



# Newsletter

## In The Press

### Helping hand for addicts, men and poor

THREE Macarthur community organisations will benefit from a \$172,000 boost, announced by Community Services Minister Linda Burney on Thursday.

Camden MP Geoff Corrigan, Wollondilly MP Phillip Costa and Macquarie Fields MP Andrew McDonald attended the announcement at Odyssey House in Eagle Vale, which is one of the local organisations set to benefit from the Area Assistance Scheme package.

The others are St Vincent de Paul in Campbelltown and Tahmoor Men's Shed.

Ms Burney said this year the State Government would spend \$4.8 million supporting about 115 projects across the state, including \$172,219 in the Macarthur area.

"Odyssey House McGrath Foundation - a rehabilitation facility with a long history of helping people with drug and alcohol addiction - will receive \$39,810 to upgrade its parents' and children's cottages, so that families can stay together while a family member receives help," she said.

Other funding will be spent on a fit-out of Tahmoor Men's Shed and renovations to the Najie Centre in Campbelltown.

Dr McDonald said community groups knew how to tackle local issues and the funding would support them.

"I look forward to seeing the success of their work," he said.

Campbelltown  
Macarthur  
Advertiser,  
Wednesday,  
July 1, 2009

Wollondilly  
Advertiser,  
Tuesday,  
July 28,  
2009

Wollondilly  
Advertiser,  
Tuesday, July  
14, 2009



Raising awareness: During National Drug Action Week, Odyssey House chief executive James Pitts said alcohol was a drug even though people don't see it that way. Picture: Elliott Housego

### Drinkers are drug users, too

By Soraiya Gharahkhani

MOST people who have never taken an illicit drug wouldn't describe themselves as drug users.

But Odyssey House chief executive James Pitts said alcohol is a drug, even if it does not have the same social stigma as cannabis and amphetamines.

A presenter at a recent drug town meeting at Odyssey House in Eagle Vale said that alcohol is a drug, too.

Laura National Research Professors S



**Launch of the big one**

MORE than 150 guests attended the recent launch of Australia's premier one-day cycling event, the Pengana Goulburn to Citi Cycle Classic.

The big race, which was established in 1982, will take place on September 20.

This historic race is the oldest one-day cycling event in NSW, and is one of Australia's most respected professional cycling events.

Phil Anderson, was at the launch, and spoke about his epic journey on the bike with five-time Tour de France winner, Frenchman Bernard Hinault.

Former champion cyclist and six-time Tour de France rider Stephen Hodge also attended.

The corporate charity race, which has raised \$300,000 in previous years, will again be hosted by race ambassador Simon Pridwin.

Proceeds go to Odyssey House, Kids of Macarthur and Goulburn's St John of God palliative care and oncology support units.

This year's race route will remain unchanged, starting in Goulburn and travelling along the Hume Highway through Mt Appin, Bargo, Tahmoor, Picton, Raiterback and finishing in Argyle Street, Camden.

Picture: Jonathan Ng

**Odyssey Recognition**

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

- 3 Wise Monkeys Pub
- Mr Chris Antico
- Mr Dick Austen
- Australian Youth & Health Foundation
- Mr John David
- Ms Linda English
- Mr JB Fairfax
- Mr & Mrs John & Inge Grant
- Mr Michael Hawker
- Health Services Union
- Mr William Loewenthal
- Mallesons Stephens Jaques
- Mr Robert Maple-Brown
- McDonalds
- Red Jet Foundation
- Mr Allan Rogers
- Star Bar & Grill
- The Hunt Family Foundation
- The John & Judith O'Neil Foundation
- The John Lamble Foundation
- The Liangrove Foundation
- The Victor Smorgon Charitable Fund
- Ms Janet Wilkinson

## ODYSSEY HOUSE



'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'



Front to Back: Darryl Wright CEO Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation (TAC), Elder Tom Smith TAC, Odyssey resident Lee, Alan Medhurst Secretary TAC, Odyssey Program Manager Susan, TAC Chairperson Alison Croall, and Elder Muriel Brandy TAC

## A Positive Result

A recent service visit by the Board of Directors and CEO of Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation has yielded a positive result and culminated in the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation and Odyssey House McGrath Foundation. This development is seen as a wonderful opportunity for all involved, as it has established a solid platform from which both organisations can work towards providing the best service delivery and outcomes for Aboriginal clients.

Building a rapport is key to this development and much of the ground work has been completed.

The emphasis is now on getting the little things in place in preparation to achieving better results. The Board were particularly impressed with the over-all service and the efforts made to make it more Aboriginal cultural friendly, with further cultural related developments intended.

A Memorandum of Understanding has also been agreed between Odyssey and the Illawarra Aboriginal Medical Service. By working together as a team, it is envisaged this new development will help assist in the fight against the increasing prevalence of alcohol and other drug misuse and associated systemic problems it causes. This applies not only

for individuals, but also families and communities in the Macarthur region.

