



# Creating Brighter Futures

AEIOU Foundation  
Annual Report 2013-2014

**aeiou**  
FOUNDATION  
for children with autism

# Welcome to AEIOU Foundation

The AEIOU Foundation's early intervention program is helping to create brighter futures for children with autism and their families. Our multi-disciplinary team work with children aged 2½ to 6 years of age during a crucial time in their development to support them to reach their full potential. Research has shown that children who receive early intervention have a much greater chance later in life of securing employment, developing meaningful and lasting relationships, and living independently.

Operating since 2005, AEIOU is one of Australia's leading providers of full-time early intervention, with a specialised curriculum that meets the 2012 Australian Good Practice Guidelines and utilises evidence-based practices.

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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.

A full list of our centres across Queensland is available on our website.

## Our reporting process

This is the fifth annual report submitted by AEIOU Foundation, documenting AEIOU's financial, operational and community performance for the financial year ending 30 June 2014. Your feedback is welcome, please email [communications@aeiou.org.au](mailto:communications@aeiou.org.au).



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# Overview

# 70%

of children who complete AEIOU's full time 2 year program transition into mainstream schooling.

# \$2 million



required in fundraising each year to keep our doors open.

Autism affects  four boys to every one girl.

# 98%



of parents would recommend AEIOU to others.

Over

# 200



children attended AEIOU's program this year.

Autism affects **1 in 100** children in Australia.

# About AEIOU

## Our mission

**To enhance the lives of children with autism and their families through early intervention, coupled with practical and caring support.**

## What is autism?

Autism is a life-long disorder that is characterised by difficulties in two main areas;

- social communication and interaction, and
- restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities (including sensory behaviours).

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) includes Autism, Asperger's Syndrome and Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS). Males are four times more likely to have autism than females.

Around 1,185 children are thought to be diagnosed with ASD each year, and more than 1 in 100 Australians have the condition. In 2012, a new study found 1 in 88 people in the United States are diagnosed with ASD. Autism can profoundly affect families, with many parents experiencing social isolation and vocational and financial challenges.

The cause of autism is unknown and while there is no cure, research shows that access to evidence-based early intervention significantly improves the chances of a child learning new skills and adapting to their environment. Some people are able to live relatively 'normal' everyday lives, while others may require ongoing specialist support and care.

## 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 purpose

Our purpose is to teach children vital life skills, helping them reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives. AEIOU provides affordable, full-time early intervention for children with autism with a high-quality curriculum which is based on evidence and meets the 2012 Good Practise Guidelines. Communication, social skills, cognitive learning and self-help skills are all at the core of our program, along with our commitment to supporting families in the early years of their child's development. Positive behaviour support and school preparation are essential to the program.

AEIOU operate centres in nine locations across Queensland; Bray Park, Bundaberg, Camira, Gold Coast, Hervey Bay, Nathan, Sippy Downs, Toowoomba and Townsville.

## Our values

At AEIOU, our people are defined by their commitment to excellence in education, therapy and care, working together to make a lasting difference to the lives of young children with autism. The same can be said for every supporter of AEIOU, who embrace these values to make a positive impact on the lives of young children and their families in our community.

Together, we believe in:

**Action**  
**Excellence**  
**Integrity**  
**Outcomes**  
**Unity**



# About AEIOU

## What AEIOU Foundation does

AEIOU Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation and is one of Australia's leading providers of full-time early intervention for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) aged two and a half to six years.

AEIOU Foundation was established in 2005 with the goal of making high quality intensive early intervention therapy and learning as accessible as possible for children with autism. Early intervention is crucial to the development of a child with ASD. Research has shown that when children with ASD receive early intervention they have a much greater chance later in life of living independently, securing employment and developing meaningful and lasting friendships and relationships.

AEIOU's unique program provides intensive education with therapy in a caring, play-based environment with a routinised curriculum designed to meet the individual needs, skills and strengths of each child. Each group of children is supported by a dedicated autism-trained team comprised of teachers, skilled learning facilitators and staff from disciplines including speech pathology, occupational therapy and behaviour therapy underpinned by evidence-based practices through our curriculum. Each centre features a high staff to child ratio, which is integral to the success of the program and our staff members also receive regular training to understand, and meet the needs of the children in the program.

At AEIOU we aim for excellence and integrity, with our program meeting the 2012 Australian Good Practice Guidelines and also the Early Years Learning Framework. All practices are based on evidence, and are subject to regular evaluation. AEIOU works closely with the Department of Communities and the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and parents.

Along with providing early intervention, AEIOU is also committed to autism research as a funding-partner of the first national Autism Corporative Research Centre (CRC) and as a chair of the Research Advisory Group. AEIOU is also a founding-partner of the Griffith University Autism Centre of Excellence.

*"It was a big decision for us to send Rob to AEIOU in Toowoomba as we live 320 kms away on a property. I leave home at 5am on a Monday morning with Rob (4) and Chloe (2) to drop Rob at the centre by 9am. We then stay in Toowoomba for four nights at a house owned by a friend from our community and then return home to my husband Dave and our property around 5pm on Friday afternoons.*

*Every weekend since Rob started at AEIOU we've noticed something new he can do. Now after five months all those little things have begun to fuse into bigger things and in sort of a "snow ball" effect. He just seems to keep surprising us with how he can now communicate and is less frustrated. We've been getting so much support from the AEIOU team, which has been a huge comfort, and most importantly Rob is happy at AEIOU. Our six month trial has turned into a two year commitment and our goals for Rob have expanded. Bring on school!"*

**Betty and Dave Rindfleish**



# Message from the Chair



**Next year, AEIOU Foundation will celebrate 10 years of service. That's a decade of caring for young children with autism, creating brighter futures for individuals with a diagnosis, and also the families who support them.**

I'm very proud of the service AEIOU provides, and the curriculum our team has developed to ensure children with autism have the best chance to learn important life-skills. As we prepare to open a new service in South Australia, and continue to lobby for additional funding in Queensland to address the waiting lists, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is set to change the way family's access early intervention.

There is concern that the NDIS will support disability but will not focus on building abilities, and it may overlook the right, and need, for parents of a child with a disability to remain in the workforce.

It's very important that the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) establishes a funding model that ensures families have greater, not less, access to services that deliver high-quality early intervention, with programs that meet the 2012 Australian Good Practice Guidelines.

