

# In The Press

The Daily Telegraph  
- 29th January 2008



Notebook - February 2008



Sunday Telegraph  
- 3rd February 2008

## Celebrities a boost for drug rehab

SYDNEY'S drug and alcohol rehabilitation services say a spike in the number of people seeking help for addictions could be partly due to "a celebrity meltdown".

Odyssey House, one of the city's oldest and best-known rehabilitation centres, says it has been forced to turn people away this month after demand on its services increased by more than one-third.

The centre's James Pitts says alcohol problems largely have been responsible for a record number of calls from people seeking help.

The increase also could be explained by publicity about celebrities who have sought treatment for drug and alcohol problems, Mr Pitts said.

Last year it seemed that seemingly every other day there was some report, particularly in the US, of people like Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan and other celebrities being in and out of rehab, Mr Pitts said.

"It tends to get sensationalised and trivialised, but it made the public

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

- ### Odyssey Recognition
- Ms Helen Cameron
  - Corinthian Industries
  - Mr Philip Graham
  - Mr Michael Hawker
  - Henry H Roth Charitable Fund
  - Liangrove Foundation
  - Mallesons Stephen Jaques
  - Mr Maxwell Ould
  - Ms Hannah Petrie
  - Mr Peter Philips AM
  - Mr Simon Poidevin
  - QBE Insurance Group
  - Sellers Holdings
  - STW Communications Group
  - Trust Company Limited
  - United Way Sydney
  - Ms Janet Wilkinson
  - Ms Abby Winters



ISSUE NUMBER 1  
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# Newsletter

## ODYSSEY HOUSE



'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'



We welcome the new staff of Odyssey!  
Front Row (L to R) Agatha Niezabitowski, Janice Grossetti, Emily Kwok, Melissa Eldridge, Kate Taylor,  
(Back Row L to R) John Park, Deacon Tōo, Hayley Potten, Trish Margetts

## ODYSSEY'S FUTURE DIRECTION

The Odyssey House logo is that of a ship with the caption, "A Calm In The Sea Of Addiction". In order for the ship to remain "on course" there is a need to determine where we wish to go, set a course and maintain it until we reach our destination. Each year we set our course for the Odyssey ship to follow at our annual Staff Retreat. We held the staff retreat this year at Nepean Shores Conference Facility in Penrith. The retreat was held February 6-8 and provided an opportunity for all of the 85 staff members from the various Odyssey services to remain together to determine the goals we wish to accomplish this year.

It was an ideal opportunity for everyone to meet the newer members of staff and to welcome them "on board". There were training sessions on the "Therapeutic Community" model; the relationship between alcohol and other drug misuse and mental health; drug misuse and brain chemistry and many more. We reviewed the accomplishments of each of the program components from last year and were amazed at the level of our achievements! We concluded the Retreat as we always do by singing, "The Longer We are Together, The Happier We Will Be!" We are "on course" for another great year!

### Diary Dates

For further information on any of these events, please contact marketing on (02) 9820 9999 or email [marketing@odysseyhouse.com.au](mailto:marketing@odysseyhouse.com.au)

- Odyssey House Rugby Dinner - **March 14**
- Odyssey House Smash - **April 2**
- Milton Luger One Day Forum - **June 24**
- On The Wagon Week - **June 22 - 28**
- Pearls of Wisdom Gala Dinner - **September 19**
- Australian Fund Managers Awards - **October 22**

The Progressive Learning Centre's Annual Report and financials are available online or by request.

### Wish List

Can you help Odyssey House with a Ride On Lawnmower and/or a commercial grade lawnmower.

PO Box 459  
Campbelltown NSW 2560  
Telephone: (02) 9820 9999  
Facsimile: (02) 9820 1796  
[www.odysseyhouse.org.au](http://www.odysseyhouse.org.au)

### 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](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.



## A message from the Chairman



Cathy Doyle

On behalf of the Odyssey House Board and management; and as the newly elected Chairman, I would like to express my thanks to the outgoing Chairman Eric Dodd, who joined Odyssey as a Director in August 2002 and was Chairman from October 2005 through to December 2007.

Eric has made a significant contribution to Odyssey House. He was instrumental in refreshing the board membership and successfully continuing the fund raising focus for the organisation. Eric has taken a leave of absence from the Board but is still a strong advocate of the work Odyssey does and will continue to be part of fundraising events like our Annual Rugby Dinner to be held March 14 at the Shangri-La Hotel (Eric has not taken a leave of absence from rugby and networking!)

I joined the Board of Odyssey two years ago and have been a member of both the Finance and Fund Raising Committees; in December 2007 I was elected Chairman. I am the Group Executive People and Culture for Perpetual Limited, have an MBA, Grad Dip Psychology, Grad Dip Vocational Education and Training and a Bachelor of Social Science, as well as being a graduate of the Institute of Company Directors program and a mother of 2 boys. I continue to be supported by a well qualified and dedicated board who are passionate about the work Odyssey does and take their duties of governance and stakeholder representation honestly and in good faith. The future focus for the Board will continue to be the development of our governance processes and overseeing the delivery of the strategic plan James Pitts, the CEO, outlines in his column.

We rely on government funding, corporate and individual donations for Odyssey to continue to deliver the great work it does with its residents for the benefit of those individuals and the community. I am very pleased to announce that on April 2nd will be the first ever Odyssey House Smash Cup Tennis Challenge, hosted by Tony Roche and Evonne Cawley. This as well as a critical fundraising event enables us to get the message out about what Odyssey does and what we stand for. I look forward to seeing some of you there!

