

Reconnecting lives,
reconnecting futures.



2023 Year In Review



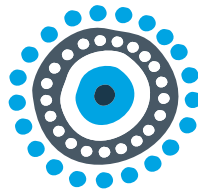
ODYSSEY HOUSE
NEW SOUTH WALES

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

*A world
free of
addiction*



ODYSSEY HOUSE
NEW SOUTH WALES

Odyssey House NSW acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country across Australia and recognises their enduring connection to the land, sea, and community.

We offer our deep respect to their cultures and honour the contributions of Elders, both past and present, as well as those who are emerging as leaders within their communities.

We have introduced an Indigenous version of our logo as a gesture of acknowledgment and support towards our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and clients at Odyssey House.

The image represents the circle of life, symbolising the interconnectedness of group dynamics, individuals, families, and the broader community. Additionally, it is associated with notions of communities both within Odyssey and those we support. We will continue to work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, children, and families we support.

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Welcome

It has been another remarkable year for Odyssey House NSW and we are excited to share our achievements – the 2023 Year in Review provides a comprehensive report of the difference Odyssey House is making through reconnecting lives, families and communities.

Supporting families through treatment and lasting change has always been a priority for Odyssey House, and the long-anticipated opening in February of the Family Recovery Centre takes this to a whole new level.

The state-of-the-art centre provides a home environment where parents can care for their children during their recovery. Holistic care is provided for the entire family and our work has been recognised by receiving the NADA Excellence in Treatment award. The Family Recovery Centre would not have been possible without the incredible support of our donors, and we thank them for their generosity.

In the past 12 months Odyssey House has provided treatment to over 3700 clients, a 23% increase on the previous year.

Our Multicultural team is an exciting addition to our community programs, addressing the significant need for specialised alcohol and other drug services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Odyssey House's wide range of community programs provide counselling and support across Sydney with flexible services meaning genuine choice and control.

Our residential programs have continued to experience high demand. Clients increasingly have more complex needs, with many people grappling with mental illness, a history of trauma and/or contact with the criminal justice system.

You can read more over the following pages about how we respond with comprehensive and integrated services along with educational opportunities provided by the Odyssey College.

None of this would be possible without the skilled and dedicated Odyssey House staff and we thank them for their hard work and commitment to supporting people to change their lives. And we acknowledge the exceptional contributions of outgoing CEO, Julie Babineau, and former Chairman, Doug Snedden.

Their extraordinary leadership has been instrumental in shaping Odyssey House into what it is today.

As we look to the future, the upcoming Drug Summit presents an important opportunity to voice our needs and for greater investment in the sector.

As newly appointed Chair and CEO, we are looking forward to leading Odyssey House so it will continue to grow and help those who need it most.

The support of our partners, as always, is critical to achieving our mission - we want to thank our funders, at both the state and federal level, our generous donors, our passionate volunteers and staff and the board, whose wisdom and guidance provide the leadership so important to success.

Together, we will work collaboratively to build safe and healthy communities.



Carmel Tebbutt
CEO



Debora Picone AO
Chair



GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

Message from

**Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC
Governor of New South Wales
and Mr Dennis Wilson**

As joint Patrons, Dennis and I thank Odyssey House New South Wales for yet another year of extraordinary service to people and communities of our State. While the mission to build safe and healthy communities by reducing the impact of substance use remains a constant, the nature of the challenges faced by the team at Odyssey continue to evolve.

Over the 2022/23 period Odyssey House New South Wales saw a 23% increase in the number of clients accessing services, with more clients presenting with increasingly complex health concerns. Confronted with this heightened demand and complexity, deep consideration was given to ensure that Odyssey's trauma-informed programs and services wrap around each individual and give timely support how and when the person needs them.

An expansion of services includes the newly opened Odyssey Family Recovery Centre, one of a handful of rehabilitation centres in Australia that accommodates single fathers, mothers and couples, including pregnant women, to undertake treatment while their children live with them. The research tells us that when families stay together, they are more motivated to complete treatment, making this a wonderful addition.

Late last year, Odyssey also expanded with Odyssey Multicultural Programs, providing treatment and support to clients from a range of cultural, linguistic, and religious groups. This service is key to building inclusive, connected and socially cohesive communities.

These kinds of services have been possible because of generous support from the wider community. Dennis and I thank all Odyssey staff, specialists and supporters for your contributions which make such a positive difference to the lives of individuals, families and communities across New South Wales.

**Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC
Governor of New South Wales**

Mr Dennis Wilson



Our People

Odyssey House NSW is dedicated to offering comprehensive support, treatment, and education for individuals seeking to address the adverse consequences associated with substance use.

These consequences encompass physical, mental, social, and economic impacts that profoundly affect our communities.

Our highly skilled staff play a pivotal role in assisting clients in identifying and confronting the root causes of their alcohol and/or drug use, which may include but are not limited to factors such as childhood trauma and domestic violence. By doing so, we facilitate the restoration of their physical and mental well-being, while also strengthening their bonds with their families, friends, and the broader community.

New leadership and development management

Having proficient and effective managers and leaders within Odyssey is crucial for delivering quality services to our clients. Our objective has always been to establish a nurturing work environment where all

our staff members feel valued, acknowledged, and empowered to excel.

We launched the Leadership Development Program in the latter part of 2022 with the aim of nurturing our managers' capabilities, productivity and augmenting their skills in coaching staff and guiding their teams toward professional growth. These workshops yielded positive outcomes, such as leading strategic initiatives, mentoring staff, fostering cross-functional relationships, and improving communication practices.

Your voice matters

Odyssey values each individual and their contribution to our mission to help those who need it most. As part of our commitment to be a great place to work, we seek our staff's thoughts and views through our Employee Engagement Survey. The survey provides valuable insights on staff engagement, our values, our leadership, culture and our performance as an organisation.

The survey highlighted that our staff rated Odyssey higher than the industry standard in the Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) sector. They take immense pride in Odyssey's commitment to its values and the quality of services provided to clients, and have a strong understanding and commitment to our strategic direction.

31% of staff were not born in Australia, with 25% of our staff not speaking English as their first language

3% of our staff identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

We had a team of 123 staff supporting clients

Our qualified treatment and support teams include Counsellors, Nurses, Teachers, Psychologists, AOD and Family Support Workers

We surpassed previous records by sending more than 25% of our staff to conferences contributing to their professional development

71% of staff have lived mental health experience, being either a close friend, family member or themselves

56.5% of staff identified as having a lived AOD experience as themselves or a close family or friend

8.5% identify as LGBTQIA+

Our Services

Odyssey offers trauma-informed recovery orientated treatment, support, and educational services for individuals seeking to address the harms related to substance use.

