never stop believing or thinking your child is special. He or she will go beyond your expectations to achieve the impossible. It is also crucial to always listen to the advice your teachers and therapists give you and trust your instincts. Together you will achieve more than you can imagine.

By Amber Mizzi



SUMMARY FINANCIALS

Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2017		2017	2016
	Note	\$	\$
Revenue	3	11,808,178	11,316,138
Other revenue	3	2,008,909	1,949,198
Employee benefits expense		(10,606,750)	(9,971,211)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(414,425)	(440,466)
Classroom and education		(64,443)	(81,878)
Event costs		(293,666)	(217,151)
Professional service fees		(202,542)	(246,195)
Motor vehicle expenses		(36,529)	(36,592)
Printing and stationery expense		(105,837)	(125,993)
Occupancy expense		(296,330)	(265,075)
Repairs, maintenance and cleaning expenses		(321,937)	(362,841)
Telecommunications expense		(148,047)	(131,735)
Travel expense		(61,057)	(63,624)
Insurance expense		(140,043)	(138,498)
Other expenses		(752,172)	(649,887)
Finance costs		(402)	(716)
Surplus for the year		372,907	533,474
Other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to surplus/deficit			
Net fair value movements for revaluation of non-current assets	8(b)	821,297	-
Other comprehensive income for the year		821,297	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		1,194,204	533,474

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2017	Note	2017 \$	2016* \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	2,084,816	1,764,804
Trade and other receivables	6	355,434	361,301
Other assets	7	160,509	114,080
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		2,600,759	2,240,185
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	8	10,839,512	9,448,401
Intangible assets	9	23,306	38,091
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		10,862,818	9,486,492
TOTAL ASSETS		13,463,577	11,726,677
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	10	893,112	446,384
Other liabilities	11	233,958	191,438
Employee benefits	12	400,753	349,941
Borrowings	13	7,899	7,851
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,535,722	995,614
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Employee benefits	12	197,161	190,778
Borrowings	13	15,022	18,817
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		212,183	209,595
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,747,905	1,205,209
NET ASSETS		11,715,672	10,521,468
EQUITY			
Reserves	14	5,114,061	4,473,181
Retained surplus		6,601,611	6,048,287
TOTAL EQUITY		11,715,672	10,521,468

* Comparative figures have been restated. Refer to Note 19 for further details.



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