



deiou
FOUNDATION
for children with autism

Annual Report

2018-2019 | AEIOU Foundation

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Welcome to AEIOU Foundation

Together,
we stand

aeiou
FOUNDATION
children w

Every person with autism is unique. At AEIOU, we embrace what makes us different as well as what makes us all the same. Autism is a lifelong journey and our team is committed to creating a safe, supportive environment for children and their families to grow and develop in the early years.

Established in 2005, AEIOU's headquarters are in Brisbane, Queensland. We operate 10 centres, with nine in Queensland and one in South Australia.

“The best thing we ever did for our son was to move to Queensland and get him into AEIOU. Both the staff and management are marvellous.”
Lauren Deuble (Bray Park)

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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 10th annual report submitted by AEIOU Foundation, documenting AEIOU's financial, operational and community performance for the financial year ending 30 June 2019. Feedback is welcome and can be emailed to info@aeiou.org.au.

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, there are generally 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 Australian Guidelines for Good Practice (2012), will provide children with the best opportunity to reach their full potential.



About autism and early intervention

1 in 100
Australians are
diagnosed with autism



*The Open Paediatric
Medicine Journal 2012

Autism affects
4 boys to every
1 girl



Research has
shown that due to
the nature of human
brain plasticity, the
earlier the intervention,
the larger the impact
(Hadders-Algra, 2011).

It is common
for people with
autism to have other
medical conditions,
including
but not limited to
asthma, epilepsy
and cognitive
impairments.

By investing in
early intervention,
it is more likely a child
will grow up to live with
greater independence,
obtain employment,
and experience
inclusion within the
community.

About AEIOU

AEIOU provided supports to **254** children aged 2 to 6 throughout this financial year.

AEIOU operates **10** early intervention centres, including: Bray Park, Bundaberg, Camira, Gold Coast, Logan, Nathan, Sippy Downs, Toowoomba, Townsville, and Brighton (SA).

AEIOU delivers early intervention to children diagnosed with **Level 2** and **Level 3** autism.

AEIOU employs **175** permanent staff members.

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

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 collaborative, 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.








We believe children

- Have a right to early intervention
- Benefit from therapy 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
- Benefit from families and staff working together

Message

from the Chair

At AEIOU, we always have our eye on the future. It's our business to care about the lifelong potential of every child who accesses early intervention at AEIOU, and I know the passion each team member brings to deliver the best therapy and support they can.

It is without question the NDIS has caused a level of disruption in the disability sector, and AEIOU is not immune to this. However, change is not an enemy. Last year in my report, I discussed the rollout of the NDIS and the inevitable challenges, but more importantly, the opportunities to be harnessed.

We set a course with priorities that would:

- ensure the business is financially sustainable
- offer greater value to the families at AEIOU
- reach more children and their families
- ensure AEIOU is at the forefront of innovation

As a profit-for-purpose organisation, this year's revenue affords us numerous prospects. We know the changing sector has placed pressure on staff, and additional training and support is a core priority for the next year. We are also investing in research that will support children both locally and regionally. A plan is underway to introduce a trial utilising robotics in our service, which will be managed by our Research and Assessment Team. I am very excited about the current research into the use of robots in early intervention, and to be at the forefront of this at AEIOU. We also plan to introduce telehealth systems to reach and support families or service providers in their respective homes or services, particularly those in rural or remote areas.

AEIOU's new centre in Bald Hills, made possible with \$4.5 million in funding from the Australian Government, will open in January 2020. This centre will be the base for the early implementation of our refreshed commitment to research, community outreach, training and support, with technology inbuilt to support all of these goals and more.

As I reflect on the year and look ahead to 2019-2020, I'd like to thank AEIOU's Directors, Executive Management Team, and each staff member in our service for their commitment to AEIOU's mission and vision. I also thank our supporters and importantly, the families who choose AEIOU to share the early years of their autism journey.

Susan Rix, AM
AEIOU Foundation Chair



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

It's been a strong year for AEIOU Foundation, with a focus on advocacy, research and client care.

We work around the clock to ensure families can access the reasonable and necessary supports for their children and advocate at every level of government for a system that works for the most vulnerable people in our community: children.

