

ODYSSEY

News

Spring 2021



ODYSSEY HOUSE
NEW SOUTH WALES



“I learnt to embrace my Aboriginal heritage and find a new sense of belonging”

Tell us what you'd like to know about Odyssey House in our short survey

**CLICK
HERE**

This issue:

- Louise's story
- Mingu Yabun
- Bringing Up Great Kids
- Reconnecting families
- Art in therapy

Message from the CEO

In this issue one of our graduates, Louise, shared her epic journey of recovery which I hope you find as inspiring as I do. We have also included some ideas about how to support your own wellbeing.

As an essential service, we have helped even more clients over the past year—3206 clients, which is 18% more than the year before—and delivered significantly more treatments and treatment plans, across many programs, to those in need.

We did this by moving our community recovery programs and counselling services online and maintaining delivery of our residential rehabilitation programs during the difficult COVID restrictions.

We're enormously grateful for your donations to our Parent's and Children's Program. It's one of a very few such programs and parents come from all over Australia to receive treatment and recover from harms related to substance use, while maintaining and strengthening their family unit. Your donations are helping fund new accommodation to house up to 16 families at once—more than twice as many as before.

Construction should start in the later part of 2021. In years to come we will help thousands of parents break the cycle of generational substance use as well as learn how to set up and manage a safe and healthy family home.



I'm keen to know what you'd like to read about in our next newsletter, and encourage you to complete our two-minute online questionnaire.

[CLICK HERE](#) for Odyssey House NSW Supporter Survey.

Thank you for your continued support of Odyssey House NSW.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Babineau".

Julie Babineau, CEO

Thanks for inspiring hope

Your donations throughout the year are supporting additional information, treatment, and support for those in need across Greater Sydney, the Southern Highlands and the Blue Mountains. Stress, uncertainty and loneliness can all be mental health triggers and are even more confronting for those affected by harms related to substance use. Thanks for being part of their journey.



Art in therapy

Education is key to recovery from harms related to substance use, and at Odyssey College we teach appropriate subjects to help clients transition to new lives at home, at work and beyond our therapeutic community. Visual Arts is an accredited subject and Odyssey College delivers art classes for clients as part of their recovery treatment plan.

Creativity provides relief from stress as well as the opportunity for students to reflect, re-engage with their emotions, express their feelings, develop creative thinking and boost

self-esteem. Art in therapy helps clients reconnect with the world, and each student usually creates three artworks during their Odyssey journey.

Odyssey College has two campuses in South West Sydney and is registered with the Department of Education. It offers general and vocational courses certified by the NSW Education Standards Authority including Mathematics, English and Visual Arts, as well as training in Traffic Control, Forklift Driving and White Card – Prepare to work safely in the construction industry.

Become a *Regular giver*

Thanks to regular givers, we treated 3206 clients across 44 local government areas in 2020-21. Regular givers help us provide reliable and much-needed treatment to those in crisis, especially families, through residential and community-based programs.

To become a regular giver, visit odysseyhouse.com.au/donate or call us on 1800 644 661

"What we are offered here, particularly with art and the different approach to therapy, makes the whole experience unique and special. It helps so many people."

– Visual Arts student, 2021



Louise's story

Mingu Yabun helped me put together the pieces of my new life

"In 2016, I entered Odyssey's residential rehabilitation to improve the chance of regaining custody of my son. As a teenager I'd started using pot and alcohol but by 2016 my two children were in foster care, I was living with a drug dealer and using ICE every day.

The residential program was paradise, to be honest, because I needed to sort my life out.

During admission, I mentioned my grandfather was Stolen Generation but we never discussed that at home. The assessment team put me in touch with Odyssey's Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Wiradjuri woman Leonie Murdoch.

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

was part of the Stolen Generation, my grandfather's name had been changed so I'm disappointed we couldn't find his birthplace or a death certificate. It's as if he didn't exist.

I now identify as Wiradjuri as that's the last place my grandfather lived that we know of.

I graduated from residential rehabilitation after 18 months, and maintained one-on-one counselling through Odyssey's community programs for another six months. I didn't regain custody of my son as he'd been with his new family too long, but I did gain a new way of living. I found a job in real estate, a home and a new partner.

I thoroughly enjoyed my recovery journey and found a piece of me that was missing. I'll always be grateful to Odyssey for that."

We help clients reconnect with community and culture

Mingu Yabun is a weekly support group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients of our community and residential programs across Greater Sydney and the Southern Highlands.

It's been running for more than 17 years and translates to 'spiritual speaking and sharing'. It helps members connect and reconnect with their culture, build self-esteem, reduce the impact of isolation and trauma, and complete their journey of recovery from substance use.

The program is being delivered online as well as face to face in the community. It is also provided to a range of other organisations across Sydney such as Nelly's Healing Centre, Kinchela Boys Home Corporation and the Wayside Chapel.

The group helps members re-engage through yarning, narrative therapy and storytelling, art and craft, Dreamtime Stories, and Dadirri (deep listening and contemplation).

Odyssey House NSW currently has seven Aboriginal staff (6% of total staff) including three Aboriginal identified positions. Mingu Yabun is supported by Odyssey's Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Wiradjuri woman Leonie Murdoch, and, in Residential Programs, by local elders through Memorandums of Understanding with both the Tharawal and Illawarra Aboriginal Corporations.

Odyssey House NSW is proud to celebrate and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, staff, clients and communities.

Our organisational Reconciliation Action Plan has been reviewed by

Reconciliation Australia and we are working on their recommendations before submitting the Plan for final approval.

We have also provided cultural awareness training for all staff. We begin all professional development days with an Acknowledgement and Smoking Ceremonies will be included as venue permissions allow.



Aboriginal Liaison Officer
Leonie Murdoch



Check your own wellbeing



Odyssey House NSW uses a holistic approach to help people recover from harms related to substance use, and simultaneously provides treatment or referral for any underlying mental health issues.

Our Mental Health Support groups help participants:

- Develop a mental health recovery plan and establish simple daily routines that support it.
- Identify triggers and coping strategies, and develop healthy, enjoyable habits to relax.
- Remain curious to challenge negative thinking and maintain healthy sleep and eating habits.

If you're concerned about your mental health or are feeling overwhelmed, ask for help sooner rather than later. Phone the NSW Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511.

Register now for our free parenting course

Bringing Up Great Kids is our free, targeted intervention for parents recovering from harms related to substance use and helps break the cycle of inter-generational drug and alcohol use. Weekly two-hour interactive online sessions run for five weeks. We help parents understand their role and develop new parenting skills.

Modules include learning about your own parenting style and how it can be more effective; children's brain development; family communication; overcoming barriers to effective parenting; and how to build support networks and find help when you need it.

To find out more, call (02) 4628 8806 to register for a course near you.

Give hope to future generations

Have you considered leaving a gift in your Will? Together we can reconnect the lives, families and communities of the future by reducing harms related to alcohol and drug use and treating underlying mental health conditions.

Pass on a helping hand to people who are struggling with substance use and make an enduring contribution to generations to come.

To make an unforgettable difference to individuals and their families impacted by addiction, contact the Fundraising Office on 1800 644 661.



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

Do you know someone who needs help?

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



ODYSSEY HOUSE
NEW SOUTH WALES

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

odysseyhouse.com.au

Facebook/OHNSW

Twitter #odysseyhousesw