Odyssey also provides supports to families and communities around the state through community development and primary prevention activities.

With over 45 years of experience, we have been dedicated to delivering health and well-being support to individuals with complex needs, as well as their families, friends, and caregivers.

As one of the largest providers of alcohol and other drug

treatment services in NSW, we offer a diverse range of programs including residential, community outreach, and online programs. We collaborate with various healthcare, community, and government organisations to provide comprehensive support within a safe and nurturing environment for all clients.

We understand that every client's path to recovery is unique. Therefore, our support services are designed to be flexible, providing genuine choice and control to those we serve.

We closely monitor each client's progress in their journey to recovery, continually enhancing our service delivery and evaluating our impact to ensure that clients are making strides toward their recovery goals, all while providing concrete evidence of our success.



Our Social Impact 2022-23

Reconnecting lives,
reconnecting futures.

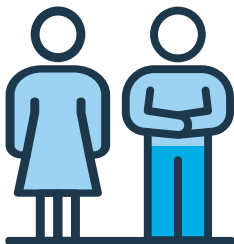
Helped
3736
clients



Supported
293
Residential
clients



13
child restorations



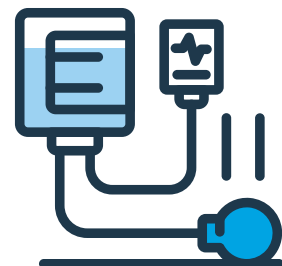
198 parents were
supported through
the Reconnecting Families
suite of services.



1027
from CALD backgrounds



5286
episodes of service



Helped **296** clients
through the Medical Unit



1 in 10

clients identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

6% of
clients identified
as LGBTQ+



35% of
clients referred from
the justice system



Supported **3481**
clients through our
community hubs



Supported
83
MERIT clients

Responded to **4920**
enquiries through phone and email



CDAT

We're stronger together

Supported **70**
Community Drug Actions
Teams (CDAT) across NSW

3456 CDAT
attendees reported they are
better equipped to seek help

132 individual
activities delivered by CDAT

Our Clients

Odyssey House offers support regardless of an individuals' life circumstances.

We provide continuity of care through a range of programs including treatment, education and support for people wherever they are in their recovery journey and whatever the context of their lives.

In the financial year 2022-2023, Odyssey provided treatment services to a total of 3,736 clients aged 18 and above, addressing issues related to alcohol and/or drug use. Notably, this marked a 23% increase in the number of clients served compared to the preceding financial year. Two significant contributing factors to this surge were the initiation of the Multicultural Programs service and the expansion of treatment services in response to the post-pandemic landscape.

Odyssey is dedicated to providing support to a diverse community. The majority of our clients, constituting 71%, identify as male, with 28% identifying as female, and less than 1% identifying as non-binary or

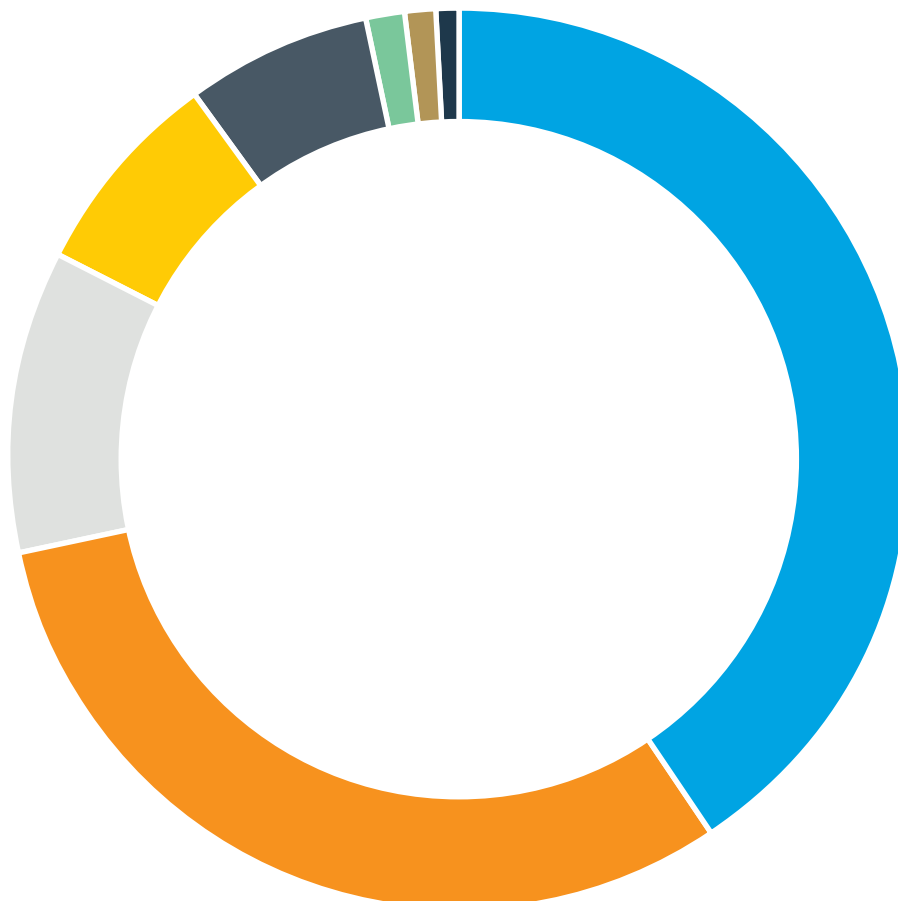
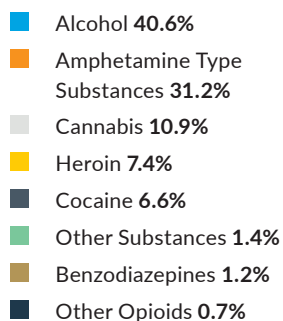
transgender. We are committed to serving all members of our community with care and inclusivity, ensuring that everyone feels valued and supported.

Among the clients, alcohol emerged as the most frequently reported Principal Drug of Concern, accounting for 41% of cases, followed by Amphetamine Type substances at 31% of cases. Other notable Principal Drugs of Concern included Cannabis (11%), Heroin (7%), and Cocaine (7%). Additionally, nearly half (49%) of our clients identified an Additional Drug Of Concern, indicating that polydrug use is high within our client group.