We have maintained our vision to deliver high-quality early intervention in an increasingly competitive world, and faced challenges including increased demands on our staff and thin markets in recruitment. We are looking ahead and considering how we can diversify our service to ensure we have options that give families more choice. We are also on a steady path of considered growth, reducing waitlists and widening the scope for training and support both locally and regionally.

This financial year we opened our Logan centre and commenced construction on our new centre in Bald Hills, which will open in January 2020. We also began works on a new classroom to expand our service in Bundaberg.

There is continued commitment to Research and Assessment, with this department gathering momentum on a number of projects and collaborating with local and international partners. This is in addition to maintaining a rigorous assessment program within our service, which helps to identify the needs of children, their gains and how we are tracking overall.

Autism is lifelong, and at AEIOU our people embrace what makes each of the children in our service unique and the qualities they have which can enrich our community now and into the future.

What we do is support children to develop independent living skills, communication skills and the prerequisite skills to support their access to education. What we do not do is try to 'fix' autism. The places our children will go will amaze you.

I'd like to thank our supporters who share our focus on each child's future. Leading AEIOU through this period of both growth and change is a privilege. I do this alongside General Manager Greg Johnson who I thank.

I also acknowledge AEIOU's Board of Directors, our Executive Management Team, and every staff member who brings their best self to work each day for the children we support. It's not an easy job, but it's a great job.

Alan Smith
CEO



Key priorities from the *year*

Innovation:

digitising our curriculum to better manage data collection and analysis, as well as real-time engagement with families



Advocacy:

working with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) along with state and federal government to improve the pathway to services for children with autism

Service expansion:

opening our Logan centre, working on a new classroom in Bundaberg, and starting construction on our new Bald Hills service



Improving our systems:

simplifying our enrolment process, preparing for the first NDIS Audit



Providing increased opportunities:

for training, for both staff and families



On the *horizon*

15 years of operation for AEIOU

Bald Hills centre opening

Development of a service in Canberra

Advocacy, and collaboration with NDIA partners in the sector

Workforce development, with a strong focus on training and wellbeing

Toowoomba centre upgrade

“The staff at AEIOU are amazing to say the least. We have not come across a more dedicated, passionate, enthusiastic and professional team of people. When I reflect, my fondest memories are of the staff who were like family to us; they supported us through our journey, reassured us when things seemed hard, and matched our enthusiasm when we celebrated successes.”

Maria Adebiyi (Nathan)



“We’re not fixing autism, and we don’t want to fix autism. There are lots of unique features about autism that mean these children could be very, very special in what they achieve later on. But we have to give them the skills to overcome the disabling aspects of autism, and that’s what our people do so wonderfully.”

Dr James Morton AM, Founder and Patron.

The year that

Our people



This year proved one of our most challenging, with the rollout of the NDIS affecting the reporting and administrative requirements for staff, and recruitment across a range of fields, including Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology.

We introduced additional supports to focus on training, development and recognition for outstanding performance.

This year we launched a **Reward and Recognition Program**. Quarterly winners receive a \$250 Visa card, a certificate signed by AEIOU's Chair, and a profile in the staff newsletter. The Employee of the Year will receive a \$1,000 travel voucher.

We also launched a **Staff Referral Program**, to encourage staff to refer outstanding and suitably qualified people as candidates for vacancies within AEIOU.

With a long-term plan to provide additional personal and professional development opportunities, we introduced leadership profiling, with 360 appraisals and culture surveys to assist with annual performance appraisal program and tailored professional and personal development for each leader.

Centre Management and Program Coordinator teams also accessed a two-day workshop to support skill development across topics including Emotional Intelligence, Industrial Relations, Resilience, Critical Leadership and Team Dynamics. Guest speaker was Dr Glenn Gardener, Director Maternal Fetal Medicine at Mater Mothers' Hospital, who spoke to the team about leading in an environment that is high in complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity.

We were also successful in acquiring a Transition Assistance Funding Grant - Boosting the Local Care Workforce. The grant, worth \$20,000, will assist AEIOU to boost capacity and capability as disability providers.

“AEIOU was a family. We became the greatest support network to each other and still stay in contact to this day.”

