

eyes on
autism



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A WORD FROM OUR CEO

Welcome to our new-look edition of Eyes on Autism. I hope you enjoy reading about our life-changing program, passionate people, and engaging activities which all focus on creating a lifetime of opportunities for children with autism.

Returning to take the reins at AEIOU has certainly opened my eyes to the changes our organisation has experienced this year. I am proud and astounded at the progress we have made to implement our revised evidence-based program, instil our new core values, and transition to the NDIS in north Queensland. All this is complemented by our strong brand and skill dedicated staff to provide high quality early intervention to the children in our program.

It was wonderful to be a part of this year's successful Take A Hike in October. Over the past seven years I have competed in every Brisbane event, seeing a growth in numbers and an increase in awareness of our organisation and what we do.

This year was exceptional, with participants swelling to more than 650. Seeing the children, families, staff, volunteers, community members, corporate supporters and members of our Board all pounding the pavement for AEIOU is simply inspiring.

With the recent announcement of the National Stronger Regions Fund investment of \$1 million towards the construction of a purpose built centre in Logan, we look forward to developing new connections in the community. The Logan centre will be a flagship for our organisation, immersing us further in research and strengthening our inclusion programs. I look forward to bringing more news on this project as it unfolds.

We also remain committed to establishing our service in other states, with negotiations currently in place for centres in Victoria and the ACT. Construction will shortly begin on our new purpose-built centre in Brighton, South Australia.

Thank you for your continued support of AEIOU Foundation, which not only raises important funds, but also awareness of who we are and what

we do and puts us in good stead to meet our goal of providing the most affordable and effective autism early intervention and family support in Australia.

Yours sincerely



Alan Smith
CEO
AEIOU Foundation



..... THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

2016 has been an incredible year for AEIOU Foundation, with milestones including evidence based updates to our curriculum to funding grants for new centres; significant steps in realising our vision. Much of this work could not be achieved without the valued support of our generous and passionate supporters. On behalf of our children, families and staff, we thank you for helping us to create a lifetime of opportunities for children with autism.



NEW VIDEO SERIES HELPS FAMILIES NAVIGATE THE EARLY YEARS

Families seeking guidance and support in the early days of an autism diagnosis will benefit from a new video series launched by AEIOU Foundation last month.

The suite of nine videos, titled Autism: The Early Years, was designed in collaboration with our experienced therapy and research team to deliver valuable information and practical advice to families who have a child with autism.

AEIOU CEO Alan Smith says the videos covered topics our therapists are most frequently questioned.

“We know just how vital it is for parents, carers and the wider family unit to feel supported while seeking a diagnosis and beyond,” Alan says.

“During this period, families have many questions about the road ahead and often don’t know where to turn to for answers.

“These videos, covering three key themes of family, behaviour and communication, gently guide families and give them a good starting point for their research into early intervention.”

Content in the videos is based on evidence-based principles, which form the keystone of AEIOU’s therapy and education program.

“They contain information from experienced professionals in the field, as well as anecdotes from families who share their first-hand experiences of the benefits they receive through early intervention.

“We are committed to providing children and families with the strategies and tools to access their community and gain vital independence, creating a lifetime of positive opportunities,” Alan adds.

The educational videos are free and can be accessed via www.aeiou.org.au

AUTISM: THE EARLY YEARS

PART 1

> Understanding autism

PART 2

> Help after a diagnosis

PART 3

> Family impacts of autism

PART 4

> Understanding behaviour

PART 5

> Building toileting skills

PART 6

> Dealing with a problem behaviour

PART 7

> Coping with public spaces

PART 8

> Helping your child make friends

PART 9

> Creating independence and meeting your child’s needs

OUR PROGRAM PROVIDES SUPPORT BEYOND THE AEIOU YEARS

Seeing children achieve their goals at AEIOU Foundation is always rewarding, but we also get very sentimental when they and their families embark on their next educational journey.

There is a real sense of pride reflecting on the outcomes they have achieved, and knowing there are plans in place to assist them beyond the AEIOU years.

Preparing for transition is an integral element of our evidence-based program, and preparations begin well in advance of the children’s last days at our centres.