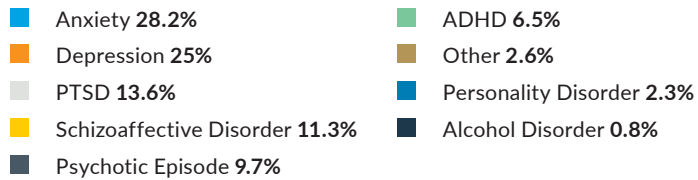
Furthermore, it's important to acknowledge that many of these clients had a history of using a range of substances prior to seeking admission.

A significant portion of our clients presented with a mental health diagnosis, a history of trauma, experiences of family violence, and/or had contact with the criminal justice system, highlighting the need for comprehensive support services.

Principal drug of concern

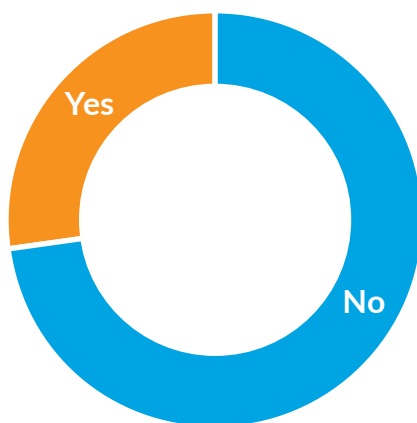
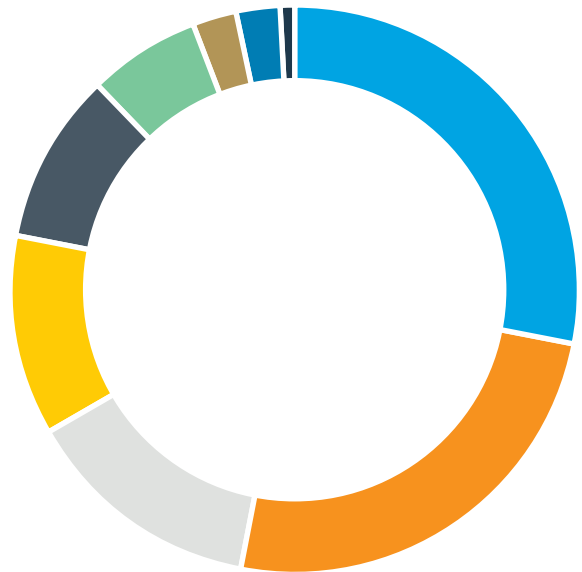


Principal Mental Health Diagnosis



Out of our entire client population 1,591 individuals, representing 43%, reported having received a mental health diagnosis. Among these, 1,016 clients, or 27% of the total, had more than one mental health diagnosis.

This underscores the complexity of our client base, with Odyssey often serving individuals in need of additional care and support.



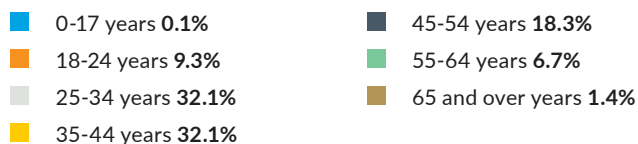
CALD Background

We provide services to clients from a diverse range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

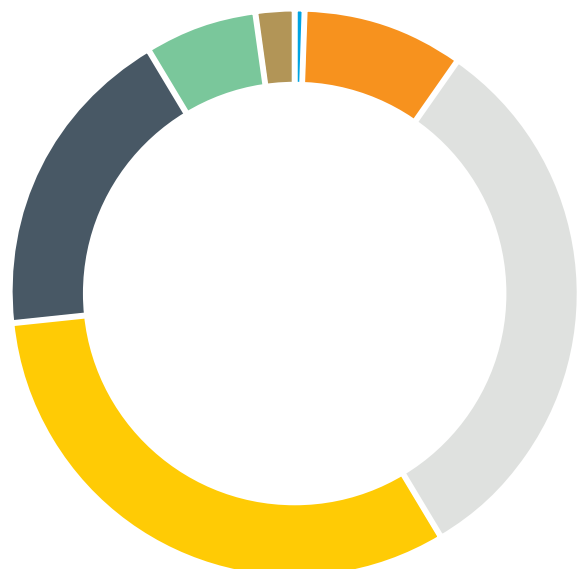
During the 2022-2023 period, 1,027 clients, comprising 27% of the total, identified from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

This number saw a noteworthy increase, particularly due to the introduction of our multicultural programs.

Age Group



Among our clients, the largest age group was between 25-44 years old, constituting 2,397 individuals, which accounts for 64% of the total. Additionally, 9% of clients fell into the young adult category, aged between 18-24.



Round the clock care

Kelly is often the first person that clients meet when they begin their rehabilitation journey. She's the Nursing Unit Manager at Odyssey's Ingleburn Medical Unit – where clients receive medicated and non-medicated withdrawal management.

"Our clients receive round-the-clock care for up to 1-2 weeks to support their withdrawal management, before beginning residential rehabilitation or other forms of treatment and support," Kelly says.

Unlike many other providers of withdrawal support, our clients can continue to build relationships with the same nurses they met when they first began their rehabilitation journey.

Throughout their rehabilitation with Odyssey, clients return to the unit as it operates like an in-house medical clinic for residents. Doctors provide assessments, and nurses supervise treatment and provide supports 24 hours a day.

Kelly says that it's rewarding to build rapport with clients and stay involved in their care, helping clients feel safe at a time when they are vulnerable.

"Because we're their first point of contact, we build trust and provide a feeling of safety," she says.

"Sometimes clients come in to share their feelings about their recovery and how they are progressing.

"We're invested in their recovery from the beginning, and we go through their journey alongside them."

296 clients attended withdrawal treatment at the Medical Unit in 2022-23.

In addition to a supportive nursing team, clients also meet a diploma-qualified support worker who has had lived experience of substance dependence.

Kelly says it's an important role to help clients open up to someone who "has walked in their shoes".

Working with a lived experience worker helps clients see the positives in their own recovery.

"Our clients can feel at ease to have conversations with someone who can share their own experience. They can open up about why they're here and look at what they want to achieve," Kelly says.

Our Medical Withdrawal Unit specialises in treatment for people seeking medicated or non-medicated support for withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs. The unit is based in a rural setting, providing privacy and comfort to all our residents.

Following a doctor's assessment and agreement to a tailored withdrawal management plan, our qualified nursing staff supervise treatment, provide 24/7 support, and help manage any additional complex or chronic illnesses. Individual and group activities include recovery support groups, other therapies, nutrition advice and physical exercise.





