



'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'

# odyssey NEWS



## The team

At Odyssey House we are committed to providing quality services and care. Our staff come from a diverse range of backgrounds which enriches the service delivery environment.

The staff are to be commended for their ability to deal with a demanding client population whose needs become greater. It is the staff who are able to see through the veneer of hostility or reticence often presented by our clients, to see the potential that lies beneath that façade.

The staff provides the consistency within the treatment environment that allows our clients to make lasting changes to overcome their dependency on alcohol and other drugs.

A great team is supported at all levels.

Our dedicated Board of Directors are responsible for the governance of the

organisation and to ensure that the organisation is properly managed.

The objective of our leadership team is to lead their teams in the best delivery of the programs and services we offer. The leadership team is led by our Chief Executive Officer James Pitts and consists of a Chief Operating Officer, Financial Controller and Finance Manager, Marketing and Fundraising Manager, Chief Facilities Operations Officer, Chief Clinical Officer and Therapy Manager, Community Services Manager and Progressive Learning Centre Principal.

It is worth noting that 30 per cent of our staff have been part of the Odyssey family for over ten years each, and the combined years of all staff working in Odyssey is nearly 370 years - an amazing effort.

We thank them.

Odyssey House is dedicated to giving people something like addictions like drugs, alcohol & gambling never can: a future.

If anyone is able to provide support we certainly would be grateful. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

## ODYSSEY Recognition

Support that Odyssey House has recently received from the following donors is greatly appreciated.

- Mr C Anderson
- Mr D Austin
- Australian Youth & Health Foundation
- Mr P Espie
- Ferris Family Foundation
- Fesq & Co
- Mr T Golder
- Mrs J Hawker
- John Lamble Foundation
- Liangrove Foundation
- Mr W Loewenthal
- Mr D Maloney
- Malleons Stephen Jaques
- Mr R Maple-Brown
- Nidigi PTY LTD
- Mr G Pratt
- Ms B Price
- Mr A Rogers
- The Hunt Family Foundation
- The Rodney & Judith O'Neil Foundation
- The Vernon Foundation
- Victor Smorgon Fund
- Mr P Wiggs
- Mrs J Wilkinson

## What is Mental health?

The term 'Mental health' has had a stigma attached to it for many years. This stigma in recent years is slowly disappearing as almost half the total population (45.5%) will experience a mental health disorder at some point in their lives.

Mental illness is a term used to describe a group of illnesses that affect the mind and the brain and is something that affects 40% of residents at Odyssey house. A mental illness such as depression, schizophrenia, anxiety, bipolar or personality disorders all affect the way a person thinks and acts and has a negative affect on their mental health.

At Odyssey house alcohol related depression accounts for 39% of co existing diagnoses therefore Odyssey provides many support services focusing on mental health for the residents, to help them through their different stages of the program. Some include, Psychological services, psychiatric services, one on one counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy.

Substance and drug abuse can make a person more vulnerable to mental illness or after prolonged use can bring on a mental illness. People who already have mental health problems are more likely to abuse substances and drugs as they feel that it will help with the symptoms of their mental illness.

When a person is affected by both mental illness and substance/ drug misuse this is referred to as dual diagnosis and can make for a more challenging recovery. The Odyssey House 'Dual Diagnosis in treatment group (DDIG-ITS)' is a speciality group designed to help clients with a dual diagnosis through their recovery.

Mental health is a serious issue; if you have concerns you should seek help immediately.

## Drug Action Week

### Drug Free Expo a massive hit

TAHNAE GOLDSWORTHY

THE Macarthur Drug Free Expo has been hailed a success with innovative and informative displays attracting record crowds to Friday's event. Organised by Odyssey House, Alcohol Women's Network and TAFE Campbelltown, the expo was run as part of Drug Action Week and brought service providers together with community members seeking help on issues related to drugs and alcohol. Odyssey House assessment and referral centre administrator Alicia Constable said the expo at Campbelltown Civic Centre attracted twice as many service providers as last year's event.