Along with their families, our graduating students are provided with strategies which help them achieve independence in their new environment, from tasks such as morning preparations and putting away their bags, to participating in classroom activities and socialising with peers.

While considerable attention is provided to the child to achieve these skills, families are engaged through individual program meetings and workshops focusing on transition.

AEIOU also actively engages with schools, teachers and therapists who will be responsible for the next stage of our children’s education and care. Through meetings, both at AEIOU and at the child’s next setting, we work to ensure a smooth transition.

Consistency in delivering strategies at AEIOU, in the home environment and the next educational setting is key to success.

We remain connected to children and their families long after they leave our service, helping them through their journey, and participating in research projects which enable us to continually review and improve our evidence based program.

There is nothing better than seeing a child thrive throughout their development, watching them be active members of the community and leading productive, happy lives.





Ruby graduated
from AEIOU
Gold Coast
in 2015

THE DOOR STAYS OPEN

By Karen Fleischer

Sitting at Ruby's graduation from AEIOU Foundation was one of the happiest and proudest moments of my life. Of course, nothing was going to take away my fear of her starting school and the challenges that lie ahead, but she would be taking the mainstream path and that's something I didn't think possible at first.

Now we're almost at the end of the prep year and Ruby benefits from an inclusion support program in the classroom. It's been a long year but when I think of all the things she's accomplished and how independent and happy she is; I realise just how far she's come.

From a child who, when she started with AEIOU before her fourth birthday, was non-verbal and suffered from severe anxiety, I now look at a young

girl in uniform who can stand up in front of her peers for show and tell, with the support of her proloquo2go.

Along with her class, she's recited a poem at the Gold Coast eisteddfod and has been involved in all the school activities from cross country and sports day to book week dress-up day. She's also a very keen learner.

Ruby has a class full of young friends and supportive parents and is invited to birthday parties. It's hard to reconcile that with our life prior to early intervention, where we wouldn't leave the house and felt ostracised in the community.

Even though our AEIOU days are behind us now, we have never been made to feel like the door has closed. The support we've received has had no end.

It was a very collaborative effort with AEIOU staff as we progressed through the transition process. Among other strategies, we attended workshops and had the Head of Special Education at the school come and view Ruby

at AEIOU. The staff were always on hand to provide advice and we always felt supported through the process.

Ruby and I drove past the school plenty of times, read lots of topical books and spent weeks repeatedly trying on her 'big girl' uniform. When the time finally came to move on, she was very comfortable knowing she was going elsewhere.

To all the other parents preparing for school next year, I wish your family the very best of luck. My advice to you would be to take on all the advice of your therapists and teachers but also remember it doesn't stop there, because the work you do at home is also so important. You're creating a better life for your child and for your family so believe in them and don't give up. My beautiful daughter is proof of that.



CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

As 2016 comes to a close, it is good to reflect on the year's achievements.

This year was remarkable for AEIOU. We faced challenges on many fronts and I am proud to say, we managed them well, never waning from our commitment to create opportunities and optimal lifelong outcomes for children with autism and their families.

We also had exciting highlights, with the announcement of a new centre in Logan and the beginning of construction of a new centre in Adelaide.

Our mission is to provide the most affordable and effective evidence based early intervention for children with autism. Research shows that "due to the nature of human brain plasticity, the earlier the intervention, the larger the impact on outcomes". Our evidence based early intervention program supports children aged two to six years, and their families. Our program is individualised to each child, acknowledges the Guidelines for Good Practice (2012), and includes at least 20 hours of transdisciplinary therapy to each child enrolled full time in our service. All centres operate under the same model, ensuring continuity and consistency.

With the NDIS now established in South Australia, Townsville, and shortly Toowoomba, advocating for our service and our families has been a priority for 2016. The NDIS has had its share of teething issues. As well as families waiting for plans to be drawn up, glitches to the NDIS

computer system blocked payments to providers. We stayed the course, and will continue to support families through their transition.