Therapeutic Residential Community

The residential program is offered as a short term 12-week Foundations of Recovery Program designed for clients with less complex needs, with an option to move onto our residential Core and Senior program stages.

The program takes place in a self-governing, self-regulating therapeutic community of women and men. The nine-month program can be followed by a four-month 'Re-Entry Stage' where clients live off site and are supported in their reintegration into the community and their post-treatment lives. The aim of the Therapeutic Community is to foster individual growth within a community of people with a shared interest of self-improvement and personal healing.

The Therapeutic Community Model is used throughout the residential programs and services – including Odyssey College, Mingu Yabun, Parents In Contact, the Parent's and Children's Program and supporting clients through court diversion.

The program supports the development of life skills, including communication skills and time management.

Clients have a range of job functions and are responsible for many aspects of running the facility, including preparing meals and ensuring the timetable is supported.

For a therapeutic community to realise its purpose, it must recognise its members who are in most need of behavioural, emotional, and psychological support, and help those individuals access that support. We support residents to show appropriate care and support for each other. Appropriate concern for others is expressed through the driving attributes of kindness, empathy, and compassion, which are considered influential to supporting a person's recovery journey.

Individuals move through the stages of change by:

- establishing recovery readiness in **Foundations of Recovery**,
- developing recovery mindedness in **Core**, and
- embedding a new habit of recovery maintenance through the **Senior stage**.

These objectives are achieved through individual treatment planning, psychoeducational and mental health recovery groups. The enduring emphasis of the recovery program is restoring the individual to a sense wholeness.

Stage 1: Foundations of Recovery *(First 3 months)*

Following initial Withdrawal Management and Medical Assessment, clients then move into Foundations of Recovery. Clients undertake a comprehensive assessment and work on their first Treatment Care Plan. They are assigned to their therapeutic group and begin to attend group treatment, group psychoeducation, and Odyssey College classes. They are also assigned to their first job functions.

Stages 2 and 3: Core and Senior *(Months 4 to 9)*

Clients continue to work on their treatment plan and therapy groups, they begin to have more access to individual counselling and case management as they begin to work on their core issues and their plans for post treatment. Core and then Senior stage residents begin to take on more responsible roles within the community, supporting more junior members around their functional and emotional needs.

Stage 4: Re-Entry and Continuing Care

Clients who complete the nine-month residential program have access to a four-month Re-Entry stage where they receive both support and case management as they re-integrate into the broader community and work towards their post-residential care goals. Continuing Care programs support clients in maintenance of progress towards their recovery goals as well as with practical support around housing, employment, training, and family reintegration or recovery.

Tabatha's* story

Empowered to live her life

Tabatha came to Odyssey as a 30-year-old experiencing opiate dependence whose family relationships had broken down leaving her isolated.

She had lost her drive for life, had stopped studying, lost any spiritual faith, and lacked overall personal fulfilment. All that changed after she entered a nine-month residential treatment program at Odyssey.

Her treatment addressed the many interconnected challenges in her life and provided her with the necessary tools and support for a successful recovery. Participation in psychoeducation, mental health recovery, and treatment planning groups led to a renewed sense of self-worth and confidence.

Throughout her treatment, Tabatha received personalised treatment planning and counselling which contributed to a significant improvement in her mental health. As a result, she developed coping mechanisms and learned to manage stress.

Group therapy sessions combined with everyday interpersonal interactions with others in the therapeutic community helped Tabatha improve her communication skills.

She learned active listening, effective expression of her thoughts and emotions, and techniques to resolve conflicts. These new communication skills created a virtuous circle which contributed to better emotional regulation, healthier relationships and a more stable support system.

She learned practical skills such as budgeting, time management, meal planning, resume writing and preparing for a job interview.

These new skills empowered her to live independently with confidence and to reintegrate into society.

With this holistic support, she was able to regain her motivation to return to studying and enrolled in online courses that allowed her to pursue her academic interests.

Support from like-minded peers in the therapeutic community encouraged her to address her spiritual needs, thereby participating as they took part in a weekly service.

In addition, she took part in a range of other spiritual-based activities such as meditation, yoga, and group discussions.

Crucially, these advances in self-esteem, practical skills as well as mental and spiritual health supported the repair and rebuilding of her damaged family relationships. Family members came together and visited Tabatha under controlled conditions, with appropriate support in place to aid family healing.

Tabatha's story demonstrates the powerful impact of a holistic approach to recovery, where one area of growth contributes to another until the process becomes self-sustaining.

*Names and images have been changed.

Learning is the road to recovery

Odyssey College is the educational arm of Odyssey House NSW. It provides free adult education to help residents recovering from substance use develop the skills they need to rebuild their lives.

After admission, each resident is assessed over four to six weeks to ascertain their suitability for the program. At the conclusion of this Assessment Phase, a Treatment Plan is formulated, and educational goals are set. All students have an Individualised Learning Plan.

During the past year, 293 people were admitted into the Odyssey Residential Program and each one attended Odyssey College.

The aim of the program is to support drug and alcohol treatment by providing educational opportunities to residents on their journey to recovery.

Odyssey College is set on two sites, Eagle Vale and Ingleburn, and is the education unit for residential clients of Odyssey. Stage 6 Life Skill subjects are taught to residents to assist in the transition to new lives at home, at work, and beyond the Odyssey therapeutic community.

All our teaching programs at Odyssey College are designed to build trust, enhance self-esteem, encourage self-expression, and develop self-identity.

Our aim is to promote personal growth as students journey through their education, so they flourish. Although some residents may not complete all of their studies, our focus is that each student develops a love for learning to help them succeed after therapy.

Each resident studies a balanced combination of subjects including Industrial Technology, Computing, Visual Art, PDHPE, Mathematics and English.

Consistent with the philosophy of a self-help program, students are continually required to monitor their own educational progress which is documented in a variety of ways and at regular intervals.

Curriculum outcomes are assessed for each subject area with a rotation of subjects which enables students to complete their mandatory hours.

Certificates of Attainment are presented to students who meet these requirements.

“Our aim is to promote personal growth as students journey through their education, so they flourish.”

- Cath Macgonical,
Executive Director and
Principal Odyssey College





Anne's story

Anne needed to study to get her children back



Like many residents 'Anne', 32, was referred to Odyssey's residential program by the criminal justice system. She arrived at Odyssey after being arrested leading to the loss of care of her three children.

"I had no option about being here," Anne says.

"I had to come here to get my children back. It was tough, but they are my whole world."