At AEIOU, we'd like to build a diagnostic tool that determines objectively which children require higher levels of services and support, and which can monitor their development and assess how long they require that particular level of assistance. We also firmly believe there must be adequate funding to ensure that services can be developed to provide appropriate interventions, ensuring parents have choice, and any provider delivering early intervention should be accredited, and accountable, when it comes to the fidelity of their service.

When asked what I'm most proud of when it comes to AEIOU Foundation, it is the fact it remains the largest and most affordable service of its kind in Australia. Apart from a world-class curriculum, what sets AEIOU apart is its accessibility. Around 35% of the families currently attending AEIOU are financially vulnerable, earning an annual household income of less than \$45,000. AEIOU is working tirelessly to ensure these families are not forgotten under a NDIS.

In addition, at AEIOU, we engage a large cohort of children, who participate in a specialised curriculum that is proven to work, providing unique opportunities for assessment and research into the field of autism to improve how we deliver intervention, and how we support children as they grow into adults, and become the best versions of themselves. It's a service we all take pride in at AEIOU, and it's a service we are striving to ensure remains available to all families under the NDIS.

With plans to roll the NDIS out across Australia from 2016, we know the next two to five years are critical.

In 2005, AEIOU opened its doors to 12 children, and employed six staff. Today, there are nine centres across Queensland, over 200 children enrolled in the program, more than 140 staff employed, and plans are gaining momentum to open our first interstate centre in the coming months. The difference this service makes to families is real. The support from each and every donor over the past decade is an enormous part of our success, and I look forward to celebrating AEIOU's anniversary milestone in 2015 with these old friends and new.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Morton'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Dr James Morton**  
Chair  
AEIOU Foundation

# Message from the CEO



## It has been an incredible year for AEIOU in terms of milestones achieved to improve the lives of children with autism and their families.

This financial year we have expanded with two new centres in Queensland. In July 2013 we officially opened a new purpose built centre in Bundaberg with the support of the Queensland Government. In April 2014 we opened another newly constructed, purpose-built AEIOU Centre on the Gold Coast with the generous support of Chain Reaction, the Queensland Government and the Gold Coast City Council. This new centre has allowed children with autism to benefit from top of the range facilities including a motor skills room, tailored classrooms, and a parent training room.

We have also established a partnership with Minda in South Australia to construct a purpose-built centre in South Australia expected to open in 2017. Currently we have nine centres in Queensland and in the interim plan to open a centre in Adelaide from an existing facility while plans evolve for the permanent centre. A strategic priority for our organisation is for the AEIOU program to be available to children with autism all across Australia, so this was another step toward achieving that.

We have forged stronger relationships with Governments, clients, stakeholders and partners throughout the year and have, as always, strongly advocated for our families at all levels.

One area where this has been particularly pertinent is in the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), which is initially trialling in Adelaide. It is critical that our families are not disadvantaged by the new funding scheme. We will continue to monitor the scheme, with a view to ensuring the best outcomes for children with autism, and gaining useful knowledge for when the scheme is implemented nationally in the next couple of years.

We also launched our new website which is easier to navigate, has more comprehensive content, and provides a fresh new look and feel. Take a Hike has expanded to include Wide Bay and we have recruited 150 new volunteers. We have published several research papers and embedded robust HR procedures throughout the organisation to attract and retain the brightest and best.

But of all our milestones, for us it's always all about the children's progress, no matter how big or small that may be. The smiles, the hugs, learning to write their name, playing with other children, saying "Mummy" or "Daddy" and gaining social skills. Every single one of our children at AEIOU is a unique individual, who gets the chance to shine!

We couldn't have achieved any of this without the drive, determination and passion of our team and our supporters here at AEIOU. We are incredibly fortunate to have the commitment and calibre of our Board, our Executive, our centre staff, as well as the unwavering support of our donors and our volunteers. I'd like to thank everyone who contributes - large or small - to our organisation, you really make a difference.

Next year is our 10th anniversary and I am excited about what we can achieve in our journey to making a difference in the lives of children with autism over the next 10 years.

**Alan Smith**  
CEO, AEIOU Foundation

# The Year in Review

## Forging futures and putting families first

AEIOU is dedicated to supporting the families in its service and provides a number of additional supports to families beyond the early intervention program.

Along with being involved in the development of their child's individual plans, AEIOU provides tailored strategies for families to work with in the home environment.

Parents and carers are valued members of our community. Parents are encouraged to share their knowledge and participate in AEIOU activities and decisions. We work closely with each family in our program and deliver a variety of initiatives including:

- Regular workshops and training seminars hosted by each centre for enrolled and wait-listed families based on topical issues or areas of interest for the parents in the centre.
- Hosting 'My Time' groups, a government initiative that provides a supportive network for parents who have a child with a disability to socialise and share knowledge alongside families who are experiencing similar challenges.
- Hosting quarterly parent and carer forums with AEIOU's CEO, a Board Member and the executive team. Each centre is represented by two nominated representatives, providing an opportunity for parents to share ideas or concerns on behalf of the parent body. The meeting also provides the chance for parents to gain insight into operational and strategic initiatives the Foundation is working on in a constructive, information sharing session.



## Advocating for families

The AEIOU Foundation has established channels with Government to advocate for the funding needs of families of children with autism. We have forged stronger relationships with Government, clients, stakeholders and partners throughout the year and have, as always, strongly advocated for our families at all levels. A particular focus of the Foundation in this reporting period has been representing the concerns of families around the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

There is concern that the NDIS will support disability but will not focus on building abilities through early intervention, and it may overlook the right, and need, for parents of a child with a disability to remain in the workforce.

It's very important that the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) establishes a funding model that ensures families have greater, not less, access to services that deliver high-quality early intervention, with programs that meet the 2012 Australian Good Practice Guidelines.

It is critical our families are not disadvantaged by the new funding scheme. We will continue to monitor the scheme, with a view to ensuring the best outcomes for children with autism. We will also gain useful knowledge through a planned new centre, in the NDIS trial site state of South Australia, for when the scheme is implemented nationally in the next couple of years.

## Bundaberg centre opening

In July, AEIOU Foundation officially opened a purpose-built early intervention centre for children with autism in the Bundaberg region. Located on the campus of Central Queensland University, the centre is a real win for Bundaberg parents who lobbied Government with AEIOU to improve access to early intervention in the region.