I welcome Alan Smith's return to the helm. Alan has been on leave for health reasons, and seeing him stride out in Take A Hike Brisbane this year was extremely pleasing. I thank our Chief Operating Officer Kerrie Mahon for her leadership during Alan's absence, and for the Executive Management Team's ongoing commitment. I also commend the Board of Directors for their strategic direction. On that note, I welcome new board member Susan Rix. Susan is the National Leader, Family Business for BDO Australia Brisbane. She brings a strong finance background, as well as a wealth of experience on not-for-profit boards.

I also offer my sincere thanks to all our supporters, new and old, who share our passion of making a difference for children with autism and their families. As a family centred service, we strive to develop essential life skills, independence, confidence and inclusion. Community support, either through donations, volunteering and raising awareness is vital to our continued success. Your support in this way provides valuable resources and inspires our efforts.



Dr James Morton
AEIOU Chairman and Founder





HIKERS STEP UP IN BRISBANE

Brisbane came out in droves to create brighter futures for children with autism and their families. More than 660 champions put their feet on the street, raising funds and awareness to ensure we continue to provide a lifetime of opportunities for all children with autism.

This was a record year where corporate supporters, past and present families of AEIOU, together with staff from all of our Brisbane and Sunshine Coast centres, joined in to raise more than \$145,000.

Our special thanks to all these champions. To our long-term and valued stakeholders Hutchinson Builders, Chain Reaction, The Bryan Foundation, BDO, Brisbane Broncos, Pitcher Partners, and Team Jacob to name a few - you again showed your commitment to making a real and lasting difference.

The seventh Take A Hike Brisbane was also an emotional one for staff and supporters. Our CEO, Alan Smith, who was joined by many in team 'Kicking it with the CEO' not only raised an incredible \$32,000 but saw him compete following extended leave for leukaemia treatment. If inspiration is measured in kilometres, then Alan walked a million!

This year we were fortunate to have the support of the boys from Churchie (Anglican Church Grammar School), who not only walked the walk but volunteered to ensure every champion had a cool drink and something to eat, as well as meeting their fundraising targets.

Once again, the Rotary Club of Ashgrove - The Gap provided our walkers and runners with the best sausages in town - thank you.

This was a champion effort by many champions - you have all made a difference and for that we are eternally gratefully - rest up and see you next year!



JURASSIC JAM.....

We thought last year was big! This year was a sell-out!

Brisbane is filled with so many amazing people prepared to give of themselves to ensure others have the best start in life and they filled the Triffid for Jurassic Jam 2.

The cream of Brisbane's corporate world traded their business suits for jeans and t-shirt, strapped on a guitar and took to the stage to create an electric atmosphere late into the night; all in aid of our children at AEIOU.

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 your venue of choice for nothing! Congrats to Graeme Wikman from BDO - winner winner, chicken dinner - or is that Vinyl! Frontier playing at your place!

We thank Ian Cuneo from Ray White Ascot who was our convincing auctioneer and Mary-Jeanne and Scott Hutchinson for the incredible auction prizes they sourced.

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

Maybe we need Suncorp Stadium next year!!

AEIOU RECEIVES \$1 MILLION FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE IN LOGAN

AEIOU is extremely pleased to receive a \$1 million investment to construct a purpose-built Logan Autism Centre as part of the Federal Government's National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF).

AEIOU Foundation Chairman and Founder Dr James Morton says the investment, announced by Minister for Regional Development Fiona Nash, will enable the organisation to deliver its nationally recognised early intervention program to children in Logan and their families.

"The population of greater Logan includes approximately 40,000 children in the age group with support. Taking into account research which shows 1 in 100 children are diagnosed with autism, at least 400 children in this area will now have the opportunity to participate in high quality evidence based early intervention," Dr Morton says.

"This AEIOU centre is part of the innovative Meadowbrook Health and Knowledge Precinct in Logan, which is transforming a suburb into an integrated centre for health, education, research and community. "It is the first of its kind in Queensland and will lead the way nationally."

The Logan centre will see AEIOU collaborate with Griffith University to create training pathways for disciplines including behaviour therapy, speech and language pathology, occupational therapy and medicine. Through the connected model, AEIOU will also will provide knowledge and tools to educators in mainstream settings, which will assist children and families to integrate in the community and transition to their next educational setting.

