

Understanding autism is unique centre's purpose

A PURPOSE-built childcare centre will be the first of its kind for the region when it opens its doors mid-year.

The million-dollar project, to be established at University of the Sunshine Coast, will focus on children with autism.

The AEIOU Centre will have up to 20 places for children with autism spectrum disorders and pervasive developmental delay, and about 70 places for mainstream children.

The non-profit AEIOU Foundation is dedicated to providing a professional, full-time early intervention program for children.

Director of education Diane Heaney said the unique concept was for children from all backgrounds to interact.

"There are many benefits," she said.

"Peer modelling where children can learn from each other... friends, mentors, social skills.

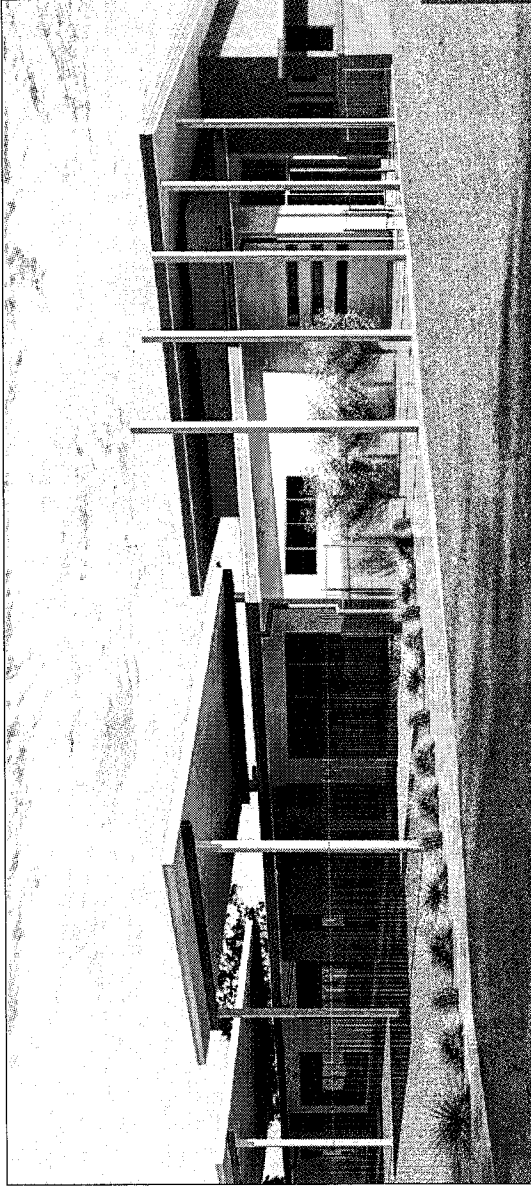
"Children with autism also have many strengths that other children can learn from."

Ms Heaney said the centre would benefit the community by providing care not only for the children of university students and teachers, but for the wider region.

USC Disability Services officer Bronwyn Crowther said the university was proud to be a part of the establishment.

"The centre will be an outstanding boost to the campus community," Ms Crowther said.

"It will provide excellent training and research opportunities for



ADVANCED CARE: Learning from children with autism is the focus of the AEIOU Centre, to be built at the USC.

students and staff to enable them to understand and work with young people with these disabilities.

"The development of such a centre on the Sunshine Coast is an

indication of the recognised need for such a service and the increased need to raise awareness, educate and assist the community to support and understand the im-

acts and management of Asperger's and autism, which starts in early childhood through to adulthood."

➔ For more information about the AEIOU Foundation visit www.aeiou.org.au

CCTV call as lifesaving club trashed

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CALOUNDRA MP Mark McArdle is calling on the State Government to boost security in the central business district.

The call follows an attack on the Ithaca-Caloundra City Surf Lifesaving Club, which was vandalised at the weekend.

Thieves broke into the Bulcock Beach clubhouse in the early hours

of Saturday destroying everything in their sight.

Doors and walls were smashed, food thrown through the building and expensive equipment stolen.

Mr McArdle said it was a "gutless act".

"It is now time for the State Government to put in CCTV throughout the Caloundra central precinct so that this doesn't happen again, or if it does we can quickly arrest and charge those respon-

sible and bring them before the court to be dealt with," he said.

"I have written a letter to the police minister asking him to urgently assess the need for CCTV to ensure it is included in the next state budget.

"Caloundra needs a safe environment and that means having modern technology and resources."

The community has rallied to support the club.

Newly formed charity group, the

Henzells Caloundra RSL Foundation, came to the rescue with a financial donation.

RSL's Lloyd Mills said the foundation was pleased to assist.

"This was why the foundation was set up, to be able to assist quickly," Mr Mills said on Monday.

"Ithaca is a good club that helps protect lives at Bulcock Beach."

Club treasurer Paul Barry was ecstatic at news of the donation.

"The response we have had from

the Caloundra community is both surprising and absolutely tremendous," he said.

"The thieves tried to hot wire the quad bike and a local mechanic fixed it."

"A local plasterer turned up and said he would fix the walls, while a lady came in and said she would donate some cash to help us buy some of the smaller equipment that has gone missing. The community won't tolerate this behaviour."