

In The Press

Sydney Morning Herald
- 21st May 2007



The Daily Telegraph
- 21st May 2007



Ralph Magazine
- May 2007



The Daily Telegraph
- 25th May 2007

Odyssey Recognition

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

- Mr Dick Austen
- Mr Paul Binsted
- Cheers Bar & Grill
- Mr Ian Dresner
- Mr Chris Fullerton
- Geofin Consulting Service
- Mr Ross Grant
- Mr Michael Hawker
- The Hunt Family Foundation
- Mr Jeffrey Kingston
- Mr Robert Maple-Brown
- Mr Roger Massey-Greene
- Mr Bruce McWilliam
- Mr Andrew Murray
- Mr Marcus O'Connor
- Mr Anthony Sherlock
- Mr Gary Smoker
- 3 Wise Monkeys



ISSUE NUMBER 2

2007

ODYSSEY HOUSE



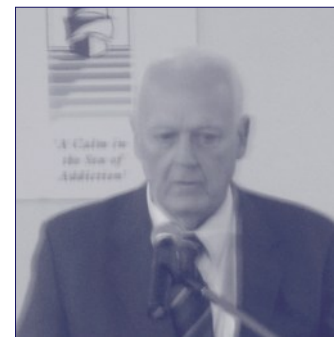
'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'

PO Box 459
Campbelltown NSW 2560

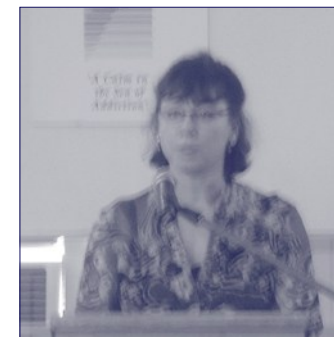
Telephone: (02) 9820 9999
Facsimile: (02) 9820 1796

www.odysseyhouse.org.au

Newsletter



Dr John Herron, Chairman ANCD, Dr Margaret Hamilton Co-Chair ANCD and Dr Sharon Dawe, Report Author.



Odyssey Hosts Report Launch

Drug Use and its IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Odyssey House hosted the launch of the report, "Drug use in the family – impacts and implications for children" at its Admissions and Intake Centre in Sydney. The report was commissioned by the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) the principal advisory body on alcohol and other drugs to the Prime Minister.

The chairman of the ANCD, Dr John Herron, commented on the major findings of the report which were:

- Over 230,000 children live in households where they are at risk of exposure to at least one adult binge drinker.
- Over 40,000 children live in a household where one adult is taking cannabis daily.
- Over 14,000 children live in a household where one adult uses methamphetamine monthly.

Dr Herron said it was critical that all the recommendations covered in the new report were adopted. He stressed in particular, the need for more family friendly treatment

programs available for people with substance misuse problems. Dr Herron's sentiments were echoed by Dr Margaret Hamilton, Co-chair of the ANCD.

James Pitts, Odyssey House CEO, on his address to the audience and media gathered welcomed the report. He said, "The report highlights what we in the treatment

community have known for a long time. Drug effected parents have a major responsibility for children, a fact which is often forgotten. If these children do not receive the intervention needed they are at risk of learning difficulties, missed developmental milestones and the possibility of engaging in anti-social behaviour in later years". Pitts went on to say, "While we welcome the report what we really need

are resources to support an intervention like our Parents and Children's program which is established already"

Further comments on this story can be found on the ABC News Online and ABC World Today website.



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

Please find enclosed my donation of: (please circle) \$50.00 \$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

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.



'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'

A message from the Chairman



Eric R Dodd

With all the recent media and political focus on the increased usage of “ice” or methamphetamines in Australia, it is important for us to recognise that alcohol abuse and dependency remains by far the biggest issue affecting both the lives of those who abuse its usage and the families and friends affected by the use. We should also consider the enormous impact it has on productivity generally in Australian society.

I am increasingly concerned that the focus away from the problems of alcohol and the growing perception that ice is somehow a ‘recreational’ drug is detracting from efforts to curb the wider problems associated with alcohol, particularly amongst the younger population. The prevalence of recent incidents involving prominent footballers, combined with the media attention being given to excessive celebration of these footballers’ achievements (such as Mad-Mondays) is sending a very negative message to our youth who look up to these individuals as heroes, and whose behaviour they seek to emulate.

