

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**26th February 2020**

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## **CONSTRUCTION STARTS: CANBERRA AUTISM HUB FOR CHILDREN**

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Canberra will become home to a world-class autism hub, with \$3.5 million in capital funding from the renowned [John James Foundation](#) facilitating the delivery of early intervention for up to 40 children per year and capacity for research and training.

The purpose-built AEIOU Garran Centre for Autism will be the first of its kind in Canberra, and will be owned and operated by [AEIOU Foundation](#), launching the Foundation's entry into the ACT. AEIOU Foundation, one of Australia's leading providers of autism-specific early intervention operates 10 services across Queensland and South Australia.

John James Foundation CEO Mr Joe Roff said that discussion with the AEIOU Foundation was initiated two years ago, with a goal to bring the expertise of AEIOU to Canberra for the benefit of the community.

"Canberra families have previously relocated to Queensland to access these services. Families will now be able to stay close to family and friends, with the autism-specific support they need," Mr. Joe Roff said.

Construction of the new AEIOU Garran Centre for Autism starts this week, with the occasion marked at a special sod turning ceremony today. The centre will be located on the corner of Curlewis Crescent and Rusden Street in Garran, and will occupy 1,200sqm of land with a state-of-the-art learning centre, playground and parking facilities. When the centre opens by early 2021, it will cater for children aged between 2 and 6 years who will be supported by a specialist team comprised of Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Behavioural Therapists and Early Childhood Educators.

AEIOU CEO Alan Smith welcomed the generosity and support from the John James Foundation for investing in evidence-based early intervention services that have the potential to change the future trajectory for young children with autism.

"This demonstrates commitment to young families and the community in Canberra and New South Wales. Early intervention is life-changing. It offers hope, unlocks potential and opens up possibilities for families and their young children at a critical time of their life," Mr. Alan Smith said.

"At AEIOU, children and their families receive unique support. We teach essential life skills that enable children to overcome the disabling aspects of autism, giving them the best chance to reach their full potential.

"Families also receive training and support, as they navigate the early years of an autism diagnosis," Mr Alan Smith continued.

AEIOU Foundation delivers a minimum of 20 hours of specialised early intervention per week in a naturalistic environment, similar to that of childcare and kindergarten setting, to best prepare children for transition to their next education setting. Utilising a transdisciplinary team approach, staff work together to develop and implement a range of group-based therapies and support in a long day-care setting.

Project Coordination will undertake the design (in consultation with the Buchan Group) and the construction works for the facility.

**MEDIA CONTACT: For more information, images or interviews contact AEIOU Corporate Affairs on 07 3320 7520 or [communications@aeiou.org.au](mailto:communications@aeiou.org.au)**

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**ABOUT AEIOU Foundation:**

AEIOU Foundation is a leading provider of early intervention for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), providing evidence-based therapy and education. AEIOU Foundation is a family-focused profit-for-purpose organisation established in 2005, which provides every child with the best opportunity to gain vital independence and achieve their full potential. Operating in Queensland and South Australia, AEIOU enrolls more than 350 children each year, who are aged 2 to 6 years.

**For more information about AEIOU Foundation visit [www.aeiou.org.au](http://www.aeiou.org.au).**

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