Yasmeen Shakoor (one of AEIOU's original families)

was

“The best things about working at AEIOU include the connection we develop with the children and families we support, the close bonds we develop with our teammates and the opportunity to learn skills and implement therapy from other disciplines.”

Paige, Senior Occupational Therapist.



Community engagement

AEIOU represented at **13** expos

More than **200** community professionals attended "supporting children with autism" workshops in Townsville and Ipswich



AEIOU hosted **105** workshops exclusively for parents

AEIOU centres opened their doors on **40** occasions for Open Day events

A snapshot on intake

Each year, we conduct thorough intake assessments, which give us vital data to create a better picture of our demographic, and help us form the foundations of each child's day-to-day therapy goals:



2.4 years - The average age of AEIOU children at time of diagnosis

45% of our cohort were three years old at time of intake

51.8% of children with diagnoses at Level 2, and

48.2% at Level 3

55% of our children were not yet toilet trained when they started with AEIOU

Almost **25%** of our children had a co-diagnosis, the most common being Global Developmental Delay (GDD)

Our families came from **21** different countries, including India, Pakistan, New Zealand, China and England

Across our service

254 children enrolled in AEIOU centres during the financial year

6 sets of twins and **1** set of triplets enrolled into service

243,840 hours of group therapy delivered in the year

150 parents assisted to transition from Department of Communities block funding to NDIS funded supports from our Gold Coast, Logan, Bray Park, Camira and Sippy Downs centres

48 new places created in Logan region by opening our new service in August 2018

60 families provided with fee relief to support their attendance

193 children transitioned on to their next education setting throughout the financial year



Fundraising milestones

35 new iPads gifted to centres through grants

1 new water tank installed thanks to community funding

The cost of **45** excursions, part of our Community and Family Connect Program, covered by generous philanthropic funding

5 new shade sails installed at centres thanks to generous grant funding across Queensland

Over **650** hikers pounded the pavement at Take A Hike events

\$42,000 received from trusts and foundations to supply educational toys and resources across Qld centres

Over **120** volunteers supported AEIOU in the centres through fundraising events





Logan centre opening



Chain Reaction Women's 300



Take A Hike Brisbane



Brisbane Broncos visit the children

Champions Challenge (\$100,000)

Commonwealth Bank awards
AEIOU Centenary (\$10,000)

Three new Directors welcomed to
AEIOU Board

AEIOU named as a beneficiary charity
at Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers

AEIOU publishes NDIS Planning Guide

Return-It partnership
announced

July 2018

September 2018

November 2018

August 2018

Logan centre opening

WANTZ Gala

October 2018

Chain Reaction Women's 300

Take A Hike Brisbane

AEIOU represented at 2018 Adelaide
KYD-X Kids & Youth Disability Expo

Coronis Golf Day (raising \$19,000)

Jurassic Jam event (raising \$40,000)

December 2018

Lord Mayor's Charitable
Trust donation to AEIOU
Nathan's Christmas party

Long-time supporters the
Brisbane Broncos visit the
children at Nathan

Year in review



Bald Hills sod-turning



What I Wish I Knew movie premiere



Autism Awareness Month Family Fun Day

Let's Get Awesome for Autism schools/business day

CEO Alan Smith celebrates 10 years with AEIOU

AEIOU Research Manager and Head of Clinical Delivery present at international autism conference in Thailand

AEIOU launches Parent Webinar Series

Regional Disability Expo - Townsville

AEIOU welcomes 110 new children across 10 services

January 2019

Take A Hike Toowoomba

Chain Reaction 7-day challenge

March 2019

May 2019

February 2019

Bald Hills sod-turning

AEIOU supports Townsville staff after extreme weather event

April 2019

What I Wish I Knew movie premiere with Autism Queensland

Autism Awareness Month Family Fun Day

AEIOU Camira Community Workshop: Springfield Lakes

Construction commences on new classroom in Bundaberg

June 2019

Raise the Roof Gala Ball

Where Are They Now? video released

Long-time AEIOU supporter Scott Hutchinson is named QCF's Corporate Philanthropist of the Year (nominated by AEIOU)

