



Reconnecting lives
in times of need

Our vision is a world free of addiction

Our mission is to build safe and healthy communities by reducing the impact of substance misuse on individuals, families, carers and communities.



“Without Odyssey House NSW I wouldn’t be where I am today—clean and sober, in employment and out of a deep depression.”

- Community Programs client, July 2020

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Message to our stakeholders

This year, demand for our services was at an all-time high. We are proud to say that Odyssey House NSW met this demand and continued to do what we do best: provide care for those who need it most.

Much has been said in the past year on the effect of COVID-19 on our health service, our communities, and ultimately the way we live our lives. We acknowledge the challenges of the global pandemic, however we also want to ensure that we didn't lose sight of the great achievements that occurred outside of the confines of COVID-19.

As you'll read in this report, this year saw a tremendous increase in demand for our services, and subsequently **we treated 18 per cent more clients** than in the previous year. It is a true testament to the professionalism and flexibility of our people that we not just maintained services, but that we increased them to meet the greater need in our community. We are so thankful for our frontline and administration staff who continue to work passionately and tirelessly to support our clients, families and colleagues. As one Board member recently stated, our staff truly are "**a team of champions who are excelling in every way, addressing the issues confronting them**".

Our Strategic Plan 2020-2024 continues to guide us as we build our scale, strengthen our systems and processes, align and sustain our resources and develop our workforce. This annual report will describe how we made great progress in all areas of our Plan, by embracing new systems as we moved many of our services online during lockdown, by expanding our presence state-wide through the Community Drug Action Team program, and more.

We're also excited about the significant progress made towards the expansion of our residential Parent's and Children's Program. We are close to achieving our capital funding goal for the new accommodation, we have received approval for our Development Application, and we are well placed to finish construction during the first half of 2022. This will allow us to support even more parents and children impacted by alcohol and other drugs and continue to establish Odyssey as a centre of excellence in reconnecting families.



While we were disappointed that we had to cancel our Business Women's Lunch for the second year in a row, impacting our fundraising efforts, once again we are amazed at the continued generosity and selflessness of all our donors and supporters. We want to take this opportunity to thank all of you, and we can't wait to see you in person again soon.

We are also grateful for the continued support of both the federal and state governments, who provide funding which enables our life changing work. This year we're especially grateful for the additional capital funding provided to support our Parent's and Children's Program expansion as noted above.

As you'll see, there's a strong theme of **reconnecting** in this year's annual report, as we continually strive to reconnect lives, families and communities. All of this could not be achieved without the dedication and commitment of all our Board and Committee members and all the staff at Odyssey. We look forward to continuing this important mission, and are excited to reconnect with all of you in person as soon as possible.

Thank you everyone for your efforts throughout this year, we look forward to facing whatever comes next together, knowing that while our mission is tough, we are much, much tougher.

Douglas Snedden
Chairman

Julie Babineau
CEO



**GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY**

Message from

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

As Patrons, Dennis and I acknowledge the efforts and achievements of Odyssey House NSW staff and clients during the past challenging year.

We pay tribute to the counsellors, psychologists, doctors, nurses, executives and other professionals who have worked together to help clients address harms relating to the use of alcohol, amphetamines, marijuana, heroin, cocaine and other drugs.

Odyssey House NSW is helping to achieve the objectives of the *National Drug Strategy 2017-2026* through its network of residential and community hubs across Greater Sydney, the Southern Highlands and the Blue Mountains. Delivering a range of programs from supervised withdrawal to recovery, parenting and mental health support, relapse prevention and after care, and with the support of the NSW Community Drug Action teams, Odyssey House NSW is helping our most vulnerable citizens reduce and recover from the impact of substance misuse.

As we know, the social and economic upheavals of COVID-19 have had a significant impact on many in our communities. In the past year, Odyssey House NSW helped more people than ever through online counselling and support. The Odyssey House team worked together to provide information, support, treatment and hope to those facing social and economic challenges, to help them understand the risks of substance abuse and reduce the use of alcohol and other drugs while developing new skills and support networks.

This commitment helps to break the cycle of generational drug and alcohol use which can affect people from all backgrounds.

We look forward to continuing our work with Odyssey House NSW to improve the well-being of individuals and to strengthen our communities.

Margaret Beazley

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

Dennis Wilson

Mr Dennis Wilson



Our organisation

Odyssey House NSW provides treatment, support and education for those wishing to address harms related to substance use.

These include physical, mental, social and economic harms, all of which have a significant impact on our communities and account for 16.5 per cent of the burden of disease in Australia*.

As an essential service, we continued to care for those in need during the pandemic. Staff provided treatment at our Medical Unit and through our residential and community programs. We received an average of 500 requests each month over the past year for information, advice or admission and treated 3206 clients, some completing several of our programs.

