



ODYSSEY HOUSE NSW  
ANNUAL REPORT 2017

**“Odyssey House not only helped me get off drugs but also supported me to deal with the real problems behind my drug use.”**



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# Our story

Odyssey House New South Wales (NSW) was founded in 1977 by Sydney businessman, Walter McGrath, following the death of his son from a heroin overdose. As a testament to his son, Mr McGrath committed himself to finding a program to help people suffering from problems with drug dependence.

Mr McGrath brought the Odyssey House concept of Therapeutic Community Residential Rehabilitation from the United States of America to Australia. He opened Odyssey House in Sydney on 30 October 1977. From humble beginnings, Odyssey House has since grown over the years to become one of Australia's largest and most successful rehabilitation services.

Today Odyssey House offers Residential and Community Services, as well as the Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment (MERIT) program. Our Residential Services include withdrawal and residential rehabilitation programs, mental health programs, a Parents and Children's Program, gambling and specialised groups services, as well as numeracy and literacy education. Our Community Services include free counselling, as well as individual, group and specialised group sessions, and a Detox in the Community Program.

These services are designed to assist clients in dealing with the underlying reasons for using alcohol and other drugs. These reasons may include low self-esteem; serious family/relationship issues; domestic violence and other trauma; parental drug misuse; and physical and mental health problems.

Odyssey House complements the direction of the National Drug Strategy (NDS) initiative, the NSW State Health Plan: Towards 2021, and aligns with the health and community goals of the NSW Government's NSW 2021 plan. The organisation is closely linked to the Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA), and the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA).



# Our vision

A world free of addiction



# Our mission

To build safe and healthy communities  
by reducing the impact of addiction on  
individuals, families, carers and communities



# Our values

## Professionalism

We are committed to excellence by maintaining our professional boundaries and fulfilling responsibilities in an accountable, inclusive and objective manner



## Creativity

We trust in our limitless potential



## Respect

We demonstrate consideration and regard for the feelings, beliefs and rights of others



## Integrity

We act with honesty and adhere to consistent moral and ethical values and principles through our personal and professional behaviours

## IN RETROSPECT

In June 1977 Milton Luger arrived from New York to establish the Odyssey House model of a therapeutic community in Australia. He had been recruited by Walter McGrath and the Foundation's Board of Directors, and was followed out in September by three other treatment staff from Odyssey Houses in the United States. Milton Luger remained as Odyssey's Chief Executive Officer until his retirement in December 1994. In 1977, however, the immediate task was to locate suitable premises for a residential treatment centre. He gave many media interviews, talking about the plans for Odyssey and the need to find a building. The all-important phone call came through, as recounted below, and by the end October 1977 Odyssey House at Eagle Vale had opened its doors. Since then Odyssey has helped more than 6,000 young men and women in the residential program.

Milton Luger was asked to contribute a retrospective view of the work of Odyssey.

*For two decades now Odyssey House has been providing intensive treatment for young men and women who have been troubled through substance abuse. Our policies and program have recognised the need to implement practical, supportive services for the extended families of those in care with us. Thus, the children and parents of Odyssey residents have always been a high priority.*

*Interestingly, in 1977, it was a young constable who called from Campbelltown and alerted us to the possible availability of an adequate building which might accommodate the then proposed Odyssey program. We made enquiries and discovered the true meaning of community involvement and good neighbours. City officials, as well as regional planning authorities, were co-operative and helpful in assisting us to gain access to the physical structure and they have maintained their support and understanding for 20 years.*

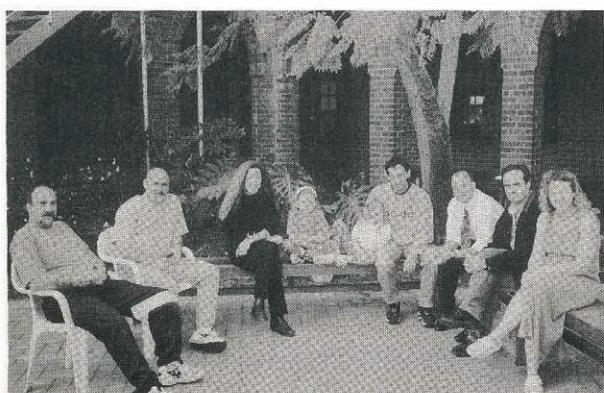
*As a matter of fact, two years after our New South Wales launch, when we were attempting to establish a second Odyssey House, those same individuals travelled to Melbourne at their own expense to testify before worried locals there about Odyssey's reliability, responsible approaches and accountability.*

*This hard-earned reputation was achieved because we were determined to operate a program which maintained our integrity and practicality. Our fiscal records were always available to the public; treatment services were open for scrutiny by government funding sources, community supporters and other drug and alcohol workers - academics and researchers were welcomed.*

*We are proud of our accomplishments. From the outset we recognised that because of the length and intensity of our programs, they were not required for casual, recreational substance abusers. But thousands of out-of-control, self-destructive individuals headed towards an irresponsible lifestyle, incarceration, or death have been assisted through our efforts and their own courage and commitment.*



**Our house is a mighty, mighty fine house**



**Odyssey residents make themselves at home**

*The current multi-faceted treatment offerings in our residential and non-residential programs have developed through a common base of integrity and honesty. They would not have been available today without the understanding, co-operation and assistance of our Board of Directors, as well as many caring individuals in the public and private sectors. Most of all, tremendous credit is due to the young, troubled program participants, who modified their mistrust, cynicism and hopelessness to believe in us and, importantly, themselves.*

# Chairman and CEO message

**Odyssey House NSW was established in 1977 with five staff, 40 bed crisis support and 75 beds in a therapeutic community. Over the past 40 years we have done extensive renovations, increased services and programs and have made Odyssey House a home for thousands of people every year.**

Odyssey House has always expanded and developed as the demand and needs of our services increased. This year, with the success for our tenders for services in Sydney, and the acquisition of Bridges Inc., a Blacktown alcohol and drug counselling organisation, we expanded our Community Services across the whole of Sydney. Building on our core state-wide Residential Services located in South Western Sydney, we now provide alcohol and other drugs community-based programs, education and counselling sessions in 11 locations throughout Sydney, as well as a community based withdrawal program in South Western Sydney.

As our services increased this year, so did our income, with an increase of government funding (29 per cent) and our infrastructure, with the purchase of a second property in Campbelltown. This investment in the future will ensure that we can build on the 40 years of expertise and passion and provide greater access and continuum of care for the community.

In addition to our 40th anniversary, this year, we also celebrated the 15th year of our Real Men Cook fundraising event and the 17th year of support from the Australian Fund Managers Foundation. We would like to thank everyone involved in those two events over the years as well as every single supporter who has given of their time, their money and their services. Thank you.

Whether you are staff or volunteers in the front line with our residents, our clients, families and the community or whether you are working behind the scenes in supporting, organising, planning, counting, fixing, managing or governing, thank you for all your hard work. A special thank you to the members of the Board and to the Executive team for all your commitment and good work throughout the year.

We hope you enjoy this special 40th Edition of our annual report which is a summary of how, together, we have and we will continue to help as many people as possible who are impacted by alcohol and other drugs to live a happy and healthy life.



**Julie Babineau**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Doug Snedden**  
Chairman

**NSW Non Government  
Alcohol and Other  
Drug Service<sup>1</sup>  
Delivery Taxonomy**



2017

Service Growth Since 1977

Service level and intensity	Harm Reduction LOW	Health Promotion and Harm Prevention MEDIUM	Treatment HIGH	Treatment + HIGH +	Extended and Continuing Care MEDIUM
<b>Service type</b>	Needle and syringe program Brief intervention – information and education	Health promotion and prevention – information and education Health promotion and prevention – community development	Case management Psychosocial counselling Withdrawal management Rehabilitation day program Residential rehabilitation Opioid treatment program	As for treatment plus: Specialist programs (i.e. residential family, residential women with dependent children, Indigenous residential pharmacotherapy stabilisation or reduction)	Case management Psychosocial counselling Supported living/transitional housing program
<b>Service setting</b>	Needle and syringe centre Community based health centre Health, welfare and homelessness service Youth service Aboriginal medical service Schools Community events	Specialist drug and alcohol service – out-client Community based health centre Health, welfare and homelessness service Youth service Aboriginal medical service Schools Community events Social media	Specialist drug and alcohol service – out-client and out-reach Specialist drug and alcohol service – residential detox Specialist drug and alcohol service – residential	As for treatment	Specialist drug and alcohol service – out-client and out-reach Supported living/transitional housing
<b>Workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health education officer</li> <li>- Community development officer</li> <li>- Welfare/youth worker</li> <li>- Drug and alcohol worker/counsellor</li> <li>- Aboriginal health worker</li> <li>- Peer worker</li> </ul>	Drug and alcohol specialist knowledge and skills required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health education officer</li> <li>- Community development officer</li> <li>- Welfare/youth worker</li> <li>- Drug and alcohol worker/counsellor</li> <li>- Aboriginal health worker</li> <li>- Psychologist</li> <li>- Social worker</li> <li>- Nurse</li> <li>- General/medical practitioner</li> </ul>	Drug and alcohol specialist knowledge and skills required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drug and alcohol worker/counsellor</li> <li>- Aboriginal health worker</li> <li>- Mental health worker/counsellor</li> <li>- Psychologist</li> <li>- Social worker</li> <li>- Nurse</li> <li>- General/medical practitioner</li> </ul>	As for treatment	Drug and alcohol specialist knowledge and skills required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drug and alcohol worker/counsellor</li> <li>- Aboriginal health worker</li> <li>- Mental health worker/counsellor</li> <li>- Psychologist</li> <li>- Social worker</li> </ul>
<b>Population &amp; drug use focus</b>	Individuals, families and communities Pre and contemplative, experimental and regular drug use Injecting drug use	As for harm reduction plus: Problematic drug use At risk individuals and groups	Individuals and families Problematic drug use At risk individuals and groups	As for treatment plus: High complex health and social needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women and parents with children</li> <li>- Coexisting mental health issues</li> <li>- Cognitive impairment</li> <li>- Acute physical health issues</li> <li>- Criminal justice connection</li> <li>- Trauma histories</li> </ul>	Individuals and families Problematic drug use At risk individuals and groups

# External and internal factors impacting Odyssey House

**Odyssey House NSW is one of approximately 60 specialist non government alcohol and other drugs (AOD) organisations that operate in New South Wales (NSW), whose sole or primary focus is alcohol and other drugs prevention, and/or treatment.**

A similar number of organisations provide AOD service delivery as part of a broader health and/or social welfare service.