The idea of attending the college was intimidating. Anne had dropped out of school in year 10 after she got pregnant and didn't have much faith in her ability to learn.

"My self-esteem was pretty low. I thought 'I'm just a mum.' I had no job, nothing."

Seven months on, Anne has found new confidence and is preparing for the transition to her new life and being reunited with her children.

Anne is now a senior at the College with her sights set on a career and working towards her goal of being reunited with her kids. She puts her change of attitude down to Odyssey College.

"It's given me self-confidence and self-worth," she says.

"I take things a lot more seriously than I did at school. I don't muck about. Mum used to say, 'I'd give anything to go back to school' and I used to think, 'No way'.

"But now I know what she meant. I'd love to go back and complete Year 12. And I wouldn't rush through, I would do it properly.

"I want to support and encourage my kids to do the same, to keep studying because you can make so much more of your life."

*Names and images have been changed.

Helping to heal mob by bringing them back to their culture and spirituality

The Mingu Yabun program helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to connect and reconnect with their culture and their community.

It is delivered by Aboriginal staff and in conjunction with Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service as a component of the Residential Program and is also delivered throughout the Odyssey Community Outreach Programs.

It helps build self-esteem through the development of interpersonal skills and the enrichment of recovery through yarning, narrative therapy, storytelling, art and craft, Dreamtime stories, Dadirri (deep listening and contemplation), and cultural activities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may participate in Mingu Yabun as a stand-alone group, as part of a case management program or as a component of their broader treatment and support.

Mingu Yabun is delivered both in person and online and is often delivered as in reach into other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services.

When clients are accepted into both our residential and non-residential programs, they often feel like their life has been controlled by either drugs, alcohol and/or mental health issues or all of them combined.

When clients are dependent on substances or behaviours they may feel they lose their selves, they feel disconnected from who they are physically, mentally, spiritually and culturally.

“When clients are dependent on addictions, they lose their selves.”

- Djalessa, Aboriginal AOD Worker

The Mingu Yabun program is designed to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people put the pieces of their lives back together by connecting and reconnecting back to culture, country, family and community.

Participants get to understand symbols, totems, and language and are given the opportunity to tell their story on canvas through art.

This model is consistent with ‘train the trainer’ principles, enabling it to be delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, staff and participants. As participants complete the program they graduate as leaders and new trainers.

It has been developed to be carried forward across services and communities.

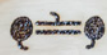
Participants have shared that before coming into the Mingu Yabun program they were hugely disconnected from their culture and spirituality.

After completing the program, they have shared that their spirit has been rekindled and they feel more connected with culture, country and family.

Graduating from the program has made them feel more accomplished and understood.



Artworks created by Mingu Yabun clients



Djaleesa's story

A safe space to speak about community, culture and to support each other.



Djaleesa – who has been actively involved with our Indigenous residential community – believes a safe cultural space is so important.

"I think what has stood out the most is how Mingu Yabun has brought our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents together to support each other with their journey through recovery.

At one stage, a client told me that he had never been to a rehab program quite like Mingu Yabun. He said that he wanted to keep the connection and praised the level of cultural support at Odyssey House.

Another client told me how connected she felt to all her brothers and sisters. She told me that the connection was what kept her going.

This comment stood out for me, because it showed how crucial it was for their recovery.

Residents saw Mingu Yabun as an opportunity for them to connect with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in a safe space and speak about community and culture, and support each other.

Often residents would express to me how they always felt better after Mingu Yabun during check-in at the end of the program.

Although painting is a very relaxing activity for clients, it is good to incorporate different cultural aspects other than painting and to open the cultural space up for other opportunities for connection.

I think when it's a culturally safe space, you see them speak about issues that they might be embarrassed to speak about to other residents but feel more open in this environment.

I remember witnessing one client – Jackson – speak about something triggering to him regarding racism, and then another provide support.

This interaction embraced how important recovery is and how leading the way for our children in our space is. I found this to be a beautiful experience to see, because you could see the realisation Jackson had after this conversation."

Working with the Justice System?

Transitions Program

The Transitions Program, which is part of the Multicultural Program at Odyssey House NSW, is a culturally appropriate service that provides intensive case management and a range of supports during pre-release, assessment, and post release.

Many people who experience harmful use of alcohol and other drugs often come into contact with the criminal justice system either directly due to alcohol and other drug use, or through crimes related to their use of substances.

Odyssey has a strong track record of working with those who have had contact with the criminal justice system including those diverted into treatment (for e.g., Drug Court and MERIT), those directed into treatment (for e.g., bail conditions or Community Corrections conditions) or those who self-refer but who have criminal justice contact.

Community Corrections

Many people who are experiencing harmful alcohol and other drug use end up in contact with the criminal justice system.

Some are incarcerated and then released with conditions that include accessing alcohol and other drug treatment and support, some seek treatment and support while on bail, and others are sentenced directly to community support under the supervision of Community Corrections.

All of Odyssey's programs support clients with contact with Community Corrections. They access our groups and individual treatment and support in Community and Multicultural Programs, and many of the clients of Residential Programs also have contact with Community Corrections.

Drug Court

The Drug Court operates across four District Courts in NSW and provides a post-sentence option for people to seek treatment and support for issues related to their drug use and to reduce recidivism.

Odyssey supports dozens of people each year in our residential programs working closely with the Drug Court and the Local Health District teams to support the needs of these clients.

MERIT

Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment (MERIT) operates in Local Courts and is a pre-sentence diversion to support people to access treatment for their harmful use of substances and reduce recidivism.

The MERIT Program provides the opportunity of rehabilitation for those appearing in the Local Court on matters relating to their substance use.

MERIT allows Magistrates to adjourn hearings for 12 weeks, the duration of Odyssey's short-term residential program, Foundations of Recovery.

The Program aims to improve the health and well-being and reduce offending for adults who have issues related to their alcohol and other drug (AOD) use and are in contact with the criminal justice system.

Positive outcomes include decreased substance use and the possibility of a reduced sentence.

In addition to dedicated beds in the Odyssey residential programs, we case-manage clients in the MERIT program at Waverley Court in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs.

Our staff work with the court and other support services, whether clients are in community or residential programs.



Innovative new centre reconnects families

A positive family unit can be a supportive factor for parents who are experiencing substance dependence and their children.

In February 2023 Federal MP and Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride and former NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard officially opened the Family Recovery Centre in Eagle Vale to support more parents to turn their families' lives around.