Brisbane Broncos visited AEIOU Logan

Developments in *research*

Our presentations

1. Preliminary Evaluation of the literature regarding educational outcomes for girls with autism: Case study plus practical tips for working with autistic girls. Presentation for Autism in Education Conference 2018, Brisbane, August.
2. AutisticThai Foundation (Autism Parents Association in Thailand) as part of the World Autism Day campaign. AEIOU's representatives were two of five international speakers, who presented on "autism-specific early intervention" and participated in a panel on "Education System at Service Center Level".
3. Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC) in Singapore in June 20-22 2019. Title: First concerns: How do parents first perceive that their child is showing signs of autism?
4. 3rd Infants and Toddlers Conference, July 19th-20th Sydney NSW. Title: *Understanding early intervention for young children with autism.*

Grants received

1. "Parental perspectives on early intervention services for children with autism", received from The Collier Charitable Fund in conjunction with Macquarie University and QUT.
2. ARC Linkage grant: "*Improving academic outcomes by moderating anxiousness in autism*" submitted by Chief Investigators Professor Deborah Keen, Dr Dawn Adams, Professor Ronald Rapee, Dr Kathryn Simpson along with Partner Investigators, Dr Jacqueline Rodgers from University of Newcastle on Tyne (UK) and Dr Madonna Tucker from the AEIOU Foundation.

Research collaborations

1. Autism Centre of Excellence and Autism CRC funded *Longitudinal Study of Students with Autism (LASA) Project*: AEIOU is a member of the research team for this project and provides ongoing support.
2. Autism CRC: AEIOU is an Essential Participant of the CRC and Dr Tucker sits on the Research and Development Committee. Dr Tucker co-supervises a PHD student on *Models of Practice to support the transition of students with ASD into and between Early and Middle Years classrooms.*
3. Collaboration with Department of Social Services for: Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centres (ASELCC) and two projects in particular: *Supporting Best Practice in the Assessment and Treatment of Minimally Verbal Children*, and *Debunking Autism Treatment Myths.*

Published research

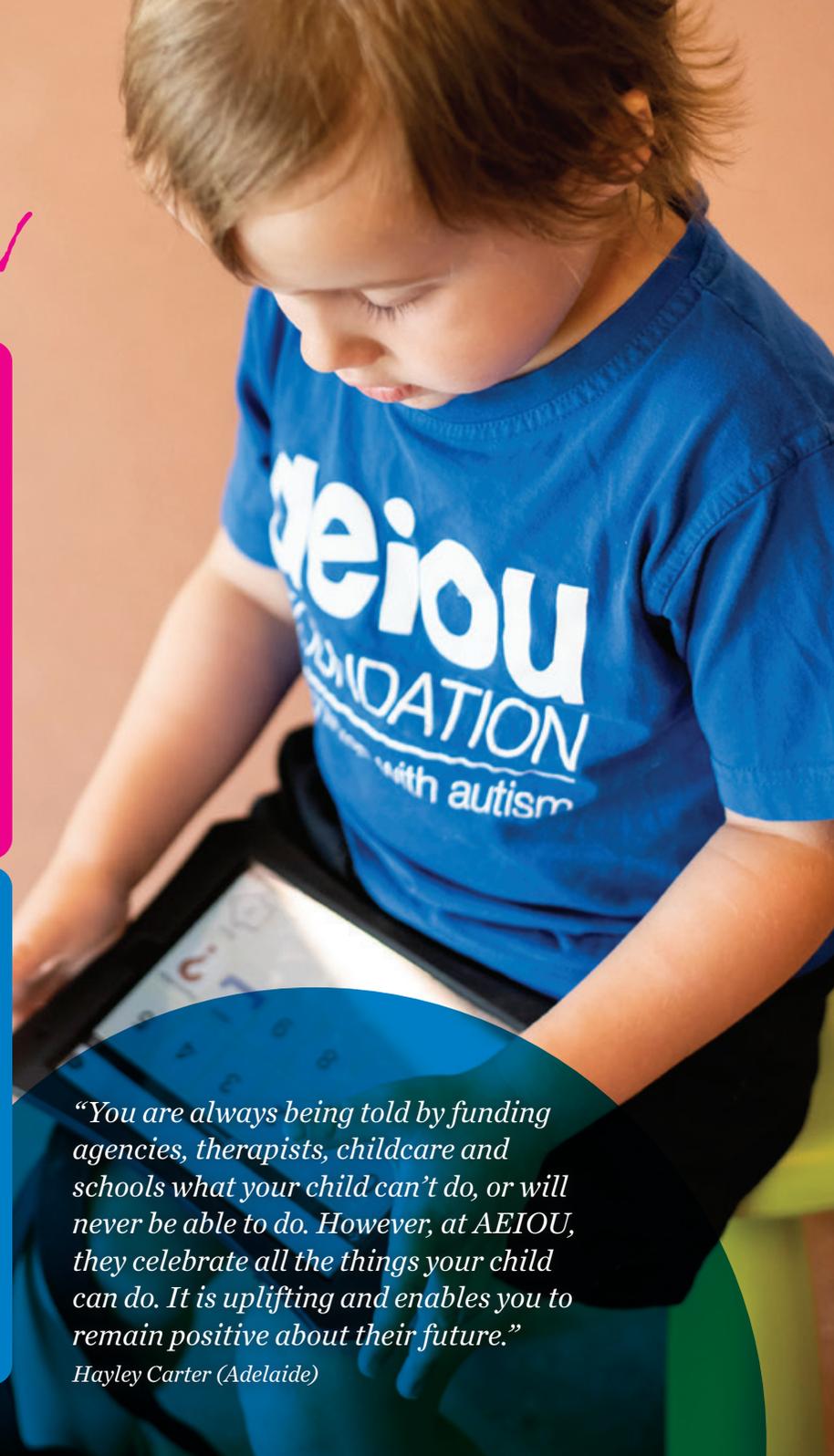
Profiles of Vocalization Change in Children with Autism receiving Early Intervention, *Autism Research*, 00: 1-13. DOI:10.1002/aur.2075. Trembath, D., Westerveld, M., Teppala, S., Thirumanickam, A., Sulek, R., Rose, V., **Tucker, M.**, Paynter, J., Hetzroni, O., Vivanti, G., & Keen, D. (2019).