Understanding the issues goes a long way in helping to address these problems and involving Aboriginal Elders in a mentoring capacity. This is a priority, with a number of concerned Aboriginal Elders, Community Leaders and Members already putting their names down as support contacts.

The Macarthur region has the second largest Aboriginal population in the nation, and while the outlook of this new development is already looking very encouraging there is still a lot of work to be done.

## Government Gives Residents a Brighter Future

The Progressive Learning Centre was the recipient of fifteen notebooks, seven personal computers, four printers, one video camera and a plotter under the Australian Government's National Secondary Schools Computer Fund.

With the purchase of this technology the Progressive Learning Centre has been able to introduce the latest technology across all teaching areas. Residents in all classes and teaching staff can access the internet for research, utilise the latest programs in design,

draw and cut stencils, create power-point presentations and present their work in a professional manner.

This has been instrumental in enhancing computer literacy and improving residents self esteem and future vocational opportunities.

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Campbelltown NSW 2560

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Facsimile: (02) 9820 1796

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.

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

Another financial year has passed, and as we diligently work through out strategic and financial goals for the coming year, it is more evident than ever that Odyssey House needs your continued support.

Your support allows Odyssey House not only to continue its life saving programs but to develop new programs to help combat the growing concern of alcohol and drug misuse in our society.

We encourage all our supporters to visit the main treatment facilities to really get a hands on feel for what we do and meet some of the residents that are undergoing treatment.

I am positive that you will be pleasantly surprised by the great work that Odyssey House achieves on a daily basis. We also open our doors to the public for our official anniversary on Sunday 25 October. Please join us for a day of entertainment and our resident graduation ceremony.

There are a number of other events coming up in the next couple of months of which Odyssey House is a beneficiary. The gruelling 150km Pengana Goulburn to Citi Corporate Charity Ride is on 20 September. We wish the riders good luck, fabulous weather and of course a safe journey.

The annual Australian Fund Managers Awards is being held in October, and while it has been a turbulent year for the finance industry, the fund managers are always very generous in supporting the events nominated charities.

A very gracious thankyou to the organisers of both of these events for supporting the work of Odyssey House. Finally, come and talk to us about how you can make a difference – every bit counts.

Cathy Doyle  
Chairman

# Alcohol is a drug too

One of Australia's biggest and costliest drug problems - alcohol - was the focus of this year's National Drug Action Week held in June. For the eighth year Odyssey House hosted the annual Milton Luger Forum with over 90 guests in attendance, experts discussed alcohol's significant role in violence, murder, suicide, illicit drug use and mental illness.

This year's guest speakers included, Professor Shane Darke and Laura Scott from the National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), Debbie Roberts CEO of Youth Solutions and Professor Ian Webster of the University of NSW.

Odyssey House CEO James Pitts advised the forum that while alcohol alone costs society almost twice as much as all illicit drugs combined, it is also often the pathway to drug dependence for young people.

"Alcohol misuse costs Australia \$15.3 billion each year in crime and violence, road accidents, healthcare, premature death and reduced workforce and household productivity, according to the latest National Drug Strategy report" Mr Pitts said.

By comparison, illicit drugs cost society \$8.2 billion annually, while alcohol and illicit drugs acting together cost another \$1.1 billion. Alcohol's insidious role in damaging and destroying lives from sporting and political scandals and binge drinking teenagers to violent crime and mental illness is finally tarnishing the image of drinking as a relatively harmless pastime far removed from illicit drugs.

"Around 85 per cent of Odyssey House clients name alcohol as their first drug of intoxication and many say it was a trigger for their illicit drug use, particularly if they

started misusing alcohol as young teenagers" he said.

According to the report, 30-50 per cent of alcohol consumption is abusive or beyond safe levels, which Mr Pitts said is reflected in rehabilitation programs.

'Alcohol Insights' is an on-line questionnaire of the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT). The questionnaire is self scoring and indicates if the individual may need assistance due to their drinking. Alcohol Insights includes links to other alcohol related help sites and is available on the Odyssey House internet site - [www.odysseyhouse.org.au](http://www.odysseyhouse.org.au)



Professor Ian Webster, Professor Shane Darke, James Pitts, Debbie Roberts and Laura Scott

## EVERY BIT COUNTS

The Minister for Community Services Linda Burney, Camden MP Geoff Corrigan, Macquarie Fields MP Andrew McDonald and Wollondilly MP Phil Costa recently visited the Odyssey House Parents and Children's program. The Hon Linda Burney announced that Odyssey was one of the organisations to benefit from the funding package provided through the Area Assistance Scheme (AAS).

The AAS is a regional community developments grants program that provides funding to local councils and non government organisations

for social, economic and environmental projects.

