

eyeson autism



Time to Shine and Shine we did!

Our 10 year anniversary Gala Ball was a fantastic night. Guests arrived at Brisbane City Hall to see the iconic Grand Ballroom bathed in pink and blue with a rolling back drop of images and recognition of our amazing supporters and sponsors from the first 10 years of AEIOU - together with an aerial artist who greeted guests while pouring the first champagnes of the evening!

Our 220 special guests heard the story of AEIOU's first ten years and our vision for the future from founder Dr James Morton AM. Emily Baitch shared her family's story of her son Charlie's diagnosis with ASD, the amazing progress he made at AEIOU and how he is enjoying his first year of mainstream schooling.

We were privileged to have the evening compered by Tim Cox of Radio 612 ABC and to have a special guest speaker; The Hon. Cameron Dick, Queensland Minister for Health, who attended the Ball in addition to State Opposition Leader, The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP and Brisbane City Council Opposition Leader and Councillor for Richlands, Milton Dick.

Our special thanks go to our Gold Sponsors – Craggy Range Wines, ASCA, Quality Food Services and the Brisbane City Council and our Silver Sponsors – Bennett & Philp, Anthonys Fine Jewellery, Khemistry, Staging Connections and Epicure.

The room was filled with AEIOU's supporters, sponsors and major donors, many of whom have been part of the AEIOU family for ten years. AEIOU Ambassador Ian Skippen together with the entire Team Jacob Take a Hike Team (led by past parent Steve Williams) were there to celebrate.

Under the control of Auctioneer extraordinaire Sam Devlin, the live auction was a roaring success with some amazing 'money can't buy experiences' including the unique opportunity to have a portrait painted by international artist, motivation speaker and AEIOU Ambassador, Tim Sharp.

For those who weren't lucky enough to take home one of the amazing live auction items they took their chance at the Tree of Hope. Each person who purchased a pink or blue balloon, which made up the tree's foliage, had the chance to win the one lucky balloon with a stunning prize of a diamond ensemble of ring and bracelet from Anthony's Fine Jewellers.

We promised a night to celebrate and celebrate we did! Our guests hit the dance floor and danced up a storm to the awesome and entertaining sounds of Brisbane's hottest band, Hot Sauce.

Thank you to our sponsors

Major Sponsors



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Sub Sponsors



Dr James Morton and his wife Louise concluded the evening by cutting a celebratory cake made by Camira Centre mother, Emma Lowe.

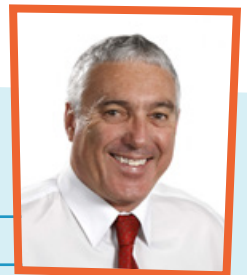
A huge thank-you also to Sami Gale, Nathan parent and owner of Love Letters Photography who donated her services as AEIOU's official photographer on the night. It is thanks to Sami we can share with you all the amazing photos in our gallery that capture the excitement and glamour of our night of nights.

We look forward to the next 10 years as we continue to create brighter futures for our children with autism and ensure every child has the right to our life-changing program.

Visit our Time to Shine night at <https://aeiou.org.au/gallery/aeiou-10th-anniversary-gala-ball--68>

We are 10! A word from our CEO

Alan Smith – CEO



In our 10 year anniversary year, AEIOU Foundation has much to be grateful for and to celebrate.

When AEIOU first opened its doors in 2005, in a small converted church building in Moorooka, we had just 12 children and six autism trained teachers and therapists. James and Louise Morton used their personal savings to fund AEIOU's inaugural centre after discovering there was lack of suitable, high quality early intervention available when their young son, Andrew, was diagnosed with autism.

Over the last 10 years AEIOU has grown to nine centres and expanded interstate supporting almost three hundred children each year.

Inside this 'Decade of Difference' edition of *Eyes on Autism* you can read how some of the first children and families who were supported by AEIOU are going now, almost 10 years after early intervention. Their stories are truly inspiring and the reason AEIOU is here. AEIOU's mission remains the same; to enhance the lives of children with autism and their families through early intervention coupled with practical and caring support.