Odyssey House complements the direction of the National Drug Strategy 2017–2026, which identified three different types of priority areas to implement its strategy: actions, populations and substances. These priority areas were identified through a series of national consultations and by reviewing available data and evidence.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout this report Odyssey House demonstrates how it enhances access to evidence-based, effective, and affordable treatment services and support; develops and shares data and research; measures performance and evaluates outcomes; and increases participatory processes.

## 40 years of service

Odyssey House has continued to deliver our existing Residential Services since 1977. From humble beginnings, Odyssey House has grown over the years to become one of Australia's largest and most successful rehabilitation services. For 40 years, Odyssey House has been one of the cornerstones of alcohol and other drug treatment in Australia, playing an important role in dispelling the myths around alcohol and drug use, and drug users.

Odyssey House clients are as follows:

- Clients over 18 with identified AOD issues, who may also have co-occurring mental health disorders.
- Clients in need of care coordination, who may need assistance accessing residential care, and support whilst waiting to enter or after exiting from residential treatment facilities.
- Clients needing support after business hours; they can access our relapse prevention education and support groups.
- Clients requiring specialist expertise, including women with children, clients with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, lesbian, gay, bi, trans, intersex, queer (LGBTIQ), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) clients, youths aged 18–24 years old, and people in contact with the justice system.

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1 Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (2014). Responding to alcohol and drug related harms in NSW: Mapping the NSW Non Government Alcohol and other Drugs Sector: NADA, NSW Australia

2 National Drug Strategy 2017 – 2026 (June 2017)

## Client Reflection

### 1998 Reflections

*When my father left the family I did not feel that this had any effect on me personally as I was too young to understand; however, it had an effect on my mother and eldest brother which I had to live with for years to come.*

*I have constantly been abused both physically and emotionally from an early age. I can recall instances of both kinds from the age of seven or eight from both my mother and eldest brother. Having been a victim of abuse has damaged my feeling of self worth and my faith in others. After having done Odyssey House I learned to accept that this was the damage and that I am no longer a victim of this abuse. I have learned that I deserve to be treated better than that.*

*In regards to feelings of rejection that I have felt from my father, I have written to him and he had not replied. I accept that this is his choice and I can live with that. At least I won't have to wonder any more if maybe he did wish to know me.*

*By far the most important issue that I have dealt with has been conflict resolution. I may not be the best at it but at least I don't lean towards a violent solution and can accept confrontation and eventually work towards a compromise rather than been constantly wrapped up in win/lose situations.*

*As for trusting people I suppose that not a lot has changed although I am now far more willing to take risks. And I can say there are a few people I am willing to put my faith in. Without these people I would not have much of a life.*

*- Anonymous*

## Growth

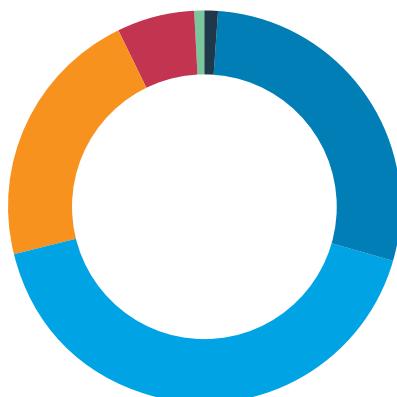
The last two years have been a crucial time for the AOD sector, with both levels of government following up their respective reviews with additional funding recommendations. These recommendations have resulted in a tender process that began at the end of 2016 and have continued into 2017. At the end of 2016, Odyssey House responded to select Commonwealth tenders for community services across the four Primary Health Networks in Sydney. We were successful and as such have grown our organisation financially by 31 per cent and our number of staff by 20 per cent.

Odyssey House has delivered Community Services in the Campbelltown region since 2002 through our Aftercare Program. In May 2017, with the additional government funding, Odyssey House expanded its Community Services to meet the existing and growing needs of the community by extending its community outreach programs to the whole of Sydney.

## Going forward

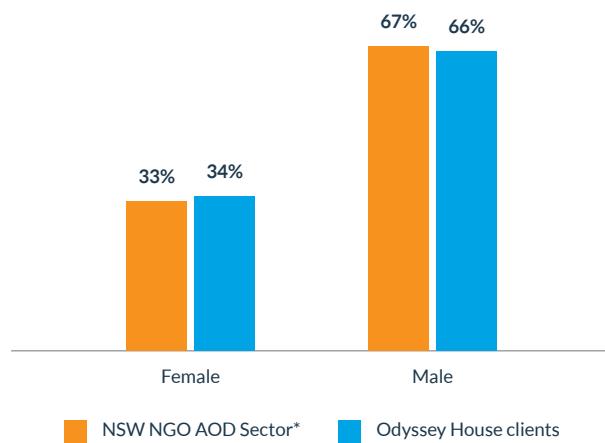
Odyssey House now offers a diverse range of residential and community-based programs and services for those affected by the complexities of AOD.

## ODYSSEY HOUSE CLIENT AGE BREAKDOWN



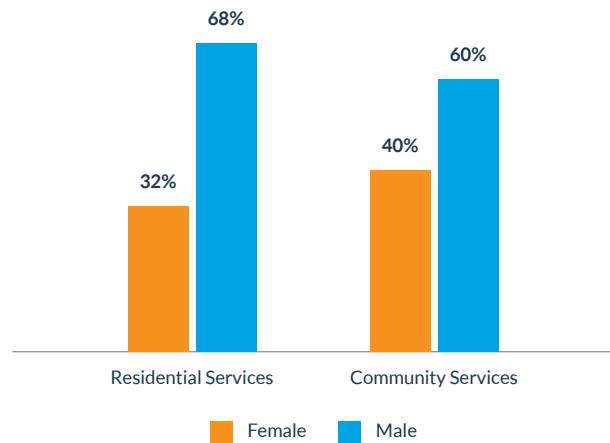
<18 years	1%
18-29 years	28%
30-39 years	42%
40-49 years	22%
50-59 years	6%
>60 years	1%

## ODYSSEY HOUSE TOTAL CLIENT GENDER BREAKDOWN



\*Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Agencies (2014). Responding to alcohol and drug related harms in NSW: Mapping the NSW Non Government (NGO) and AOD Sector. NADA, NSW Australia.

## ODYSSEY HOUSE CLIENT GENDER BREAKDOWN BY SERVICE



## AOD MISUSE IN AUSTRALIA VS ODYSSEY HOUSE CLIENTS PRINCIPAL DRUG OF CONCERN



Similar to the previous year, in 2017, 49 per cent of clients entering our programs cited meth/amphetamines as their principal drug of concern. In addition to our residential program, for the first year, this also includes our clients across the whole of Sydney who participated in our Community Service programs for two months. We originally anticipated that the principal drugs of concern for our clients participating in these community-based programs would be alcohol or cannabis as reflected in AOD misuse of Australians 14 years and above

in the National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2016 (AIHW. 2017). However, up to the end of July 2017, the emphasis on meth/amphetamines remains quite high for our Community Service clients, at 40 per cent. This is an interesting trend which we will continue to monitor in 2018.

Note: Odyssey House 2017 client statistics includes the whole year of our Residential Services, our MERIT Program, our Aftercare Program and two months of our new Community Services.

# Our 2020 Vision



## Build our scale

Odyssey House NSW will balance our core business with the opportunities to evolve our programs and services

## Strengthen our systems and processes

Odyssey House NSW will build an efficient and sustainable organisation that has seamless access and equity for all clients

### GOALS

.....

- 1 Deliver client informed services that achieve positive outcomes with individuals, families, carers, and communities
- 2 Establish mutually beneficial and sustainable partnerships and alliances
- 3 Deliver quality programs and services through continual improvement and evaluation
- 4 Recognised as an innovative, proactive and leading organisation in the alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector

### GOALS

.....

- 1 Increased productivity and effectiveness in the use of all our resources and systems
- 2 Maintain transparency and accountability through good governance
- 3 Ensure that the organisation has efficient and effective information management and knowledge application systems



## Align and sustain our resources

Odyssey House NSW will build on its current viable financial position to attract, diversify and retain current and new sources of income

## Develop and retain our workforce

Odyssey House NSW will be recognised as an employer of choice in the AOD sector with an engaged workforce focused on client care

### GOALS

.....

- 1 Greater balance and diversity in income sources
- 2 Ensure that government funding opportunities align with client needs
- 3 Invest in and own our infrastructure and assets where relevant

### GOALS

.....

- 1 A values-driven performance culture that enables our people to perform
- 2 A training program that encourages professional growth and development of our highly qualified staff
- 3 Establish a competency-building system to improve management and leadership
- 4 An engaged workforce that shares ownership of the organisation's values, objectives and targets



# Build our scale

**Odyssey House NSW will balance our core business with the opportunities to evolve our programs and services.**

## Organisation priorities

- Develop and align treatment models to meet the evolving needs of clients.
- Facilitate research alliances to guide service improvement and evaluation.
- Foster collaborative partnerships that support service delivery.
- Demonstrate alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector leadership in the advocacy for and delivery of services.

## Challenges

- Residential drug rehabilitation is often seen as a treatment of last resort for people with severe AOD issues. These clients present with more severe symptoms and a high proportion of clients seeking treatment may exit prematurely. Our Residential Rehabilitation Program continued to conduct regular case reviews, worked closely with service partners to ensure successful transfers and referrals, and introduced relapse prevention to counteract this ongoing challenge.
- The recruitment of appropriate staff and securing relevant office locations for our new Community Services added complications to the commencement of our new service delivery.

However by the end of June 2017, services had commenced in all sites in Western Sydney and Sydney North, in two of the three sites in Central Eastern Sydney, and in three of the four sites in South Western Sydney.