Of that package Odyssey will receive \$39,810 to upgrade the Parents and Children's cottages, by building a communal group and play room, the renovations will join the two separate cottages, bringing all the families together.

Ms Burney spent time having morning tea with Odyssey House residents and hearing about their experiences. She was also delighted in the opportunity to feed one of our littlest residents, six-week-old baby Tait, who resides with his father in the cottages.



Hon Linda Burney  
feeding baby Tait

## Renovations at the Assessment and Referral Centre

The long awaited renovations at the Assessment and Referral Centre have finally commenced. The Assessment and Referral Centre is located on the premises of 'The Robin Hood Farm', the still standing stone cottage was built in the 1830's, the structure has an important historical significance in the Campbelltown area.

The renovations will provide better amenities, dormitories, new electrical, heating, cooling and ventilation units are being installed. The residents will

also receive a new dining room and kitchen with state of the art cooking equipment.

The renovations will allow residents to undergo their rehabilitation in a safe and comfortable environment.

These renovations are made possible with support from the Federal Attorney Generals Office under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Thyne Reid Trust.



An early photo of 'The Robin Hood Farm'

## A Road to RECOVERY

The Road to Recovery is one which takes some time to traverse safely and successfully. The people who seek the assistance of the Odyssey House programs are those whose lives have been adversely affected through their use of alcohol other drugs and other problematic behaviours. They have long histories of drug misuse (starting as young as 12 years of age), anti-social behaviours and an inability to engage in mainstream activities including interpersonal relationships. They have been involved in a pattern of behaviour which dictates they resort to deceit, theft, sexual exploitation and other acts which assault their self esteem in order to obtain drugs, or the money to purchase them. Research conducted by the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre in the Australian Treatment Outcome Study indicates the people who access Odyssey House's

rehabilitation programs have had more attempts at treatment (on average 8) previously; greater rates of criminal activity; poorer psychological health; poorer general health; and the use of more drug classes than comparable groups in methadone treatment or detoxification.

So how does a person with this level of dysfunction turn their life around? It takes a great deal of courage in the first instance to be able to admit that they have a problem. After doing so it is incumbent upon each individual when they enter the Odyssey House program to be willing to take as much responsibility for their lives as is possible. They do this with the support of the staff and their peers who are undergoing the same process. They are required to be accountable for their behaviour in all of their areas of functioning whether in job

assignments or therapy groups. Gradually the expectations of the program upon each individual increases to reveal their true potential. They become willing participants in the rehabilitation process assuming roles within the program in which they impart the gains they have achieved to other program participants.

The Road to Recovery is not travelled successfully, or safely through deceit or subterfuge. It requires individuals to embrace a new value system which is termed Odyssey House's "Five Pillars" which are: Trust, Honesty, Responsibility, Concern and Love. In doing so the individual ensures their journey will not end within Odyssey House, but will continue as they are able to leave its protected environment and embrace life fully in the community at large!

## 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)

Goulburn to Citi Classic - 20 September 2009  
Odyssey House Open Day - 25 October 2009  
AFMA - 29 October 2009

## A message from the Chief Executive Officer



James A. Pitts

There would be few people who have not been affected by the downturn in the economy in Australia. Odyssey House is not exempt from these same pressures, as much of our funding is linked to the generosity of supporters in the general community. As a result of the downturn in general donations and escalating costs for administrative commitments, we have had to produce a very tough budget for the current financial year. This has resulted in some vacant positions not being filled, rationalisation of staff's work schedules and a reduction in a couple of "non-essential" (there is no such thing in this business) positions. These initiatives will enable us to continue to deliver quality services without the loss of our most valuable assets, our staff! That's the downside!

The upside is the fact we continue to face the future unafraid! We are in the final phases of the renovations of the Assessment and Referral Centre's dormitory, dining room and kitchen. We recently installed a 15,000 litre water storage tank at the Centre as a result of funding received through the Federal Government's "National Schools Pride" program. We will be upgrading other areas of the organisation's physical plant as a result of this very important funding initiative. We anticipate the appointment of a new Chief Operations Officer imminently. The establishment and filling of this position will add greater flexibility and support to the Chief Executive Officer.

Odyssey House will celebrate 32 years of continuous service delivery in October of this year! We, as an organisation, have never failed to provide the best quality of service possible to the tens of thousands of young men, women and their dependent children who utilise our programs. So despite the fact there is an economic downturn which has affected us adversely, it serves also to spur us into action. While some see the term GFC (Global Financial Crisis) as a spectre looming over our head menacingly, we see it as a great opportunity for re-branding. In our eyes GFC stands for "Give To Favorite Charity! We would appreciate any help you can offer. While we alone must do it, we can't do it alone.

James A. Pitts, MA  
Chief Executive Officer