The relationship between AEIOU Foundation and the CQ University presents a number of mutual benefits to the local community, with the prospect of research collaboration and work experience opportunities for students enrolled in a wide range of degrees in Bundaberg and across the wider University.



*The Hon. Stephen Bennett MP and The Hon. Tracy Davis MP, officially opening the new Bundaberg centre with Mr Alan Smith*

# The Year in Review

## Gold Coast centre opening

We were delighted to officially open a new, purpose-built AEIOU centre on the Gold Coast in May 2014. The centre was opened in time for children to commence Term Two in their new classrooms. AEIOU designed the centre to meet the growing need for autism and early intervention support in the region.

Thank you to the Minister for Disabilities, the Hon. Tracy Davis and Gold Coast Mayor, Tom Tate, who officiated at the opening ceremony. We are most grateful to the Gold Coast City Council for gifting the land and the Chain Reaction Challenge Foundation whose philanthropic support made the construction possible.

AEIOU is continuing to work with government with a goal to increase the centres funded capacity from 20 child placements to 40, to reduce waiting times and provide adequate support for local families.



*Mr Alan Smith and Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate 'turning the sod' at the Gold Coast site*



*The Hon. Tracy Davis MP, Queensland Chair of the Chain Reaction Challenge, Mr Michael Byrom, Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate and Mr Alan Smith officially open the Gold Coast centre*



## Centre open days

The annual centre open days in September provided parents and carers of children with a recent autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnosis with an opportunity to see the program first-hand, meet AEIOU's specialist team of educators, facilitators and therapists and better understand how AEIOU can support and enhance their child's life. More than 45 parents, carers and allied health practitioners attended on the day with enquiries pouring in state-wide.

AEIOU experiences long waiting lists, which can be difficult for families. AEIOU is also investigating how it can better support families living in regional and remote areas.

*"I think the AEIOU My Time groups and parent forums are wonderful. There are a lot of tips, training and information available to parents and it has been really excellent."*

## New centre in Adelaide

AEIOU is closer to delivering early intervention and support to young children with autism in Adelaide, with a new centre expected to open in September 2014. A centre has been leased in Huntfield Heights, with plans underway to develop a purpose-built facility in partnership with Minda, South Australia by 2017. As South Australia is a pilot site for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, our Adelaide service will give a good insight into how the NDIS will impact on families. In the meantime, the first intake of staff have been employed for the service and the program will commence with 10 full-time placements, before expanding to support up to 30 children in 2015.



## Lynn Wright Memorial Fund

Around 35% of families at AEIOU Foundation have a household income of less than \$45,000. The AEIOU fee structure has been developed to ensure parents and carers can access a number of childcare benefits and rebates and AEIOU fundraises approximately \$10,000 per annum for each child placement to reduce the overall fees.

In addition to the subsidised fees, the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund (in honour of AEIOU Co-founder Louise Morton's mother, Lynn) was established to assist those families who may otherwise be unable to access the program.

This year's ninth annual 'Lynn's Lunch' held on 2 May 2014 raised funds to support families who, in the future, may need assistance from the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund in order to attend AEIOU's program. The event was hosted by Sharyn Ghidella and local Brisbane inspiration, Cathy Coory who joined AEIOU Foundation to share her personal insights into some of her greatest triumphs and adversities in her life. In 2013/2014 the Fund supported 33 families allocating a total of \$44,988 from previous fundraising efforts.



## Connecting with Community

### AEIOU Autism Research Conference, November 2013

AEIOU hosted its second annual Autism Conference welcoming special guest and keynote speaker Dr Gary LaVigna of the Institute of Applied Behaviour Analysis, along with a number of local and national autism experts. The conference featured cutting edge research, new developments, thought provoking topics and the latest science in the field of autism to enable participants to better understand, work with and aid individuals with ASD and their families.

Thank you to our other guest speakers; Professor Deb Keen (Associate Dean of Research at Australian Catholic University), Dr Jill Ashburner (Manager, Research and Development at Autism Queensland) and Professor Robyn Young (Associate Professor of the School of Psychology at Flinders University).

AEIOU's Autism Conference captured the attention of many allied health professionals, educators, parents and people with an interest in autism. The aim of the conference was to disseminate research, which is vital to assist the community to better understand and support people with autism.

### Temple Grandin visit

Temple Grandin shared two days with the AEIOU Foundation. It was a great coup for AEIOU and her visit was highly anticipated by staff, families and the community at large.

Temple is an inspiration to many; she is a best-selling author, autism activist and was listed in the Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in the world in the 'Heroes Category'. That is not to mention her day job as Professor at Colorado State University, an expert in animal science who has made an extraordinary difference to the livestock industry and the handling of cattle all over the world.



On Thursday 24 October, Temple and the AEIOU Foundation welcomed 330 guests to a very special seminar at The University of Southern Queensland where Temple shared valuable insights into her own life, her experiences with autism and her extraordinary journey. The following day Temple visited the Nathan centre in Brisbane to meet the children and the team and learn about the Foundation's program and how it benefits young children in Queensland. This was followed by an afternoon question and answer session with 60 guests facilitated by respected Queensland journalist, Kylie Lang.



### Autism Awareness Month

To celebrate Autism Awareness Month, this April AEIOU Foundation joined pro-bono partner advertising and digital agency, JuniorCru, to help raise awareness and funds for



children with autism in a special campaign that launched on 1 April 2014. The team was inspired to create a series of ice sculptures, to make a splash in Brisbane's Queen Street Mall. The sculptures proved unique and artistic and were based on a 1:1 scale of pre-school aged children. The installation featured four blue sculptures and one pink, to demonstrate the prevalence of autism in males. The fifth artwork was created live for viewers.

Each sculpture featured a special message, to illustrate the urgent need to improve access to life-changing intervention. This, coupled with the melting sculptures, helped demonstrate to the community that the window of opportunity for early intervention is very small and there are many families missing out.

AEIOU was delighted to be joined by long term supporters, including students from St Laurence's College, past and current families from the program, and a number of dedicated volunteers from Suncorp Banking Operations to help raise awareness and collect funds on the day.

### AEIOU newsletters, social media, website

Each year, AEIOU Foundation publishes two editions of its supporter newsletter, 'Eyes on Autism', a glossy magazine which is delivered to around 6,000 subscribers. The newsletter provides an opportunity to share all organisational developments, fundraising achievements and family stories with a range of donors, philanthropists, volunteers, families and alumni.