Our staff help clients identify and address the underlying cause of their alcohol and/or drug use—such as childhood trauma and domestic violence—to regain physical and mental wellbeing, improve their numeracy and literacy and strengthen their connections to family, friends and community.

Clients' needs change throughout their journeys of recovery. Over the past 44 years, we have developed a holistic framework of programs which includes withdrawal, one-on-one assessment and counselling by our psychologists and counsellors, group therapy and residential rehabilitation. Clients develop new life skills and can access free education at Odyssey College.

Our work is funded and supported by the NSW Ministry of Health, the South Western Sydney and Western Sydney Local Health Districts and the Department of Communities and Justice, as well as the Australian Government Department of Health, 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, client contributions and a range of individual donors, trusts and foundations.

Our holistic approach helps clients transition to a new way of living and working in their community.

*Australian Government Institute of Health and Welfare Annual Reports 2019 and 2021

"It's a great program, especially, nowadays with COVID I find it most helpful.

Hearing other people sharing gives me the feeling that I am not the only one going through difficulties and at times my problems are not as bad as I thought they were."

- Community Programs client,
February 2021

Odyssey College

The College is registered with New South Wales Education Standards Authority and provides structured learning and course outcomes. Education helps clients embrace opportunities for lasting change in their lives therefore subjects range from mathematics and art to vocational training.





Todd's* story

“My life was going up in smoke.”



I started smoking pot every night with Dad when I was 14. By 19, I was using a range of drugs and at 20, I was involved in an armed robbery and got arrested. I did three years' jail.

When I was released I met my partner, got a job, got my act together and stopped using most drugs—except pot. I lost my job at the start of the pandemic in 2020 and quickly fell behind with bills, so my dad and I started selling pot. We were arrested and my partner threatened to leave me if I didn't stop smoking. I had been smoking pot for 23 years.

I signed up with the Odyssey House Short-term Residential Program and spent the first month fighting everything, looking for loopholes and thinking I didn't

need to be there. A counsellor suggested I write down my feelings about responsibility—one of the program's pillars—and I ended up writing about my lack of it for four hours. It was a revelation and I embraced the program after that. I learnt how to manage emotions, conflict and relationships and how to ask for help.

After three months, I left to take care of my partner. I joined Odyssey's non-residential community programs in Western Sydney and now get one-on-one support every week, all online now of course because of COVID.

Odyssey House programs, the staff and the other residents gave me a life I didn't know I needed or wanted.

*Names have been changed.

Our social impact 2020-21



Reconnecting lives, families & communities

In 2020-21 Odyssey House NSW:

Helped
3206
clients



Supported
311
Residential
clients

Treated **3006**
clients through our
community hubs across
Greater Sydney



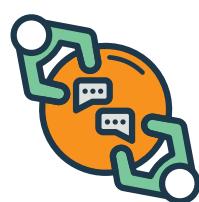
Helped clients through
11 community centres,
2 residential sites,
and **online**

Responded to
6147
phone or email
enquiries



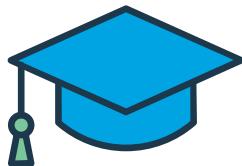
Helped **310**
clients through
Medical Unit

Treated **18%**
more clients than
last year



Provided **4951**
treatments or series
of treatments

Taught **255** students
at Odyssey College



Delivered **7981** units
of education at Odyssey College



Provided help through **19**
tailored treatment programs



Had **0** cases of
COVID-19 among
staff or clients

Began our leadership role
to support more than
60 Community Drug
Action Teams across NSW



Carried out

511

COVID-19 tests on
residential clients



Finalised plans to
DOUBLE
family accommodation for
the residential Parent's
and Children's Program