"I also acknowledge Minister for Health Cameron Dick, who has committed \$1million to the construction costs, Chain Reaction Foundation, Griffith University and The WANTZ Committee for their support and financial contribution which is making this unique Logan centre for children with autism a reality."

The Logan centre is expected to be completed in 2018. Pictured at the announcement are Federal Member for Forde Bert van Manen, Pro Vice Chancellor and Head Griffith Logan campus Lesley Chenoweth, AEIOU Founder and Chairperson James Morton, and Minister for Regional Development Fiona Nash.



WANTZ COMMITTEE

The women on the WANTZ Committee are renowned for their philanthropic work, especially raising funds for children's charities. This year, AEIOU Foundation was overwhelmed with the commitment and support received from these medicos and their colleagues.

The WANTZ dinner was held at the iconic Customs House and supported by more than 180 like-minded guests ready to entertained by opera singers, who received a standing ovation, a menu to tempt every taste, and even a disco for those who wished to work off their gourmet meal.

As is the norm at a WANTZ annual dinner, the night was completed by silent and live auctions. Our sincere thanks to Mary-Jeanne Hutchinson, long-time supporter of AEIOU, for her generosity in providing a Craggy Range Wines experience in Hawkes Bay, New Zealand as an auction prize.

Thank you also to Alex Perry Hotels, Paspaley and Infiniti - all supporters of AEIOU for also providing auction prizes on the night.

To Dr Joanna Tait and her amazing Committee, we sincerely thank you for your support. Please know that the \$134,000 raised on the night will provide the tools required in each of our centres to ensure we create a lifetime of opportunities for our children.



... TAKING THE NEXT STEP

By Amelia Cupitt

AEIOU has provided a voice for us in the community. With Tyler transitioning to school in 2017, it's so comforting to know we're not on our own. We're backed up with evidence and data and are confident in our child's capabilities and boundaries.

Before our journey with AEIOU began, Tyler's behaviours were so bad I thought no-one would ever want him at their school. He never fit the normal bill of autism but we fought for a diagnosis. While his communication was progressing, he lacked many social skills and started to become violent with us to seek our attention.

Today, he's a much happier kid who is learning to find a better way to regulate his emotions and using appropriate communication skills, thanks to the support of AEIOU's early intervention program. On a daily basis the staff continue to put in a lot of work to get him school-ready.



Tyler attends AEIOU Toowoomba and graduates to mainstream prep in 2017

Tyler has come so far that he will be attending a mainstream prep next year and we can happily say he's well and truly ready to move on to a new challenge. There's already been lots of cross over between AEIOU and his new school during the transition process. We're confident they'll both continue to monitor and observe his needs and supply us with as much information as possible to allay our concerns.

Despite his impending graduation from AEIOU, we know we'll have access to them next year and they've

already built us up to be as confident as possible.

At school, our motorbike-obsessed Tyler is looking forward to making friends, learning new skills and funnily enough, no more 'rest time' in his day.

We are so appreciative of the support AEIOU has given us over the past three years. It's been such a constant for us and ultimately given us our life back. For those worried about taking the plunge, it's definitely a step worth taking and I guarantee, you'll never feel alone.

A gala night with the Stars

Saturday 13 May 2017

Saturday 13 May 2017

6.30pm for 7.00pm

The Boulevard Room
BCEC
Grey Street
South Brisbane

Dress Black tie

Tables of 10 \$2,500
Singles \$250

RSVP Date 1 May 2017

You are invited to party with the stars at AEIOU's night of nights, all in support of children with autism.

You will be treated to sumptuous al-la-carte dining, all perfectly matched with elegant wines from Craggy Range Vineyards.

World renowned entertainment will feature as part of this exquisite evening as well as an interactive auction with prizes fit for a star.

You can then dance the night away under the stars with one of Australia's most sought after bands.

★ Book today at www.aeiou.org.au/events or call AEIOU on 3212 1110



All proceeds will help create a lifetime of opportunities for children with autism.

Families
Early
Disability
NDIS
Supports
Children

goals

family

EXPERIENCING THE NDIS

The implementation of the NDIS remains a key focus for AEIOU as we continue to work hard to support families through the changeover. More than half of the families enrolled at AEIOU Townsville have now transitioned. We are also excited to be part of a trial service, commencing in early 2017, to support children's transition to local Townsville schools. This enhanced service has the support of the NDIS, Education Queensland and the Autism Hub.