Former Minister Hazzard said, "For more than 45 years Odyssey has been a valuable provider of rehabilitation services for people dealing with the challenges of alcohol and other drug use, and this new \$4.5 million

centre will provide vital support to those in need, and their loved ones."

The centre provides a home environment where parents can maintain care of their young children during their recovery. While living at the centre, we help parents develop skills to establish and manage a safe and healthy family while also undergoing alcohol and other drug treatment in line with Odyssey's Model of Care.

It's one of very few rehabilitation centres in Australia that allow single mothers, fathers and couples, including pregnant women to undertake treatment while their children (0-12 years) live with them.

From the ground up

Phase: Demolition



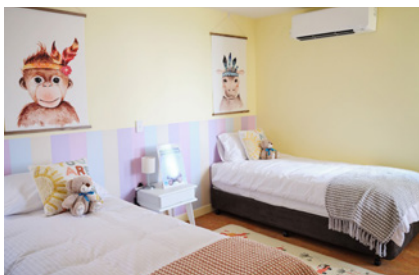
Phase: New foundation



Phase: Main works commence



Official opening



Keeping families together through treatment

There have always been children residing with their parents at Odyssey House NSW, however our dedicated Parent's and Children's Program along with the Parents in Contact program have been in operation for about 24 years.

In our Family Recovery Centre, emphasis is placed on holistic care for parents and children as individuals as well as for the family as a unit.

The centre of the program remains the individual family, with all the other pieces working collaboratively towards supporting holistic recovery.

No single area is more important than another, creating a centralised space to address not only the impact of substance use, but the very pathways, stressors or individual factors that have led to their current circumstances.

We provide holistic care for entire families, enabling the core family unit to remain intact while they engage in recovery and simultaneously work to address other associated harms. The term 'family' refers to all family types, including same-sex couples, opposite-sex couples, gender-diverse couples, and single parents (both mothers and fathers).

Parents engage in weekly educational groups that support parenting, whilst also developing an understanding of the impact of substance use upon their children, repairing the connection with their children, and learning how to become parents.

Living at the Family Recovery Centre also encourages healthy lifestyle habits and provides a supportive environment to help parents and their children reconnect and rebuild their lives whilst in recovery.

The Centre is the hub for a number of programs that we run to reconnect families.

The Parents in Contact parenting program is offered to clients of the main program, whose children are not residing with them, and is designed to repair the harms caused to the family and children through substance use. Emphasis is placed on reparative parenting and attachment, whilst learning to rebuild and maintain appropriate connection with their children whilst receiving alcohol and other drug support.

The outcomes include the fact that parents are reconnected with their children that they may have lost contact with through substance use, reducing the risk of harm faced by children with parents with substance use.

It also prevents the establishment of future unhealthy relationships with alcohol and drugs for both parents and children.

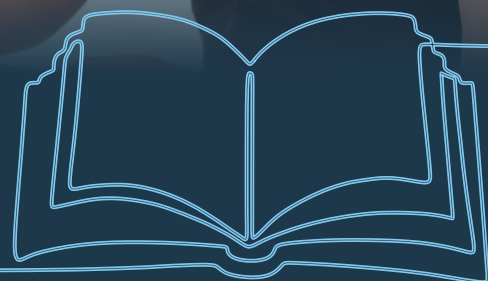


In May 2023, Reconnecting Families was awarded the AOD Award for the NSW Non-Government Sector Excellence in Treatment award by our peak body, Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA).

The award recognises individuals or organisations that contribute to building the evidence base for practices to prevent and/or reduce alcohol and other drug related harms.

India's* story

India has been able to travel her journey without leaving her son



I was in a really difficult time in my life, having gone through the breakup of a traumatic relationship.

I was trying to find a way forward and knew that I needed to find a place that could help me through my journey and offer a residential program.

At the time I came to Odyssey, I was moving around a lot and had been having difficulty as I was self-medicating in an unhelpful way. I had heard that Odyssey offered an opportunity for a residential program that would allow me the space to heal and provide me with a range of support services that would enable me to heal and grow.

Odyssey has an amazing reputation for providing programs that offer lifelong change.

Since coming to Odyssey House, I have been able to completely change the direction my life was taking.

I have been able to develop a range of skills in identifying and embracing healthy relationships and effective communication. I have been able to access counselling services and refocus my energies positively in a safe and secure environment.

I have been able to access both individual and group therapy services in a stable and secure environment.

Most importantly, I have been able to share my journey with my peers who can understand and

empathise with where I have come from and what I want to achieve.

By being a part of the Family Recovery Centre, I have been able to do this with my beautiful little boy who provides me with so much motivation in a brand-new environment with everything I need in self-contained accommodation.

I am so excited for my future and everything it will bring.

I have many hopes and dreams I want to fulfil and have a new focus on life and the things that are important. I have new skills that will see me be so much more successful than I could ever have thought possible.

I can plan and work towards my own goals.

Odyssey has helped me hit the reset button on my life and start an incredible new chapter for myself and my family.

It has shown me that by being willing to do the work on myself and embrace the changes that are possible, I can set my mind to almost anything and be the woman and mother that my family, friends and most importantly of all my son can be proud of.

*Names and images have been changed.

A high-quality service that dedicates time to clients

Community Programs offer a range of government-funded services that focus on treatment, counselling, education, pre-admission, aftercare support and case management for individuals who are worried about their own or their loved one's drug and alcohol use and the impact it has on their lives.

Our Community Programs are showing positive results after implementing a new model of care.

While it's challenging to identify trends due to fluctuations in demand from new clients, we have observed an upward trajectory in active clients and favourable outcomes for this fiscal year.

This success can be attributed to improvements in personalised treatment planning and client review sessions, resulting in longer client retention and increased active client numbers.

We provide high-quality service and achieve improved results by dedicating more time to each client.

Our Community Programs have expanded into the Nepean Blue Mountains region in 2022, providing Aftercare Case Management and Care Coordination for individuals with complex needs.

This program aims to coordinate individual care, support, and advocacy to access health and social services.

We have successfully expanded Community Programs across Greater Sydney, Southern Highlands, and now the Blue Mountains, Hunter Valley, and Central West region.

Our team has experienced significant growth over the past year, thanks to our high client outcomes and increased referrals. We have a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander case workers as part of our team and have now doubled in size to meet the demand.

Based on data analysis, self-referral continues to be the primary reason clients seek our services, followed by clients directed or diverted by the criminal justice system. This indicates that Odyssey Community Programs have a strong reputation within the community, with individuals actively choosing to approach us for support.

“Our team has experienced significant growth over the past year, thanks to our high client outcomes and increased referrals.”