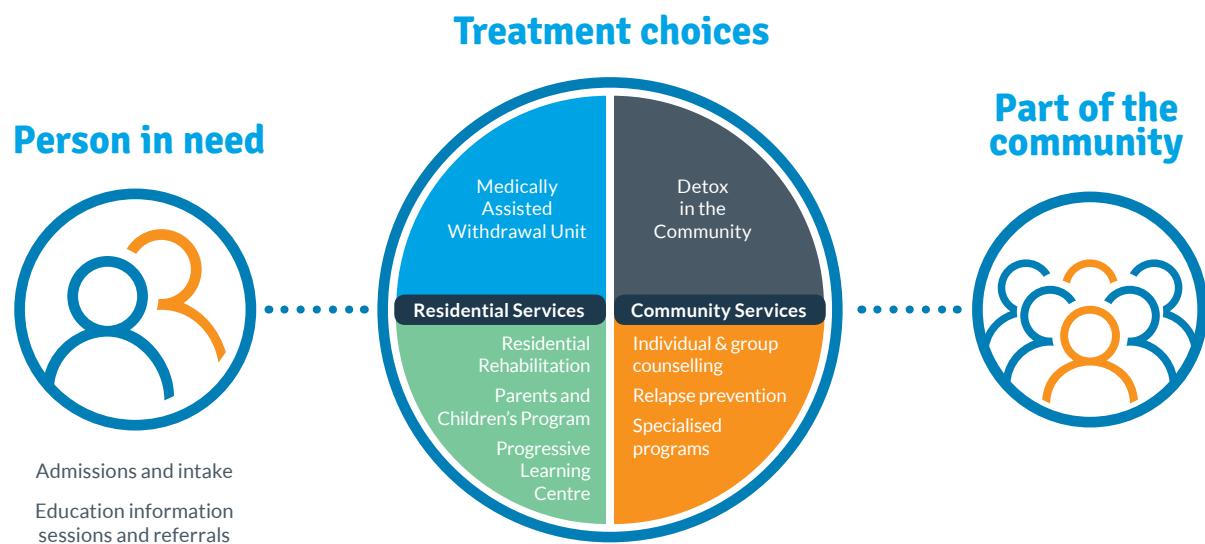
- Our website content management system did not allow Odyssey House's website to be optimised for the mobile/tablet platform. This issue was identified in 2017 and in 2018 the website will transfer to a new open source content management system, allowing it to be optimised for mobile, ultimately leading to a better user experience for our clients and supporters.

## Highlights

### Growth in Community Services

Odyssey House has delivered Community Services in the Campbelltown region since 2002 through its Aftercare Program. In May 2017, Odyssey House expanded its Community Services to meet the existing and growing needs of the local area by extending its service model to include community outreach programs and services to the whole of Sydney. These programs include: Counselling, AOD Recovery Group Stage 1 & 2, Mental Health Recovery Group Stage 1 & 2, and Specialised Recovery Groups.

## OUR CLIENT'S JOURNEY



### Research partnerships

Towards the end of the 2016 financial year, Odyssey House tendered for and was successful for an outcome review of the Residential Rehabilitation Program. The outcome review is funded through NSW Health's AOD Early Intervention Fund for a two-year duration. At the same time, there was an opportunity to also conduct an independent review of the processes of the Residential Rehabilitation Program which will be completed in the 2018 financial year.

The Residential Rehabilitation Program Outcome Research is in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and A/Prof Toby Newton-John. The data collection will begin in the 2018 financial year. The major outcome of this project will be a final evaluation report.

The Residential Rehabilitation Program Process Review will be conducted by Dr Lynda Berends from TRACE Research and will review how the program operates including assessment and admission

procedures. This review will also be implemented in 2018 and will provide recommendations on what the organisation needs to continue to do, what can be phased out, and what can be improved, based on standards and evidence within the AOD sector.

### Student placements

Odyssey House supports students on placement in a number of disciplines within its Residential Services to provide a range of learning experiences through its programs. Odyssey House is committed to providing placement opportunities that are supported, fulfilling, challenging and frequently involve direct service provision to clients. This includes social work, psychology, counselling, nursing, AOD support, community services, mental health, and admissions. Highlights include having a range of student placements in our Withdrawal Unit that included intern psychologists and counselling students from universities, and students studying AOD or Community Services at TAFE.

## What we did

### Residential Rehabilitation Program

In the Odyssey House Residential Services, residents achieve therapeutic goals by demonstrating their ability to move from the assessment phase through the four levels of the Residential Rehabilitation Program. Residents can be referred into the Residential Rehabilitation Program through internal services, such as the Odyssey House Withdrawal Unit, and external services from anywhere in NSW, such as health and non-health services, governmental services, families, friends, and self-referrals.

In 2017, the total number of admissions into our Residential Services (not including transfers from the Withdrawal Unit to the Residential Rehabilitation Program) was 789, an increase of 27 per cent from 2016. The program focused on resident retention, updating and creating workshop packages, and specialised training such as nutrition workshops with the Narellan Wellness Clinic.

### Setting up Community Services

By June 2017, the new Community Services were up and running across the whole of Sydney. The Community Services Clinical Response Guidelines were developed and a 1800 number was put in place and used for all queries and assessments for all Odyssey House services. In addition, promotional material for the new services were created and distributed across all service delivery areas. Additionally referral pathways from other services, families, friends, and self-referrals were completed and put in use.

## Communicating with our stakeholders

Staff and clients participate in the Quality Assurance Program that evaluates the customer satisfaction of a program after completion via a survey. Here the staff and clients share their ideas on areas of the program that can be improved. In addition, clinical indicators are kept across the organisation and sent to the Quality Assurance Department monthly. This data has been used to review services and programs within the organisation. Feedback from the quarterly Consumer Satisfaction Survey is reported to staff via email and staff meetings, and to clients via a residential community meeting. Staff have also worked in collaboration with clients to address issues raised in the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

### Media

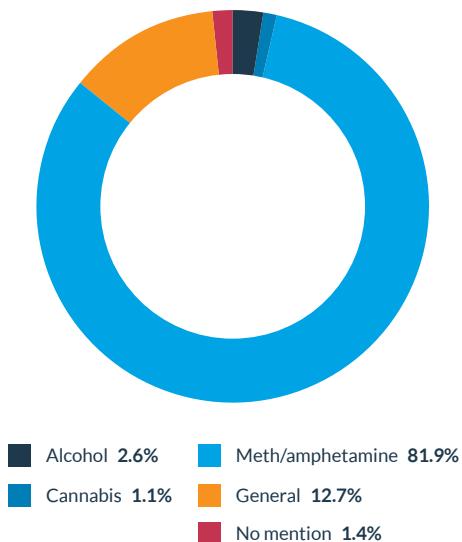
Odyssey House shares important news and stories about the journey to recovery through our bi-annual newsletter, Odyssey House Facebook page, Twitter handle, website, and media stories.

Odyssey House focused on three main areas of discussion:

1. AOD treatment, as well as the effectiveness of our service model, recovery and relapse programs, and outcomes.
2. The reality of addiction and dependence issues such as drugs of concern, harm minimisation, coexisting mental illness, and underlying personal issues.
3. The organisation's sustainability, such as government funding, fundraising resourcing, and Odyssey House's impact in the community.

Our traditional media coverage (which includes TV, radio, newspaper and magazine) tracked the primary drug featured throughout the year, which was meth/amphetamines. The dominant medium for our traditional media coverage was radio (68 per cent).

## PRIMARY DRUG MENTIONED IN TRADITIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE 2016/17



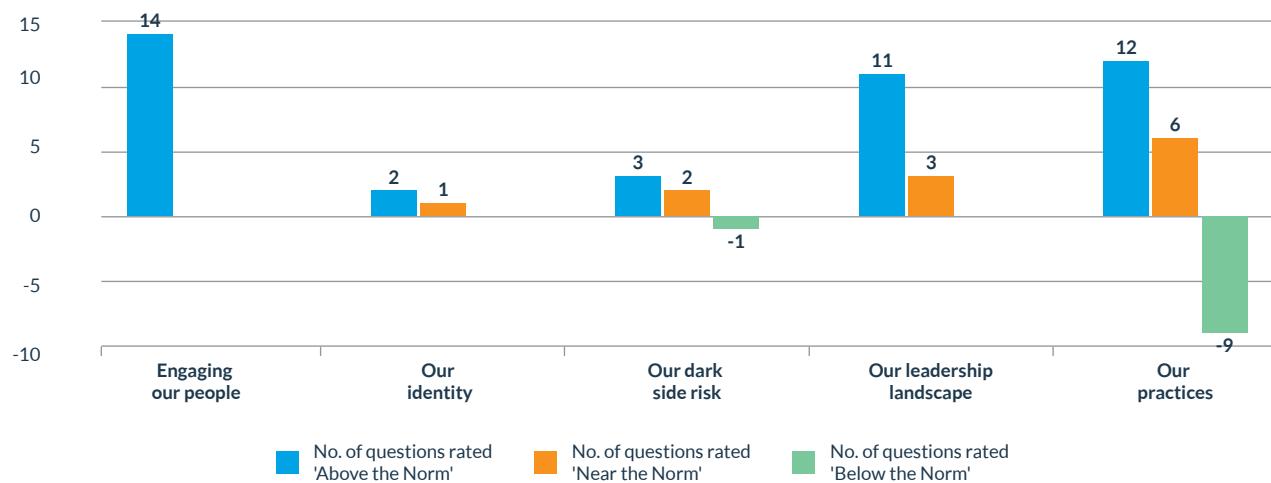
Our Facebook page, Odyssey House NSW, grew throughout the year with a 41.7 per cent increase in page engagement. Our Twitter handle, @odysseyhousensw increased its followers by 199 per cent with a 167 per cent increase in engagement. These social media forums gave us the ability to engage with our supporters by informing them on the impacts of AOD, encouraging them to become involved in our initiatives and events, and discussing with them interesting international and local news, as well as client stories from the alcohol and other drug sector.

## Surveys

In August 2016, Odyssey House conducted our first ever supporter survey. Responses were used as part of our planning for future communications with supporters, and also to help improve our fundraising and marketing activities.

In October 2016, Odyssey House staff took part in the People Survey by Best Practice Australia. This was the first time that Odyssey House had participated in an independent employee survey that enabled the organisation to compare itself against the health and community services sector in five main areas: engaging our people, our identity, our dark side risk, our leadership landscape, and our practices (see results below in Odyssey House People Survey Benchmarking Against Health & Community Services graph). 82 surveys were distributed with a 76 per cent response rate. The results saw that at the time of the survey, 59.4 per cent of Odyssey House's staff were engaged. In addition, 50.8 per cent of the staff were promoters of the organisation, 16.9 per cent were detractors, and the rest were undecided.