Next to transition will be our Toowoomba centre, which will move to the NDIS model in January 2017. We have actively engaged with local families, both continuing and new to our service, and recently presented a series of short workshops to help them in the planning process. Parents in attendance said they left feeling more confident with the NDIS process. These workshops will be rolled out across all centres as they embark on the transition process.

To complement our workshop series, we have also rolled out an information pack, provided to all new families who enter our services. The information pack includes frequently asked questions, how to enrol with the NDIS, where to seek assistance, and what to expect.

AEIOU IN THE SPOTLIGHT



As a leading provider of early intervention for children with autism in Australia, AEIOU and our staff are receiving peer recognition through conference and event invitations.

Senior members of our program team attended the Australian Behavioural Analysis conference in Melbourne in September, networking with national and international experts on the subject. AEIOU program coordinator Di Keating, spoke on transitioning to the NDIS, highlighting AEIOU's experiences. Feedback on Di's presentation was extremely positive and Di was commended for her understanding of the topic.

AEIOU also attended the Kyd-X Youth and Disability expo in Adelaide in October. This inaugural event showcased organisations providing services to families in Adelaide. AEIOU Huntfield Heights Service Manager Nicole Schaumlöffel spoke on the importance of evidence based therapies in early intervention for children with autism.

On the Sunshine Coast, program coordinator Courtney Muckert also shared details of our program with attendees at the inaugural Sunshine Coast Health and Education Expo 2016. As sponsors of the event, AEIOU Sippy Downs program manager Erin Flugge and staff engaged with local families interested in our service, as well as professionals working in the field of autism and health.

Attending these events gives AEIOU the opportunity to not only highlight the value of early intervention for children with autism, but illustrates the effectiveness of the AEIOU program.

To deliver high quality therapy and education, AEIOU also seeks highly qualified and experienced staff. The roll out of the NDIS is expected to create thousands of jobs throughout Australia, and an extremely competitive employment market. At a recent Careers in Disability Expo in Townsville, AEIOU staff had the opportunity to meet with prospective employees who are not only qualified and experienced in working with children with autism, but are passionate about their profession.



VOLUNTEERING AT AEIOU...

Without our extraordinary army of volunteers, AEIOU Foundation could not carry out its extensive array of events and activities which raise our profile, and help us to provide our holistic service of supports and therapies for children and their families.

Volunteering Australia gives the definition of volunteering as time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.

This year, hundreds of parents, friends, corporate supporters and unique individuals gave willingly and generously of their time, energy and passion to help us maximise funds and boost awareness of AEIOU.

Volunteers, including corporate supporters EY, BDO and Westpac have supported us at our flagship events, in our centres, and out in the community, doing everything from selling tickets, guiding patrons, setting up equipment and even wielding tools at our centre makeovers.

The ongoing support and generosity of these wonderful souls is making a life-changing difference to our children at AEIOU.

A volunteer's story

By Catherine Hoey

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

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

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

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



CHAIN REACTION CONTINUES TO SUPPORT AEIOU

Chain Reaction is the ultimate corporate bike challenge raising money for children by challenging senior executives who have a passion for cycling and an awareness of their corporate social responsibility, to ride a 1000-plus kilometre course in 7 days. And that they did!

The Queensland Committee and 47 of Brisbane's elite corporates set off in Adelaide and rode through some of the best scenery in Australia, all in the name of AEIOU Foundation and the Starlight Children's Foundation - raising more than a staggering \$1m.

AEIOU is particularly grateful for this amazing support as the Chain Reaction Foundation assisted us with the building of our Gold Coast Centre and the 2016 ride will assist us with our new Logan centre.

Just when you thought it couldn't get any better, the Chain Reaction Foundation - Queensland Committee, led by Michael Byrom, announced it will again support us in 2017 with their ride from Sydney to Brisbane. Monies raised will assist us with the fit-out of our Logan centre.