AEIOU Founder Dr James Morton AM believes if you can reach children with autism early enough with quality intervention you can drastically change their life trajectory, this is evident in our 'Decade of Difference' stories.

Today, AEIOU is one of Australia's largest providers of high quality early intervention therapy for children with autism with a vision for further national expansion. Our next centre outside of Queensland is planned to be established in Melbourne within the next couple of years.

Our unique, manualised program aims to ensure children with autism reach their potential and the delivery of our program is consistent across our centres as we expand.

AEIOU is at the forefront of autism research in Australia through our Research Advisory Group, our collaboration with the Griffith University Autism Centre of Excellence and as a founding partner of the first national Autism Cooperative Research Centre.

And we continually advocate for our families to ensure their needs are recognised by Government and through awareness raising in the wider community.

AEIOU's Time to Shine Gala Masquerade Ball gave us the perfect opportunity to celebrate the difference AEIOU has made to the families and children who have shared our journey over the last 10 years and to thank all those who have supported the AEIOU Foundation.

AEIOU couldn't do what it does without the support of Government or without the passion, care and commitment of our generous major donors, supporters and volunteers, our Board, our wonderful ambassadors, our incredible families and our dedicated team of staff.

Great thanks also goes to AEIOU Founders Dr James and Louise Morton. Without the Morton's commitment, persistence and passion to make a difference for children with autism, AEIOU would not be the organisation it is today.

I'm very excited about what the future will hold for AEIOU. The AEIOU team is constantly evolving and growing, continually learning, training and expanding their knowledge and skill set; leading the way in early intervention for children with autism.

Alan Smith
CEO

Join AEIOU on social media



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Planning for the transition to the NDIS

The NDIS is currently being trialled at different sites around Australia and will commence in Queensland on 1 July 2016. AEIOU is at the forefront of the assessment of the NDIS to ensure the best possible outcome for people with autism particularly in the early stage of life to ensure adequate access to high quality, outcome focused early intervention.

AEIOU has gained useful knowledge of the application of the NDIS to families of young children with autism through our centre in Adelaide where an NDIS pilot program is operating. We will also be at the frontline of the transition to the NDIS in Queensland with AEIOU's CEO Mr Alan Smith's recent appointment to the Queensland Government's NDIS Transition Advisory Group (QTAG).

The Advisory Group's role will be to consult with people impacted by the NDIS and provide feedback and advice on the challenges that may be encountered during the launch and transition phase.

The QTAG will be a key source of advice to Government to ensure the voices of the sector; representatives, people with disability and their families and carers are heard throughout the process.

The QTAG is made up of:

- members of organisations that represent people with disability and carers;
- providers of specialist disability services; and
- members of disability peak bodies.

Of the 16 members of the QTAG, AEIOU Foundation is the only organisation representing autism.

With a start-date in Queensland of 1 July 2016, AEIOU Foundation has been continuing to establish the impact the NDIS will have on all people with autism and in particular families of young children with autism. It is our hope to see the best possible scenario for people with autism under this scheme at all stages of their life.

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. AEIOU is concerned that individuals who use NDIS funding to access early intervention for autism can be assured of the fidelity, quality and measurable outcomes of the service or program they are accessing.

AEIOU's focus is on building abilities through early intervention, we want to ensure the NDIS is not just supporting autism as a disability but has a focus on building ability for people with autism of all ages and allowing parents of children with autism to remain in the workforce if they are able and choose to be in the workforce.

We will continue to keep AEIOU parents and our research and fundraising partners informed of what to expect of the NDIS as the Queensland start date draws closer.



New Minister for Disability Services opens additional rooms at Gold Coast Centre

Since the opening of our Gold Coast Centre in April 2014 it has been a goal of AEIOU to gain increased funding to meet the large currently unmet need of supporting more children with autism in the Gold Coast region and to more fully utilise our purpose-built facility. This goal has finally been realised, we can now double the number of families we help in the region by increasing from 20 places to 40.