## ODYSSEY HOUSE SURVEY BENCHMARKING AGAINST HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES



## Our stakeholders

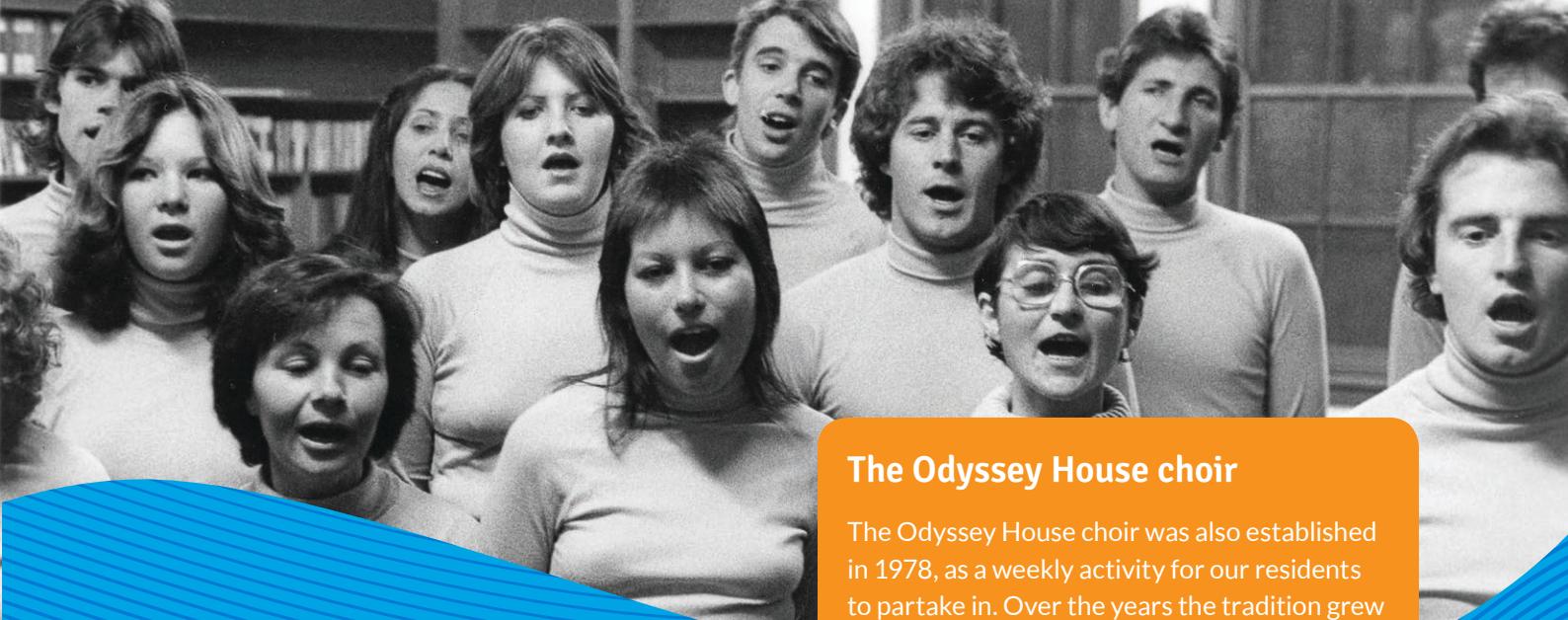


## How we communicate

- Regular updates
- Our client and resident evaluations
- Sharing reports and evaluations with supporters and partners
- Feedback from clients through program evaluations
- Feedback from clients and families through our admissions process
- People survey
- Supporter survey
- Invitations to events and activities
- Appeal opportunities
- Staff presentations at conferences
- Attendance at inter-agency and sector meetings
- Memberships of relevant peak bodies and sector agencies
- Phone calls
- Emails
- Bi-annual newsletter
- Website
- Odyssey House annual Open Day
- Media relations and interviews

## What's new in 2018

- In 2018, our focus will be on extending the regular feedback from stakeholders, such as our clients and their families, to our supporters and staff.
- In 2017, as part of our Community Services in South Western Sydney, a pilot for the Detox in the Community Program was introduced to treat people with mild to moderate withdrawal symptoms. This pilot program will be completed and implemented in 2018.
- Residential Services will continue to review, evaluate, and update its specialised groups and programs, such as the Parent's In Contact Program.
- In 2012, the Progressive Learning Centre (PLC) passed registration with the NSW Board of Studies, entitling it to operate for five years until 31 December 2017. In 2018, the PLC will focus on passing the registration process to ensure its eligibility for another five years.



# Historical snapshot

## Progressive Learning Centre

In early 1978, Ruth and Joy Jackman commenced the first remedial literacy program. By the end of 1979, approximately 30 residents were studying to complete the School Certificate and were studying by correspondence with Liverpool Technical College. Three teachers from Liverpool would visit one day per week for classes.

Vocational education and training continued to be offered throughout the 1980's under the program name Progressive Learning Centre (PLC). In 1993, mathematics, computer courses and more art and woodwork options were introduced and in the late 1990s, the range of arts and crafts was extended to cover visual arts and music.

All residents in the Residential Program participate in courses provided by the PLC. It aims to provide educational experiences that foster personal growth, enabling our residents to participate in the wider Residential Program in a more effective way without the influence of drugs or alcohol. In 1981, the PLC was officially identified as a school and is a member of the Association of Independent Schools (AIS).

The staff at the centre teach courses in remedial English and maths, computer skills, and visual arts in a dynamic and innovative approach. As well as the

## The Odyssey House choir

The Odyssey House choir was also established in 1978, as a weekly activity for our residents to partake in. Over the years the tradition grew and became part of the education unit of the Residential Rehabilitation Program. To this day, the choir is an integral part of the week for our residents and staff.

skills content in each subject area, teachers focus on helping clients to achieve personal growth and enhance their social skills.

The art-as-therapy component enables residents to create something they can be proud of, express their feelings, and interact better with others in a non-threatening environment. Vocational guidance seminars and individual career consultations are also provided by the PLC, which greatly assists residents in the re-entry phase of the Residential Program, helping them identify what careers would be appropriate for them and their professional growth.

The PLC is registered and accredited by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

During the 2016 calendar year students attended four plays performed by the Sydney Theatre Company. Additionally the choir performed each term at the Narellan Congregation Seniors Facility and Odyssey House's celebration of International Women's Day. As in previous years, the PLC had education students from the University of Western Sydney complete placements with the school, and also had nursing students and TAFE students participate in various classes. Students from Narrabundah College (Canberra) also visit annually.

# A timeline: 40 years of Odyssey House

**1977**

James McGrath Foundation is launched and Odyssey House is auspiced under the Foundation and begins operating from an old seminary in Eagle Vale, Sydney with 40 bed crisis support and 75 beds in a Therapeutic Community model. An admissions centre is established in Elizabeth Bay, Sydney.

**1979**

30 residents studying for School Certificate. 3 teachers from Liverpool Technical and Further Education visit one day per week to give classes. See more info on page 17. Doctor Nino Sa-Corderio commences providing health care to patients 113 residents have received treatment by the end of 1979.

**1982**

New Vocational Centre at the Assessment and Referral Centre, Robin Hood Farm, Ingleburn, Sydney The tents at Robin Hood Farm are replaced by a new dormitory, funded by the Parents & Supporters Association.

**1986**

New modern kitchen and dining hall built at the Main Treatment Facility, Eagle Vale, Sydney.

**1989**

Walter McGrath passes away James McGrath Foundation changes name to Odyssey House McGrath Foundation.



**1978**

Ruth and Joy Jackman commenced the first remedial literacy program. Robin Hood Farm at Ingleburn, Sydney pre-treatment centre established. Odyssey House Parents and Supporters Association established.

**1980**

Brian Hunt introduces innovative program of play therapy for children of residents.

**1983**

The inaugural bi-annual Odyssey House Olympic Games commences between Odyssey House NSW and Odyssey House Victoria.

**1984**

Clara Hali commences art therapy program James Pitts joins Odyssey House NSW as General Manager.

**1992**

Mel Cranfield, arts teacher, sets up a screen printing shop as part of Art Therapy at the Assessment and Referral Centre in Ingleburn, Sydney.

**1993**

The Progressive Learning Centre expands with mathematics and computer studies.

**1996**

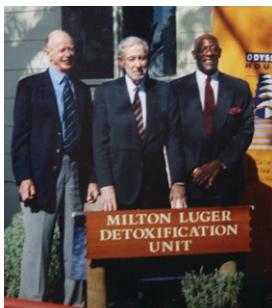
Detoxification service established at Main Treatment Facility, Eagle Vale, Sydney.

**1997**

20th anniversary of Odyssey House services in NSW.

## **1999**

Parents and Children's Program cottages opened at the Main Treatment Facility, Eagle Vale, Sydney. See more info on page 24.



## **2002**

Aftercare Program moved to Campbelltown, Sydney.  
Inaugural Real Men Cook fundraising event raised \$25,000

## **2004**

Young Adults Group (18-25 years) established.



## **2006**

Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment (MERIT) Program commences at Waverley Local Court, Sydney – see more on page 36.



## **2001**

Detoxification service moved to the newly built Milton Luger Detoxification Unit officially opened in Ingleburn, Sydney – see more info on page 31.

## **2005**

The Milton Luger Detoxification Unit wins the National Drug and Alcohol award for outstanding success rates.



## **2007**

JANUS program introduced for residents with mental health needs.

## **2009**

Inaugural Goulburn to Citi Classic bike ride raises \$110,000.



## **2010**

Odyssey House Survivors Group established.  
Inaugural Ladies Luncheon (now Business Women's Lunch) hosted by Perpetual, Audrey Page and Associates.



## **2014**

Celebration of James Pitts working at Odyssey House for 30 years.  
His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC RdC (Ret'd) Governor for NSW accepts invitation to become Patron, succeeding Dame Marie Bashir.



## **2011**

ING backyard blitz for creating soft play area for children.  
Accreditation received from the Australia Council on Health Care Standards.

