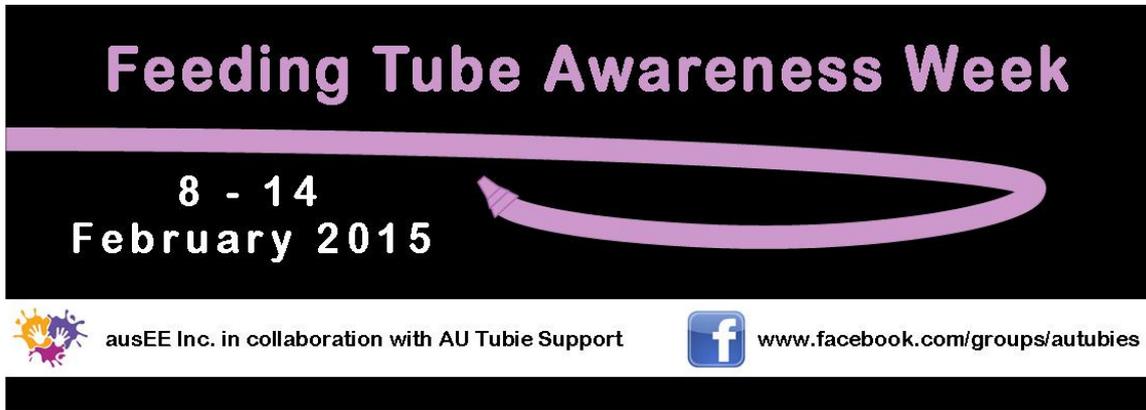


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**Feeding Tube Awareness Week**  
8 - 14  
February 2015

 ausEE Inc. in collaboration with AU Tubie Support  [www.facebook.com/groups/autubies](http://www.facebook.com/groups/autubies)

**ausEE Inc.** is partnering with facebook support group AU Tubie Support to promote Australia's first **Feeding Tube Awareness Week** to be celebrated nationally **8 – 14 February 2015**. Together they hope to raise awareness for those living with feeding tubes and the day to day challenges they face.

There are many reasons why children or adults may require feeding tubes. ausEE's president, Sarah Gray's 11 year old daughter Bella has Eosinophilic oEsophagitis (EoE) and had a feeding tube inserted in her stomach when she was 7 years old due to the complexity of her food allergies and chronic illness.

Tube feeding, also called enteral nutrition, is a way food or formula can get into your body if you are unable to eat or unable to eat enough. Food in liquid form is given through a tube into the stomach or small intestine.

Tubes can be placed in different places along the gastrointestinal tract, the two most common methods are a nasogastric tube (NG), which is a tube that is put up the nose and down into the stomach and is mostly used for short term tube feeding. A gastrostomy, sometimes called a PEG, (percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy) is placed in the stomach during a procedure. Some PEG's have a tube always hanging out, and some replacement PEGs are flat ('low profile', or 'buttons'). Bella has a low profile feeding tube and this allows her to participate in all of her life's activities including being a flyer in her favourite sport Cheerleading.



*a charity dedicated to improving lives affected by eosinophilic disorders*

Web: [www.ausee.org](http://www.ausee.org)  
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Kate Anderson started the facebook group **AU Tubie Support** to bring together all Australians who need a little bit of help and support in tough times. Being a mum of a tubie she knows just how hard it can be, with good days and bad days and whatever else happens along the way. Life with a tubie is different every day! Her 3 and a half year old son, Zephyr has had a feeding tube from 6 weeks of age. Their family lives by the ruling he can do anything until he reaches his own limits. Zephyr was NG fed for 10 months then had a button inserted at 11 months of age. Suffering from two rare allergic conditions, EoE and FPIES (Food Protein-Induced Enterocolitis Syndrome), Zephyr is now only able to eat 9 'safe Foods' and his nutrition is supported by his elemental formula feeds which occur 4 times a day and overnight as well.

Kate says 'It was overwhelming at first, I found it hard trying to get help and reach other parents, so I came up with AU Tubie Support and we are slowly growing, learning and supporting each other.'

'Living with a tubie has changed our life and perspective. We take each day as it comes, from infected sites, to buttons and tubes being pulled out and put back in, to Zephyr swimming at the beach, skating and loving the slip n slide on Australia Day'.

Zephyr also attends Kindy and the staff members have been completely open and willing to learn about life with a tubie and allergies. Last year they had all the children in Zephyr's class participate in activities that involved the tubes that hook up to Zephyr and they even made musical instruments out of his feeding container bottles. The children were encouraged to wear purple (the colour of the feeding connector tubes) on the Friday of Feeding Tube Awareness Week. This year the date has been set and on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> of February, purple will be worn again.

Those living with feeding tubes who are looking for support can join AU Tubie Support on facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Autubies>

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