James Morton AM, our Founder and Chair will join these inspiring men and women on the ride as they meet their challenges and fundraise for our children and families.



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 is recognised as a leader in evidence based early intervention and continues to expand.

The Lynn Wright Memorial Fund was established to recognise Lynn's commitment. 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.

The annual Lynn's Lunch, organised by the committee, not only raises funds, but also increases awareness of our service and program.

In 2015-16 the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund bequeathed more than \$39,000 to 31 families who would otherwise be unable to attend our program and receive vital early intervention which provides a lifetime of opportunities. We thank the committee for the long-term support.

WHAT'S ON.....



April 23	Take A Hike Toowoomba
April 29- May 5	Chain Reaction Sydney to Brisbane
May 13	AEIOU Gala Ball
May 15- May 19	Rotary Art Spectacular Brisbane
June 16	Lets Get Awesome for Autism

THE TIMES ARE A CHANGING...

AEIOU Foundation is in a unique position as one of the few non-government organisations which has a dedicated research and assessment team with strong collaborations within the ASD field. The Research and Assessment team works across three areas:

1. Research
2. Assessment
3. Curriculum

As a team, we work to integrate *research* and *assessment* outcomes of our children, to inform the *curriculum* of AEIOU. Each area will be briefly discussed in turn.

Research

AEIOU is involved in many research projects with organisations such as The Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Autism CRC), Griffith University, and the University of New South Wales to name a few. In order to do this, we collect data from children, parents and teachers at our centres. We are currently involved in a project related to understanding how best to support our children to transition to a new school. Another is to develop teaching practices for teachers to use in their work with children on the spectrum in their classroom. This means that through our research program AEIOU is contributing to Australia's knowledge of ASD.

AEIOU also works closely with the Research Advisory Group (RAG), chaired by Dr Beth Saggars, from Queensland University of Technology, which is a scientific collaboration between AEIOU and individuals from external research agencies who have expertise in undertaking research in ASD. RAG oversees research that has the potential to provide benefit to children with ASD and their families. 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.

Further to this work, RAG has identified the following research priority areas for AEIOU to concentrate on in the future:

1. Evaluation of AEIOU curriculum
2. Transition to school research: understanding issues specific to a child and also examining issues for the new teachers and school that the child is transitioning to.
3. School readiness issues: Identifying critical skills that are needed for children when they transition to prep/new school.
4. Delivery of program essentials: researching how many hours of intervention provide the best outcomes for a child.
5. Researching specific practices occurring within AEIOU.

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

Assessment

In order to “capture progress” of the children at our centres, we conduct standardised assessments. These are different to the informal assessments that are conducted almost every day with the children in our centres. The research and assessment team conduct standardised assessments which have been designed to

measure children's abilities compared to children of a similar age. The reasons we conduct standardised assessments are to:

- provide an assessment of children's progress in order to compare scores over time
- continue monitoring outcomes of the AEIOU curriculum
- continue providing assessment outcomes and data to be used in research
- produce assessment outcomes across AEIOU centres, especially useful for the NDIS.