Expanded
**online
service**
delivery

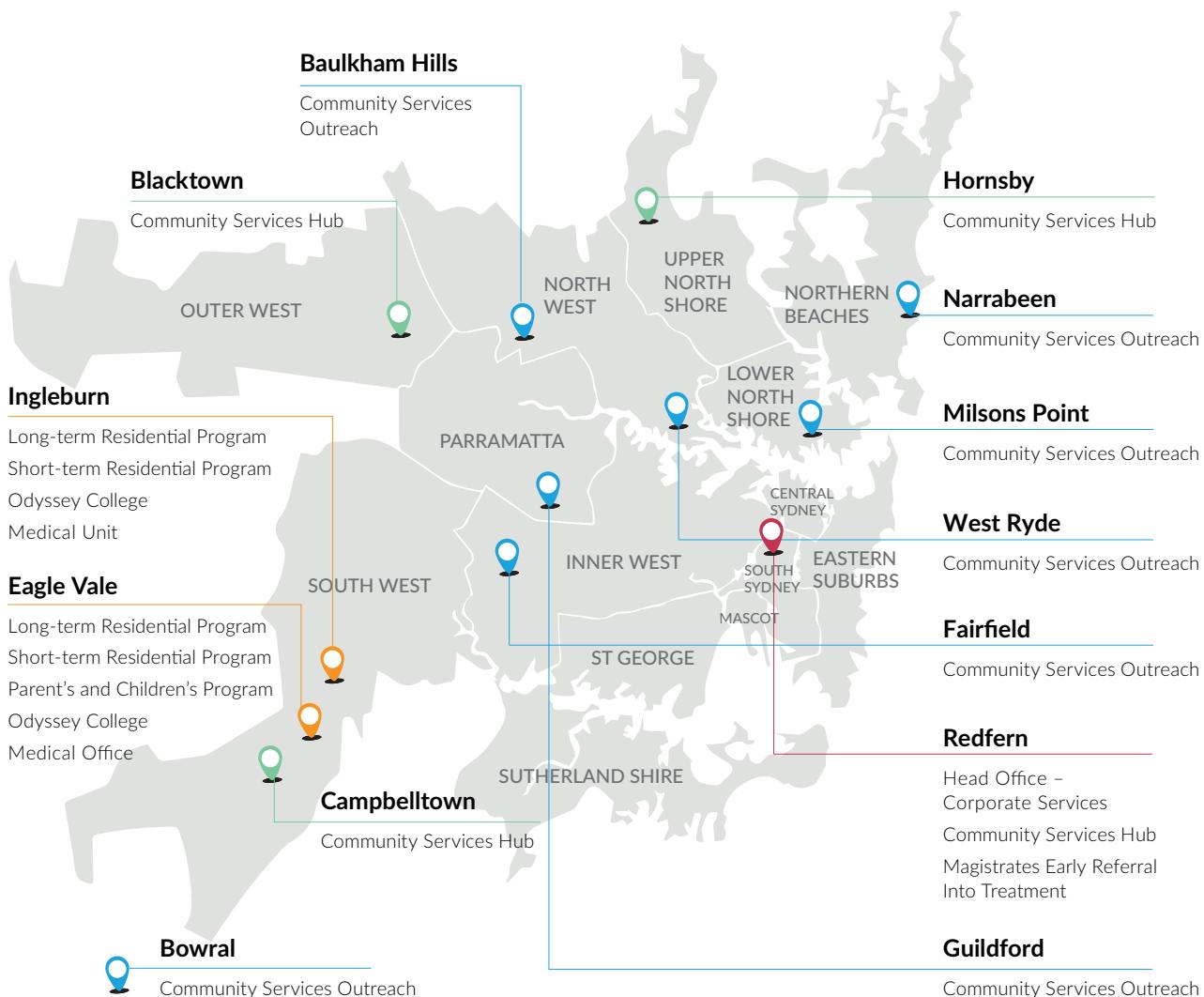


Maintained ongoing clinical
accreditation through the
**Australian Council
on Healthcare
Standards**

***“After the pandemic
I would like to continue
both online and face-to-face
services. I like the flexibility
they give me as I work and have
a young baby at home now.”***

- Community Programs client, February 2021

Our service locations



Last year, NSW Health appointed a new consortium, led by Odyssey House NSW, to support the volunteer NSW Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs) throughout NSW.

Central NSW (Odyssey House NSW)

Kariong/Peninsula
Kincumber
Northern Gosford
North Wyong
Ourimbah
Shellharbour/Kiama
Wollongong
Callaghan
Cessnock
Dungog
Gloucester
Greater Manning & Myall Lakes
Hunter Multicultural
Lake Macquarie
Maitland
Muswellbrook

Port Stephens

Singleton
Southlake
Bankstown
Blue Mountains
Campbelltown
Canterbury
Fairfield
Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai
Inner West
Liverpool
North Shore
Northern Beaches
Parramatta
Randwick
Redfern & Waterloo
Penrith
St George

Western NSW (Bila Muji Aboriginal Corporation Health Services Incorporated)

Forbes/Parkes
Lachlan (Condobolin)
Orange
Wellington
Collarenebri
Lightning Ridge
Walgett Shire

Northern NSW (The Butterly)

Tamworth
Tenterfield
Bellinger Shire
Browneville
Byron Shire
Clarence Valley/Grafton
Glenn Innes
Garlambira Youth
Kempsey/Macleay Valley
Kyogle
Nambucca Valley
Nimbin
Richmond Valley
Port Macquarie/Hastings
Tweed Valley
Valla

Southern NSW (Karralika Programs)

Albury
Coolamon
Federation (Corowa)
Griffith
Temora
Wagga Wagga
Ulladulla
Nowra
Goulburn
Queanbeyan
Snowy
Bega Valley



Our programs

We help individuals, families and communities reduce harms related to substance use.

Clients come to us at all stages of their recovery. We provide treatment, education and support for the length of their journey.