"It brings everyone who supports people with a drug and alcohol issue together," she said. "I think it has a huge impact. People don't have to feel ashamed to seek help and they don't have to hide." Mission Australia drug and alcohol community development worker Trish Kelly said the expo was a great way to inform the community about the organisations and is great for referral centre staff and residents alike. "Expo sponsors were Youth Solutions, Community Drug Action Team Macarthur and the Australian Stockbrokers Foundation.



The expo's staff members offer free information (clockwise from left). Macarthur's free drug services join together to educate against drugs. University of Wollongong's Director Sandra and Barnard's Brewery and Amvic set up their stall. A staff member offers advice to a Macarthur resident.

### Another Successful Submission for the Progressive Learning Centre!

The Progressive Learning Centre staff were delighted to learn when they returned to work this year that a submission that they had submitted before going on holidays was successful. The project they submitted is supported by the NSW Government's Climate Fund and resulted in a grant of \$23,145 to install new energy efficient lighting, flow control

valves on taps, a water efficient toilet suite and an air-conditioner for the medical office eliminating the need to heat & cool the whole wing which was not occupied during the day. The project is estimated to save an estimated 479 megawatt hours of electricity, 513 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and 1.5 million litres of water in the first 10 years.

## in the press



### "Recovering is something everyone can do if they persevere"

Seventeen months sober, 32-year-old Finbarr Heather was brought back into the community by help.

### Welcome return for Shibui

It was a simple choice for Shibui Joseph when he was 'head hunted' to return to Deniliquin for work. The drug and alcohol clinician had spent a few months working with Deniliquin Mental Health last year and said he felt welcomed by the community. So when the local mental health team was recruiting for a drug and alcohol worker in Deniliquin, he was more than happy to take the job. Originally from India, the 34-year-old had been working in Lightening Ridge before coming back to Deniliquin. He had previously been employed locally on a six-month contract from March 2010, when former drug and alcohol support worker Brian Hill left to take up a position with Vinnies Services.

Before that, Mr Joseph had worked with Odyssey House in Sydney, an organisation which focuses on addictions like drug, alcohol and gambling. He started there soon after migrating to Australia in 2008. Mr Joseph said he grew up in a rural area and was pleased to be working in Australia. "In India we come from a farming background, and the people here treat me very friendly," he said. "I've always had a lot of support from the local community, including my bosses, and I've been welcomed by the community. "I'd rather be here than in Sydney."

With a study background in social work, Mr Joseph offers counselling for addiction and dependency of drugs and alcohol, which he says is closely linked with mental health. He is based in the Cressy St office at Deniliquin, but will provide services to the region. His outreach program extends to the Finley, Jerilderie, Tumbarumba and Berrigan areas, through the community health centres. Clients can seek help at any time, or may be referred to the service by a doctor or other authority. Deniliquin Mental Health is located inside the Cressy St Centre at 376 Cressy St, Deniliquin. To arrange an appointment, phone 5880 2100. "Anyone needing assistance or advice on a range of issues may also call the 24-hour Accessline service, on freecall 1800 800 944.



Shibui Joseph is welcomed to Deniliquin Mental Health by team manager David Baker.

**YES! I would like to help Odyssey House assist residents to live a drug free life.**

Please find enclosed my donation of: (please circle)

\$50 \$100 \$500 or \$\_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my cheque / money order made payable to the Odyssey House McGrath Foundation or charge my credit card.

Visa Mastercard Amex Diners Club

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: (Dr/ Mr/ Mrs/ Ms/ Miss): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Facsimile: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month to be deducted from my Credit Card until revoked in writing by me or Odyssey House.

DONATIONS OVER \$2.00 ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

For more information on Odyssey House, visit [www.odysseyhouse.com.au](http://www.odysseyhouse.com.au)  
 Phone: (02) 9820 9999  
 Fax: (02) 9820 1796



Please return this coupon and your donation to:  
**Odyssey House McGrath Foundation,**  
 PO Box 459, Campbelltown, NSW, 2560.