New Queensland Minister for Disability Services, Coralee O'Rourke, made a formal announcement at the centre in late April this year about the State Government funding these additional places saying, "I commend the AEIOU Foundation for making a real difference in improving the lives of children with

autism. Parents and families have seen the benefits of these early intervention services too."

With a background as a working parent, a Degree in Early Childhood Education and as a former Director of a community based learning centre in Townsville, Ms O'Rourke, has a unique perspective of our work at AEIOU. In her new role as Minister for Disabilities, Ms O'Rourke states her passion is family and community and she believes that working together is when a community can effect great change for the better. This has certainly been the case on the Gold Coast where AEIOU and families in the region have been lobbying Government for some time for the funding of additional places at our Gold Coast Centre.

The additional places were filled almost immediately and there are still a considerable number of children on our waiting list in the Gold Coast region. The recruitment of additional new staff is complete and our newly enrolled children have started.



Spectacular on all fronts

For the second year running AEIOU is humbled to be the major beneficiary of the Brisbane Rotary Art Spectacular, Queensland's most prestigious annual art exhibition hosted by the combined Rotary clubs of Brisbane High-Rise, Hamilton and Stones Corner. With a new venue - Waterfront Place and a new online sales gallery, the event was a resounding success.

Over 350 of Australia's best art pieces, carefully selected by the 2015 Rotary Art Spectacular curator, multi-award winning, internationally renowned painter and cartoonist, Brett Lethbridge were displayed at Waterfront Place by artists from all over Australia.

Opening Night was an elite occasion with 300 sponsors, artists, Rotarians and AEIOU supporters in attendance. Against the stunning backdrop of Waterfront Place guests were treated to an exclusive first glance at the exhibition whilst enjoying Craggy Range fine wine, canapés and live entertainment.

This year marked an impressive milestone for the Rotary Art Spectacular in raising almost \$1.5 million for local charities like AEIOU Foundation. We thank the Rotary Art Spectacular committee, event sponsors including Reliance Worldwide and MGD Wealth, Waterfront Place and importantly the volunteers who made the event possible and who helped raise \$27,000 to create brighter futures.



On your marks

Hosted by AEIOU Ambassador Ian Skippen, *Fast Five for Kids* was held at St Laurence's College and had something for everyone from challenging obstacles, creative designing, spine-tingling racing, activities for the kids and a tasty BBQ to boot.

There was friendly, yet fierce competition atop the rooftop field with over 15 teams vying for the Fast Five for Kids Champion Team Award, with The Flintstone's taking out the title. Team Samsationals were the highest fundraising team raising \$3,380 and 'Five Cougars Thanks' won the best dressed team.

Thank you to Samsationals, Five Cougars Thanks and Lachie & Wyatt's BFFs for their mammoth fundraising effort and congratulations to all teams who helped raise \$10,000 to support a child at AEIOU Foundation for a year.

It was great to see our parents, both present and past join in with AEIOU staff and their families in a fun day out for all.

A very special thank you to our long term supporters St Laurence's College for their amazing and continued support of all things AEIOU.

Did you know?

Autism affects 1 in 100 people in Australia.



Join AEIOU on social media





Bragging Rights



We all know the importance of grandparents but especially to a child with autism and their family. Our Nathan centre was pleased to see grandparents Paul and Sue who dropped by with a cheque to say thank you and brag just a little about their bestie, Tomas who is now in Prep at mainstream school and 'excelling' Sue tells us. The cheque was on behalf of the members at the Pacific Golf Club at Carindale who have been fundraising for our centre.

Watch out – the Great Corporate Caper is coming!

Is it a bird? Is it a plane – no it's AEIOU's Great Corporate Caper.

Many of the challenges faced by the children who attend AEIOU centre's involve pushing through barriers, tackling difficult obstacles and taking themselves outside of their comfort zones.

That is exactly what AEIOU's Great Corporate Caper will do for Brisbane's top twenty business and sporting leaders in November. They will be pushed beyond their everyday limits and tackle five tasks and raise much needed funds for AEIOU.



