

ODYSSEY

Spring 2022

News



ODYSSEY HOUSE
NEW SOUTH WALES



Jonah...

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Message from the CEO

It is hard to believe how much this year is flying by.

As you will read in this edition of our newsletter, the construction of our Family Recovery Centre is rapidly progressing. We are looking forward to holding an official opening as soon as possible.

We have a lot of exciting news to share: the Business Women's Lunch event in May was a resounding success. The Community Drug Action

Team (CDAT) conference was a great opportunity for the community drug action teams to come together to share ideas and knowledge.

And in what may be our biggest announcement is that we are launching a brand-new service! More on that inside this newsletter.

I truly hope I will see you at our Open Day on the 30th October – be sure to register.



Thank you for your continued support of Odyssey House NSW.

Julie Babineau, CEO



Oh, what an event!

The Business Women's Lunch was a wonderful celebration.

It was our first face to face event in three years and provided an opportunity to reconnect with old friends and new.

We were thankful to hear from a Parent's and Children's Program graduate about how Odyssey helped he and his daughter to reconnect through recovery.

We also heard stories of resilience and wisdom from our incredible panel of highly accomplished women – Dr Kerry Chant AO PSM, Sam Mostyn and Josephine Sukkar AM, alongside our adjudicator, AFR columnist Jennifer Hewett.

A big thank you to our MC Natalie Barr, advisory committee, sponsors, supporters and all attendees for helping to make this a memorable event.

Save the date: Friday 5th May 2023 for next year's event.



YOU CAN VIEW ALL THE PHOTOS FROM THE EVENT HERE



Update: Family Recovery Centre

Construction of our new Family Recovery Centre is well underway with the official opening planned for later this year.

We are thrilled at the progress and thankful to our project partners: APP Corporation, TCQ Construction and TZG Architects.

During rehabilitation, parents learn and develop positive parenting skills and tools needed to support their children's wellbeing. Children are case managed in psychological, paediatric, and other supports by our specialist staff. The program aims to create lasting positive changes to enhance parent's and children's physical and mental health, to repair the bond between parents and children and to break the cycle of generational substance use.

The increased space will accommodate twice as many families as the old buildings, housing up to 16 families simultaneously.

Staff are looking forward to moving into the new centre.



Construction is expected to be completed later this year

Staff profile: **Chris Lonsdale**

Chris Lonsdale joined Odyssey in June as our new **Family Recovery Centre Manager**.

Prior to joining Odyssey, Chris worked and supported families and children within the child protection system, including early intervention, residential care and foster care.

In his new role, Chris is looking forward to increasing the scope of support for families and providing an environment that holistically supports the recovery for parents living with substance use.

Children that enter child protection systems are at higher risk of repeating generational patterns. By providing a place of safety and

recovery, Chris aims to be a part of a system that keeps families together and offers the opportunity for those going through the program to change.

Every story and each person that Chris has engaged with at Odyssey so far has stuck with him. Witnessing the personal resilience and the drive that parents have to improve the outlook for themselves, and their children is inspiring. It has shown him that despite adversity we all have the capacity for learning and growth.

Even if we have yet to reach our full potential, all it takes is the support from people who care to make a difference.





Today is the day to create hope!

The Odyssey Family Recovery Centre will be opening its doors later this year, and we need your help to purchase bedding, household furniture, kitchen utensils and children's play toys..... just to name a few.

We've got an ambitious goal of raising \$100,000 by 31st October – can you help us to get there?

To make showing your support easier, we've created an online shop with the items most in need. Simply visit the online shop, make your purchase, and your gift will be used to support the families we welcome to the new Odyssey Family Recovery Centre.

Today is the day to create more hope for families of our new Family

Recovery Centre. No matter how big or small, every item purchased will make a lasting impact and all purchases are tax deductible.

Odyssey NSW has set the standard for alcohol and drug rehabilitation services across NSW. Your generous gift will enable us to DOUBLE the number of families we can support, ensuring that treatment enables families to stay together and supported to reconnect through recovery.

Join us and open a new door for these families. Your purchase from the Odyssey Family Recovery Centre Shop will help families taking their first positive step to recovery.

“Odyssey’s Family Recovery Centre allowed me to receive the help I needed, whilst maintaining custody of my son, Chase. The team at Odyssey NSW saved my life, and your support can allow them to help other families like mine.”

- Sylvia

SHOP NOW!



