

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

---

## **CANBERRA'S FIRST EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM OFFICIAL OPENING TODAY**

---

Canberra is home to a world-class autism centre with [AEIOU Canberra Region](#) celebrating its official opening today, Wednesday 17 August. The event was officiated by His Excellency the Hon David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor General of Australia, and patron of the [John James Foundation](#) which brought the service to Canberra.

AEIOU Chair Susan Rix AM commended the vision of the John James Foundation. "This project goes beyond capital investment: this is a genuine partnership which is testament to the John James Foundation's commitment and vision for strengthening health outcomes in Canberra," Ms Rix said.

Ms Rix recognised the local community: "AEIOU has a long history in Queensland and South Australia, but we are newcomers in the ACT. This centre is the result of a shared vision and an inclusive community. I thank the families who choose AEIOU, the donors who support the children, and the education and health professionals who have welcomed AEIOU so warmly."

John James Foundation Chair, Professor Paul Smith, acknowledged the collaborative partnership with AEIOU and the community approach to bring the centre to the Canberra Region, with support of other partners including reputable local Builder Project Coordination Australia, and AEIOU Project Architect, Buchan Group

"John James Foundation recognised the need for autism-specific supports in Canberra. Families experience long delays to access therapeutic support, and it was astounding to learn families would move across the country to access early intervention," Professor Smith said.

"Partnering with AEIOU to establish this service is part of our long-term commitment to strengthening health outcomes in our community," Professor Smith said.

AEIOU Founder and Patron A/Prof James Morton AM said it is imperative families raising children with autism have access to tailored supports, and the opportunity to select a service that meets their needs.

"Autism affects people differently, but there are common characteristics and traits. Children at AEIOU typically present with 'classic' characteristics and benefit from specialist supports. AEIOU's programs create strong foundations for children to access the community and participate meaningfully within it, while simultaneously building the capacity within family units," A/Prof Morton said.

John James Foundation committed \$4.9 million in capital funding to construct the centre, in addition to the land it is located on, and developed and project managed the construction. It will retain the building, which was designed to include sustainable building elements, such as a 33KwH solar energy system with

battery storage to generate green energy and to provide AEIOU with a passive income from distributing surplus energy production back to the main energy grid supply.

The service has opened in stages, with three classrooms in full operation, and a fourth set to open later this year. The team is comprised of occupational therapists, behaviour analysts, speech pathologists, early childhood teachers and highly trained early intervention specialists.

Ms Rix AM concluded by giving further insight into the assistance provided by the service to the families of the Canberra region.

“There is a team around each child, with therapists and educators working together, in partnership, each day. Families are supported with opportunities to develop new skills, too. Most importantly, AEIOU is fun. It is inclusive, playful, and respectful for learners and their families.”

“This is a community which recognises the life-potential of a generation of young children. It has been a long road to get here, and the teams across John James Foundation and AEIOU are proud of this milestone,” Ms Rix concluded.

Enrolments for places in AEIOU Canberra Region’s fourth classroom are open and interested families can discuss joining the waitlist by contacting AEIOU on 1300 273 435. For more information visit [www.aeiou.org.au](http://www.aeiou.org.au)

***MEDIA CONTACT: For more information, images or interviews contact Lauren Griffiths, Threesides, on 0417 409 264 or [lauren.griffiths@threesides.com.au](mailto:lauren.griffiths@threesides.com.au)***

- ENDS -

---

**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.

AEIOU Canberra Region was made possible thanks to the vision and partnership of the John James Foundation.

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

**For more information about John James Foundation visit [www.jjf.org.au](http://www.jjf.org.au)**

---