Being a father of a 12 year old, football-mad son, I am at constant pains to stress the need to view this behaviour as a negative example. In my view, the media and society as a whole need to rethink their approach to the ‘glamourisation’ of alcohol which remains by far the biggest problem in dealing with the broad issues of drug and alcohol dependency.

Eric R Dodd
Chairman

An “ICE” Epidemic

An “epidemic” is defined as “affecting at the same time a large number of people in a locality, and spreading from person to person, as a disease not permanently present there”. According to media reports and public comments, Australia now has an “epidemic” of the drug crystal methamphetamine, also known more commonly as “Ice”, but is this really the case?

Television reports show hospitals dealing with “Ice” users suffering from psychosis, we hear of deaths due to “ice”, or read comments that not only document, but also enhance the perception of an “Ice” epidemic. New South Wales Police Commissioner, Ken Moroney was quoted by The Australian as saying, “I don’t know in all the time I’ve been a policeman, which is 41 years, of a greater scourge on the community. The physical and mental manifestations of this drug are absolutely horrific. It has the potential to destroy generations”. The Director of St Vincent’s Hospital Emergency Department in Sydney, Gordian Fulde, has been a featured commentator on the “Ice” epidemic. He describes patients with methamphetamine psychosis as “the most out of control, most violent human beings I’ve seen in my life, and I’ve been around a long time”. Four Corners featured a program entitled “The Ice Age”, while The Daily Telegraph trumpeted the headline, “Star’s Ice Hell!”. This hyperbole and sensationalist media depictions of “Ice” and its impact distort the realities of the situation. So what are the facts about “Ice”?

THE FACTS

It is estimated one in ten Australians has tried methamphetamine on a small number of occasions with

no adverse consequences. Most people who use methamphetamine do so infrequently at home. There are an estimated 72,000 dependent users of methamphetamine who typically inject or smoke it: a “core group” who inject several times per week; another group of heroin injectors who “switched” to methamphetamine; and a third group of younger, more highly educated and affluent people who smoke “Ice”.

There has been an increase in availability of “Ice” since 2001, with a corresponding increase in media exposure. Rehabilitation centres like Odyssey House have seen an increase in admissions for amphetamine type substances over the last 6 months of 2006; 21% of all admissions to Odyssey House were in this category.

Epidemics produce widespread mortality rates within the affected population. Fatalities from “Ice” are rare. In 2004 there were 75 deaths due to “Ice” in the 15-54 year old age group, up from 50 in 2003. However, there were 357 heroin related deaths during the same period and among the same age group, down from 1116 in 1999.

Arrests for amphetamine type substances accounted for 12% of all arrests for illicit drug use while cannabis use accounted for 72%!

Amphetamine related psychosis has been touted as one of the “scourges” of the drug. It is true that hospital presentations for methamphetamine psychosis have risen from 1028 in 1999, to 1510 in 2005. It is also true that the prevalence of psychosis among regular dependent “Ice” users is 11 times greater than the general population, and 23% of dependent users

experience psychotic symptoms in a given year. However, those most at risk of psychosis are dependent users, those who have a history of mental illness and/or psychosis, and those who have a chronic psychotic disorder already.

There have been many reports about the aggression of “Ice” users. While acute intoxication from “Ice” enhances aggressive behaviour, no causal link between “Ice” use and aggressive behaviour has been established. In these instances it is important to look at the drug and its properties, the environment in which the use occurs and the person taking the drug.

CONCLUSION

The facts about “Ice” support the existence of a growing problem, but they do not support an “epidemic”. We should not allow methamphetamine use to be over stated and to displace concern for other forms of drug use. For example, alcohol use in Australia accounts for 25% of all drug costs to society, estimated to be \$23 billion in 2002. In comparison all illicit drugs accounted for 9% of the costs. On that basis we would have to declare alcohol use as a pandemic! In relation to the so-called “Ice” epidemic, these words from the founding executive director of Odyssey House, Milton Luger, are most appropriate to close with. “We might know what we mean or intend to imply; the danger lies in the receiver of our message misunderstanding, misinterpreting or generalising our statements to all situations, when they were appropriate just in specific instances and settings!”