# The Year in Review

## Social media

AEIOU uses its social media presence to share news about important developments, events, fundraising initiatives and stories from the centres. Our Facebook page connects families from different centres or those who may have transitioned and many users also use the site to seek advice from AEIOU's professional team, to connect with other families in their areas and to share happy announcements and milestones. It remains AEIOU Foundation's most interactive and popular social media space.

## New website

We are in the final stages of launching a new website at [www.aeiou.org.au](http://www.aeiou.org.au) allowing stakeholders to keep up to date with forthcoming events and initiatives and learn more about our organisation. Visitors will also be able to read a number of family stories, new blog articles and more.

*"Brett started at AEIOU part-time in September 2012 and was able to go full-time from the beginning of 2013. Since then, Brett's speech has progressed beyond my wildest dreams. His social skills have improved dramatically and he has made lots of friends at AEIOU who are waiting to play with him when he arrives each morning.*

*His writing, spelling and drawing skills have also come along fantastically. When I was recently informed by AEIOU staff that Brett is ready to start mainstream Prep six months earlier than I thought he would, I cried happy tears. I'm so proud of Brett and so grateful to AEIOU for the work they have done with him. Without their efforts Brett would not have advanced so much and would not be starting mainstream Prep later this year."*

Tara Cuddeford



## Operational Excellence



## Education

The 2013/2014 year has been busy for our Education team with the following milestones achieved:

This year AEIOU has been rolling out a new curriculum across all of our centres and as a result has now commenced the manualisation of its unique program, enabling a standardisation and consistency of delivery across all centres. The majority of our classrooms are now utilising an interactive whiteboard and iPads are used widely in all centres.

The support provided through parent training is a large part of the success of our program. Training is chosen that focuses on the specific needs of families involved, enabling behaviour management strategies to be consistently applied at home. Throughout the year workshops and training sessions have been facilitated across our centres by the education team, therapists and teaching staff covering topics including:

- Communication
- Behaviour
- Toileting
- Play
- Independence skills
- Make and Take sessions
- The Triple P Positive Parenting Program
- Transition to school.

Members of our education and research teams are trained to deliver the Triple P Positive Parenting Program to our families. AEIOU was recognised by the Triple P Program for the valued training delivered to our families throughout the year.

The introduction of a family goal setting tool has also greatly assisted families to identify goals within individual plan meetings.

Director of Education, Diane Heaney, delivered three sessions with school-based staff as part of their professional development and to assist in capacity building for children with ASD in the community. The training session, 'Supporting students with ASD in the school setting', was delivered to:

- all staff at St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace
- junior school staff at Toowoomba Grammar School; and
- a region of Education Queensland's special education teachers and aides.

AEIOU centres have continued to support students from Education, Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy on practical placements, plus UQ medical students as part of their community experience.

Another key focus in 2013/2014 has been planning for the delivery of the AEIOU program at a new centre in Adelaide. This will be the first AEIOU centre outside of Queensland under a different regulatory framework as well as operating within the National Disability Insurance Scheme pilot program. We have also been working on relationship building with key external stakeholders within South Australia. As part of this process we have been continuing to strategically plan for the national roll-out of the NDIS and any potential impact on the AEIOU program.



*"I love the way behavioural strategies are put into place so everyone is working with the same approach before behaviour becomes really problematic."*



### Our people

Every child shines at AEIOU, because every staff member is committed to their individual needs and strengths. It is our people who define what we do, delivering education and therapy with dedication and compassion. In turn, working at AEIOU is a rewarding experience, with staff able to go home at the end of each day knowing they are making a positive contribution to a child's life.

We invest in our people by providing a stimulating, valuable working environment that offers opportunities for career development and progression, and a flexible work-life balance.

Staff training is a continuous process at AEIOU with new and existing staff staying up to date and maintaining high quality delivery of our program across our centres through internal, external and on-line training.

The 2013-14 year saw a focus on quality and continuous improvement across a wide array of operational elements. We moved our records to electronic archival systems and we introduced web-based conferencing technologies to name just a few initiatives throughout the year.

The results of our '20 Questions' employee survey reflected strong agreement from team members to the following statements; that they are coping well with changes that have occurred, that they feel committed to the goals and values of AEIOU; that each individual's work makes a really important contribution and there was also strong agreement to our key question, 'I enjoy working at AEIOU'.

We acknowledge the pressures of delivering a high quality early intervention program at a low cost structure for our families and know this couldn't be achieved without the support and patience of every staff member in the organisation and for this we say, "thank you!"

AEIOU aims to become an Employer of Choice and continually strives for excellence in its workplace culture.

# The Year in Review

## Research and Assessment

The research and psychology team conducted intake, 12-month, and exit assessments for over 100 children across AEIOU's centres within each child's first four weeks at AEIOU. Assessments included autism symptoms, thinking and reasoning, everyday life skills (i.e. adaptive behaviour), communication, and behaviour. This data was used to develop a database of child characteristics that now includes over 200 children. This database will be used in the future as the basis for research and evaluation activities. To safeguard use and publication of this data, and to make the most of potential collaborations, a data use and access policy was developed and ratified by the AEIOU Research Advisory Group in this period.



“I think all the AEIOU staff are very knowledgeable and the fact staff are continually receiving training is fantastic.”

## Presentations

The Research team presented a number of workshops and training to AEIOU parents, staff and community groups in addition to the other following external presentations of research:

- **“The AEIOU Early Intervention Program: An Effectiveness Study”** was presented by Dr Jessica Paynter to approximately 100 delegates at the **Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC)** in Adelaide on 9 August 2013.
- **“Wellbeing and Burden in Parents of Children with ASD,”** was presented by Dr Jessica Paynter, on 5 September 2013, to Paediatric Grand Rounds at the Gold Coast Hospital.
- **“Theory of Mind and Social Competence in ASD”** was an invited presentation by Dr Jessica Paynter, on 2 December 2013, at the Mater Children Hospital for the Queensland Centre for Intellectual and Developmental Disability *Family Information Day: Autism Spectrum Disorders and Health*.

## Journal articles

A number of journal articles were drafted and submitted in this period including:

1. Paynter, J., & Keen, D. (In Press). “Knowledge and use of intervention practices by community-based early intervention service providers.”
2. Paynter, J. & Fothergill, H. “Conducting assessments with young children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.” *Australian Clinical Psychologist*.
3. Vivanti, G., Paynter, J., Duncan, E., Fothergill, H., Dissanayake, C., & Rogers, S. “Feasibility and effectiveness of the Early Start Denver Model implemented in a group-based community childcare setting.” Submitted to *Autism Research* (Oct 2013).