Evaluation of a template for countering misinformation—Real-world Autism treatment myth debunking, *Plos One*, 4(1), e0210746. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0210746. Paynter, J., Luskin-Saxby, S., Keen, D., Fordyce, K., Frost, G., Imms, C., Miller, S., Trembath, D., **Tucker, M.**, & Ecker U. (2019).

Designing a Model of Practice for Australian Teachers of Young School-age Children on the Autism Spectrum. *Journal of International Special Needs Education*. <https://jisne.org/doi/pdf/10.9782/18-00017>. Taylor, A., Beamish, W., Paynter, J., & **Tucker, M.** (2019).

"You are always being told by funding agencies, therapists, childcare and schools what your child can't do, or will never be able to do. However, at AEIOU, they celebrate all the things your child can do. It is uplifting and enables you to remain positive about their future."

Hayley Carter (Adelaide)



This year, AEIOU Foundation presented a poster outlining the findings of a study which explored the early markers of autism and the first concerns of parents.

Parental First Concerns

Authors: M. Tucker^{1,2}, G. Montague¹ & Bowerman, N.¹

¹AEIOU Foundation, 3 Balaclava Street, Woolloongabba, 4102, Australia

²Griffith Institute for Educational Research, Griffith University, Nathan Campus, 4122, Australia

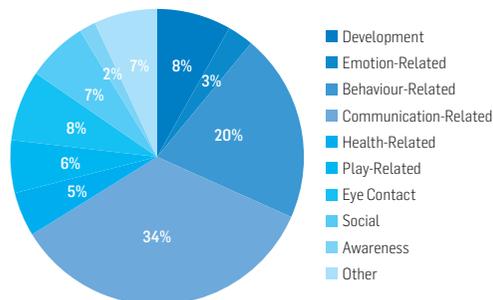
Hey Julie, What made you think your child might have autism?

I think it began when Audrey wasn't beginning to speak.

Oh interesting, with Bobby it was when he only wanted to play with blue cars?

I looked this up actually and Tucker et al (2019) found that the most common parental concern related to communication, then behaviours and developmental issues and eye contact were mentioned similarly.

