

# Odyssey House

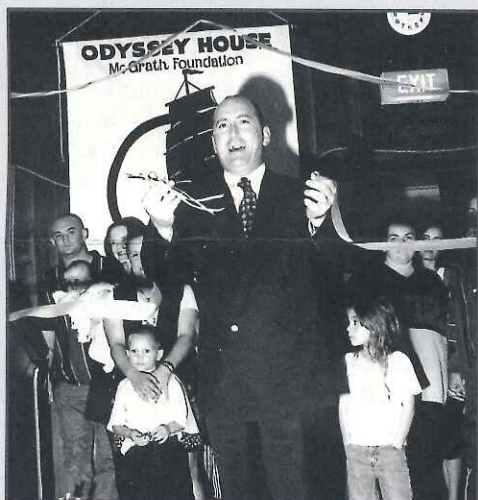


Christmas Newsletter 1999

## *New Cottages Make for a Special Family Christmas*

This Christmas will be a particularly special one for the new residents of our Parent's and Children's cottages which were opened amid great celebration on Sunday, 31 October 1999. After many months of building, the cottages were opened by the Minister for Health, the Hon Craig Knowles MP in front of a crowd of some 200 dignitaries, residents, family and friends of Odyssey House.

The cottages will provide a private family environment for parents and their children living at Odyssey House. Each cottage will house three family units comfortably in self-contained apartments with communal dining facilities.



The Hon Craig Knowles MP cuts the ribbon officially opening the Cottages, watched by parents and children.



General Manager of Odyssey House James Pitts says, "It was wonderful to finally open the cottages after a long period of design and building. Even though there are finishing touches still to be done, we are looking forward to the parents and children moving in for Christmas," he said.

"They can now live as a family in a 'home' and this is so important - especially at Christmas time. They can enjoy private family time and celebrate in their own way still sharing Christmas with their co residents during the day".

The money to build the cottages was raised via the Odyssey House Corporate Care Appeal with donations coming via private corporations, trusts and foundations as well as individual donations.

The celebrations on the 31st also saw the graduation of four residents of Odyssey House. One graduate Troy (pictured above with General Manager James Pitts) said Odyssey House had changed his life beyond recognition.

Congratulations to the graduates. We wish you the very best for the future!

*Photography by Tim Ollis.*





## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The 1998/99 financial year has been one of great progress for the Odyssey House McGrath Foundation. The highlights include the following.

1. Federal government financial support for our Detoxification Program over four years.
2. The State Government's very successful Drug Summit, with the allocation of additional funding in the State Budget for rehabilitation.
3. The construction of two houses at Eagle Vale for our Parents and Children's program. Funds to cover the completion and furnishing of these buildings are currently on hand.
4. The continuation of our residential and non - residential Gambling program.
5. Urgent repairs and maintenance to the ageing Eagle Vale building have been carried out, and will continue to do so. It is hoped for funds to become available to renovate the building to allow better use of the space available.
6. The containing of all expenditure for the year - in keeping with the limited funds available.

In July 1999, the Hon Peter S M Phillips AM resigned as the chairman of the Odyssey House McGrath Foundation, and from the Board after 23 years. On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and residents (both past and present), we would like to place on record our sincere thanks for his outstanding contribution.

The new financial year promises further progress on all our major activities - the residential and non-residential drug, alcohol and gambling rehabilitation programs, the expanding parents and childrens program and additional accommodation being added for our Detoxification program at Robin Hood Farm.

The Board acknowledges the excellent work and leadership of our General Manager - Mr James Pitts and we would like to thank all staff for an outstanding year. We look forward to continuing to work with you in this important life saving charity.

**Allan Rogers**  
Chairman

# Odyssey House

## Takes its Place at the Summit

*Odyssey House* was involved in the recent and much talked about NSW Drug Summit - the first State or Federal initiative of its kind since the 1985 Premiers Conference which established the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse.

This important summit, organised at the invitation of the Premier Mr Bob Carr, was held in response to the community's growing concern over the escalating death toll due to heroin overdoses and related problems of illicit drug misuse.

Odyssey House General Manager James Pitts participated as the Co - Facilitator of the Health Maintenance and Treatment Services Reference Group, one of the 11 reference groups held during the weeklong 'talkfest'.

He said, " It was only natural for Odyssey House to be invited to be involved in the summit. We have been one of the organisations the government has relied upon over the years to make comments on trends in the drug using population. Additionally, Odyssey House has a strong tradition of contributing to Policy Initiatives and debating relevant issues within the field.

"Finally and most importantly however," James added, "Odyssey House continues to provide a comprehensive range of services to the drug using population. Therefore our input is based on real knowledge and credibility."

The Summit brought together 11 working groups covering topics from Young People and Drug Use, Building Skills, Breaking the Drugs and Crime Cycle, Drug Education in Schools and The Community and Drugs in Rural and Regional NSW.

The ultimate aim is that the work of the Summit will see a better range and mix of services flow to the community across NSW. The particular focus being regional and Rural NSW where a number of gaps in service delivery were pinpointed.

" The greatest benefit I believe is that all parliamentarians must be more aware in a real sense of the issues associated with alcohol and drug misuse," said James. "The results which will flow to Odyssey House are the same as those which flow to the community, an enhancement in the resources allocated to the alcohol and other drug areas."



## General Manager's Message



The time has gone by so rapidly it is nearing the end of another busy and productive year at Odyssey House. We have had one of our most exciting periods of expansion in service delivery as well as additions to our physical plant.