Odyssey House is dedicated to giving people something addictions like drugs, alcohol & gambling never can: a future.

## WHAT'S ON

Odyssey House Anniversary and Open Day  
Sunday 30 October

Ph (02) 8307 8838 or email  
sandy@odysseyhouse.com.au



Odyssey House Graduate Sally, CEO James Pitts and Professor Jan Copeland

# Odyssey House Ladies Luncheon

The annual Odyssey House Ladies Luncheon which supports the Parent's and Children's program at Odyssey House was recently held on Friday 3rd of June. The luncheon featured a wonderful presentation from one of Odysseys long standing board members, Professor Jan Copeland followed by a very moving story from one of Odyssey House's recent graduates Sally.

Professor Jan Copeland is the founder and the director of the National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre and also the assistant Director of the National Drug and Alcohol Centre, both at the

University of New South Wales. With Jan's knowledge and experience she presented on 'Women, alcohol and other drugs: use, harms and treatment'.

Odyssey House Graduate Sally shared her story of addiction to her Odyssey House recovery. Her inspiring road to recovery bewildered the guests and made for much conversation and applause.

The event was a success, raising much needed funds to continue to provide support to the Parent's and Children's Program. We thank everyone who supported this event.

A message from the Chairman



John Coughlan

A new financial year always highlights our achievements of the year past and our challenges moving forward.

It was with much sadness that Cathy Doyle has resigned from her position as Chairman of the Odyssey House Board due to her professional commitments. Cathy always ensured that the Board was driven and motivated focusing on positive outcomes for the Odyssey House program.

As the Acting Chairman for the Board I will continue this process, along with tracking the strategic plan and the needs of the quality improvement program to ensure that Odyssey House is a Best Practice program.

In these tough economic times we are constantly reminded by the increasing demand of our services and the costs to run a Best Practice program. We will continue to engage with our supporters and strengthen our long term relationships.

A number of events have been held over the past couple of months to support Odyssey House. Perpetual recently hosted the annual Ladies Luncheon. There was a strong turn out to hear from the guest speakers Professor Jan Copeland and Odyssey graduate Sally.

The annual Real Men Cook celebrity chef luncheon has just been held at bel mondo. This is always a fabulous event with a sell out crowd. Be sure to read more about our celebrity chefs in our next newsletter!

The original 'Articles of Association' are in the process of being updated to a formal Constitution thanks to the pro bono work of the law firm Corrs Chambers Westgarth. The new Constitution is expected to be ratified at our Annual General Meeting to be held in October.

Finally, the Board remains dedicated and will continue to work and support Odyssey House during this challenging time.

John Coughlan  
Acting Chairman



# Finbarr's Story

Growing up in Durham drinking was accepted as part of Finbarr's daily family life.

"I can barely picture my mum without a drink in her hand, she was an alcoholic and as her law career took off, my parents divorced, her drinking escalated and eventually contributed towards her death two years ago with cirrhosis of the liver".

When Finbarr started University he felt the odd one out and started drinking to feel accepted socially, before long it started to take over any ambition to study and he dropped out of University.

Picking up the odd job here and there to get by his life slowly spiralled out of control as his drinking escalated the worse his personal life became.

**"I could easily drink six litres of cask wine a day and what ever else I could get my hands on"**

"I would be so ill and shaking in the morning I would start drinking as soon as I woke up, on the way to work (if I had a job) at work, and then more to help me sleep at night".

Spending most of his time now homeless Finbar was slowly dying inside, he could barely eat with what ever he did manage to eat he would throw up.

Finbarr met his wife Elissa online with a mutual love of music. Over a couple of years the friendship soon developed romantically and Finbarr moved to Australia. "Elissa knew I was an alcoholic, but she could also see who I was on the inside. With her encouragement and support it was time to get the help I desperately needed".