Cathy Doyle  
Chairman

# Pearls of Wisdom

To acknowledge the tens of thousand of Australian lives that have been saved by the dedicated staff of Odyssey House over the past three decades, we are holding a dinner titled Pearls of Wisdom.

The Pearls of Wisdom dinner will be held on Friday 19 September 2008 in the Grand Ballroom, The Hilton, Sydney.

We anticipate more than 400 valued supporters, along with founding Odyssey House Board members and past and present residents who have successfully participated in the Odyssey House programs, to join us to celebrate this major milestone.

Guests will be invited to join iconic Australians as they share timeless pearls of wisdom - personal reminiscences and anecdotes that will touch and inspire.

The anecdotes by high profile supporters will be interspersed with inspirational stories of past and present Odyssey House residents, Board members, staff and parents who will give personal accounts of what Odyssey House has meant to them and how it has helped so many people in their journey through life.

Seats are available for \$350  
or tables of ten for \$3,500 by contacting  
marketing@odysseyhouse.com.au

# Odyssey Arts Teacher Sculpts Success

Odyssey House Arts and Crafts teacher, Clara Hali held an exhibition of bronze sculptures at the Stella Downer Fine Arts Gallery from 16 January to the 16 February. Ms Hali has been employed as a teacher as part of the Odyssey House "Progressive Learning Centre" education programme for 24 years!

Clara received her Masters of Fine Art from the National Arts School, Sydney in 2007. She has lectured at the National Art School since 1988. Clara exhibited recently at "Sculpture By The Sea" and her works are represented in many public and private collections including Macquarie University (Sydney), University Of Sydney, Compaq Computers and Brambles.

Her latest exhibition, "Sculptural Transformations" is the accumulation of five years work.



Clara with one of her fine sculptures.

# A Road to RECOVERY

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

Andrew was born in New South Wales and lived with his parents and two brothers. Andrew's father was a pilot in the Air Force which dictated the family had to move constantly. As a result Andrew had few friends and became very shy. His father left the Air Force when Andrew was seven years old to become a commercial pilot. Andrew's parents divorced when he was eleven years old and he lived with his mother in Perth while his two older siblings resided with his father in Hong Kong.

Andrew's life with his mother contained few boundaries and he became his mother's "friend" due to her loneliness. As a consequence he was soon drinking at home with mom and shortly thereafter his illicit drug taking started. It wasn't long before Andrew was smoking pot, and taking speed and hallucinogens. His school work suffered and he was aimless in his life. Andrew had a "wake up" call when a close friend of his died from a drug overdose. He returned to school to complete Year 12 and enrolled in TAFE planning to become a teacher. This attempt was short lived as the lure of drugs was more attractive than study.

Andrew's family pleaded with him to get his life together and he decided to join the military. He felt a sense of belonging, purpose and pride immediately upon joining. He was accepted by his fellow soldiers as someone who could handle himself physically. Andrew was stationed in East Timor for two tours of duty, which he enjoyed. Finally, he was sent to Iraq where he became disillusioned because it appeared to him more damage was inflicted on the civilian population than the enemy! Andrew returned home and resumed his drug use for which he was discharged from the



Andrew has a much clearer future now.

Army. He was using \$600 a day on speed which was supported through criminal activity. He tried rehabilitation, but left with another female resident and afterwards became suicidal. He was living with his Dad in Newcastle when he contacted Odyssey House.

Andrew's initial transition to the structured Odyssey House environment was easy due to his time in the military. Consequently, Andrew spent little time in the lower levels of the program, where emphasis is on controlling behaviour and organising tasks. His confidence grew as a result of his position within the program structure in which he was required to assist others to have their emotional needs met. Andrew's real

conflicts came when he reached Level 4 where he had to learn to be responsible for himself. As he said, "I was used to sabotaging myself, when I was on the verge of any success it scared me!"

Andrew utilised the support and insight of his other Level 4 peers and one to one counselling to overcome his fear and anxiety of living in the community without using drugs. Andrew says, "I can't return to any form of drug use, including drinking, because of my addiction. It will only hinder my life and my desire to be healthy and happy!"

Andrew is working currently to establish himself in the community. He is living with 2 of his peers in the local community and hopes to work in the social services field.

## A message from the Chief Executive Officer



James A. Pitts

This is the first edition of our newsletter for the year. We are excited as we begin the year on the back of a strong performance last year. We ended the year with a surge of media interest about the profiles of our resident population. We begin this year with similar media interest due to an upsurge in people attempting to enter the Odyssey House rehabilitation programs.

We have a new Federal Government who has yet to state clearly their position as to alcohol and other drugs funding. That will become clear in the ensuing months. However, we are pleased with the prospect of having secured funding from the Federal Attorney General's office which will allow us to relocate our After Care program and ensure funding for the next 3 years. We are also pleased we will be able to start our "Janus" project which will assist residents in treatment, and in the community who have co-morbid conditions (alcohol and other drugs and mental health issues).

We have a number of new staff members who have come on board the past few months. The face of our Board has changed due to Cathy Doyle assuming the role of Chairman following the tenure of previous Chairman Eric Dodd.

As you can see the theme at present is "newness". New politics, new initiatives, new staff! All of which are committed to combat an old problem, the misuse of alcohol, other drugs and problematic behaviours.

James A. Pitts  
Chief Executive Officer