Our professional teams help clients create a treatment plan to meet their goals and address any underlying trauma and mental health issues, while also developing new skills to improve all aspects of their lives.

**"We use a holistic approach to wellbeing.
We specialise in working with the whole person
in context including providing mental health and
wellbeing supports and life skills education to
bring about lasting change in clients' lives."**

- Program Director, David Kelly

We keep clients at the centre of everything we do through professional case management, using rediCASE software, and step treatment up or down as clients develop skills in:

- emotional regulation
- interpersonal effectiveness
- self-awareness, self-care and education
- communication, relationship and task management
- problem-solving and planning
- management of their home environment and social networks.

The Australian Government's National Drug Strategy 2017-2026 provides a roadmap to reduce demand and supply of alcohol and illicit drugs. It also aims to reduce their associated harms and Odyssey House NSW is part of a lively network of health sector partnerships and referral pathways which support this part of the Strategy.

Community programs

11 sites across Greater Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Southern Highlands, and online.

- SMART Recovery for online delivery of our programs
- Bringing Up Great Kids*
- AOD Recovery Group
- Case management for the NSW Magistrates Early Referral into Treatment Program (MERIT)

Residential programs

2 sites in South West Sydney.

- Medical Unit
- Foundations of Recovery Short-term Residential Program (3 months)
- Long-term Residential Program (3-12 months+)
- Parent's and Children's Program*
- Parents in Contact*
- Positive Parenting Program*
- Circle of Security*
- Clinical services including referral
- Drug Court and MERIT court diversion support
- Odyssey College: Board of Studies, VET and life skill subjects

Community & Residential

- Individual treatment, support, and case management
- Group treatment and psychoeducation
- Relapse prevention
- Mental Health Recovery Program
- Mingu Yabun Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support group)

*Reconnecting Families suite of services

Our clients

People who seek our assistance come from all walks and stages of life.

We support clients of all ages and demographics across Greater Sydney, the Southern Highlands and Blue Mountains including dependent children of adult clients through our Parent's and Children's Program.

We treat people who are homeless and sleeping rough, and those with homes and families and jobs.

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

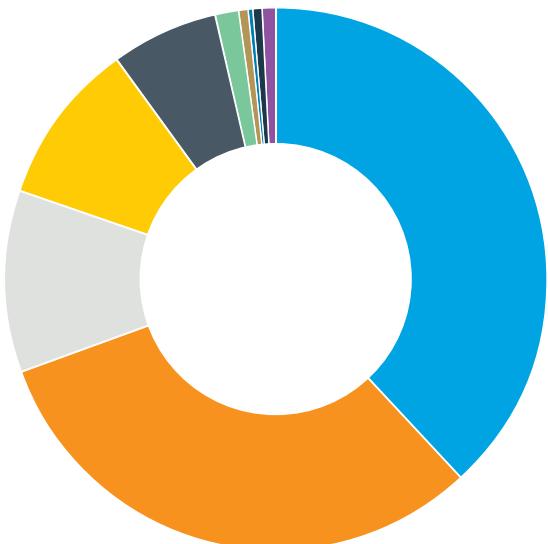
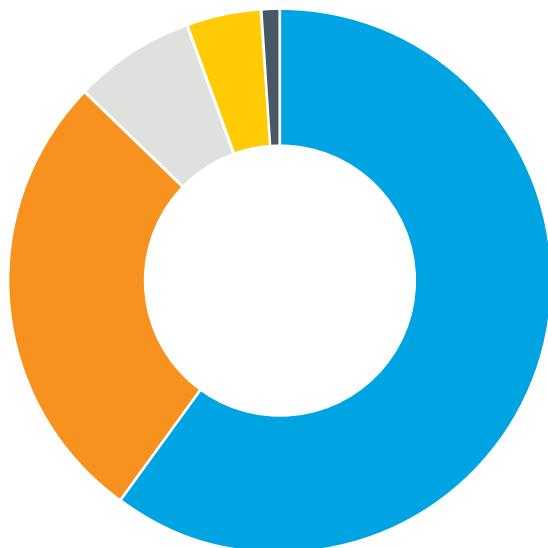
The most common substances of concern amongst clients are methamphetamine and alcohol, although

most are using a range of substances prior to admission. Many have mental health concerns, experience of trauma and family violence and/ or contact with the criminal justice system and require complex support.

By far the most common mental health diagnoses across all programs are anxiety and depression but clients present with a range of concerns. Our staff are professionally trained to help all those who turn to us.