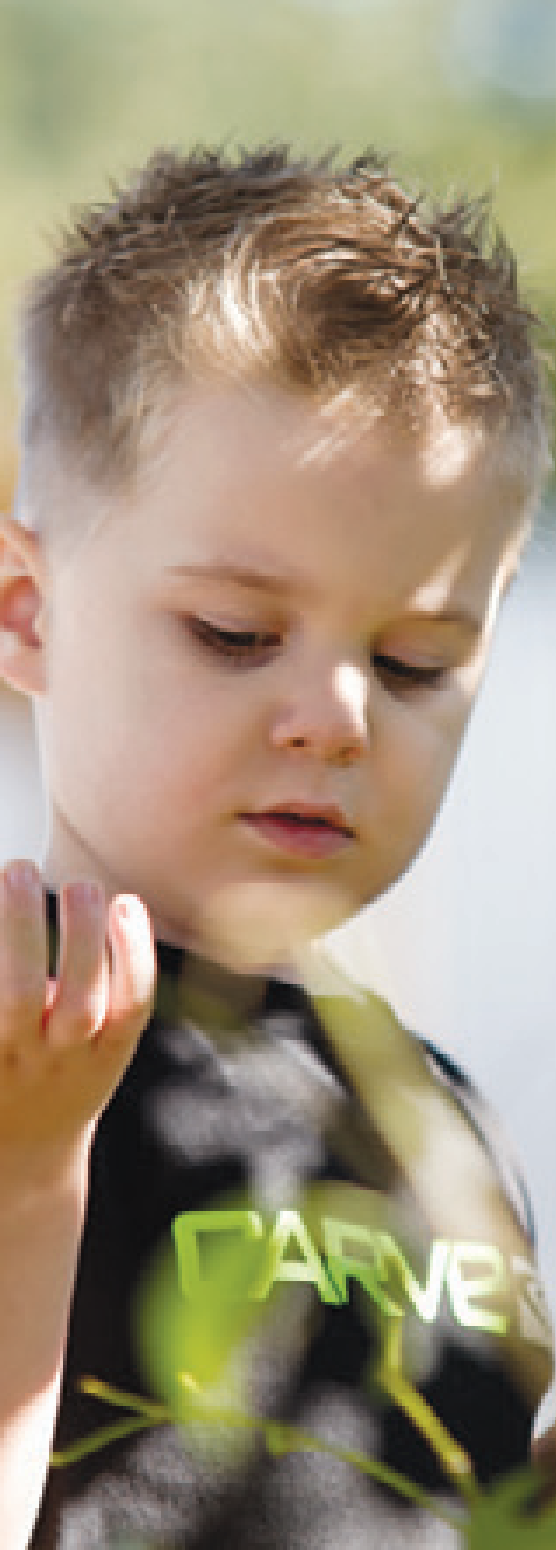
Curriculum

In conjunction with the centres, the research and assessment team would like to:

- assist in the development of the curriculum
- evaluate the model of practice (curriculum)
- present outcomes of the curriculum through research and assessment data.

During 2017 the Research and Assessment Team will investigate how to better integrate the research and assessment data to contribute to the development and evaluation of the curriculum.





THE ONLY WAY IS UP

By Natalie Cupitt

‘Well, I guess the only way is up.’ Through my tears, they were the first words I spoke to the doctor after we learned Finn had autism. I knew there was a limited time we had to shape his mind and I didn’t want to waste a moment looking for that next step, despite the anxiety I felt for what the future held.

Through early intervention, Finn’s future is constantly changing the more he learns. On the first morning we walked through the doors at AEIOU, the staff had Finn happily wearing a hat, something we always struggled with, despite our best efforts.



At this point, Finn was non-verbal, gave no eye contact and had food aversions. He was not interested in interacting with anyone, beside his immediate family, and we held great fears he would be forever like this. However, within the first days, weeks and months at AEIOU, we could see him steadily evolving. We gladly celebrated all the small achievements, because they led to much greater things.

As time passed, it wasn’t just Finn improving, but it was our family unit too. For my husband and I, the parent information sessions with the therapists were the key to growth between us and our child. The skills we learned have been so advantageous.

Finn has now started talking and has learnt how to go to the toilet. He’s also starting to communicate with his big brother, which brings us all so much joy. We have all come to realise he is so much more capable than we gave him credit for. We just needed to learn to be patient and give him the time to process.

We’ve opted for another year with AEIOU and our hope is that he may be able to attend a mainstream school in the future, however, we’re happy to navigate whichever avenue is meant to be.

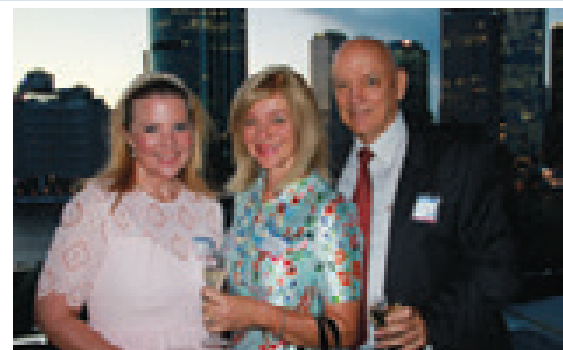
AEIOU has been an extended family for us and I cannot thank the staff enough for all the time and effort they have put in. They have helped shape Finn into the wonderful boy he is now.