Finbarr first entered the Odyssey House medically assisted Withdrawal Unit. "Shaking, Cold sweats, hallucinations, confusion and anxiety were just some of the symptoms that I went through during that week; I couldn't have done it without the medical support".

When Finbarr first entered the residential program he was extremely nervous and felt intimidated by the environment and its rules. Finbarr soon developed coping mechanisms and learnt to love himself for the person that

he is with the help of Odyssey House.

Since completing the program and with the skills he learnt working in Odyssey House Woodwork shop (A component of the Odyssey House School - Progressive Learning Centre) Finbarr is now working part time as an assistant at a specialist furniture manufacturer. The rest of his time is spent studying to become a librarian at TAFE.

Finbarr now walks around with confidence, poise and a sense of happiness about himself.

**"I am now a role model for other residents giving them the confidence to keep going, recovery is something everyone can do if they persevere; its just if they want it bad enough"**

# Help our work live on

Most of our income comes from the generosity of people just like you. Every gift counts - whether it's through donations to collection boxes or taking part in our events. This year we are taking an active part in 'Include a Charity Week from 12th - 18th September', helping to raise awareness of the importance of gifts included in wills.

It's a common myth that you have to be wealthy to leave a gift in your will, but nothing could be further from the truth. After taking care of family and friends, you'll be amazed at what one final gift, no matter how big or small, can do.

Whatever the amount, we're extremely grateful for any gift that's been included in a Will for us, as it helps us to continue to assist individuals overcome their dependencies upon harmful external agents by empowering them through the concept of self-help and the ability to integrate, live within and contribute to the community at large.

Including a gift in your will is a very simple and straightforward thing to do

as well. Just ask any professional Will provider or solicitor who will show you how.

Of course we don't expect you to write or update your will right now. We appreciate that you need time to think about taking care of your family and friends and how you can support your favourite charities. Instead, we only ask that you don't forget how powerful a gift in your will could be. You could make a difference and ensure that your last wishes are something to remember.

Please keep it in your mind, discuss the subject with your family and friends and then maybe, when the time comes, you'll consider including us in your will and help our work live on.

**"Everyday we are making a difference to lives, big and small"**



A message from the Chief Executive Officer



James A. Pitts

The recent death of singer Amy Winehouse reminded me of the significance of the work that we do at Odyssey House. The organisation has been in operation for over 33 years during which it has provided services to over 30,000 young men, women and their dependent children. These have been, and remain individuals whose lives have been rendered out of control and chaotic due to their dependence on alcohol and other drugs.

Their initial entry and participation in the program is tentative as they face the reality of their lives often for the first time in many years without drugs in order to cope. We recognise how difficult this transition can be. Therefore we ask each resident to follow the 'Rule of Three', which states "By first doing I proved it could be done; The second doing followed with ease, And the third slipped by unnoticed, I had a habit of living!"

The transition which takes place within individuals who participate in the program is demonstrable. The key to this is 'participation'. Each individual is expected to participate to the best of their ability, whatever that ability is. By so doing people who professed their ability to do things which never came to fruition start to see tangible results. Their previous fears, anxiety and low self esteem are replaced by courage, confidence and pride in what they accomplish. This is due to the fact it is the residents undergoing rehabilitation who are responsible for the day to day management of the program.

The person who stands before us at the end of the program is completely different from the one who entered some months ago. Their sense of accomplishment and pride has been achieved through the difficult process of facing their emotional conflicts with honesty and determination. They have learned that life has many ups and downs and how to cope with these without the use of drugs. They have learned to like themselves and this has been reinforced by the concern and support their peers and the staff have shown. The catch line in Amy Winehouse's song rehab was, "they told me to go to rehab and I said no, no, no". I would say to anyone who recognises they have a problem due to their drug use and its suggested they go to a rehab like Odyssey that, 'they go, go, go!'

James A Pitts, MA  
Chief Executive Officer