Closed treatment episodes – Main treatment type

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Counselling 61% | ■ Rehabilitation 5% |
| ■ Assessment only 27% | ■ Other <1% |
| ■ Withdrawal management
(detoxification) 7% | |

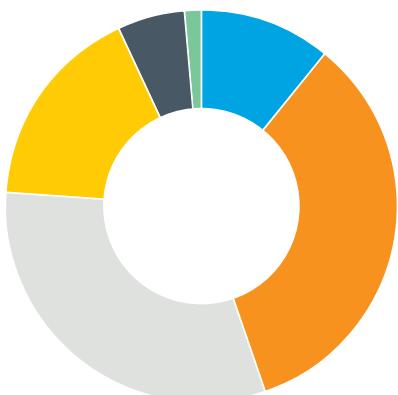
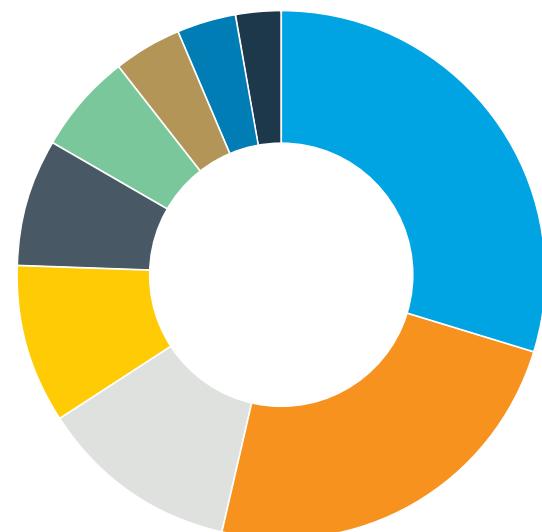
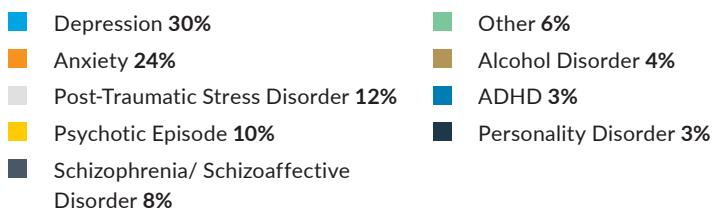


Principal drug of concern

During this period the principal drug of concern in Residential was Amphetamine Type Substances (53%) and Community Service was Alcohol (39%)

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Alcohol 38% | ■ Benzodiazepines 1% |
| ■ Amphetamine Type Substances 31% | ■ GHB <1% |
| ■ Cannabis 11% | ■ None / No other drugs of concern <1% |
| ■ Opiates 10% | ■ MDMA <1% |
| ■ Cocaine 6% | ■ Other <1% |

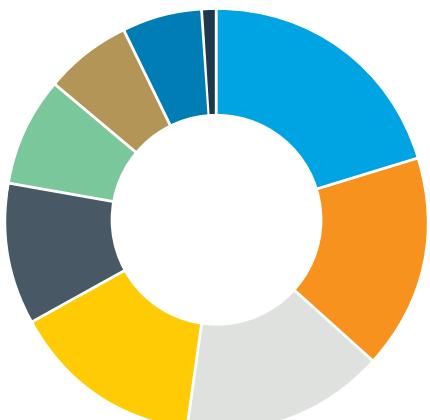
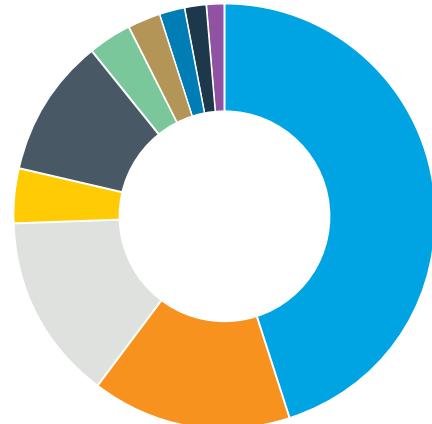
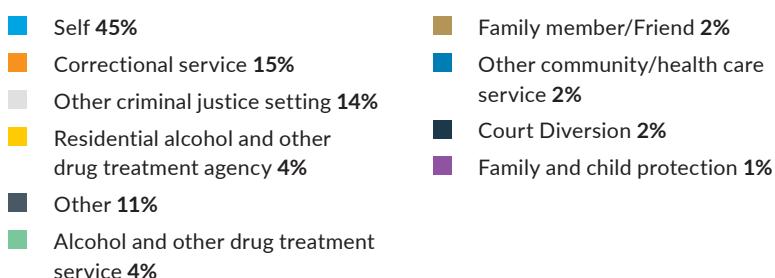
Principal mental health diagnosis



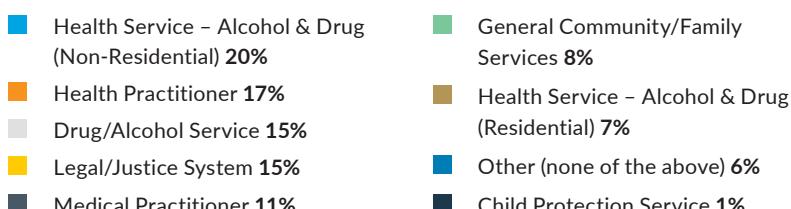
Age group



Source of referral in – New clients



Source of referral out – Exit clients



Blake's* story

“Odyssey helped me open up about my childhood trauma.”