By James A Pitts MA, Chief Executive Officer, Odyssey House McGrath Foundation

A Road to RECOVERY

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



Candice and her family travelled from New Zealand to Australia when she was 5 years old. Her mother had split recently with her biological father and became involved with another man who was to become her stepfather. Within two years of relocating to Sydney Candice had two brothers from her mother and step-father. The children were living in an environment of uncertainty, insecurity and hostility as both parents were dependent upon alcohol! Candice says she remembers the fights between her parents and her attempts to protect her younger brothers. The family had no relatives in Sydney and Candice felt isolated and alone. Candice’s mother left to enter into another relationship and she and her siblings had to live with her stepfather. She was 11 years old.

Candice started to drink in order to cope with her home situation which was deteriorating. She became the “surrogate mother” of the household. Her step father was depressed, drinking more and making unwanted sexual advances towards Candice. This put in place a cycle of running away from home, drinking, taking drugs, returning only to leave again. At 17 Candice turned to heroin and shortly thereafter started to use with her partner. Candice lost the sight in her left eye during a

fight and had two children within the next 3 years. She and her partner attempted rehabilitation but both were unsuccessful. Her partner entered rehabilitation again and Candice alone, and having another child went on a methamphetamine binge which resulted in a drug induced seizure while her three children were in the back seat of the car!

Candice says she knew she had to do something about her drug use after this incident. “I was doing exactly what my parents had done to my brothers and I. It just wasn’t fair to my children!” Candice says she entered Odyssey House after searching for a program that would allow she, her partner and her three children to enter rehabilitation as a family. Candice’s first impression of the Odyssey House Parents and Children’s program was its sense of community.

She felt everyone in the program were experiencing similar problems and were all willing to help one another find solutions to

them. It was comforting as well to be able to be honest as to how she was feeling about any issues which concerned her. Even though she experienced some setbacks these did not deter her and as she said, “I put everything I had into getting all the help I could from the program”.

Candice has overcome the feeling of guilt as a result of the treatment of her children. Through her participation in the Parents and Children’s program she has learned to understand her children’s behaviour and to respond to them appropriately. She, her children and her partner have been living in the community for the past 6 months. She and her partner are working, establishing new support networks and enjoying their children and life without drugs.

** Editors Note. Candice’s story is poignant and timely in light of the report released recently by the Australian National Council of Drugs, “Drug use in the family: impact and implications for children”.*

Odyssey Pursues Accreditation

Odyssey House received its preliminary report from Quality Management Services (QMS) regarding its accreditation review. The accreditation process was implemented by the Centre for Drugs and Alcohol to assist agencies in their continuous quality improvement processes.

The focus of the accreditation review is upon the governance, management and service delivery functions of the organisation.

There are 25 standards contained within the Health and Community Services Core Module and the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Services Standards. We were

able to meet 13 of the standards in full and 12 were met in part. The draft report received from QMS highlights the adjustments we need to make in the standards which were met in part. We are more than confident of our ability to meet all of the standards in full.

A message from the Chief Executive Officer



James A. Pitts

One of the benchmarks as to what is relevant in society is how much media coverage a particular event, individual or cause receives. This phenomenon can best be demonstrated by the inordinate amount of media exposure celebrity Paris Hilton has received as a result of her gaol sentence recently. Fortunately Odyssey House has been able to receive very positive media exposure since the beginning of the year. We have been featured in the major daily newspapers of Sydney, the Daily Telegraph and the Sydney Morning Herald. We have been asked to comment on changing drug trends, the purported “Ice” epidemic, teenage binge drinking and mental health issues. CEO, James Pitts has appeared personally on radio, television and the print media to comment on these relevant trends within the alcohol and other drugs field. This exposure ensures Odyssey’s perspective on these very important issues is kept constantly within the public domain. It ensures as well the recognition by those in the media of Odyssey’s extensive experience and expertise in these matters.

This type of exposure is of great assistance to lift the profile of Odyssey House as we attempt to end this financial year on a positive note. Our fundraising activities during the course of the last financial year have been successful. However, as we approach the close of this financial year 30th June 2007, we need that last bit of financial assistance from all of our supporters! All donations over \$2 are tax deductible and go to support the award winning programs at Odyssey house. Remember, “While they alone can do it, they can’t do it alone!”

Thank you all for your continued support.
James A. Pitts
Chief Executive Officer