



## ODYSSEY HOUSE



*A Calm in  
the Sea of  
Addiction'*

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*Odyssey House resident Shawn and General Manager, James Pitts take time out to inspect the redevelopment work that has started at the main Odyssey House facility.*

## A new House of Hope

The year at Odyssey House has started with an amazing optimism and a spirit of adventure among the staff and residents, as the refurbishment of the 65-year-old main Odyssey House facility at Campbelltown has begun.

Building work started in earnest in February 2003 and looks set to keep staff and residents busy throughout the year, with plans for new and expanded living, dining, kitchen and sleeping spaces for the residents and office spaces for staff.

The original Odyssey House facility was built in 1938 and was designed for the Christian Brothers and their philosophies of isolation, contemplation and seclusion.

"These ideals are not suited to the philosophies behind the programs at Odyssey House, where we promote a feeling of community, peer interaction

and the personal growth of each individual," says James Pitts, General Manager.

Walker Corporation (formerly McRoss Developments) a leading residential and commercial development company, is managing the refurbishment work. They specialise in creating stimulating, enjoyable places for people to live and work and have kindly supported Odyssey House by providing huge savings on all associated building costs.

For 27-year-old Shawn, an Odyssey House resident about to complete his rehabilitation and overcome a twelve-year drug addiction, the refurbishment work at Odyssey House couldn't be better news.

"It will make a huge difference in recovery. Although everything I needed to get well was at Odyssey House, the new living spaces will help lift the spirits of all the residents. It is already

looking fantastic," says Shawn.

Support from individual and corporate donors has seen over one million dollars raised over the last two years to help cover the cost of the building work at Odyssey House, however \$700,000 still needs to be raised to complete the project.

"Now the refurbishment program has begun, we need the financial help of our supporters more than ever, to ensure its completion. Every dollar will bring us one step closer to our goal," said James Pitts.

The end of the financial year is near, so if you are in a position to make a financial contribution to Odyssey House, please do so. Remember, your individual support makes a real and lasting difference to the many individuals, like Shawn, who seek help from Odyssey House each day.



## A message from the Chairman



Allan Rogers

With the end of the financial year nearing, Odyssey House is making an impassioned plea to all our corporate supporters and

individual donors to help us reach our goal of raising the final \$700,000 needed to complete the refurbishment of the main Odyssey House facility at Campbelltown.

The support Odyssey House has received from many corporate organisations for the redevelopment program has been inspiring. However, opportunities still exist for further contributions and sponsorships, including the sponsorship of individual rooms and the securing of naming rights to the new and redeveloped facilities that will form part of the new building at Odyssey House.

This provides a chance for corporate organisations to put something back into the community and have an ongoing involvement in the day-to-day workings of Odyssey House. Rather than just getting corporate sponsors to hand over money, Odyssey House is proud of its long-term and viable "hands on" relationships with our corporate supporters.

Further and continued support will ensure Odyssey House is well on its way to building a new facility that will lead us into the future.

Support Odyssey House has received from individual supporters has also made an enormous difference. This includes a \$100,000 personal financial commitment from the Odyssey House McGrath Foundation Board members that has gone directly towards the refurbishment of the existing building.

Please be part of the completion of our vision – your individual or corporate support for the completion of the building program at Odyssey House really can make an enormous difference to the lives of so many people in need.

By providing the residents at Odyssey House with an updated environment, we are showing them we care and acknowledge that they deserve positive surroundings in order to help them get their lives back on track.

Allan Rogers  
Chairman



Odyssey House Choir sing up a storm at the Rugby World Cup Gala Dinner.

# World in Union

In an amazing gesture of support, Odyssey House was honoured to be the sole beneficiary of the recent *Odyssey House 1999 Rugby World Cup Gala Dinner* held at the Four Seasons Hotel.

The event was a huge success, with over 400 guests from Sydney's leading business and football communities raising over \$60,000 for Odyssey House.

A highlight of the evening was a spectacular performance by the Odyssey House choir, which had the honor of singing

*World in Union* with renowned singer Teddy Tahu Rhodes.

Players from the 1999 Rugby World Cup squad who supported Odyssey House by attending the dinner included John Eales, George Gregan, Tom Bowman, Matthew Burke, Matt Cockbain, Dan Crowley, Owen Finegan, David Giffin, Nathan Grey, Richard Harry, Daniel Herbert, Phil Kearns, Toutai Kefu, Stephen Larkham, Chris Latham, Jason Little, Rod Moore, Patricio Noriega, Glen Panoho, Jeremy Paul, Joe Roff, Scott Staniforth,

Tiaan Strauss, Ben Tune, Chris Whitaker, David Wilson, Rod Macqueen (Coach), Jeff Miller (Assistant Coach) & John McKay (Team Manager).

Special thanks are extended to Ross Grant & Eric Dodd for their commitment to the evening.

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

- Odyssey Recognition**
- CAF Australia
  - I Fraser
  - R A Gale Foundation
  - R Grant
  - A Green
  - P Hunt
  - Mallesons Stephen Jaques
  - Macquarie Bank Foundation
  - R & S Maple-Br
  - Marsh Pty Ltd
  - S Mordant
  - J Packer
  - QBE Management Services



James Pitts addresses guests at the Rugby World Cup Gala Dinner.



# Excellence in Rehabilitation

Quality Management Services recently conducted an external review of the programs and services offered at Odyssey House in order to assist Odyssey House with its future planning activities and service development.

In review, Odyssey House was able to demonstrate that it met 30 of the 33 standards chosen for assessment, with two standards met in part and one standard, for consumer and service principle, was exceeded.

The review report stated, "Odyssey House is commended for creating a positive living and work environment for staff and clients."