## **2016**

James Pitts retires as Chief Executive Officer.  
Julie Babineau commences as Chief Executive Officer.  
Real Men Cook Fundraising event 15 years celebration.

## **2017**

Odyssey House NSW expands its Community Services to the whole of Sydney.



# Strengthen our systems and processes

**Odyssey House NSW will build an efficient and sustainable organisation that has seamless access and equity for all clients.**

## Organisation priorities

- Upgrade and streamline corporate and clinical systems and processes.
- Develop and deliver an evidence based clinical and governance framework.

## Challenges

- During 2017, Odyssey House's rapid growth put a spotlight on its information technology (IT) infrastructure, thereby helping to identify the need for the organisation's IT requirements to be reviewed.
- The growth in Community Services led to the implementation of the Redicase client database. However, a different client database is used for Residential Services, which has led to decision between which client database to use across the whole of the organisation.

## Highlights

### Developing our 2020 Vision

In 2017, Odyssey House developed its strategic direction for the next three years. Its 2020 Vision was finalised with a focus on four key areas: 'Build our scale' by balancing our core business with opportunities to evolve our programs and services;

'Strengthen our systems and processes' to build an efficient and sustainable organisation that has seamless access and equity for all clients; 'Align and sustain our resources' by building on our current viable financial position to attract, diversify and retain current and new sources of income; and 'Develop and retain our workforce' so that we are recognised as an employer of choice in the alcohol and other drugs sector with an engaged workforce focused on client care.

### Risk Management

Odyssey House has embedded a risk management approach into our overall corporate governance, planning, and operational service delivery. Odyssey House has been accredited by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) since 2010.

Odyssey House evaluates its Risk Management and Business Continuity Plan bi-annually. This plan includes the organisation's risk matrix and the residents' risk categories. Each program has a risk management plan that identifies possible risks and mitigation strategies. Risk identification, risk analysis, and management is reviewed by the Chief Financial Officer as financial data is entered daily. This data is reviewed on a monthly basis by the Chief Executive Officer and the Board Finance, Operations (Efficiency), and Risk Management Committee. The Board Quality and Clinical Safety Committee also reviews qualitative data.

Odyssey House has an Organisational Risk Register which is reviewed monthly by Coordinators and Managers, through the executive team to the Board.

### Clinical governance

A review of our clinical governance process was undertaken in 2016/17 to incorporate the new Community Services within Sydney. At the review, risk assessment forms, a confidentiality agreement, a service agreement, and client consent forms were all completed. In addition policies, procedures and the Community Services Clinical Response Guidelines continue to be developed and updated.

### What we did

#### Executive structure and governance arrangements

In May 2016, Odyssey House appointed a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Julie Babineau. Julie came to Odyssey House from the NSW Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, where she was CEO for seven years. The CEO is the most senior member of the executive team with the Chief Operations Officer (COO), the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the Program Director of Community Services, and the Fundraising and Marketing Manager reporting to the CEO. The CEO is responsible to the Board of Directors and attends monthly meetings with the Board, as well as monthly meetings with specified Board sub-committees, which encompasses the Finance, Operations (Efficiency) and Risk Management Committee, the Quality and Clinical Safety Committee, the Marketing Committee, the Nominations Committee, (which is formed as needed) as well as the School Board.

Odyssey House is unique in that it has an independent school (Progressive Learning Centre) for people within its Residential Services. As such, a review of our curriculum and governance procedures was undertaken by the National Educational Standards Association.

Client  
Reflection

2011

I might be special

*My true passions, desires, ideas, talents and charms are concealed beneath the flesh that most people see as me.*

*Only people able to look beyond my vague exterior, and into the limitless network of memories, thoughts and emotions that individualise me, can really say they know me.*

*Only a person, who compels these qualities to come out of me could ever see my elegance and appeal or possess all the love and trust my heart will ever have to offer and say they really knew me.*

– Michael

### What's new in 2018

- Odyssey House will participate in an external review of its IT infrastructure in 2018 and will begin to implement change to ensure that our staff has access to an integrated IT system that allows them to work effectively and efficiently.
- Odyssey House Residential Services will review its client database needs and work on ensuring that all information management is responsive, transparent and in line with organisational requirements.

# Our Board



## Christine Bishop

Christine joined the Board in 2011. She spent 25 years in legal practice, then eight years with the Department of Juvenile Justice as a psychologist specialising in alcohol and other drug issues with young people. She has an interest in pathways to recovery that balance medical, legal, and social issues so that clients leave treatment with skills leading to pro-social and productive lives. Christine is a member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal, fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Sydney Symphony Council and has served on several not for profit Boards.



## Jan Copeland

Professor Jan Copeland (PhD, BSc Psych (Hons)) is the founding Director of the National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre (NCPI) at the University of New South Wales since 2007. She has worked in the addictions field for more than 20 years over a range of topics. She is best known for her studies developing and testing brief interventions for the management of cannabis use disorder among adults and adolescents. Jan joined the Board in 2005.



## John Coughlan

John Coughlan (B.Ec. Dip. Rur.Acc. FCA) enjoyed a 25 year career in the racing industry occupying Chief Executive positions in the thoroughbred, harness and greyhound industries in NSW and Queensland, after an eight year career in chartered accounting. He is chairman of Sire Custodians Ltd and has been a director of Odyssey House NSW since 2006, being chairman of the Finance and Risk Management Committee since that time. John joined the Board in 2006.



## Stewart Hindmarsh

Stewart Hindmarsh is a director of diversified property business, Hindmarsh. Stewart most recently was Chief Executive Officer of World Nomads Group, a leading global provider of travel insurance now owned by private health insurer, nib. Prior to his role with World Nomads Group, Stewart was a Director of boutique corporate advisory group, Grant Samuel. It was here that Stewart advised on a wide range of corporate advisory transactions across a broad range of industries. Stewart has been a long term supporter of Odyssey House NSW and joined the Board in 2016.



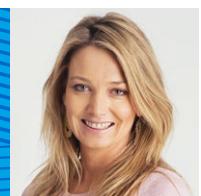
## Valerie Hoogstad

Valerie Hoogstad has lectured at several universities in communication studies and international education. She has written sixteen textbooks and several papers on intercultural education and communication studies. She was the director for International Education at Australian Catholic University. She currently works at Sydney University and is chair of the Centre for Volunteering NSW. Valerie is also on the board of the National Volunteering Body, Together for Humanity and AIM Overseas. She has been a director of Odyssey House NSW for 21 years.



## David McGrath

David McGrath runs his own independent consultancy business, providing advice to the government on areas of social policy. He was previously the director of Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Programs at NSW Health, and held that role for nine years. With a background in psychology, research, operational management, 15 years clinical experience, and a Masters degree in Business, he has a mix of skills that are of considerable value to Odyssey House NSW. David is a technical advisor to the World Health Organisation on Mental Health and Human Rights. He has previously been on the NSW Psychologists Registration Board, the board of the Institute of Psychiatry, and the board of the National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre. Additionally he was previously the chair of the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs, and has represented Australia on four occasions at the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs. David joined the Board in 2014.



## Natalie Micarone

Natalie Micarone is a co-founding director of Bendelta and a practice area expert in strategy, cultural alignment, governance, and leadership. Natalie works with clients across both the public and private sector, concentrating on the transformational impact of building strategically aligned capabilities. Her primary focus is assisting organisations with the design of environments and capabilities that unlock human potential in highly disruptive contexts. Natalie joined the Board in 2010.



## Douglas Snedden (Chairman)

Douglas has been the chairman of Odyssey House NSW since October 2011. Formerly managing director of Accenture, he is chairman of Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, a director of OFX Ltd, and a member of the National Library of Australia Council. Douglas joined the Board in 2011.



## Garry Wayling

Garry is a chartered accountant. He graduated from the University of NSW with a Bachelor in Commerce in Accounting Finance and Systems. Garry's professional experience includes more than 35 years in accounting and business leadership. He was an Audit Partner at Arthur Andersen and then Ernst & Young Australia. Garry currently is an Independent Director at ASX listed OneVue Limited and ASX listed Inabox Group Limited. He holds other private company directorships and is an ex-officio member of the Audit and Risk Committee of Mission Australia. Garry has been a director at Odyssey House NSW for four years and a member of the Finance and Risk Management Committee of Odyssey House NSW since 2013.



## Geoff Wilson

Geoff Wilson is the chairman and founder of independent investment manager Wilson Asset Management. Geoff is also the founder of the *Future Generation Investment Companies*. Geoff holds a number of public company and charitable Board positions. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree and a Graduate Management Qualification. Geoff is a fellow of the Institute of Company Directors and a fellow of the Financial Services Institute of Australasia (Finsia). Geoff has been a director of Odyssey House NSW since 2008.



# Historical snapshot

## Parents and Children's Program

The Parents and Children's Program makes it possible for parents or single mothers and fathers, to undertake treatment in the Residential Program, whilst living with their younger children. When the program opened its doors in 1999, it operated from the Main Treatment Facility in Eagle Vale, Sydney. The vision was to move the program to its own self-contained cottages with communal dining facilities.

In the 1990s, corporate lunches were established to raise funds for the cottages through the support of Ross Grant, chairman of Grant Samuel Group. In 1998, a construction ceremony for the Parents and Children's Program cottages, was attended by the Hon. Peter Philips A.M; Danni Wilson, Parents' Program Administrator; and Melinda, a parent. The cottages were completed and officially opened in 1999. The cottages are named after Danni Wilson, who gave 17 years of service operating the Parents and Children's Program and the Hon. Peter Philips AM.

With residents living together as a family, the program provides intense family support with the aim of keeping children safe and breaking the cycle of addiction and trauma. The program is dedicated to meeting the individual needs of each parent by assisting with their drug rehabilitation and

parenting skills, as well as the needs of their young child/children by assisting with their educational, emotional and physical development, ultimately leading to an increase in the family's wellbeing as a whole.

Children are encouraged to attend the local day care facility or primary school, and are provided with supervised play and recreational activities. When parents finish their rehabilitation it is typical that they recognise that they have gained the confidence to responsibly raise their children.

