

A message from the
Chairman



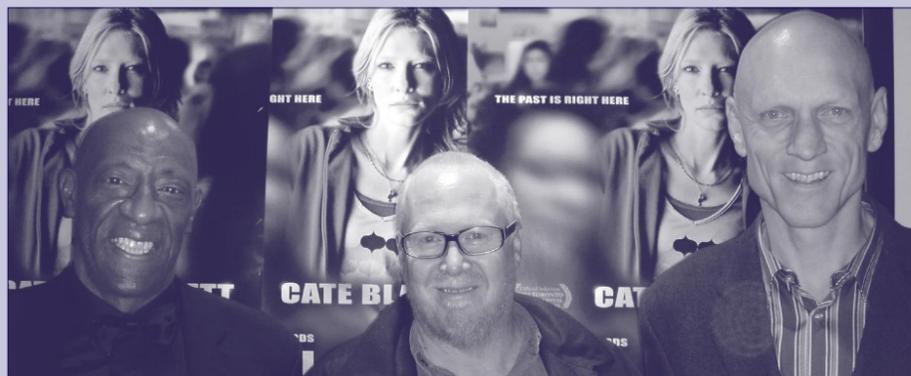
Maurice Green

The challenges for the Board of any Not for Profit Organisation are immense, yet rewarding. Surprisingly it has been two years since I took over the helm from our former Board Chairman, Allan Rogers. I personally, and the board collectively are pleased with the program achievements over the past two years.

Despite the fact that we had to raise \$2 million to complete the refurbishment of our main treatment facility at Eagle Vale, we did it! The refurbishment is now complete thanks to the support of corporate, private, and institutional backers. Without their belief in Odyssey and its services we would have been unable to complete this awesome task. The benefits of the refurbishment to the well being of the residents and staff are immeasurable.

It is on this very positive note I announce my intention to step down as Board Chairman. The timing is ideal as we face new challenges on the political front. I have enjoyed my time as Chairman and now readily turn it over to the incoming Chairman, Mr Eric Dodd. As we have for the past 28 years the Board looks forward to the future with confidence.

Maurice Green
Chairman



Little Fish

James Pitts with *Little Fish* director Rowan Woods & Federal Opposition Arts Spokesman; Peter Garrett.

On the evening of August 31st, the residents of Odyssey House and their families were the guests of Icon Productions and Liverpool's Greater Union Cinemas for a special preview screening of Rowan Woods' highly acclaimed new movie "Little Fish".

With a first rate cast including Cate Blanchett, Hugo Weaving,

Sam Neill and Noni Hazelhurst, James Pitts (Odyssey House CEO), Peter Garrett (Federal Opposition Arts Spokesman) and the film's director Rowan Woods introduced the screening.

The film tackles a number of issues with the central theme addressing the question of how do you learn to love again when the pain of the past won't let you go? Many of our

residents face this question through their recovery and it was interesting to experience different people's reactions to the film and its issues.

Overall, it was a great night and it was a privilege to be able to stay behind at the end of the film and discuss the movie with the director Rowan Woods. Once again a sincere thank you to all those who made this excellent night possible.

2005 City To Surf

Sunday August 14th saw the running of the 35th Sun-Herald City to Surf and again Odyssey House was well represented. Ten residents and three staff members headed off for what has become an eagerly anticipated event on the calendar.

The event provides a great opportunity for the residents to challenge themselves in new healthy ways, to interact with the community, and to complete something that many would have thought was beyond them.

The fastest member of the 2005 Odyssey House team was Eddy who recently graduated the program, completing the 14km course in a new Odyssey House record time of 66 minutes. Well done to all and we will be back next year!



The Odyssey House team ready to conquer 'Heart Break Hill'.

A Road to RECOVERY

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

My name is Sandy, I am 48 years of age and I am the very proud and loving mother of a beautiful and healthy little boy.

My journey to recovery was a very long and arduous one. I am now a graduate of the Odyssey House Residential Program and this is my story.