"The review team commends Odyssey for the genuine spirit of collaboration and support that exists between staff and clients at all stages of their therapeutic journey."

Congratulations are extended to all the staff and residents at Odyssey House who were involved in preparations for the review.

A message from the  
General Manager

A persuasive sense of excitement permeates the environment at Odyssey House, enhanced by our recent achievements.



James A. Pitts

The best way to describe the events, which have taken place and will take place in the future, is ground breaking.

We have started renovations to the main facility and the first stage of the project is expected to be complete by mid May. The difference to the living environment for the residents is remarkable and will be even more so upon completion.

An external quality assurance review of Odyssey House was completed in March and we received rave reviews! The process ensures Odyssey House meets best practice standards in its delivery of services in the field of alcohol and other drugs. All staff and residents who participated in the compilation of information, interviews and the collation of it all, are to be congratulated.

We look forward to the events of the next two months. These include our major fundraising event *A Cabaret Extravaganza* to be held on 31 May at the Four Seasons Hotel.

The Alcohol and Other Drugs Foundation of Australia will hold its annual Drug Action Week from 23-28 June to highlight the benefits alcohol and other drug agencies like Odyssey House provide to the community. We will host the grand opening of our After Care Centre as well as that of our newly renovated Vocational Training Centre to commemorate the week.

We are buoyed by our accomplishments whilst maintaining the drive to meet our formidable challenges. In keeping with the values and concepts of our organisation, we face the future unafraid. We are able to do so through the very generous support of you, our friends. Thank-you.

James A. Pitts  
General Manager

## A Road to RECOVERY

To demonstrate the real work of Odyssey House, this column features an Odyssey House resident's story.

Amy and her gorgeous daughter Chloe have been part of the Parents and Children's Program at Odyssey House for nearly a year.

Growing up in the Blue Mountains, Amy started experimenting with marijuana and alcohol at 16 years of age and a few years later, started using heroin.

"I didn't think it was a problem at first. After leaving school I always worked fulltime and was in a steady relationship with my partner, who was a fulltime tradesman," says Amy.

However when Amy fell pregnant at 19, her drug use had escalated to a daily habit. Amy knew she didn't have anywhere to go. It was then she entered Odyssey House.

"My family has been very supportive of me during my stay at Odyssey House - I don't think I could have done it

without them. My parents, Chloe's dad and his parents have all offered assistance, especially in helping me care for Chloe," says Amy.

"I now go to sleep at night feeling proud of what I have

done during the day. I am willing to do what it takes to be the best parent I can be."

"I look forward to sharing my life with Chloe. I am taking it one step and one day at a time," said Amy.



The best is yet to come for Odyssey House resident Amy.



# In The Press

## Offering dose of tough love

by ELLEN McINTOSH

JAMES Pitts pities the person who does drugs to cope with sexual abuse, but has no such feeling for someone who believes "I deserve your TV to pay for my drug addiction".

On the other hand, Kingswood's Carmel Spicer is thankful to anyone who tries to help her son fight his seven year long drug addiction.

The two have the tough love Campbelltown-based Odyssey House McGrath Foundation rehabilitation program in common.

Mrs Spicer's son Damien, 21, got through eight months of the intense 18-month-long course before being asked to leave.

(She hopes he realises his plans of returning to rehab soon.)

"It's very difficult to keep on hanging in there, it's an incredible drag down, and there is remarkably little help out there," she said.

"I mean, there's help there, but I am amazed people out there don't know they exist."

The Odyssey House program is based on per-

**'The stakes are high. It's their lives, and getting back into the community is hard for them'**

sonal responsibility, with residents required to confront the reasons why they resorted to an addictive lifestyle.

General manager Mr Pitts said: "Only they can beat their addiction, but they can't do it without the support, understanding and encouragement of the wider community."

Mrs Spicer said: "They really make them aware they are responsible for their decisions and their behaviour."

"But the stakes are high - it's their lives, and getting back into the community is very hard for them."

Mr Pitts said: "As much as possible, we try to place the emphasis on: you have the problem, I don't have the problem."

"And to overcome the problem you have to work

really hard - for 16, 17 years, they have worked really hard at screwing things up, and it's going to take time to change that."

"We put a lot of responsibility on the people: we don't do anything for anyone they can do for themselves."

The reasons were not simple, however they included a need to be accepted; criminal background; psychiatric disorders; and self indulgence.

The Odyssey House method was tough but empathetic: "It's trying to get people to deal with reality."

"Everybody always wants you to work miracles, but there is no quick fix."

Meanwhile, Mrs Spicer is fundraising for Odyssey House, a registered charity.

"This is everybody's problem, and we all have to deal with it," she said.

A charity screening of *Ned Kelly* will be held at Hoyts Penrith Plaza at 7pm on Monday, March 31 for Odyssey House. Tickets: \$15. Details: Odyssey House 9820 9999.



"There's no quick fix" . . . Carmel Spicer and James Pitts believe in the tough love approach of Odyssey House

## Wish List

Odyssey House is in desperate need of the following items. You can be sure that if you were able to help in donating even one of these items, your support would make an enormous difference.

- Digital camera.
- New or good quality second hand lounges.
- Window curtains or blinds.
- Single bed linen, pillows and new single mattresses.
- Double wardrobes with shelves and drawers.

The Penrith Press, 25th March 2003.

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

Please find enclosed my donation of: (please circle) **\$50.00** **\$100.00** **\$500.00** or \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

☐ Bankcard

☐ 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.org.au](http://www.odysseyhouse.org.au)

Telephone: (02) 9820 9999 Facsimile: (02) 9820 1796

Please return this coupon and your donation to:

Odyssey House McGrath Foundation, PO Box 459, Campbelltown, NSW, 2560.