Volunteers doing extraordinary things at AEIOU ...

The last six months has seen lots of new and exciting endeavours in the volunteering space at AEIOU.

Coinciding with our continued relationship with the Rotary Art Spectacular, we recruited two fantastic interns from Martin College in January 2015 to assist with Marketing and Graphic Design, Rodrigo De Aguiar and Ellen Wu. They brought with them a wealth of specialised knowledge and eagerness to learn and became a valuable part of our team. We thanks Rodrigo and Ellen very much for their amazing contributions and wish them all the very best with their future studies.

We also kicked off our 2015 partnership with the Brisbane Broncos in March, cheering them on against the 2014 premiers the South Sydney Rabbitohs.

In searing, 37 degree heat, 35 wonderful people volunteered their time selling tickets in the 50-50 draw. Volunteers brought endless energy and smiles, mingled with footy goers and helped us to sell over \$14,000 of tickets in the first draw of the NRL season.

Not only that, outside the stadium the amazing guys at *Super Heroes for Hire* brought along a few of their famous friends, while Mr Toot provided expert balloon hats and animals and the lovely Bec Wilson painted many little (and some big) faces!

If you would like to register your interest in volunteering with AEIOU Foundation, and help make a big difference to the lives of children with autism and their families, email Jasmine at volunteers@aeiou.org.au

We make a living by what we get.

We make a life by what we give.

Winston Churchill



**The Great Corporate Caper
Friday 13 November 2015**

What's on

1. Take a Hike Brisbane – Sunday 11 October
2. The Great Corporate Caper – Friday 13 November
3. AEIOU Toowoomba Centre Golf Day – Friday 16 October

A family story

Sheridan Buckley

Our daughter Sheridan was diagnosed with severe autism when she was three years old. The Paediatrician said she was easy to diagnose because her autism was textbook and severe. We had no idea how Sheridan would develop from there ... would her autism remain severe? Would it get worse? Could it improve and the impact of it on her life be minimised and managed?

I suspected from about 12 months of age that Sheridan may have autism. Sheridan wouldn't make any eye contact or gestures, and she had no non-verbal communication and when she began to walk it was on her tip-toes.

At 15 months old Sheridan would categorise numbers by their shape, she wouldn't play with toys in the way they were designed for play but would deconstruct them and sort all the like objects together in a line. Sheridan was starting to talk but was mainly echolalic. She also had sensory issues with tactile things and would love to stim with lights and have her eye-balls right up close to the TV screen.

We heard about the possibility of the AEIOU program starting from James and Louise Morton at a Mater Hospital event back in 2003, soon after Sheridan's formal diagnosis. I knew that this would be the best option for Sheridan and so we paid a deposit and waited until it was established. In the meantime, we did 12 months of in-home therapy which was hugely expensive (about \$50,000 p.a.) with multiple therapists coming in and out of the house five days of the week. This meant that I also had to be housebound for the five days of the week that Sheridan was having in-home therapy. The only other early intervention therapy option was a two morning a week program run by Autism Queensland that had a very long waiting list at that time so we were very pleased when we got word that AEIOU was going to start operating in 2005.

Sheridan was able to start at AEIOU in the first intake in February 2005 when she was almost four years old. AEIOU were just amazing; it was fantastic to have a one-stop shop of speech therapy, occupational therapy and (at that stage) psychology all together in the one program.

"2005 was a really intense year for us. We lived, breathed, ate, slept and talked autism."

It was our whole life and it was Sheridan's whole life. We received so much support from the teachers at AEIOU and it was great to get to know other parents with children at the same stage with autism and be able to rally around each other knowing that we could understand each other's circumstances.

By 2006, with the foundation of a year of intensive intervention and the continuation of the intense multi-disciplinary therapy as a supportive back drop, Sheridan

was able to attend AEIOU part-time and mainstream kindy part-time. Sheridan flourished that year, and her language really came together.

We transitioned Sheridan to a mainstream school for Prep that supported lots of children with additional needs such as English as a second language, which was great for her as her language was still developing.