This paper compared outcomes for the two prospective evaluation sites (Bray Park and Camira) to the Melbourne Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre (ASELCC); and was rejected but later accepted to the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* JADD on second submission in this period (see below).

4. Paynter, J., Riley, E., Beamish, W., Scott, J. G., & Heussler, H. S. "Brief report: An Evaluation of an Australian Autism-Specific, Early Intervention Programme." Firstly submitted to *Focus on Autism and Developmental Disorders* and then to *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, unfortunately rejected from both in this period. This report evaluated the first three years of outcomes for AEIOU Nathan.
5. Paynter, J., Riley, E., Beamish, W., Davies, M., & Milford, T. (2013). "The double ABCX model family adaptation in families of a child with an autism spectrum disorder attending an Australian early intervention service." *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 7, 1183-1195. (Accepted July 2013)
6. Lane, B., Paynter, J., & Sharman, R. (2013). "Parent and teacher ratings of adaptive and challenging behaviour in young children with autism spectrum disorders." *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 7, 1196-1203. (Accepted July 2013)
7. Vivanti, G., Paynter, J., Duncan, E., Fothergill, H., Dissanayake, C., & Rogers, S. (2014). (Publication of Comparative Outcomes Data) "Effectiveness and Feasibility of the Early Start Denver Model Implemented in a Group-Based Community Childcare Setting." *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 44(12), 3140-3153. (Accepted Jan 2014)

"Getting to know other parents at the centre has been a great support and really valuable part of our time with AEIOU."



### Research Partners

**Research Advisory Group:** The Research Advisory Group (RAG) was chaired by Dr Beth Saggars and met 10 times throughout the 2013/2014 year. The RAG is a scientific collaboration between AEIOU and individuals from external agencies who have expertise and interest in undertaking research in ASD. The AEIOU RAG oversees and facilitates sustainable research that has the potential to provide benefit to children with ASD and/or their families.

In November 2013, AEIOU and the RAG hosted their second annual AEIOU Research Conference at Griffith University. Approximately 150 people attended one or both days including teachers, parents, allied health and medical professionals. The program included keynote speaker, Dr Gary La Vigna, who discussed positive behaviour support and Associate Professor Robyn Young who discussed the implications of DSM-5 and the childhood trial site in Adelaide of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

**Autism CRC:** AEIOU Foundation has developed a strong collaboration with the Autism Co-operative Research Centre (CRC). The Autism CRC is the world's first national cooperative research effort focused on autism, which takes a whole-of-life approach to Autism Spectrum Disorder, from diagnosis to education and adult life.

Dr Paynter has been working on the development of a number of strategic research projects with the Autism CRC that were submitted for funding in this period including an Innovation Grant Application investigating early literacy in children with ASD and a longitudinal study aimed to investigate long-term outcomes for children with ASD.

**Griffith University, Autism Centre of Excellence:** AEIOU Foundation continues to collaborate with the Griffith University, Autism Centre of Excellence. In 2013 Griffith University donated the use of a lecture theatre for the second annual AEIOU Autism Research Conference and we were most grateful for a donation of \$5,000 from the Griffith Institute of Educational Research towards the conference which was a great success.

# The Year in Review

## Uniting with our Partners

AEIOU Foundation's early intervention program costs around \$46,000 to deliver for each child, per year. After Government funding and parent fees, AEIOU experiences a \$10,000 funding shortfall for each full-time placement. As a result, we employ a dedicated Fundraising team to maintain the service while ensuring the program is affordable to families. The Fundraising team also supports the parent fundraising committees across each centre, who host a range of initiatives to purchase additional learning materials for their classrooms.

Grants, corporate sponsorship, philanthropy and general fundraising through appeals and events provide AEIOU with the platform to deliver Australia's leading early intervention service.

Establishing enduring and meaningful relationships with our supporters is an important priority for the team, and AEIOU Foundation sincerely appreciates the commitment and generosity of our donors, sponsors, volunteers and supporters. Together, each one makes an important contribution to the lives of the young children we care for in our centres.

*“AEIOU has been perfect for our family! I could not ask for better support or therapy... Thanks to AEIOU I'm finally getting to know my little boy.”*

## Fundraising highlights 2013/2014

### Broncos 50:50

We are honoured to have joined the select few charities supported by the Broncos Charitable Fund. With thirty plus dedicated volunteers, we attended our first home game for the Broncos and sold raffle tickets, with a percentage of the takings donated to AEIOU. This is a prime opportunity for AEIOU to showcase our amazing work and talk to patrons at these games about the milestones our children reach through our life-changing program



**Take a Hike**

AEIOU's signature fundraising event, *Take a Hike*, is a 40km hike that is replicated across the state in five regions including Townsville, Brisbane, Toowoomba, and the Gold Coast. This year *Take a Hike* expanded to include events in the Wide Bay region and Sunshine Coast. Almost 500 *Take a Hike* participants tackled the 40km hike with over \$400,000 raised by our inspiring hikers and their supporters.

AEIOU again enjoyed the valued sponsorship and relationship with Hyundai Motors Australia who provided vehicle support to each of the hikes to ensure our hikers had the best support crew on hand, every step of the way.



**Bridge to Brisbane**

AEIOU thanks members of the 'Blue Crew' who volunteered their time to support AEIOU at the *Bridge to Brisbane* run on the day. Once again, the 'Blue Crew' stood out at the event in their bright blue, raising awareness of AEIOU and autism and raising funds to help support the children in our centres. AEIOU's 'Blue Crew' has welcomed nearly 1,000 people to its team since 2009. In that time the 'Blue Crew' have made a great contribution to our organisation by raising over \$120,000 to help our children shine.



**Appeals**

AEIOU produced two fundraising campaigns in 2013/2014, the annual Christmas Appeal and Winter Tax Appeal. AEIOU received pro bono support from leading advertising agency JuniorCru who were instrumental in delivering a new level of creativity to promote the two appeals which contributed to the campaigns exceeding expectations. The results have set new benchmarks for appeals in the years to come.