I am in my twenties, live with my partner and our baby, and have been working from home during the pandemic. I used drugs because I thought it helped me cope with anxiety, as I was sexually abused during sports training from the age of four to seven years old.

Over time, my drug use led to involvement with the criminal justice system and admission into the Odyssey House detox program. I transferred into the residential program but lasted less than a month.

Several months later, my community corrections officer suggested I reconnect with Odyssey House. I joined their Relapse Prevention Program just before the first COVID-19 lockdowns. The counsellors introduced themselves and set us up on the SMART Recovery Online platform and I used that service up to four times a week during the first lockdown. My GP had also prescribed new medication and I was trying to find a psychologist or psychiatrist.

The group eventually resumed face-to-face but we also kept up the online group. Unfortunately, I couldn't understand what was being said at the meetings because of the voices in my head. Once, the counsellor stopped

the meeting so she could contact another colleague to calm me down and I was able to rejoin the session.

The next week, the same thing happened when I was working at home alone, only worse. The voices in my head were at an all-time high. I called my counsellor and she talked to me while we waited for my partner to pick me up and get help. My father called in the middle of this and after that call I rang the counsellor back. That's when I first told her I'd been sexually abused at that early age by a coach.

That day, I met Odyssey's senior counsellor to talk about what happened to me. We discussed coping techniques and he referred me to SAMS, a male sexual abuse survivors' group. He recommended I go back to my GP to tell him about what happened when I was so young, to get more help.

I haven't used drugs for 18 months now but I keep in touch with the team at Odyssey House. I have finished renovating our place and am engaged to be married next year. I love my life and my family and feel hopeful about the future.

*Names have been changed.



Our people

We have an engaged and passionate workforce.

Over the past year, we ran regular online sessions to monitor staff wellbeing and maintain our client focus during the pandemic. This was supplemented by staff engagement surveys measuring employee and leadership development, satisfaction, technology and engagement about COVID-19 wellbeing.

In March we launched **O People**, our new payroll and human resources platform to improve management of staff details, documentation, and credentialing compliance. This system includes a learning

management module to help staff easily access mandatory and non-mandatory training, materials and courses. It also keeps track of training needs and compliance requirements while encouraging staff to remain engaged in their individual learning and development.

Developing a healthy, empowering, and innovative culture is one of our highest priorities over the next four years and will help us achieve our vision. In 2020-21:

- Odyssey House NSW had 98 employees, of which 66 per cent were full time.
- Our team included six Aboriginal members of staff.



Our Volunteers

We thank our interns Veronica (Bingjie) Zheng, Omur Akdemir and Anna Mylordin and the many volunteers who invested their time and skills in the development of our systems and programs over the last financial year.

Although many volunteering opportunities were restricted by the pandemic, volunteers helped us innovate in the areas of client service and delivery.

Recognition

Staff are recognised for 5, 10, 15 and 20 years' service, and through Values in Action peer nominations throughout the year.

Safety and Wellbeing

We are committed to providing a safe workplace for all who work for and on behalf of Odyssey House NSW.

Throughout the year the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Committee worked with the Executive to ensure continuous improvement of policy, procedure, practices and plans on each of our sites. They coordinated WHS training for all employees. In response to the ongoing pandemic, we also provided access to:

- Regular health updates, COVID-19 vaccinations, information and encouragement sessions.
- Wellbeing resources, including access to training, webinars and independent support.
- Ongoing supervision and support.
- Additional counselling through our external Employee Assistance Program if requested.

Our strategy

The need for our services continues to grow

The *Four Year Strategy 2020-2024* was developed to help us sustain, optimise, expand and improve our services to reduce harms related to drug and alcohol use, particularly among vulnerable populations.

Despite the pandemic's challenges to our operations and fundraising activities, we made progress towards our four strategic goals: build scale; strengthen our systems and processes; align and sustain our resources; and develop our workforce.

STRENGTHEN OUR SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

Build an efficient and sustainable organisation by providing equality, diversity and seamless access for all clients.

DEVELOP AND RETAIN OUR WORKFORCE

Become an employer of choice with an engaged workforce focused on client care

ALIGN AND SUSTAIN OUR RESOURCES

Attract, diversify and retain current and new sources of income

BUILD SCALE

Grow our programs and service delivery in balance with our core business



Build scale

We're building stronger networks and feedback mechanisms to help more vulnerable people throughout NSW.