Here are examples of how your gift can make a difference to Odyssey NSW residents:

Toys

\$50

Play, learn, dream!! Toys for our children living at the Odyssey Family Recovery Centre.



Bikes

\$150

Provide a bike for a child and their parent, to encourage adventure, outdoor play and exercise.



Bed Frame

\$300

Sleep is so important, especially whilst taking the journey to positive and lasting change.



Fridge

\$1,600

Every home needs a fridge to keep the food fresh.



Shed

\$6,000

Help our teams maintain the gardens and outdoor spaces.



Reconnecting Culture

Some of the Odyssey Multicultural Programs team

New Service Announcement!

We're delighted to announce that we have a new 'Odyssey Multicultural Programs' team to deliver specialised Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) services in western and south-western Sydney.

Odyssey was approached to provide the services that were previously delivered by the Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC). These services included AOD counselling and support for individuals from CALD backgrounds as well as community engagement, research, and resources development to support CALD individuals and families. Odyssey Multicultural Programs will continue to provide all of these services to individuals and communities.



"This added service aims to strengthen and support community partnerships to collectively contribute to preventing harm related to substance use, identified within cultural and linguistically diverse communities."

"Our organisation's key priority is to ensure that clients can receive continuity of care and have equitable access to services that are culturally responsive, safe, and of high quality." Julie Babineau, CEO, Odyssey NSW.

We're very excited by this opportunity and look forward to providing this new suite of services.

"Mingu Yabun's weekly sessions gave me the opportunity to learn about Dreamtime stories and the new laws of the land, to embrace my culture and find a new sense of belonging."

- Client, 2022

Celebrating culture through Mingu Yabun

Odyssey NSW runs a specialised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD program called Mingu Yabun, which means spiritually speaking and sharing in D'harawal language.

The program is operated by both our Community and Residential programs. Mingu Yabun is unique in that it combines healing programs with western AOD treatment models and demonstrates innovation and standard best practice. During NAIDOC Week, our Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal clients and residents, along with staff from residential and community programs came together to share Aboriginal culture through an Aboriginal Art workshop. Led by Aunty Leonie Murdoch, it was designed to highlight that Aboriginal Art is not just a pretty picture – it's a story.

The participants learnt about symbols from different Aboriginal countries, and how to tell their stories the Aboriginal way.

Art is a safe way of expressing our feelings, this brings about healing and rediscovering self-identity. **It's a way of connecting back to country, community, family and culture.**



Artwork by resident, Jayden

Jonah was supported through our MERIT Program

Jonah's* story

Jonah overcame a traumatic childhood to create a stable life.



"For a long time, I thought my father's physical and emotional violence was normal, that I had it coming to me, and I just had to bear it and be a better son.

I remember he always smelled of alcohol or had a drink nearby. I never felt safe or secure at home.

I quickly realised the reality of my life once I started hanging around with a local group. They gave me a sense of security and belonging and became a substitute family. They also introduced me to drugs and crime.

Cannabis, prescription painkillers and ketamine were my first taste of drugs in my early teens, along with alcohol. Later, I got into cocaine, benzodiazepines and hallucinogens. They helped me feel okay, fit in with the others and cruise through life – not really feeling too much of anything.

I qualified as a plasterer, yet I didn't have much to show for myself. I was single, I spent every cent I earned, and was irresponsible and reckless. Odyssey came into my life when I was in court on a high-range drink driving charge.

Because of my drug use, I was referred to the Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment Program (MERIT) and I was approved to participate in twelve weeks of counselling and case management at Odyssey.

I would not have gone looking for drug treatment unless

I'd had that option put right in front of me at court, and I was willing to give it a go to get my life on track to go somewhere other than prison.

I was surprised that things started looking up for me after just a few counselling sessions. I soon built a good rapport with my Odyssey therapist. As that trust developed, I found it easier to talk about my feelings of isolation, mistrust, abandonment and failure. It was such a relief being able to talk about how I had been struggling emotionally and what had happened in my life. I'd never been able to open that can of worms before.

I finished my MERIT program and I've been drug-free for over three months. I'll keep going to sessions through Odyssey Community Programs to maintain my progress and receive ongoing support.

I know having that connection with other people and talking about how I'm feeling will be an important part of my ongoing healing and recovery process."

If you or anyone you know needs support, please contact us on **1800 739 397 or go to **www.odysseyhouse.com.au****

*Names have been changed.