# The Year in Review

## Beneficiary events

AEIOU is very grateful for the generous support of community groups and individuals who raise funds on behalf of AEIOU through a variety of events and initiatives. This year we would like to acknowledge the support of:

- The St Laurence's College Annual Walkathon:** The students of St Laurence's College laced up for their annual Walkathon which covers 15 kms to raise funds and awareness for AEIOU children. We also acknowledge the commitment of the staff and students who assist us with volunteering at fundraising events throughout the year.
- Warner Social Golf Day:** This generous community group of golfers has raised over \$20,000 for AEIOU's Bray Park centre through their annual charity golf day since 2011. This year, the Committee announced AEIOU Foundation will be the sole beneficiary of their fundraising efforts in 2015. Thank you to the entire committee including President Ross Brown, Treasurer Dennis Parker and Fundraising Co-ordinator, Gaye Parker.
- Rotary Art Spectacular:** AEIOU was very fortunate to be named the major beneficiary of this hugely popular annual event in 2014. The 35th Rotary Art Spectacular was held during April for Autism Awareness Month and is recognised as one of the most prestigious art exhibitions in Queensland attracting 35,000 guests each year. Thank you to the three Brisbane Rotary Clubs who host the event; Brisbane High-Rise, Hamilton and Stones Corner.
- Broncos and Corey Parker:** AEIOU enjoys a great relationship with its Ambassadors including Brisbane Bronco legend Corey Parker, who has made a commitment to dedicate every goal he kicks to AEIOU, meaning \$100 is donated for every goal Corey kicks to the children at AEIOU.



League Legend, Wally Lewis, interviews Broncos Great, Corey Parker and Alan Smith

- Chain Reaction Challenge Foundation:** A group of leading Queensland business identities banded together to raise funds through sponsorship of their cycling challenge. The team of 48 men and women cycled a 1,000 km route over seven gruelling days. The support from the Chain Reaction Challenge Foundation has made it possible for AEIOU to construct its purpose-built centre on the Gold Coast.



Mr Michael Byrom, Chain Reaction Challenge, Mr Peter Egan, Bank of Queensland, Mr Brad Bennett, Chesterton International and Mr Alan Smith with the plaque acknowledging Chain Reaction's role in the establishment of the Gold Coast centre



“AEIOU is fantastic, it has changed all of our lives, not only our son's.”

### Centre fundraising

Each year, the Fundraising team supports parents and carers from AEIOU centres to create their own centre-based fundraising committees. This helps equip AEIOU's valued volunteers to raise funds for various learning materials including technological resources and various playground and centre upgrades.

This year, AEIOU families in these committees from across AEIOU centres have worked tirelessly to raise funds for their centres. Centres employ a variety of initiatives to engage their local communities, including the creation and sale of cookbooks, chocolate drives, raffles, Bunnings and Masters barbecues, trivia nights, book drives, and much more.



### Volunteers

This year, more than 140 volunteers supported AEIOU Foundation across a variety of fundraising events.

We would not be able to provide our services without the dedication of our volunteers. They are the face of our organisation in raising the profile and also provide an incredible resource to our centres.

*“One morning in January 2013 we dressed our little three year old, red-headed boy who didn't look at you or make any eye contact, who couldn't play with others, who couldn't communicate and was struggling with toilet training and took him for his first day at AEIOU. He started the PECS program straight away and speech followed soon after. One of the happiest days of our lives was within Chase's first few months at AEIOU; he said “Mum” and “Dad” for the first time. After just three months Chase was able to tell me “I love you Mum”.*

*Our journey at AEIOU continues and after six months in the program our little boy is a changed child who plays with his peers, speaks freely with developing speech, engages with others, sings, dances and looks at you when you speak.*

*I am truly grateful to AEIOU and love seeing Chase so happy and smiling. Chase will continue at AEIOU and it is our hope in two years' time he will be ready for mainstream school.”*

*Tamara Stephens*



# The Year in Review

## Our Ambassadors

We are very fortunate to have the support of our Ambassadors, all high-profile achievers in their diverse fields of endeavour, who are passionate advocates for children with autism. Thank-you to our Ambassadors for their valued contribution over the past year:

- Tim Sharp, International Artist and Motivational Speaker
- Alex Perry, International Fashion Designer
- Ian Skippen, Media Personality
- Corey Parker, Brisbane Broncos Great
- Thomas Fraser-Holmes, Commonwealth Games Swimmer
- Cathie Reid, CEO, APHS and AEIOU Business Ambassador



## Thank you to our supporters

AEIOU would not have been able to achieve yet another year of amazing outcomes without the generosity and support of our donors, trusts, foundations and government departments.

Financial supporters enable AEIOU to do what it does best - help children with autism realise their full potential. Every \$10,000 fundraised means one more child has the right to early intervention. One of AEIOU's objectives is that access to our services should be a right and not a privilege. It is only through the support and generosity of donors and funding through trusts, foundations and Government that we have been able to achieve what we have to date.

An expression of thanks in words never seems commensurate with the level of support received. Our family stories highlight how our donors' support enables AEIOU to positively change the lives of so many children.

Whilst our donors give as much as they can and we are very grateful to every single donor, a special thanks must be made to our major donors - their support is vital to AEIOU's ability to provide services now and into the future.

### Private philanthropists

- Lyn and Bobbie Brazil - Anchorfield PL as Trustee for the Brazil Family
- Bob Bryan - The Bryan Family Foundation
- Brian and Peggy Flannery - The Flannery Foundation
- Dr Ross and Margot Forgan-Smith
- Scott and Mary-Jeanne Hutchinson
- Dr James and Louise Morton
- Terry and Mary Peabody
- Beverley Power
- Michael and Ann Williams
- The Goldberg Family Foundation

### Community philanthropists/Trusts and Foundations

- Neumann Benevolent Foundation
- Perpetual Trustees
- E Robert Hayles and Alison L Hayles Charitable Trust
- Stan and Maureen Duke Foundation
- Towards a Better Future Foundation
- The Trust Company Australia Foundation
- The John Villiers Trust
- The James N. Kirby Foundation
- Queensland Community Foundation
- The QBE Foundation
- CAF Community Fund
- Buildcorp Charitable Fund

*“AEIOU not only provides a vital service for families living with autism, they also provide a voice for these families and advocate for families who are unable to do so themselves.”*

Our supporters



Alens < Linklaters



# Our Structure and Governance

AEIOU benefits from a robust Board, a strong leadership team and a qualified and dedicated workforce.