Nature of Parental First Concerns



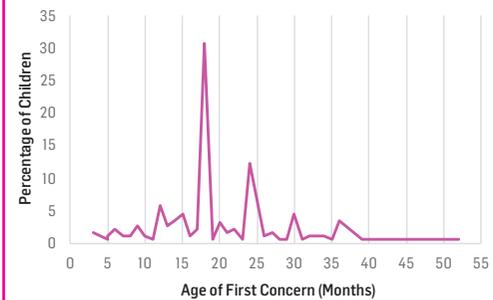
How did they know come to that conclusion?

They examined data from 216 parents whose children attended one of three AEIOU Foundation child care centres in Queensland. But those parents mentioned more than one first concern they had for their child: 660 in total actually.

So what age were most children when their parents had their first concerns?

Children ranged in age between 3- 52 months, but most were 19 months.

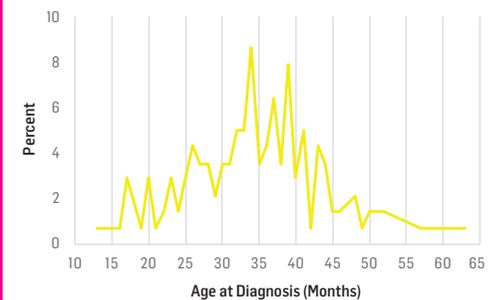
Age of First Concern



Bobby was about 15 months when I first thought something concerned me. Then it took me at least 12 months to get his diagnosis.

Audrey was older and she didn't get diagnosed until 4. The parents in the Tucker et al (2019) study found that the age of diagnosis ranged from 13 to 63 months. Most people got their child diagnosed around 34 months.

Age of Diagnosis



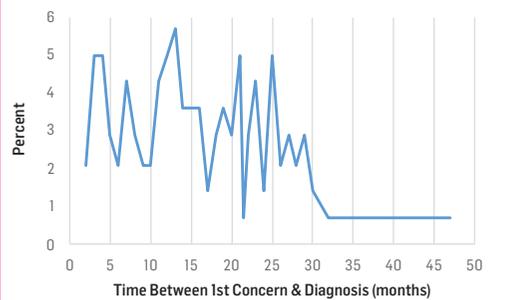
How long did it take for Audrey's diagnosis and was that the same as Bobby and these other parents?

So it took about 2 years for Audrey to be diagnosed. The other parents said that the time from first concern to diagnosis ranged from straight away to 47 months. The average time was about 15 months which is a little shorter than it took us.

Well it is interesting to know about other parents' experiences.

Yeah more similar to you than me. But there is that variability in autism again. Kids with ASD are so different. Keeps us on our toes!

Time from 1st Concern to Diagnosis



Our people

Our board



Susan Rix AM
Chairperson



Euan Morton
Director



Mark Algie
Director



Dr James Morton AM
Founder and Patron



Scott Reading
Director



Dayle Grant
Director



Peter Kelly
Director



**Dr Bev Rowbotham
AO**
Director



Ben Deverson
Director

Our Executive Management Team



Alan Smith
Chief Executive Officer



Deborah Whiteoak
Corporate Affairs
Manager (job share)



Dr Madonna Tucker
Research and
Assessment Manager



Greg Johnson
General Manager



Nicola Morgan
Corporate Affairs
Manager (job share)