In 2017, 23 parents and 25 children attended the service (21 families). During the reporting period the principal drug of concern was; alcohol (26 per cent), methamphetamine (56 per cent) and cannabis (17 per cent). In 2016/17, five clients completed the Parents and Children's Program and two clients went on to graduate the Odyssey House Residential Rehabilitation Program. The NSW Department of Family and Community Services were involved with 72 per cent of the program's clients and, due to these clients participation in the Parents and Children's Program, seven families achieved restoration of their children.

*“Odyssey House staff believed in me, even when I didn’t believe in myself. I could never have gotten where I am today without their support.”*





# Align and sustain our resources

**Odyssey House NSW will build on its current viable financial position to attract, diversify, and retain current and new sources of income.**

## Organisation priorities

- Diversify funding sources through identifying sustainable and strategic funding opportunities.
- Establish an asset management plan in line with strategic priorities.

## Challenges

- Ongoing maintenance issues at our Residential Services locations due to the age of the facilities.
- Odyssey House is highly reliant on government funding (71 per cent of organisation income).
- Alcohol and other drugs (AOD) misuse and addiction has many root causes, some of which are perceived to be of a person's own making, which makes fundraising messages more complex.

## Highlights

### 15th anniversary of Real Men Cook

2017 was the 15th anniversary of Real Men Cook, one of the most anticipated fundraising events on the Odyssey House calendar. This was held at the Glass Brasserie, Hilton Sydney.

Over the years many talented 'celebrity chefs' have included David Koch, Vince Sorrenti, Mikey Robins, Rhys Muldoon, Kieren Perkins, Graham Ross, Luke Jacobz, James Tobin, Rob Mills, Cameron Daddo, Fast Ed, Darren Simpson, Chris Gray, Mark Ferguson, Simon Marnie and Merrick Watts to name a few. All gave tremendous support to help raise money for the Odyssey House Parents and Children's Program.

This year the lunch was supported by a number of celebrities including Mike Munro, Mikey Robins, Steve Price, Vince Sorrenti, Karen Ledbury (MC) and long term event sponsor Chris Gray.

The guest speakers on the day were broadcaster, Mike Munro, and Odyssey House graduate, Luke. Both gave powerful insight into their journeys; Mike as a child of a parent with alcohol and other drugs misuse, and of course, Luke as someone who recently completed his time with us at Odyssey House.

Odyssey House would like to thank everyone who has supported the event over the last 15 years, especially to all the sponsors and attendees, who made the 15th anniversary of Real Men Cook such a huge success.

## Consolidation

Odyssey House acquired Bridges Incorporated, a Blacktown alcohol and drug counselling organisation, on 31 March 2017 to expand its footprint in Blacktown and the Western Sydney region. It was a timely acquisition that boosted Odyssey House Community Services in Western Sydney. The new service brings together Odyssey House's and Bridges' extensive counselling expertise and dedicated staff, plus the addition of four new staff members. Former Bridges Executive Officer Gail Davies said the long-term funding and sustainability of Bridges had been at the forefront of the Bridges Board's considerations over the past few years. "For a small organisation, Bridges coming together with Odyssey House is a long-term, sustainable opportunity that creates a foundation to tender for larger grants as they become available. It also ensures local services will not only continue, but also expand to meet community needs," Ms Davies said.

By combining forces, Odyssey House expects to assist around 640 people each year for the Western Sydney Primary Health Network, an increase of 83 per cent on the 350 people Bridges had assisted annually on average. The services are free to residents in the Local Government Areas of Blacktown, Parramatta, The Hills and Cumberland, which have a combined population of approximately 900,000 people.

## Refreshing the House

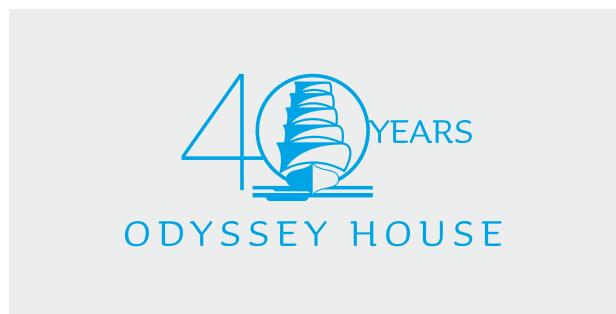
Odyssey House identified an opportunity to celebrate its 40th Anniversary and increase the value of the brand by aligning the organisation colours with its sister organisation, Odyssey House Victoria. In November 2016, the Board agreed to the creation of a 40th Anniversary logo and to refresh the look and feel of the organisation's posters, letterhead, business cards and brochures.

A working group of a cross section of Odyssey House stakeholders was created, which provided feedback and gave a final recommendation for official sign off.

## ODYSSEY HOUSE LOGO COMPARISON



Old logo



New logo

The visual identity draws inspiration from the Greek myth Odyssey House, which tells the story of the struggles and triumphs of Odysseus and how he overcame countless obstacles during his long journey home by sea. This story rings true for those seeking help from Odyssey House, as well as people on their own journey to recovery and well-being. This is the basis for the wave pattern that has been developed as the graphic device.

This report is an example of how the brand elements can be put into use. Thank you to L+L Design for their ongoing work on this project.

In addition to a refresh of the brand, Odyssey House took the opportunity to revisit the organisation's vision, mission, and values during its work on its 2020 Vision (see more information on page 10). Through a consultation process that included the Board and all staff, the new vision, mission, and values were finalised in early August 2017 to reflect a client-centric, individually tailored, and holistic care approach that could reach a broader range of clients.



## Client Reflection

2002

### The Cross Roads

When times are tough and  
your road's been rough  
And life doesn't seem worth living  
When friends are few, and dollars too  
And the taking, outweighs the giving

When memories fade of the good times made  
With those people who no longer care  
Just remember my friend,  
when it comes to an end  
That your true friends will always be there

There are those that will use  
you then later abuse you  
When all you have left is a frown  
And those who will hurt you,  
ignore and desert you  
That you once helped when  
their lives were down

It's then you will find, you  
must leave them behind  
And move on to find a new road  
Where companions are few, but  
their motives are true  
And they'll lighten not burden your load

It's then you'll discover as  
you help one another  
That your past has been better directed  
Than it was when you found that  
what goes comes around  
But not always from where you expected

- Rusty

## What we did

### Expanding our premises

At the beginning of the financial year, Odyssey House's five premises consisted of one owned by the organisation and four leased premises, including heritage listed properties in Ingleburn and Eagle Vale. By the end of 2016/17, Odyssey House purchased a second property in Campbelltown and 10 leases to house the new Community Services. This capital purchase was the first step in a \$4 million in four years capital fundraising campaign that was launched with the 2017 tax appeal.

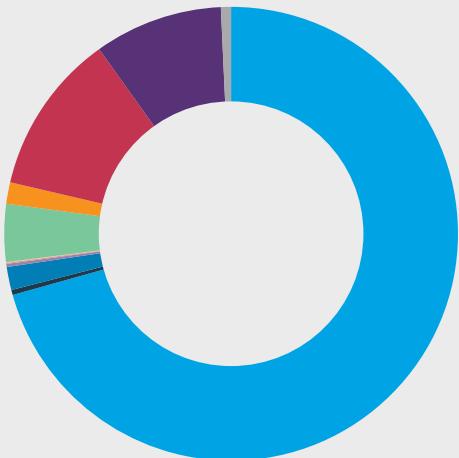
### How we raised the funds

Odyssey House is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) by the Australia Taxation Office, and holds a Charitable Fundraising Authority from the New South Wales government. All of our appeals and fundraising activities comply with the Fundraising Institute of Australia's Principles and Standards of Fundraising Practice, Trade Practices Act, and the Privacy Act. Our fundraising proposal form is available on our website. We do not undertake face-to-face fundraising.

For the year ended 30 June 2017, Odyssey House reported a surplus of \$789,814 (2016: \$438,885) which represented an 80 per cent increase on the previous year. This increase was due to the Bridges Inc. acquisition and an increase in donations. Income from the government increased by 29 per cent from \$5,574,741 (2016) to \$7,218,228 (2017) due to the previously mentioned tenders for our new Community Services. Income from the government represented 71 per cent (2016: 71 per cent) of our total revenue. The diversity mix of income streams has remained consistent year on year, highlighting the organisation's need for more balanced income sources in 2018.

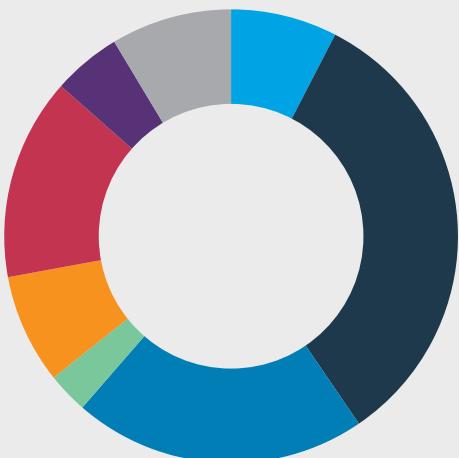
## What's new in 2018

- Following on from Odyssey House's acquisition of Bridges Inc. and growth in Community Services, Odyssey House McGrath Foundation changed its name to Odyssey House NSW from 25 July 2017.
- Continue to focus on the \$4 million in four years capital campaign.