Mental Health Support

People living with alcohol and other drug issues frequently have other conditions to do with their physical or mental health that they are dealing with at the same time.

Often the substance use, the mental health symptoms and the physical health problems all intertwine, making it very difficult to recognise and treat each one effectively.

Seeking mental health support with Odyssey NSW is an opportunity for a holistic assessment – we help clients understand their symptoms and access the support they may need.

Delivered in a group or individual setting, our mental health recovery programs give guidance, education, and support to those living with both mental health and alcohol and/or other drug issues.

We provide programs and services through face to face and telephone counselling and online groups.

For more information, please call **1800 397 739** (option 2) or email referral@odysseyhouse.com.au



“Odyssey staff helped me to manage my mental health and my addiction.”

– Client, 2022

“Mental Health and AOD can be different chapters in textbooks, but on the ground they’re incredibly symbiotic.”

– Sanjeet, Mental Health & Wellbeing Recovery Specialist

Supporter profile: **Christine Bishop**



Christine Bishop is a former Odyssey board member and ongoing supporter of our work

A passing conversation at an event many years ago led Christine Bishop to holding a decade long tenure on the board of Odyssey House NSW.

In 2011, Christine attended a fundraising function where she met Valerie Hoogstad, a long time Odyssey Board member. Valerie asked what Christine did and upon finding out, invited her to investigate the work of Odyssey.

What inspires Christine about Odyssey is the impact achieved when people go through the program. She loves hearing the stories from graduate speakers at events like the Business Women’s Lunch, and believes the results speak for themselves.

Christine sees that there are two levels at which Odyssey supports people – firstly the social/human level of helping people to turn their lives around.

The second is at an economic level, in seeing the difference it makes to society when people have an opportunity to achieve their best lives. It is more cost effective to support people to rehabilitate than it is to manage them through justice, health and other systems.

Christine has many fond memories of her time with Odyssey. While she retired from the Board last year, Christine continues to support our work as a regular giver and event attendee.

Did you know...

Odyssey runs **FREE Community Programs** that provide treatment, counselling, education, and aftercare

support to those who have been affected by alcohol and other drugs?

Contact our Community team on **1800 397 739** (press option 2) for more information.

“I am so much better in so many ways! I would not be here without the caring people at Odyssey who helped me believe in myself.”

– Client, 2022

WE'RE TURNING 45

Odyssey House was officially opened on the 30th October 1977

Odyssey House NSW was founded by Sydney businessman Walter McGrath following the death of his son James from a heroin overdose.

From humble beginnings, Odyssey House has grown to become one of Australia's largest rehabilitation services. Over the past 45 years, Odyssey has helped more than 45,000 people turn their lives around.

The decision to locate the first Australian Odyssey House at Eagle Vale was welcomed in October 1977 by the then Mayor of Campbelltown, Alderman Gordon Fetterplace OA. Before Odyssey began running services from the site, Walter McGrath arranged for an open day for friends and supporters, a tradition that we have maintained (except during lockdowns).



Above: Original Odyssey team at official opening



Left: Residents erect Odyssey House sign

You're Invited!

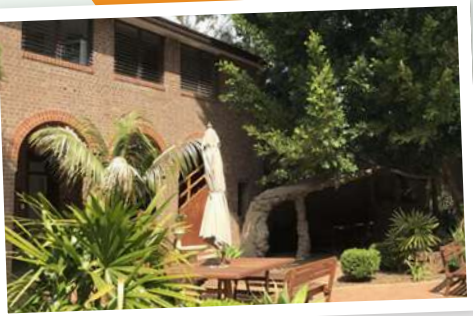
Odyssey Open Day – Sunday 30th October

On Sunday 30th October, we will be holding the Odyssey Open Day at our Eagle Vale facility – providing an opportunity for clients and graduates, family, friends, supporters, and the wider community to visit Odyssey House.

we can celebrate the longevity of our mission.

If you would like to attend our Open Day event, please scan here to register:

The Main House was officially opened on 30th October in 1977, so it is serendipitous that 45 years later,



Thank you! Your support funds frontline workers to help vulnerable people and build community resilience.

Do you know someone who needs help?

Call Odyssey NSW on 1800 397 739 to take the first steps to recovery from alcohol and other drug use or to explore more comprehensive support



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If you have any queries please contact us on 1800 644 661 or marketing@odysseyhouse.com.au

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