In 2020-21 we:

- Maintained service delivery, as an essential service, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and fluctuating government restrictions. We reached 18 per cent more clients than last year through fast-tracked, high-pressure evolution of the organisation's practices to ensure services were safe, efficient and accessible during the pandemic.
- Launched and led our partnership with the Butterly, Bila Muuji and Karralika Programs to support the 60-plus Community Drug Action Teams around NSW, on behalf of NSW Health.
- Finalised project planning, in partnership with APP Corporation, to double accommodation and therefore program participation in the residential Parent's and Children's Program.
- Partnered with SMART Recovery to improve accessibility and extend online delivery of recovery and parenting counselling.
- Restructured subjects and teaching at Odyssey College (previously known as the Progressive Learning Centre) to meet and exceed accreditation standards and provide better client outcomes after treatment.
- Adapted to changing client, community and organisational needs with new staff and resources.

In the year to come, we will continue to seek partnerships and further collaboration with university research projects.

Strengthen our systems and processes

As a not-for-profit organisation, we will continue working as 'One Odyssey' to improve our systems, processes, efficiencies and client outcomes.

In the past year, we:

- Completed implementation of new client case management software rediCASE. This was a two-year project to improve evaluation of client data, from assessment and recovery through to discharge and referral. Generalised client data in this report was produced through rediCASE.
- Launched O People, a new software platform to upgrade our payroll and HR capabilities and promote staff learning and development.
- Revised our policy framework to strengthen corporate governance processes.
- Received ongoing clinical accreditation from the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards.
- Established Zoom and Microsoft Teams as key staff collaboration platforms.
- Adopted CompliSpace to manage Odyssey College's legal and governance obligations along with related policies and procedures.

We will continue digital transformation over the next 12 months. This will be supported through Xero and associated applications for financial reporting, adding Power BI to strengthen data and reporting processes.

“My counsellor is amazing at what she does. My progress is from my hard work, but she has opened the door for me to believe in myself and the mindset I have comes from the confidence I get from her counselling.”

- Community Programs client, July 2020

“Accessing programs online during the pandemic was just as good as face-to-face but there was less pressure. I think it allowed me to open up and express myself more.”

- Community Programs client, July 2020

Align and sustain resources

We are committed to maintaining and building our financial viability in light of growing demand for our services and increased competition for philanthropic donations to charities.

In the past year, Odyssey House NSW:

- Maintained fundraising income despite cancellation of the 2020 Business Women’s Lunch, restrictions on events and face-to-face gatherings, the tightening economy and increasing demand for new donors in the charity sector.
- Continued to diversify income, expand services and develop relationships with funders. In January 2021 we began leading a consortium to support NSW Community Drug Action Teams, through a contract with NSW Health.
- Reviewed fundraising capacity and gained Board support for an updated fundraising strategy.
- Employed a database specialist to leverage the capability of existing software.
- Streamlined resources and processes to identify and seek funding through grants and tenders.
- Invested in and developed technological assets to improve and expand capacity for communication, service delivery and facility upgrades.

Expansion of the Parent’s and Children’s Program will continue, with the construction of new accommodation beginning later in 2021.

We will continue expanding our programs by aligning, sustaining and improving resources, capability, capacity and funds over the next three years.

Develop and retain our workforce

We strive to provide the best possible client care and deliver positive, sustained outcomes through engaging and maintaining a resilient and capable workforce.

Training, professional development, recruiting to organisational values and establishing safe and supportive work environments help us maintain a strong and client-focused workforce.

In the past year, we:

- Restructured business units to redefine responsibilities in response to changing community needs and organisation evolution.
- Enhanced internal communications through **O People** and through frequent CEO updates, regular all-staff Zoom sessions and an ‘Ask CEO’ email address.
- Introduced **O Heroes** to enable staff to recommend colleagues at any time. These recommendations are visible to all staff and are also linked to ongoing performance evaluations.
- Carried out the 2020 Staff Engagement Survey to better understand the challenges staff were experiencing during the pandemic and evaluate barriers to engagement at work.
- Established the Staff Engagement Response Team to facilitate staff engagement, contribution, collaboration and productivity.

In the next 12 months, we will continue to work with staff to develop and implement innovative projects in line with our values, including a training course to upskill staff in innovation.

Matthew's* story

"I'm strong enough to say no."

I got really sick of the ups and downs in my life. None of my relationships were lasting and drugs were a big part of it all—mainly cocaine—so when my partner and I broke up a year ago, I moved back in with my parents. My father knew about Odyssey House, so we called them and I began my journey of recovery in the Medical Unit doing a withdrawal program.

There was some domestic violence growing up, yet I respect my parents as they valued education. I felt I had to protect my family and just get by. When I grew up, I used drugs to keep myself working, to reward my hard work and to mask my emotions.

A lot of people don't try to recover from cocaine use as they think it's socially acceptable and makes you the life of the party. My counsellor had a similar experience and that made it easier to talk about it. She said, what's a couple of months out of my life to think about what I've done and to deal with my emotions?