- Cameron Brown, Manager,
Community Programs



Joanne's* story

An ice user for five years finds a way back

Thanks to our support, Joanne has an apartment, a bank account, and a job – all things she never had before.

She even completed our eight-week Mental Health Recovery Group program by dialling in from her phone during work breaks.

Joanne is a woman in her early 40s who first came to Odyssey in 2021. She reported that methamphetamine was her primary drug of concern and that she had been smoking the drug for over five years.

She stated she experienced domestic violence and had left her partner. She had also lost custody of her daughter, whom the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) had removed.

Joanne became a client of Community Programs in Blacktown in 2021 and received services from the Western Sydney team.

During her first visit, she expressed difficulty speaking without becoming emotional and shared her uncertainty about what recovery meant for her. We identified that providing individual support and case management would be the best way to assist Joanne on her journey. We thus initiated regular one-on-one counselling sessions with her.

As Joanne expressed her desire to reunite with her daughter, we requested her case plan from

DCJ with her consent. DCJ recommended Joanne attend residential rehabilitation, which she agreed to. Our Community Programs team worked with the Residential Programs team to provide seamless support for her transition, and three months later, Joanne moved into the Residential Program. This move greatly improved her treatment and boosted her confidence.

Once Joanne had completed the Residential Program, the Community and Residential teams collaborated to ensure a smooth transition. She now continues her journey through our Blacktown Community Services hub, attending groups at least weekly for over a year. Joanne has also participated in many of our service offerings, including our parenting program 'Bringing Up Great Kids'.

"It's amazing to see the changes in Joanne," says Julijana Davila, an AOD Treatment Worker in Community Programs Western Sydney.

"She has undergone a complete shift in her mindset, becoming more tolerant of discomfort and able to confront her issues calmly.

"Her gratitude is evident, and I am thrilled to witness her progress. Though she is still working towards gaining custody of her daughter, she is highly motivated and well on her way."

*Names and images have been changed.

Delivering recovery customised to cultural needs

Odyssey Multicultural Programs team deliver specialised services in Western and South-Western Sydney.

These services include culturally appropriate AOD counselling, groups, intensive case management, and other supports for individuals from CALD backgrounds, research, community development and resources development to support CALD individuals, families, and communities.

After taking on the management of this service late last year, we have achieved increased engagement and access to the multicultural programs by individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We have seen a significant increase in referrals across the various programs offered, and therefore increased the number of clients we were able to support.

They include culturally appropriate group programs and AOD counselling and support, intensive case management, research, and community development.

The team offers counselling and support services tailored to the unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds of CALD individuals. This approach ensures that they receive assistance in a way that is sensitive to their cultural values, norms, and language preferences.

Our team develops resources specifically designed for CALD individuals, families, and communities. These resources can include translated materials, culturally sensitive information, and educational tools, which empower CALD communities to make informed decisions regarding AOD use and seek appropriate support.

Through counselling, support, and case management, the project expects to see improvements in the well-being of CALD individuals, including decreased substance use and associated harms.

Our clients also benefit from strengthened community support. The program seeks to foster community resilience and support networks by engaging with CALD communities, promoting collaboration among stakeholders, and facilitating community-led initiatives.

“We have achieved increased engagement and increased the number of clients that we serve.”

- Teguh Syahbahar, Manager, Multicultural Programs



Nadan's story

Refugee from Sri Lanka received trauma-informed care



Nadan is 48 years old and was referred to Odyssey Multicultural Programs for AOD Treatment by Westmead Hospital.

Data was gathered by obtaining correct and comprehensive details of his cultural identity as a priority to provide culturally appropriate treatment.

Using cultural awareness in assessment provided an opportunity to capture Nadan's ethnic background of Sri Lankan Tamil descent, his migration history seeking asylum in Australia in 2013 and his preferred language.

Nadan was assigned to a clinician of a similar ethno-cultural background who was culturally informed and understood his cultural values and norms.

The clinician used an AOD treatment plan that was culturally appropriate and provided services in his preferred language.

In addition, the clinician connected him to support services that were culturally appropriate so that he could obtain housing, clothing, medication, food services, support from Centrelink, and support for bridging visas.

Through the use of trauma-informed care, the clinician also offered support to him for the traumatic experience that was associated with his migration.

Nadan, who before had given up hope for a better life, now has a glimmer of optimism.

He hopes to give up substance use, cultivate healthy coping strategies, find employment to provide for his family in Sri Lanka, and eventually relocate to the same city as his wife and children.

*Names and images have been changed.

Community Drug Action Teams



Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs) are comprised of volunteers who work together on addressing alcohol and other drugs (AOD) concerns that affect their local community. We work to support approximately 70 CDATs across NSW.

Our job is to support the volunteers who carry out this important work with evidence-based information so they can build their knowledge and confidence in this complex space.

This year's highlights include:

- Communication toolkit. This is designed to ensure that stakeholders, digital audiences and the community have access to quality information about the CDAT program. We aim to increase the profile of CDAT programs across NSW.
- Capacity building workshops for CDAT members that enhance their skills in a variety of areas including project planning, applying for grants and writing reports.
- 50 Action Plans have been approved in the FY22-23, injecting approximately \$340,000 into communities across NSW.
- Increased the number of teams who access and disperse the number of Your Room resources. CDATs are supported to use the interactive tools on the Your Room website such as the Standard Drink Calculator to engage in meaningful conversations that increase awareness and encourage positive behaviour and attitudes while showing where to find more information and/or support if needed.
- The creation of an innovative learning tool developed for NSW State Library staff that increases their understanding of the CDAT program and aligns with the DrugInfo@YourLibrary. Designed to increase engagement with the general public and highlight the opportunities for CDAT and Libraries to collaborate.

Since the CDAT program has a grassroots focus, the delivery of these programs occurs in a variety of settings. This year, we delivered 48 programs in the workplace, 40 at public events, 28 in schools, 9 each in libraries and sporting events, 4 at PCYC gyms, 2 at a primary health location and 1 in social housing.



Examples of regional CDATs delivering for their community:

Lightning Ridge CDAT attended a preseason, alcohol-free Family Fun Day for the Lightning Ridge Junior Rugby League Club, providing education to all age groups including discussions on how alcohol and other drugs affect the development of the brain and behaviour.

Queanbeyan CDAT was excited to work in partnership with the State Library of NSW to produce a video that is helping to educate and change behaviour.