## AEIOU Board

### Dr James P Morton

*BSc (Med), MBBS, FRACP, FRCPA*  
Chairman and Founder



Dr Morton is an accredited specialist in Haematology & Oncology. He is Medical Director, Haematology-Oncology Clinics of Australasia and Senior Specialist, Leukaemia and Bone Marrow Transplant Service, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

In addition to his role as Chairman of AEIOU Foundation, James is also a Board Member of Haematology-Oncology Clinics of Australasia (2000-current) and a previous Board member of the Leukaemia Foundation QLD (2000-2007).

Dr Morton 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.

### Stuart Giles Director



Stuart Giles is the Managing Partner & Group CEO of APHS, a national organisation delivering pharmacy services to hospital, oncology, aged care and community pharmacy sectors. Named a Regional Winner in 2010 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Stuart continues to lead APHS to success alongside his wife,

business partner and co-owner of APHS, Cathie Reid.

Stuart is proud of his association with AEIOU Foundation, and has watched with pride as AEIOU has continued to grow, and achieve positive outcomes for children across Queensland.

### 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.

### Graeme McFadyen Director



Graeme brings a wealth of management experience and support to the AEIOU Foundation. Graeme is the CEO of Trilby Misso Lawyers and the father of two children. He is committed to making a positive contribution to the community with AEIOU Foundation.

### Euan Morton

*LLB (Hons), BEcon (Hons) BComm*  
**Director**



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).

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.

### Brendan Power

**Director**



Brendan is a director of Harris Black Chartered Accountants, and a fellow of The Institute of Chartered Accountants. He is also the former Chairman of the Brentnalls National Affiliation of Accounting Firms, of which Harris Black is the Queensland member.

Brendan joined AEIOU's Board of Directors in 2005. He is proud to be involved with the Foundation, and to have supported its growth across Queensland.

Brendan's daughter Mary-Claire was one of the first children to enrol in AEIOU's program when it was established in 2005. She is now in high school, and no longer experiences significant autism symptoms.

### 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 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.

### Brett Robinson

**Director**



Brett is the Managing Director and CEO of Integrated Clinical Oncology Network (ICON). Brett completed a medical degree at the University of Queensland and worked as a surgical trainee before later completing a Doctorate of Philosophy in Clinical Orthopaedics at Oxford.

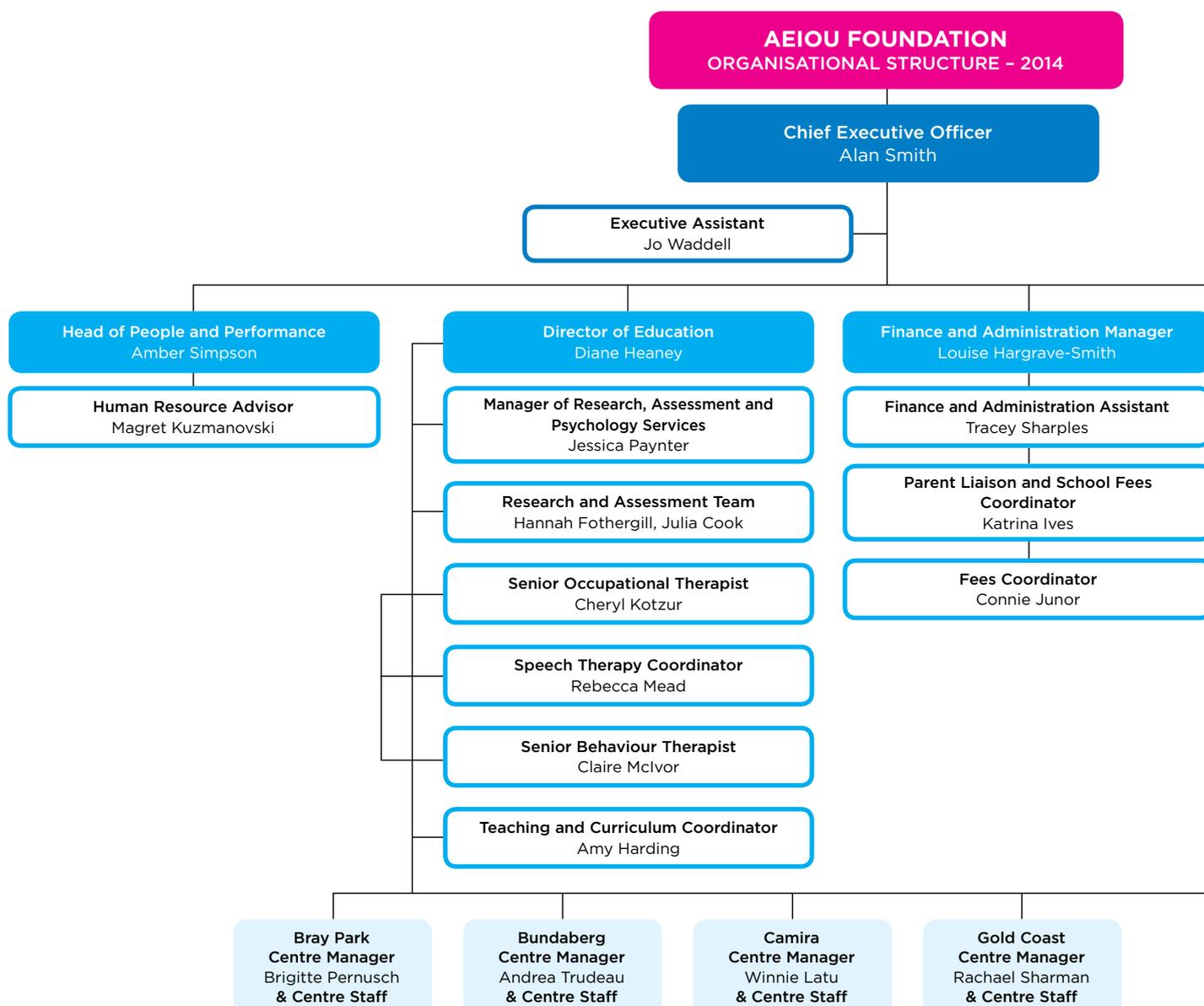
He continues to assist Orthopaedic colleagues in advanced joint replacement therapy. Prior to joining ICON, Brett was the Australian CEO for Mondial Assistance, a French-based global company with a core medical assistance and travel insurance business.