In March this year we started accepting admissions to our Detoxification Program, which was funded through a grant from the Commonwealth Government's "National Illicit Drugs Strategy". The funding for four years ensured we were able to provide this vital service. The grant also provided for capital improvement funds which will enable us to renovate an existing building at our 'Assessment and Referral Centre' to house the expanded Detoxification Program. We expect the building to be ready for occupancy in February, 2000.

We moved our Community Counselling services, which include the Non Residential Counselling Program and the Non Residential Gambling service, to new premises located in the Sydney CBD. The facilities allow for more space and privacy for the counsellors and the growing client population.

Other highlights include our participation in the historic New South Wales Drugs Summit; funding from the Commonwealth's National Illicit Drugs Strategy - Round two to employ a specialist in child development for our Parents and Childrens program; and the continued support of parents, family and friends as we attempt to assist the young people in the program to take back control on their lives. It has been a wonderful year and we look forward to the new millennium!

## Odyssey House Residents Honoured

Two residents of Odyssey House were recently honoured for their creative work by The Self Help Organisations of NSW, both of them being presented with certificates of participation.

Melinda and Matt were also involved in the Campbelltown City Council Initiative, "Kickstart Your Art" at the Campbelltown Bicentennial Art Gallery.

Melinda's submission was titled "Sailing My Odyssey" and was a multimedia presentation encompassing screen and linoleum print, collage, acrylic and pastel, and photography.

"I really enjoyed photography at school, (it was) one of the few things I did enjoy!" said Melinda.

"This piece explores the ups and downs of my life journey until now and includes glimpses of my goals".

"The uses of a variety of media helps to explain the diverse parts of me; the confusion and difficulties, the struggles, the beginning of a new direction, a new path," said Melinda (pictured below with her work).

Matt's submission was titled 'Emotions in Turmoil' - a Multimedia piece which included screen print and acrylics on paper.

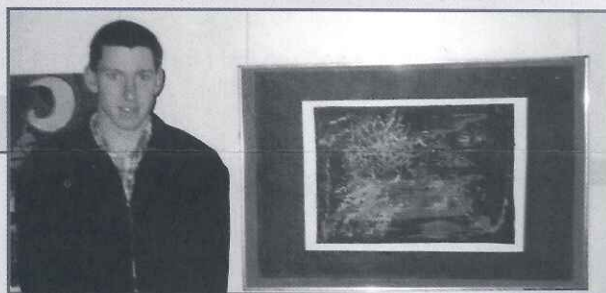


"I have only taken up visual arts as a means of expressing myself recently and it is exciting to discover I have the ability to express myself in a way that is different than I am used to", says Matt who is pictured below.

Matt believes that art has become an important outlet for his frustrations, fears and insecurities as well as the positive thoughts he has. For him, 'Emotions in Turmoil' represents exactly what the title says - a painting more of energies and vibrations than specific images or designs.

He explains the emotions represented include confusion, anger, pain and sadness intermingled with 'high' states.

"These emotions have been brought about partly by drug misuse and depression which has led me to where I am now, Odyssey House. Here I am slowly regaining control of my thoughts, feelings and emotions," he says.



Melissa Grub, Teacher of the Screen Printing Shop at Odyssey House, feels through its multifaceted program, Odyssey House attempts to provide residents with tools to learn to identify and express positive emotions. Previously such emotions were expressed through alcohol and drug misuse, acting out, self harming and self defeating behaviour.

"The journey of Odyssey House is the journey toward positive expressionism and behaviour - what better way to reinvent this expression than via art."

**With your help, Odyssey House can continue to provide the best programs possible to help young addicts on their journey toward their new direction.**



## A Space Odyssey

On Friday 5 November, the 1999 Odyssey House Ball was held at The Westin Sydney. Looking toward the new Millennium, the evening was themed A Space Odyssey and was MC'd by Channel 7 newsreader Mr Ross Symonds. Proudly sponsored by Coca Cola, the evening's dramatic special effects were created by Tp Events with the night's celestial entertainment by the Odyssey House Choir and The Hollywood Horns.

Over 400 guests partied into the night with around \$100,000 raised. A special thankyou to Corporate Traveller, proudly part of the Flight Centre Group; Audrey Page and Associates, Brook Printing, The Westin Sydney, Mr Ross Grant, Fesq & Co and Huntingdon Estate Wines plus the hundreds of companies and individuals who supplied the wonderful prizes for the Space Balls Lucky Dip.

## Tooheys Donates \$84,460

Tooheys Pty Ltd continued its support of the work of Odyssey House this year by recently donating a cheque for \$84,460.

Tooheys has been committed to recognising the harms which may possibly be caused by drugs such as alcohol and raises money throughout the year to assist Odyssey House with its rehabilitation programs.

Odyssey House applauds Tooheys for this initiative which highlights its recognition of its responsibility to the greater community.

Pictured Odyssey House General Manager James Pitts, former board Chairman Peter Phillips, Tooheys Managing Director Julian Davidson.



*YES! I would like to help Odyssey House!*

Please find enclosed my donation of: (please circle)

\$50 \$25 \$100 \$500 or \$.....

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

Amex



Bankcard



Mastercard



Visa



Card Number

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Name on Card .....

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DONATIONS OVER \$2.00 ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE. Please return this coupon and your donation to Odyssey House McGrath Foundation: Box K1115 Haymarket Post Office NSW 1240

Ph: (02) 9211 2400 Fax 9211 2368