Drugs were not at all prevalent when I was a teenager and it wasn't until I left school at 15 that I encountered them. Soon after I was experimenting and using 'pot', LSD and alcohol.

By the time I was 22 I had been introduced to heroin and had succumbed to her hypnotic spell by the time I was 23. My relationship with heroin continued for the majority of the next 20 years. She was my best friend. I had very few others.

She was a very expensive partner to have.

Two years later I began the first of two jail sentences for 'white-collar' crimes. Even though I had all good intentions of giving up drugs after these incarcerations...that is all it ever became...Good intentions!

By 1998 I had had enough of the constant withdrawals of heroin so I entered the methadone maintenance program and remained on it until I detoxed in November 2003.

Because the methadone did not give me the 'high' that the heroin once had done, I began to drink copious amounts of alcohol along with frequent and large amounts of Valium.

It wasn't until my little boy was born in 2001 that I attempted to address my substance abuse problem. I had previously lived such a carefree life and with so



Thanks to Odyssey House Sandy can now be the person that has been buried under the fog of drugs and alcohol for so long.

much disregard for the people who loved me.

When my son was four months old I left his violent and abusive father and entered my first 'rehab'. Over the course of the next 18 months I completed another three short-term programs. I relapsed not long after I completed each program. By this time DoCS were involved in my life and it was getting to the stage where removing him from my care was a very real option. I entered the Parents and Children's Program of Odyssey House in December 2003 with my son, however I was discharged for drinking on the facility and DoCS removed my little boy from my care.

I went into self-destruct mode and overdosed three times in the next couple of months.

In February of 2004 my father became very ill with a rare disease. As his health deteriorated, my addictions worsened.

In April 2004 I lost my father. I had also finally lost the support of the rest of my family. They had had enough of the pain and hurt and rightly so.

I believe that the loss of my father and the removal of my

boy gave me the motivation that I desperately needed to beat this addiction once and for all.

I re-entered the program in April 2004 and graduated in June of this year. I even had a slip at the end of the program where again I had a drink, but this time I chose to address the problem at hand and returned and persevered with my journey. I have learned so much from my mistakes, at last.

I cannot begin to explain how much I have learned about myself throughout the program and how my attitude towards life has changed. For the first time in almost three decades I love the person I am and I am so grateful for the opportunities that keep knocking on my door.

I am presently studying Drug and Alcohol counselling at TAFE. I am also kicking goals with my progress of having my son returned to my care full time. He should be back with his Mummy, full time, next year. My family and I have rebuilt our relationships and they are so proud to have the 'real' Sandy back with them.

I can now be the person that has been buried under the fog of drugs and alcohol for so long and my little angel can have the mother he deserves.

A message from the
Chief Executive Officer



James A. Pitts

Our challenges at Odyssey House are great as are the rewards of meeting those challenges. The alcohol and other drugs field in New South Wales is undergoing a period of major transition. This has come about as the result of political forces over which we have no control. Premier Carr's resignation put in train a number of changes in the government's portfolios. As a result we have a new Minister for Health, John Hatzistergos, whose portfolio encompasses the Centre of Drugs and Alcohol (CDA), which is our funding body.

The CDA, it appears, will become a part of a new administrative structure, which will include the Department of Mental Health. This will mean the need for us to form alliances within the new structure as personnel are allocated. To this end we will endeavor to do our best.

In spite of the political and administrative upheaval within the Department of Health we continue to provide quality services. This was demonstrated recently when our Detoxification Unit was awarded the "Excellence in Treatment" category at the recent National Drug and Alcohol Awards, held on June 24.

More recently the public demonstrated their support of Odyssey and its services through the "Real Men Cook" fundraising luncheon, held at the bel mondo restaurant. We raised over \$37,000 on the day.

We appreciate the challenges before us, and are confident with the assistance of our supporters we will meet them readily.

James A. Pitts
Chief Executive Officer