Now, Sheridan is in Grade 8 at a mainstream high school which is beautifully supportive of her. Sheridan has learnt to live within society's demands and the demands of school life, and if people

show understanding of her quirks like the need to talk to herself in class or to move around at different intervals then she can manage very well. Sheridan's friends really value her authenticity as she doesn't try to be someone she is not or to be like everyone else, she doesn't pretend to be any one other than who she is.

As Sheridan has a verified condition, she gets longer to do exams and is allowed movement breaks in class time. She'll often sit on a fit-ball when she's doing her homework so she can rock or have movement while she's thinking.

Sheridan does very well at English, is an excellent creative writer and is doing well academically. Her attendance and focus skills are still very good, since her time at AEIOU, so she doesn't get distracted in the class-room by any chat or social/friendship issues. Sheridan has a great mental strength and is so determined. We're so proud of her and all she's achieved.

From a three year old with severe classic autism, Sheridan has emerged now 10 years later as a 13 year old, mainstream Year 8 High School student with high functioning ASD. The early intervention she received at AEIOU was an essential foundation for her.

"I honestly don't know where Sheridan would be today without AEIOU."

Sheridan still has autism and always will, but she is living well with autism and it is only a small part of her life.

By Michelle Buckley



Sheridan Buckley(5) at AEIOU Moorooka 2005



Sheridan Buckley (14) Year 8 high school student

Did you know?
AEIOU has a short-fall of \$10,000 for every child that attends our program, every year.

Join AEIOU on social media





Jenni Heenan Director of Fundraising proudly accepts a \$10,000 QCF cheque for AEIOU Sippy Downs Centre

Major Donors ... Major Help

QCF also held their annual Philanthropist of the Year Awards on 18 June. AEIOU Foundation nominated Mary-Jeanne Hutchinson and Craggy Range Wines (Terry and Mary Peabody) for their on-going and continued support of AEIOU Foundation. Craggy Range Wines provided all wine for our 10th Anniversary Gala Ball as well as providing the major auction prize 'Life is too short to drink bad wine' which was fiercely fought out. Mary-Jeanne did make the finals for Philanthropist of the Year and from AEIOU's perspective, was the clear winner of this award.

AEIOU is extremely grateful for ongoing support received from our private, community and corporate philanthropists. Without their support, parent fees would increase by at least \$10,000 per child per annum and our campaign to build more centres nationally would stall.

The support of these philanthropists enables AEIOU to achieve amazing outcomes that ensure the highest possible social and economic return for our supporters and for society as a whole. We provide philanthropists with a worthy cause that has a proven track record in changing lives. We are the first-choice provider for many philanthropists because we have a clear and demonstrably beneficial program that creates positive impacts in perpetuity.

We have the perfect partnership. If you would like to be involved as a major donor to enable us to do what we do best, *allow children to reach their full potential in life* and in so doing, create positive outcomes for families and society in general please give us a call on 3212 1112. Making a difference starts with you.



- Mrs Beverly Power
- Brazil Family Foundation
- Bryan Family Foundation
- Stan and Maureen Duke Foundation
- Flannery Foundation
- Dr Ross Forgan-Smith
- Terry and Mary Peabody

Grants

Nearly \$1.6M worth of applications have been lodged since the last newsletter was issued. This represents over 55 applications with an average value of nearly \$30,000.

\$500,000 worth of grants are pending (fingers crossed). We have secured \$173,000 in grants but are very hopeful of securing a lot more. We were unsuccessful in securing a total of \$324,000 in grant applications to date.