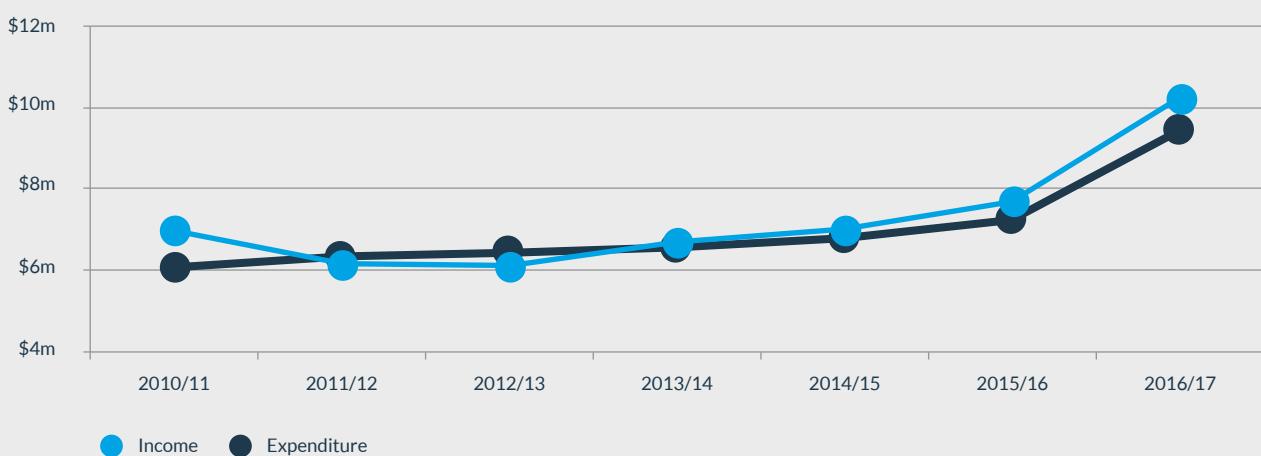
### ORGANISATION INCOME 2016/17

Government	71%	Major Donors >\$1K	4%
Events	<1%	Community Fundraising	2%
Bequests	2%	Treatment cost & fees	11%
Donations <\$1K	<1%	Other	9%
Regular Giving	<1%	Investment	1%
		Corporate	<1%



### WHERE THE MONEY WENT 2016/17

### ORGANISATION GROWTH 2011-17

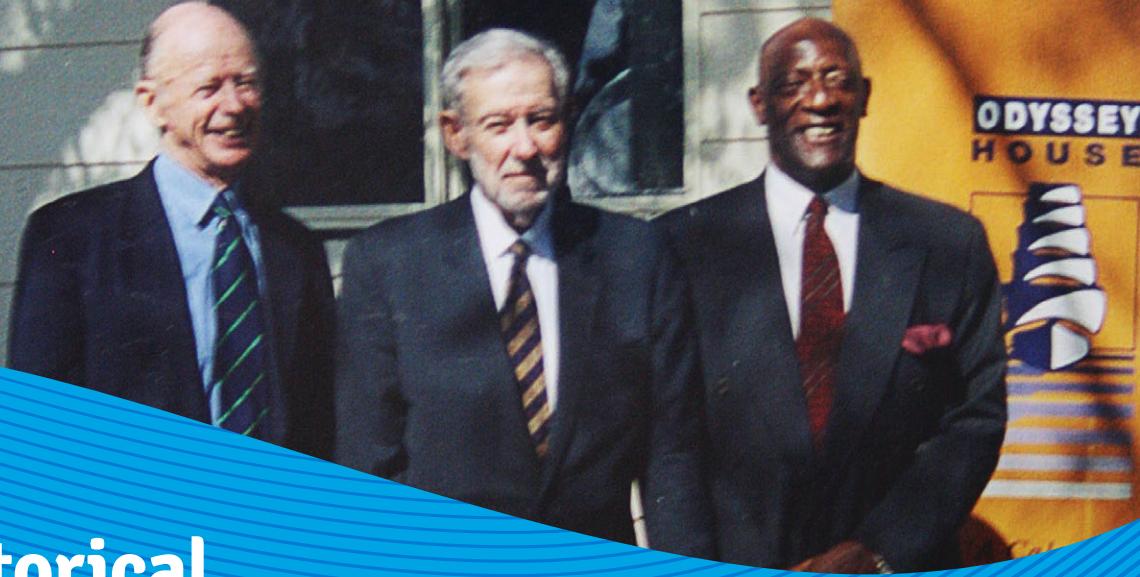


# Thank you to our supporters

Odyssey House NSW would like to acknowledge the support of the following\*

- Robert Albert AO
- Christine Bishop
- Adapt Productivity
- ASX Thomson Reuters Charity Foundation
- Australian Department of Health:
  - Central Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network
  - South Western Sydney Primary Health Network
  - Sydney North Primary Health Network
  - Western Sydney Primary Health Network – WestWent
- Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Australian Department of Education and Training
- Australian Fund Managers Foundation
- Department of Attorney General and Justice
- Australian Independent Schools
- Australian Youth & Health Foundation
- Best Practice Australia
- Campbelltown Catholic Club
- The CEO Circle
- Ross Grant
- M Halstead
- S Hindmarsh
- V Hoogstad
- John Lamble Foundation
- Judith Neville Consulting
- Liangrove Foundation
- W Lowenthal
- Susan Maple-Brown
- Marsdens Law Group
- Cath and John Murray
- The Nous Group
- NSW Health:
  - South Eastern Sydney Local Health District
  - South Western Sydney Local Health District
  - Western Sydney Local Health District
- NSW Department of Education
- NSW Department of Family and Community Services
- Janette Mary O'Neil
- Rodney and Judith O'Neil Foundation
- The Patter Foundation
- D Robinson
- Rotary Club of Lower Blue Mountains
- D Snedden
- TRACE Research
- University of Technology
- R Waters
- H Waters
- The Wiggs Family Foundation

\*Some have requested that their support be kept private.



## Historical snapshot

### Medically Assisted Withdrawal Unit and Clinical Services

The Odyssey House Withdrawal Unit, known as the Milton Luger Detoxification Unit, is housed in a modern facility built on the grounds of Robin Hood Farm in 1999.

In 1998, Odyssey House received four years of funding from the government through the National Illicit Drugs Strategy to construct and run a detoxification unit. The grant provided capital funds that allowed the organisation to renovate the Assessment and Referral Centre (ARC) in Ingleburn, Sydney.

The first admission to the unit was on 1 March 2001, on the site where there was once a cow shed. The rural setting provides an ideal environment of privacy and comfort, which helps men and women who are attempting to withdraw from a range of licit and illicit drugs. The unit accommodates up to 12 people and is staffed by qualified nurses on a 24-hour basis. All clients are reviewed and assessed by clinical staff to determine an appropriate withdrawal regime.

The program usually lasts from seven to ten days and includes a social and medical assessment and an individually tailored withdrawal regime, as well as supportive individual and group counselling.

Participants are also taught relaxation techniques and receive educational information on relapse prevention. On completion, clients are referred on for ongoing support in their recovery in the community, or may enter the Odyssey House Residential Rehabilitation Program.

Odyssey House has an extensive clinical department that has been built over last the 40 years. The department includes psychologists, therapists, a general practitioner and psychiatric consultants.

In 2017, there were 261 referrals with 193 people completing the program. Reasons for not completing the program include being transferred to another service (3.4 per cent), leaving against advice (17.6 per cent), and leaving involuntarily (non-compliant, 4.6 per cent).



# Develop and retain our workforce

**Odyssey House NSW will be recognised as an employer of choice in the alcohol and other drug (AOD) sector with an engaged workforce focused on client care.**

## Organisation priorities

- Foster engagement with and a commitment among all staff to deliver services that support the mission, vision and value of the organisation.
- Review current processes and ensure delivery of best practice staff professional development.
- Strengthen understanding of roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities at all levels of the organisation.

## Challenges

- Residential Services staff were sometimes under resourced throughout the year, however, the Residential Rehabilitation Program Process Review that will be conducted by TRACE Research in 2018 will assist in clarifying roles and responsibilities for staff. Additionally, it will recommend what can be phased out and what can be improved, based on standards and evidence within the AOD sector.
- Odyssey House's rapid growth led to communication challenges due to the introduction of new locations, technology and resources.

## Highlights

### Learning and development

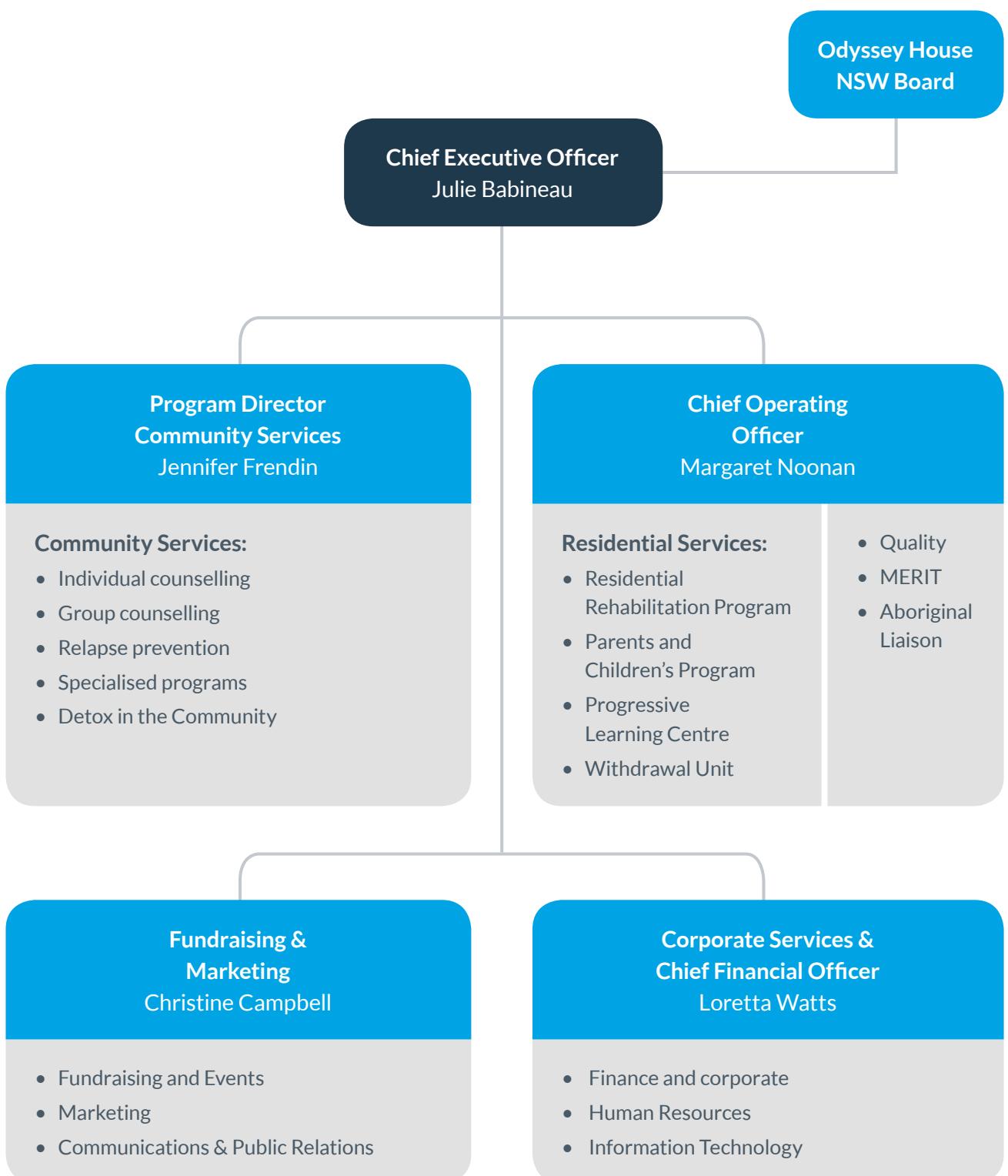
Odyssey House embraces every opportunity to develop its employees' skills by encouraging them to attend training and personal development courses on a regular basis. Staff participated in over 40 training sessions during 2016/17.