Karen Descovich
Fundraising Manager



Matthew Clapham
Chief Financial Officer



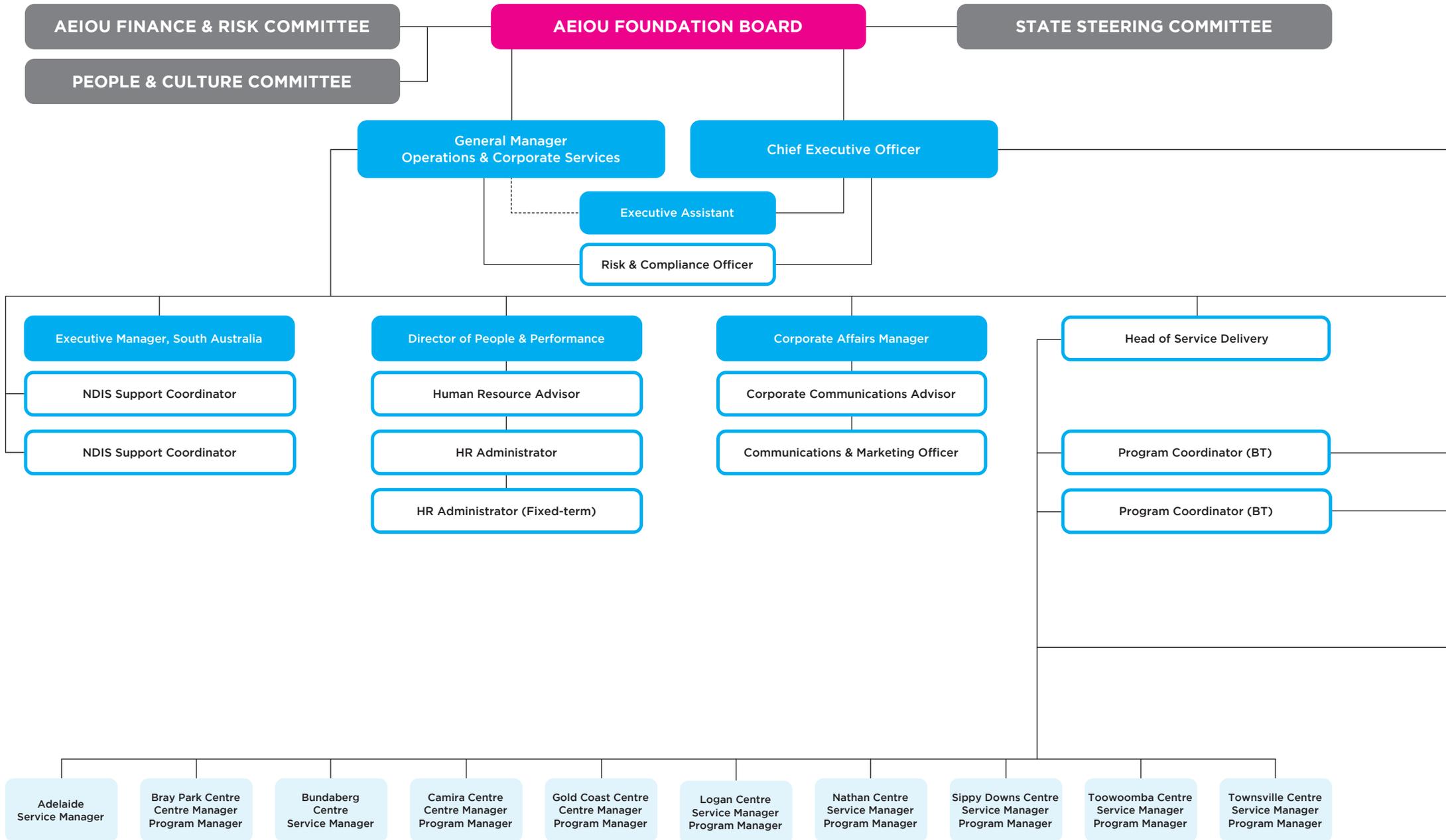
Laura Denholm
Director of People and
Performance