Recent grant successes include (and a big thank you to funders):

- Nathan – Shade Sail for Sensory Garden - Community Benefit Gambling Fund
- Nathan – New chairs for Parent's Room and Staff Room - Community Benefit Gambling Fund
- Townsville – Shade Sail - Community Benefit Gambling Fund
- Toowoomba IT Upgrade - Community Benefit Gambling Fund
- 2 child placement gap funding from the Queensland Community Foundation (QCF)
- A donation from the Queensland Teachers Union (via QCF)
- The E Robert Hayles and Alison L Hayles Charitable Trust (via Perpetual Trustees 2015 IMPACT Philanthropy Application Program) to fund 10 child placement gap funding at our Townsville Centre
- We are also very grateful to the Keith Gay Charitable Fund who (via trustees QCF) provided AEIOU with 2 child placement gap funding for Toowoomba and Sippy Downs centres



Lethal Lee Visits Townsville

Our super speedy AEIOU Ambassador and V8 Supercar driver Lee Holdsworth certainly brought excitement to our Townsville centre recently. In Townsville for Race 17 – Castrol Edge 400, Lee took time out from his busy media and practice schedule to visit, play with the children and sign Walkinshaw Racing posters and race caps.

It was a day to remember for our children and staff alike. We thank you Lee and wish you the best for the rest of the Supercar race season. Go Lethal!



Take A Hike Takes Flight...

A stunning Sunday morning in Townsville saw the unveiling of the new Take A Hike model. The event kicked off at 6am with those eager beavers who committed to walking the 42km marathon. They were then joined by the 21km half marathon contenders and then in came the 10.5 km participants.

The foreshore of Townsville was the perfect backdrop for Take A Hike... now in its fifth year and saw over 70 hikers took part and raised vital funds for the AEIOU Foundation Townsville Centre.

This inclusive model saw Mums with their little ones in strollers for the first time, taking part in the 10.5km leg. We saw those committed people who come back year after year, pushing their personal limits and tackling the 42km marathon...

those last 2km would have been a real mental challenge but people dug deep and found the endurance needed to finish.

The village type atmosphere at "base camp" was the perfect spot to recharge batteries, rehydrate and take a snack for energy. There was a real sense of camaraderie and scenes of encouragement from people who had only met for the first time. People are joined together in a common purpose... to challenge themselves and to support children attending AEIOU Townsville and this was certainly evident on the day.

A heartfelt thank you to those people who so kindly gave of their time to make it all happen and our local supporters:-

- Rotary Club of Ross River for our wonderful BBQ at "base camp"

- Pickering's for the use of Hyundai loan vehicles
- Paradise Outdoor for their stunning billboard and great team of volunteers and hikers
- Our 'set-up' team who dragged themselves up in the wee small hours
- Townsville Bulletin

This display of support proves that Townsville as a community really gets behind our local centre and enables AEIOU Foundation to reach more children with autism and their families in this region.

See you next year Townsville and our sincere thanks for your support.



Did you know?

AEIOU early intervention should be a right for every Australian child.

Join AEIOU on social media





Meet Yolanda Borucki, AEIOU's new Operations Manager

Recently AEIOU created a new role of Operations Manager in our Executive Management Team. AEIOU, CEO, Alan Smith said, "The addition of the Operations Manager role will bring great benefits to the direction of our organisation and the continued smooth running of our centres. I am delighted that Yolanda Borucki, Centre Manager, Nathan has been appointed to this position. Yolanda has been with AEIOU for five years and will bring her leadership, operational experience, extensive knowledge of AEIOU and her professionalism to this role."

The Operations Manager will oversee the program, staffing and all operational matters with all Centre Managers reporting to the Operations Manager under this new structure.

JURASSIC JAM

SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 3PM



FEATURING

ROGER THE CABIN BOY
THE MANIOWS
THE VINYL FRONTIER
THE HANOVERS
THE BUDGEE SMUGGLERS

IN SUPPORT OF

AEIOU FOUNDATION

\$25 + b/f only at

<http://tickets.oztix.com.au/?Event=53552>

Brighter futures start with you

We are reliant on the generosity of many through donations, events, grants and volunteering to deliver our life-changing program to children with autism and their families. Simply put, we cannot do what we do without your support and commitment. The demand for our services grows each and every week with waiting lists on the rise. Please help us to ensure every child has the right to a brighter future by assisting us. Contact Jenni Heenan on 07 3212 1100 to discuss how you wish to make that difference.