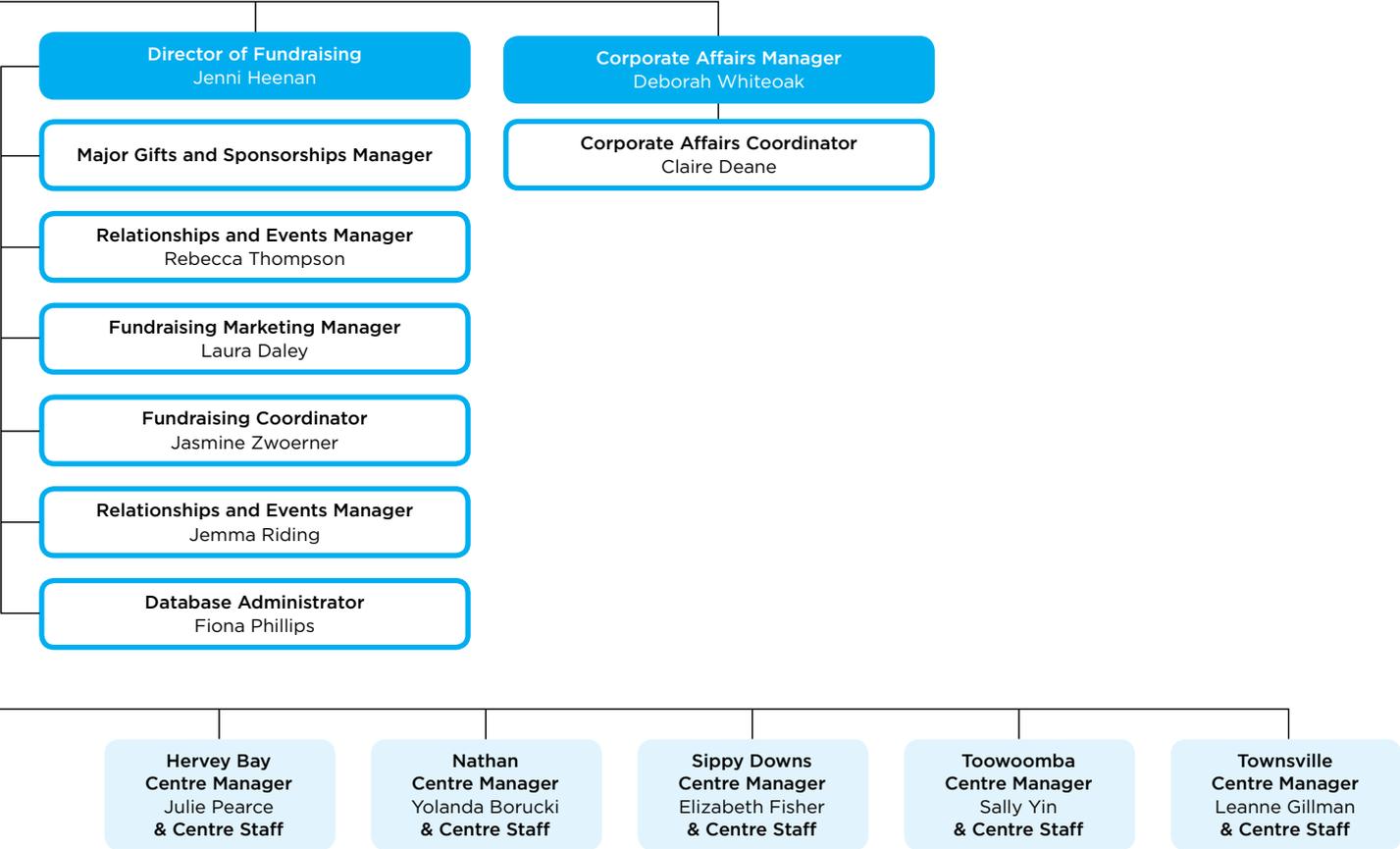
Brett was also the inaugural captain of the ACT Brumbies in the Super 12 competition and in total, played 16 test matches for the National Rugby Union Team. From 2002-2005, he was the General Manager of the Australian Rugby Union's High Performance Unit.

# Our Structure and Governance

The team at AEIOU is comprised of more than 160 people including teachers, learning facilitators, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, behaviour therapists, a research fellow and a psychologist. The Foundation is supported by professionals in fundraising, marketing and communications, business development, human resources, and administration and is led by a voluntary Management Board.

## AEIOU Organisational Chart 2014





# Summary Financials

## Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2014

	Note	2014 \$	2013 \$
Revenue	2	9,285,409	9,330,067
Other income	2	2,185,368	2,163,217
Employee benefits expense		(8,318,500)	(7,861,144)
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment expense		(348,634)	(541,502)
Classroom and education		(108,126)	(94,338)
Event costs		(314,573)	(204,846)
Professional service fees		(166,423)	(193,634)
Motor vehicle expenses		(74,344)	(88,326)
Printing and stationery expense		(129,439)	(151,249)
Occupancy expense		(241,558)	(194,221)
Repairs and maintenance expense		(324,669)	(224,329)
Telecommunications expense		(120,266)	(129,168)
Travel expense		(62,588)	(62,809)
Other expenses		(594,284)	(489,170)
Finance costs		(9,964)	(17,524)
<b>Surplus before income tax</b>		<b>657,409</b>	<b>1,241,024</b>
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>657,409</b>	<b>1,241,024</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>			
Revaluation increment/(decrement)		-	(178,457)
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>657,409</b>	<b>1,062,567</b>

## Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2014

	Note	2014 \$	2013 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	948,295	1,029,146
Trade and other receivables	6	176,334	581,080
Other assets	7	84,971	38,822
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>1,209,600</b>	<b>1,649,048</b>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	8	9,730,960	8,197,285
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>9,730,960</b>	<b>8,197,285</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>10,940,560</b>	<b>9,846,333</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	9	764,598	1,299,986
Other financial liabilities	11	-	9,980
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>764,598</b>	<b>1,309,966</b>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Borrowings	10	933,851	3,955
Long-term provisions	12	143,090	90,800
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>1,076,941</b>	<b>94,755</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>1,841,539</b>	<b>1,404,721</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>9,099,021</b>	<b>8,441,612</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Reserves	16	4,292,764	4,451,522
Retained earnings		4,806,257	3,990,090
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>9,099,021</b>	<b>8,441,612</b>

**aeiou**  
FOUNDATION  
for children with autism

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