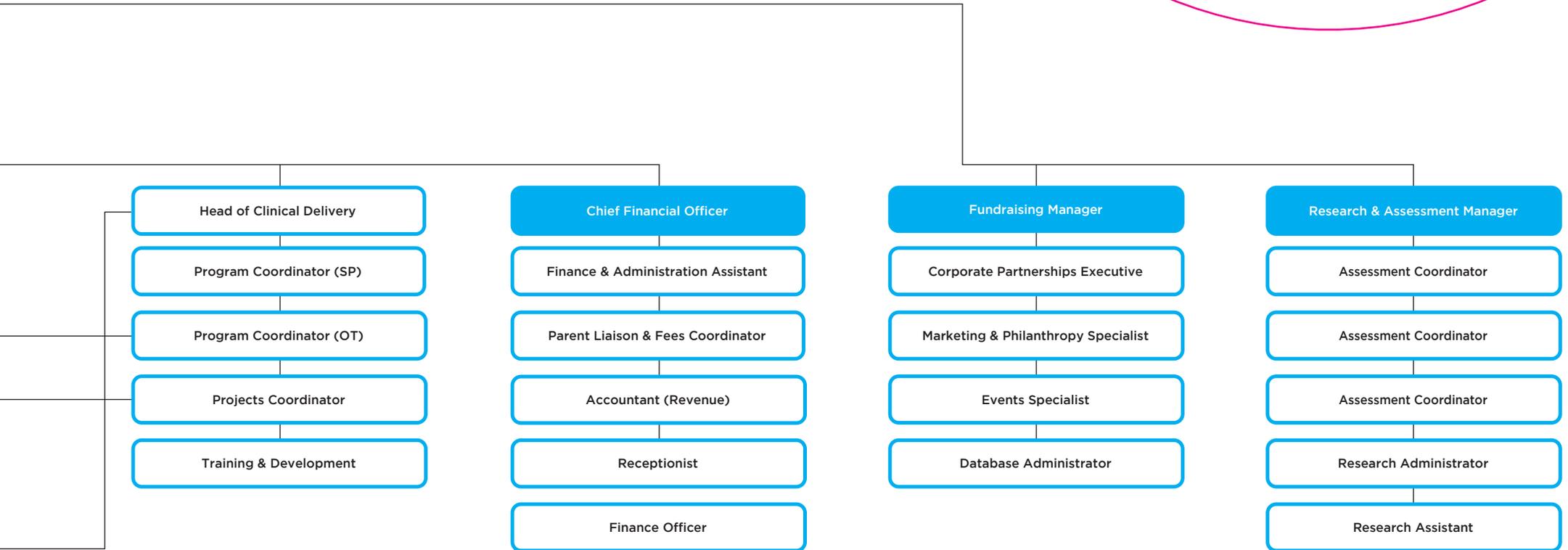


Louise Davies
Executive Director,
Adelaide



AEIOU Organisational Chart





Summary financials

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Revenue and other income		
Tuition fees	12,094,850	8,723,439
Other revenue and income	6,953,128	8,763,166
	19,047,978	17,486,605
Less: expenses		
Employee benefits expense	(12,864,978)	(11,336,652)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(902,322)	(639,485)
Occupancy expense	(395,858)	(399,469)
Advertising expense	(166,510)	(139,725)
Event costs	(328,498)	(228,053)
Repairs, maintenance and cleaning expenses	(444,745)	(298,981)
Travel costs	(106,737)	(102,040)
Insurance expense	(168,551)	(130,447)
Bad and doubtful debts	(765,633)	(361,180)
Professional services fees	(286,639)	(251,305)
Telecommunication expenses	(152,983)	(148,223)
Loss on disposal of plant and equipment	(21,967)	(230,562)
Motor vehicle expenses	(56,595)	(49,608)
Classroom and education	(156,221)	(60,430)
Finance costs	(42,295)	(41,338)
Other expenses	(828,299)	(750,932)
	(17,188,831)	(15,168,439)
Surplus for the year	1,859,147	2,318,166
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income	1,859,147	2,318,166

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,315,033	1,714,786
Receivables	578,528	527,777
Other assets	198,889	101,840
Total current assets	<u>4,092,450</u>	<u>2,344,403</u>
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	14,567,537	14,120,772
Intangible assets	9,084	15,240
Total non-current assets	<u>14,576,621</u>	<u>14,136,012</u>
Total assets	<u>18,669,071</u>	<u>16,480,415</u>
Current liabilities		
Payables	602,354	1,035,900
Borrowings	968,838	
Provisions	663,930	451,658
Other liabilities	214,852	168,254
Total current liabilities	<u>2,449,974</u>	<u>1,655,812</u>
Non-current liabilities		
Borrowings	41,157	502,381
Provisions	220,347	192,765
Other liabilities	64,607	95,618
Total non-current liabilities	<u>326,111</u>	<u>790,764</u>
Total liabilities	<u>2,776,085</u>	<u>2,446,576</u>
Net assets	<u>15,892,986</u>	<u>14,033,839</u>
Equity		
Reserves	5,114,061	5,114,061
Retained surplus	10,778,925	8,919,778
Total equity	<u>15,892,986</u>	<u>14,033,839</u>

Our Supporters







Registered office:

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Email: info@aeiou.org.au | **Website:** www.aeiou.org.au

ABN: 19 135 897 255 | Registered Charity CH1818