Did you know?

More than 70% of children who attend our full-time program go on to mainstream schooling.



Research – vital to the future of our children

AEIOU has a dedicated research team that is working hard across a number of studies designed to evaluate and improve outcomes for children with ASD, their families, and support our valued team members. Conducting this research is linked to both our federal funding at Nathan, as well as being an essential element of good practice (Prior & Roberts, 2012). We are also part of the Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders CRC and are engaged in a number of exciting studies designed to support individuals with ASD and their needs, including understanding long-term outcomes, literacy, and transition to school.

Since 2010 we've been monitoring outcomes at Nathan as part of our federal funding, and have expanded this outcome evaluation to Bray Park and Camira in recent years. To date, a total

of 254 children have been assessed and have completed standardised assessment of their thinking and reasoning, ASD symptoms, everyday life skills, and communication. Assessment was conducted when children started the program, and after 12-months and/or on exit to the program. Changes over time have been compared and shown significant improvements in all of these areas. Additionally, initial analysis shows gains have further strengthened after the implementation of the curriculum. So far we have published two papers showing outcomes:

- *A pilot study of the effects of an Australian centre-based early intervention program for children with autism published in The Open Paediatric Medicine Journal* by Paynter, J., Scott, J., Beamish, W., Duhig, M., & Heussler, H. (2012).

- *An Evaluation of an Australian Autism-Specific, Early Intervention Program published in the International Journal of Special Education* by Paynter, J., Riley, E., Beamish, W., Scott, J. G., & Heussler, H. S. (2015)

We sincerely acknowledge and thank our long-time major donors, the Bryan Foundation for their continued support thus allowing our involvement in Autism CRC.

For further information on research at AEIOU please feel free to contact Jessica on jessica.paynter@aeiou.org.au

Did you know?

Up to \$3.4m community benefit per child.

Double Shot of Happiness

AEIOU Ambassador Tim Sharp and his mother, Judy Sharp have been busy over the past weeks completing the rounds of national interviews to promote their new book, *A Double Shot of Happiness*. We are ecstatic to report that at the time of print, their amazing account from Tim's diagnosis of autism to today is now No 2 best seller in Australia.

If you haven't read this inspirational story, do yourself a favour and buy it today. We all know that it will be No 1 very shortly and deservedly so. Go Tim and Judy!



Did you know?

Autism affects four boys to every one girl, represented by the colours of AEIOU's logo.

Join AEIOU on social media



A family story

Michael Kiley

When our son, Michael, was diagnosed with autism in 2004 at the age of three, our reaction was, "Well, what on earth do we do now?"

Autism was a completely new area for us, so we initially needed to research what it was and what it meant for our family. In the meantime we were visiting multiple therapists and a Paediatrician through the Mater Children's Early Development Clinic and attending a Special Education Development Unit autism-specific playgroup one morning a week.

Towards the end of 2004, things became clearer for us. Another playgroup Mum told me she was enrolling her daughter at a new early intervention centre called AEIOU for the following year. After looking at some information about AEIOU I knew at once that this was the place for Michael. Luckily, Michael was a student in the first intake at AEIOU Moorooka in 2005.

We were so excited about the possibilities for Michael when we saw what the AEIOU program offered. There were so many facets to autism and areas where Michael needed help and we just hadn't known how we would tackle all those areas individually. The AEIOU program was the answer; it also would provide us with the knowledge and support to be able to support Michael at home. It was great to feel as though we were able to do something pro-active to help Michael.

Although, it wasn't all plain sailing, at that stage the program was all self-funded so financially it was a large burden. We lived on the other side of town from Moorooka and I worked full time. My husband resigned from his job so he could transport Michael and our daughter to and from school. Michael had major tantrums in the early days at AEIOU as he adapted to the routine and the new environment, however, the staff were amazing with Michael.

Before Michael started at AEIOU he was completely non-verbal, he didn't interact with us, his older sister or other children, had sensory issues and would have major tantrums for no apparent reason. Michael would play differently to other children; he would line up toys and lie horizontally to watch the wheels of the car spin. He loved being outside but would just run away, again, for no apparent reason.