THANK YOU TO OUR CHAMPION SUPPORTERS

More than 50 of AEIOU’s major donors and supporters gathered for an evening of fine wine and spectacular views to celebrate this year’s amazing achievements.

The generous support of these wonderful organisations and individuals has enabled the enrolment of more than 220 children in our service across Queensland and South Australia, construction of purpose-built centres at Brighton in South Australia and Logan in Queensland, and a record number of participants in Take a Hike. We have also seen great support through a multitude of beneficiary events.

Thank you to our gracious hosts and long-term supporters Mary-Jeanne and Scott Hutchinson for welcoming us into your beautiful home.



FAMILIES COME FIRST



Recognising that families require support and engagement, AEIOU Foundation focuses on equipping them with strategies and tools which provide opportunities to successfully navigate the early years.

All centres provide regular workshops on popular topics including behaviour management, mealtimes, transition to further educational settings, independence and social skills. Presented by our qualified staff, they not only provide evidence based information which helps in the home and community setting, but are an opportunity to meet with fellow families, ask questions and hear new ideas.

AEIOU also provides an online resource library of recommended reading and videos for families, and our recently released video series *Autism: The Early Years*, is free for all members of the community.

Parents also have the opportunity to attend forums to share information, advice and ideas. They are also an opportunity to provide feedback on our program. Forum representatives are encouraged to share this feedback at meetings with the executive management team and board representatives.



AUTISM THE EARLY YEARS

Has your child recently received an autism diagnosis?

Do you need support and advice?

Autism: The Early Years is a collection of nine short videos providing information to guide you through your next steps. Easy-to-follow advice, tips, and stories are delivered by therapists, researchers and families.

Topics include

- Understanding autism
- Help after a diagnosis
- Family impacts of autism
- Understanding behaviour
- Building toileting skills
- Dealing with a problem behaviour
- Coping with public spaces
- Helping your child make friends
- Creating independence and meeting your child's needs

Watch them for free at www.aeiou.org.au





BRONCOS 50:50

The relationship with the Brisbane Broncos is longstanding and one we value highly. This year we were again chosen as a charity of choice and the game fell on the farewell game for AEIOU Ambassador Corey Parker.

Our corporate partner BDO joined us on the night with a band of merry volunteers, 30 in fact, to raise awareness for AEIOU and sell 50:50 raffle tickets at the game. Our sincere thanks to all at BDO - we hit an AEIOU record for sales and look forward to season 2017 where we will be number one.

MELBOURNE CUP GLAMOUR AND GLITZ

Melbourne Cup is a time for glamour and glitz and this year the ladies and gentlemen attending Cloudland and Victoria Park complex events were all winners. Not only did they look fit for the occasion, but they wined and dined at two of Brisbane's elite premiere venues.

We were grateful for the opportunity and honoured to be named beneficiary for these events allowing us to showcase our life-changing programs and the positive outcome for our children.

Our amazing volunteers shone again and our sponsors Paspaley, Alex Perry Hotels, Infiniti, Samantha Ogilvie and Mitchell Ogilvie, WANTZ Committee 'Hot Laps', Cloudland and Victoria Park assisted us with raising \$20,000 from raffles and sweepstakes.

Thank you to Cloudland and Victoria Park - we look forward to working together in 2017.

OUR SUPPORTERS

Sponsors / Partners

Community / Trusts / Foundations

- Brisbane Broncos Inc
- Brisbane Broncos Community Foundation
- The Bryan Family Foundation
- Stan and Maureen Duke Foundation
- Chain Reaction Challenge Foundation
- Community Benefit Gambling Fund
- Flannery Foundation
- Griffith University
- Russell McKimmin Charitable Trust
- E Robert and Alison L Hayles Charitable Trust
- Queensland Community Foundation - Regional Grants program
- Rotary Art Spectacular
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- WANTZ Committee

Private philanthropists / Supporters

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

Ambassadors

- Alex Perry
- Corey Parker
- Ian Skippen
- Lee Holdsworth
- Tim Sharp

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for children with autism

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of opportunities
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