Port Macquarie CDAT partnered with the Hastings Neighbourhood Service to deliver a mural and community connection day. The community project highlighted the strengths and skills of participants and demonstrated ways in which volunteering can be mutually supportive.

Our Supporters

We express our heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated supporters for their assistance throughout the past year.

No words are adequate – their unwavering generosity has empowered us to enhance the care we provide to our clients and fostered our growth and development.

Our supporters are fundamental to our mission of cultivating safe and thriving communities, as we work tirelessly to achieve our vision of a world free of addiction. It is made attainable through the invaluable contributions of our donors, volunteers, and a diverse array of partners, including corporate entities, philanthropic organisations, and government organisations. **We thank all our supporters for their ongoing commitment to the work we do.**

Supporters

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| Altus Group | Foodbank NSW & ACT Limited | Pittwater RSL Club |
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Government

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| The Attorney-General's Department | NSW Health |
| Australian Government Department of Education | NSW Police Force |
| Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations | South Eastern Sydney Health District |
| Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care | South Western Sydney Health District |
| The Association of Independent Schools of NSW | South Western Sydney Primary Health Network |
| Central Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network | Sydney North Primary Health Network |
| Department of Education NSW | Western Sydney Local Health District |
| NSW Department of Communities and Justice | Western Sydney Primary Health Network (WentWest) |
| NSW Government | |

Board of Directors

The success of Odyssey over the past year would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of our dedicated Board members.

Drawing upon their extensive clinical, management, and operational experience, they have played a pivotal role in shaping and guiding our organisation towards excellence.

We welcomed three new Board members – Douglas Bain, Douglas Isles and Debora Picone.

During the year, we farewelled Julie Babineau, Valerie Hoogstad, Douglas Snedden, Susanne Taylor, Garry Wayling and Peter Wiggs.



Carmel Tebbutt
CEO



Debora Picone AO
Chair



Julie Babineau



The Honourable Roger Dive



Professor Michael Farrell



Stewart Hindmarsh



Valerie Hoogstad AM



Douglas Isles



Dr Debra Kelliher



David McGrath



Douglas Bain



Douglas Snedden AO



Susanne Taylor



Garry Wayling



Peter Wiggs

Financial Snapshot

Odyssey NSW is committed to providing much needed AOD services across the State.

During 2022-2023 Odyssey House NSW increased grant revenue by \$2,309,152. This increase in grant revenue is attributable to the new Multicultural funding contracts acquired as well as to capital grants recognised for the construction of the new Family Recovery Centre accommodation. Funding contributions from government grants constitutes 83% of revenue (down from 90 per cent last year), of which non-recurring capital grants were eight per cent.

Donations and fundraising revenue increased compared to the prior year. The increased donations were essential for the completion of the new Family Recovery Centre.

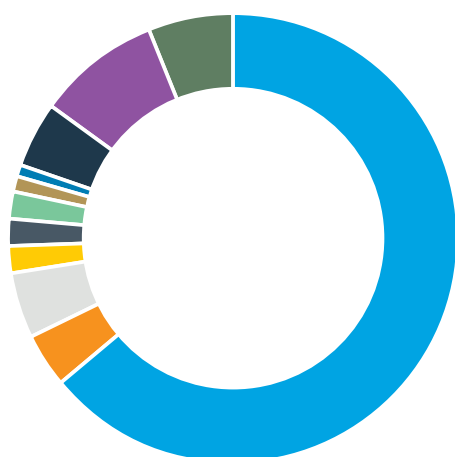
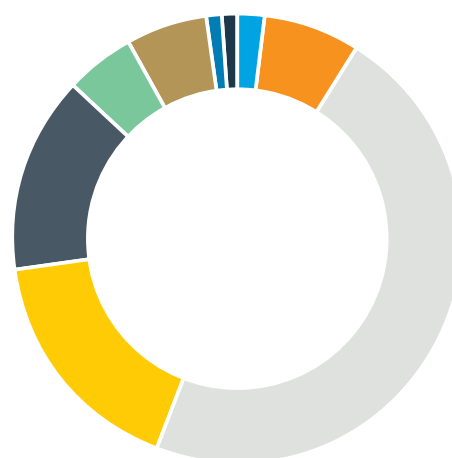
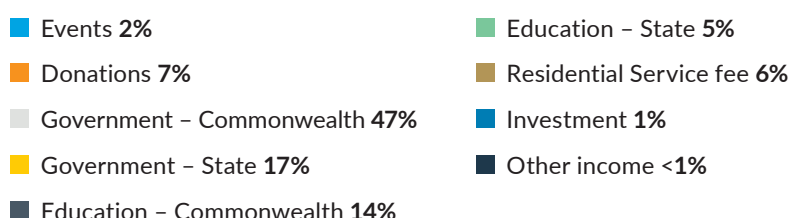
The increase in employee costs of \$1,931,761 is mostly due to the new Multicultural Programs as well as award increases. The increased cost is offset by unfilled roles

that were not filled due to a challenging resourcing environment. The increase in operating expenses of \$1,216,157 was mainly due to the introduction of the new programs.

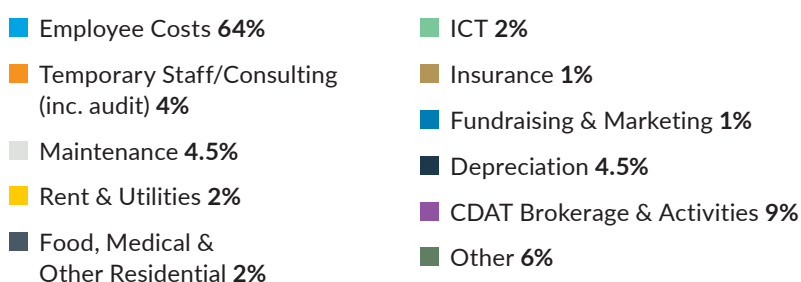
Total profit of \$2,894,925 relates in part to Accounting Standards requirements to recognise government grant funding in the profit and loss, with underlying expenditure being recognised as additions to property, plant, and equipment in the balance sheet.

Our work is funded and supported by the Australian Government Department of Health, NSW Ministry of Health, South Western Sydney, South Eastern Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains and Western Sydney Local Health Districts and the Department of Communities and Justice, as well as the Western Sydney, South Western Sydney, Central and Eastern Sydney and Sydney North Primary Health Networks. We are also funded and supported by both State and Federal Departments of Education.

Our sources of income 2022-23



How our income was utilised 2022-23





ODYSSEY HOUSE

NEW SOUTH WALES

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Admissions
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Donations
T: 02 9030 3901

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