"The three years Michael spent at AEIOU had a huge impact on him, it transformed his prospects and so many more things were possible for him."

One of the greatest things Michael learnt at AEIOU was definitely routine - turn taking and stopping and starting activities. Michael also really benefited from copying what other children did, particularly with toileting. He learnt to follow instructions, which made life so much easier for us as well, and developed the ability to transition from one task to another. He also worked on his fine motor skills and the skill that really revealed itself was Michael's ability to concentrate on a task which has, again, been great for us but more importantly meant Michael was able to have a sustained interest in an activity.

As he developed these skills and became better able to communicate with us, his tantrums and frustrations lessened greatly.

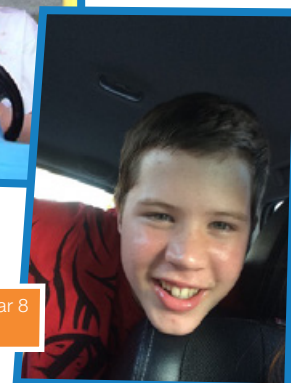
When Michael was six we transitioned him to Mitchelton Special School. He was still a runner at this stage so he really needed to be in a secure environment. The running eventually stopped when he was about 9 and he transitioned to Year 5 at Eatons Hill State School. Initially, Michael spent about 90% of his time in special education which decreased to 20% special education and 80% mainstream education.

Now, we have a teenage Year 8 boy at Craigslea High School who loves to talk (very loudly sometimes!) and engage with people. There are five other children with autism and an additional special education teacher in Michael's mainstream classroom.

Michael always has a story to tell and is a very happy young man who is enjoying life. He taught himself to swim when he was about three and loves the sensation of being immersed in water. He's snorkelled about eight times now, the first time at the Barrier Reef when he was only four or five. He loves car shows, listening to music, playing the x-box and is taking boxing lessons. He learnt to surf on a family holiday to South Africa, kayaks in his own kayak and loves ocean swimming.



Michael Kiley at AEIOU Moorooka 2005



Michael Kiley Year 8 Student in 2015

Autism does still limit Michael in some ways; academically he is about 2 – 3 years behind his cohort and socially he has very strong ideas and will often say the wrong things at the wrong time.

However, autism also provides opportunities for Michael.

"I believe 100% that Michael was put on this earth to show people you can enjoy life no matter who you are. He is a joy to be around."

He's making a big contribution to other children with higher disabilities through a mentoring role in a support group we are involved in. Michael is able to understand the children, communicate with them and be their friend in a non-judgemental way. It is just beautiful to watch.

We're so grateful AEIOU's early intervention program had started operating at just the right time for Michael. The program really gave Michael important foundation skills to help him enjoy and make the most of life. We don't know what Michael will do when he finishes his schooling but the options now are far greater than we imagined back when Michael was first diagnosed.

By Marie Kiley

Did you know?

A Decade of Difference for children with autism and their families.



de1ou
FOUNDATION

A decade of difference

for children with autism

TAKE A HIKE BRISBANE

SUNDAY 11 OCTOBER 2015

Take A Hike Brisbane is back - bigger and better than ever.

What better way to spend a Sunday than walking the magnificent Brisbane River, working together to positively change the life of a child with autism! Call on your colleagues, business associates, friends and family and get your team together today. How?

Walk. Run. Race

- **10.5km as an individual or as a team**
- **21km half marathon individual or as a team**
- **42m marathon individual or as a team**

Celebrate with a BBQ at the finish line to share your war stories, have a massage, acknowledge your amazing achievements and most importantly, take pride in the knowledge that you have helped create brighter futures for children with autism.

So, dust off those trainers, start taking the stairs, and prepare to get your feet on the street to support children with autism. Let's work together!

Call Karen on 07 3212 1110 or E: Karen.descovich@aeiou.org.au

Register today and start your fundraising www.takeahike.org.au/event/hikebrisbane