Odyssey House ensures that staff have a learning and development strategy in place to help develop our workforce's capabilities, skills and competencies to create a sustainable, successful organisation. Odyssey House believes that training helps drive high performance levels and business success and therefore it is part of our overall business strategy.

### Recruitment

Odyssey House adheres to all Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines to create a discrimination free work environment for all our staff. Our goal is to approach recruitment in a systematic manner, with a commitment to employing staff based on their qualifications and merit, who are then able to manage and operate the business in a safe and effective manner.

## ORGANISATION STRUCTURE



## Client Reflection

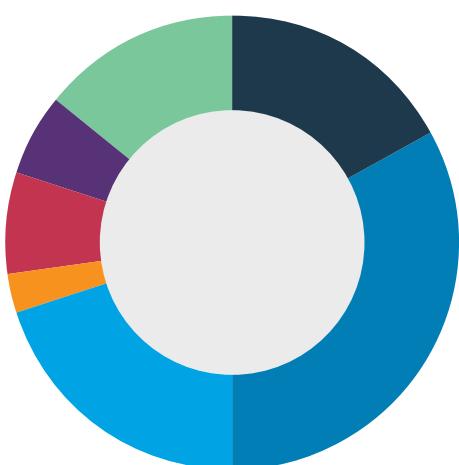
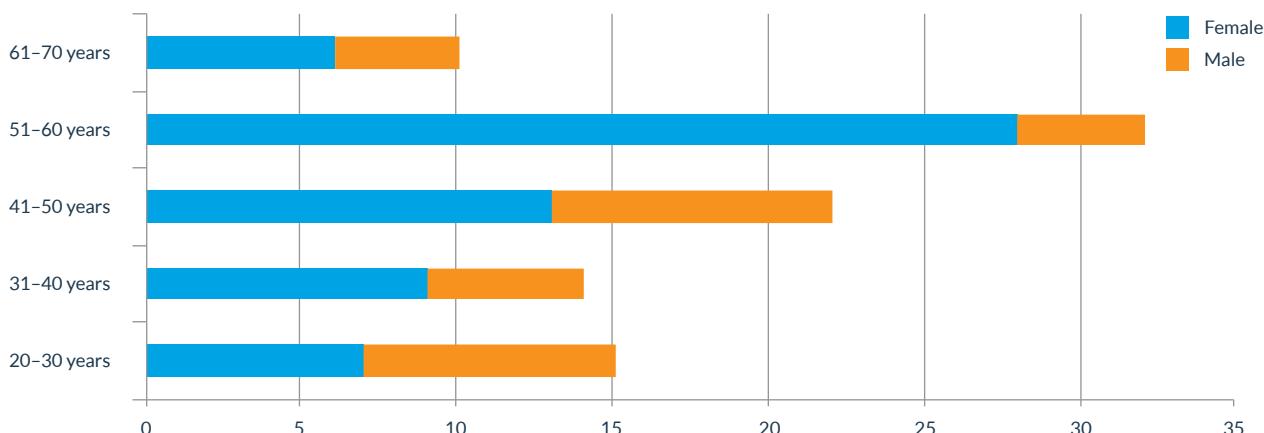
### 2001 – Habit of Living

There's a time in your life, when you need to be heard. When you need to believe in yourself. When the doors are all closed and the weather is dark. And there's nothing to feel. Dust the books off all-alone on the shelf, let it grow upon the soil of ourselves. And though it's not the same, there's always somewhere to begin. First by doing, I proved it could be done; now I'm sitting in the sun. And I've got to believe in myself, the second now then followed on with ease. Now there's no-one else to please, cause I'm pleasing myself. The third slipped by and then I realised,

that I love this life  
of mine. Cause I had a habit of  
living. When your world's full of hate, and you  
can't quite explain. How you can't really love  
anymore. Find the door, find your way, cause  
it's never too late. To find there's something  
to see. Take a small step; take a jump, then a  
leap. Take my past, take my love, and take me.  
And though it's not the same, there's always  
somewhere to begin. First I proved, the second  
moved, the third slipped by before I know. I  
love my life, and know I have a habit of living.

– Larry

### ODYSSEY HOUSE STAFF BY GENDER AND AGE



### STAFF (FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME) BREAKDOWN BY EXPERTISE

Business staff	17%
Operational staff	33%
Nurses	20%
Consultant doctors	3%
Psychologists	7%
Teachers	6%
Counsellors	14%

## What we did

### Our people

As part of our goal to build an organisation with financial and operational sustainability, Odyssey House provides specialist support for employees and volunteers across recruitment, learning and development, industrial relations, Work Health and Safety, staff recognition, performance and career management, rehabilitation and workers compensation, and payroll. As an employer in the health sector, Odyssey House is required to have all staff and volunteers complete a National Police Check and a Working with Children check.

Odyssey House is an equal opportunity employer and boasts a diverse cultural mix of people working and volunteering to meet the needs of the clients in our organisation. As of 30 June 2017, we had 78 full-time, part-time, and casual employees, and had five volunteers.

### Work Health and Safety (WHS)

Odyssey House is committed to providing a healthy and safe work and service delivery environment to its board members, paid staff, volunteers, contractors, clients and visitors.

Odyssey House continues to use an online incident management system to assist staff in reporting accidents, incidents and near misses. It also assists the WHS committee members in their follow-ups and assists management in monitoring incidents, allowing management to better manage potential risks. This system includes mandatory training, record keeping, and reporting preventative maintenance issues.

The WHS committee monitors any potential workplace hazards and meets on a regular basis to discuss and resolve any training requirements or issues that may arise. Odyssey House continues to educate and train volunteers, managers, and employees on the requirements and function of the WHS manual, which is made available in accordance with the NSW WHS Act 2011.

In addition, site inspections and risk assessments were completed for all Odyssey House sites ensuring compliance with all NSW WHS codes of practice.

### Staff recognition

Staff continue to be recognised with an annual acknowledgement of five, 10, 15 and 20 years of service. Additionally an Employee of the Year Award is also in place.

### Payroll

In 2010, the Commonwealth government, through the Fair Work Commission, issued the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) for employees in the social and community services industry. Currently, this Social and Community Services Award is gradually increasing the pay rates for some of these employees until they are applied in full by 2020. This award applies to over 50 per cent of the organisation's employees and Odyssey House will continue to implement these pay rate increases.

### Policy and procedures

Odyssey House has increased its number of policies, and is constantly revising and refreshing new policies and procedures. The organisation runs a Policy of the Month program where all policies are scheduled for review.

### What's new in 2018

- Embed a values-driven performance culture that enables our people to perform.
- Ensure the involvement of staff in the planning and implementation continuous improvement of Odyssey House's business processes and performance.



# Historical snapshot

## Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment – MERIT

A court diversion program has been available within the NSW Drug Courts since 1977. The MERIT program started in 2001, and is a Local Court based program that provides the opportunity for adult defendants with drug problems to work, on a voluntary basis, towards rehabilitation as part of the bail process. Participants can be identified by magistrates, solicitors, police, or the defendants themselves as suitable for assessment for the MERIT program.<sup>1</sup>

The MERIT treatment program is developed to match the defendant's individual needs. The Court will make the defendant's involvement in MERIT a condition of bail. Defendants are closely case-managed by the MERIT Team throughout the program and the magistrate receives regular reports on the participant. The final hearing and sentence generally coincide with the completion of the MERIT program. Magistrates are then able to consider the defendant's progress in treatment as part of final sentencing.<sup>1</sup>

It has been in its current form since it was piloted in Lismore in 2000 and since then the program was expanded across New South Wales. It is now available at 52 Local Courts, which cover approximately 65 per cent of the Local Court population.<sup>2</sup>

Odyssey House MERIT has been operating out of Waverley Court, Eastern Sydney, since 2006. During that time the team has established an identity and place in the functioning of the Waverley Court. In addition, the team has actively adopted practices cited as essential to working with methamphetamine users and has worked seamlessly with the relevant government agencies, Odyssey House's Residential Rehabilitation Program, and other alcohol and other drug services.

During 2016, on the recommendation of the Chief Magistrate, Odyssey House MERIT Case Managers increased from half a day per week to three full days per fortnight at Waverley Court, to assist in the backlog of cases in the local courts and to increase the support. Overall the MERIT program for Waverley Court has been completed by 772 people since November 2006.

In 2016/17, 241 people were referred to Waverley MERIT staff for an eligibility assessment, 81 were suitable to participate at a completion rate of 65.2 per cent. The completion rate for MERIT programs across NSW is on average 65 per cent.

1 Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment Program Fact Sheet  
2 Illicit Drug Diversion Initiatives and MERIT Fact Sheet

**The legislative frameworks we comply with or work within are:**

- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- The Fundraising Institute of Australia's Principles and Standards of Fundraising Practice
- Trade Practices Act 1974
- Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights (2008)
- The National Safety and Quality Health Service
- (NSQHS) Standards (2011)
- Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)
- The Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)
- NSW Trustee and Guardian Act 2009
- NSW State Records Act 1998
- The Privacy Act 1988
- The Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
- Education Act 1990 (NSW)
- Teachers Accreditation Act 2004
- Institute of Teachers Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Food Act 2003
- Explosives Act 2003
- Building Code of Australia

**Our Professional Services**

Independent Auditors: Deloitte Australia

Bankers: Westpac Banking Corporation and Bankwest

Legal Advisors: Marsdens Law Group

**Financial Report**

For our complete Financial Report for 2016/17, please go to  
[www.odysseyhouse.com.au](http://www.odysseyhouse.com.au)



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