I didn't want to take time out from work but I realised there were no quick fixes. I made the commitment to long-term recovery and it took me nearly a year all up.

After a few weeks at the Medical Unit, I transferred to and completed the three-month residential program and now get regular support through a community program.

Now I'm living with my parents and having regular group and one-on-one counselling through Odyssey's community programs, all on Zoom during COVID.

I have good consistent work and I'm earning decent money. I appreciate what I have and keep things simple, like having coffee with a friend and training. Training is a massive thing in my life and has replaced cocaine—it makes me challenge myself and feel better about everything.

I've worked hard to get into this headspace. My counsellor helped by showing her concern for me, so I let my guard down and she helped me. I'm not used to that and will appreciate it for the rest of my life. Unless you deal with your problems they will always be there.

I don't need cocaine anymore. If I'm at a party and cocaine is around, I just go home.

*Names have been changed.



Our supporters

We gratefully acknowledge supporters' impact over the past year.

Their generosity enabled us to improve client treatment and helped us grow and develop. Our supporters' connection is crucial to building safe and healthy communities by reducing the impact of substance use on individuals, families, carers and communities and achieving our vision of a world free of addiction.

Our donors, volunteers and partners—corporate, philanthropic and government alike—help us create opportunities to improve clients' wellbeing.

We are continuously humbled by their ongoing commitment to the work we do.

This year, we worked even harder to communicate the purpose and outcomes of our work in light of increasing demand for our services and diminished funding opportunities during the pandemic.

We also commissioned a strategic review of our fundraising activities to help achieve our potential.

While the review found return on investment was well above charity benchmarks, we want to ensure the sustainability of our model.

The Board has therefore approved a new engagement strategy to sustain and improve our relationships with supporters. This will complement our tender and grant application processes, which we also upgraded this year.

Odyssey House NSW is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient by the Australian Taxation Office and holds a Charitable Fundraising Authority from the NSW Government.

All activities comply with the Fundraising Institute of Australia's Code, informed by the International Statement of Ethical Principles in Fundraising, as well as the Trade Practices Act and The Privacy Act.

Your generosity helps us build safe and healthy communities. Thank you for your outstanding support.



Long-term community fundraising volunteer, Val Mills

Donors

Mr Robert Albert AO	Mr Paul Espie AO	Mrs Valerie Hoogstad	Mr Douglas Snedden AO
Mr Dick Austen AO	Ms Stephanie Fairfax	Mr William Knight	Mr Peter Spicer
Ms Carol Austin	Annie & Mark Fesq	Mrs Susan Maple-Brown	Ms Louise Vaughan
Ms Julie Babineau	Dr Leslie Green	Mr Rod Matthews	Mr Ralph Waters
Ms Karen Becker	Mr Christopher Grubb	Ms Cherie Mylordin	Mrs Helen Waters
Ms Christine Bishop	Mr Warren Havemann	Miss Janette O'Neil	Mr Garry Wayling
Ms Trudy Devitre	Mr Stewart Hindmarsh	Mr Jonathan Pepper	

Businesses and Foundations

Altus Group	Horticultural Management Services
ANZ	Lambert Bridge Foundation
APP Corporation	LCI Consultancy
Australian Fund Managers Foundation	Manly – Warringah Rugby League Club Ltd
Australian Youth & Health Foundation	Marsdens Law Group
Byora Foundation Pty Ltd	MCR
Chatswood RSL Club Ltd	Michael Brown Planning Strategies Pty Ltd
City of Sydney RSL & Community Club Ltd	NBRS Architecture
Club Burwood RSL	OzHarvest
Club Merrylands Bowling Group	Rodney & Judith O'Neil Foundation
Design Confidence	Sellick Consultants
Everything HR	The CEO Circle Pty Ltd
Foodbank	The John Lamble Foundation
GHD Group Pty Ltd	The Liangrove Foundation

Government

Attorney General's Department	NSW Department of Family and Community Services
Australian Department of Education and Training	NSW Health
Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	South Eastern Sydney Health District
Australian Department of Health	South Western Sydney Health District
Australian Independent Schools	South Western Sydney Primary Health Network
Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network	Sydney North Primary Health Network
NSW Department of Education	Western Sydney Local Health District
	Western Sydney Primary Health Network

Financial snapshot

We are committed to leveraging our resources to scale up delivery of much needed AOD services.

In 2020-21, Odyssey House NSW increased revenue by \$4,393,485. This reflects an additional \$4,182,989 from existing government funders, and our successful tender for support of NSW Community Drug Action Teams on behalf of the Ministry of Health. Funding contributions from government grants was 87 per cent of revenue (up from 83 per cent last year), with 4 per cent from individuals and organisations and the balance from other funding sources.

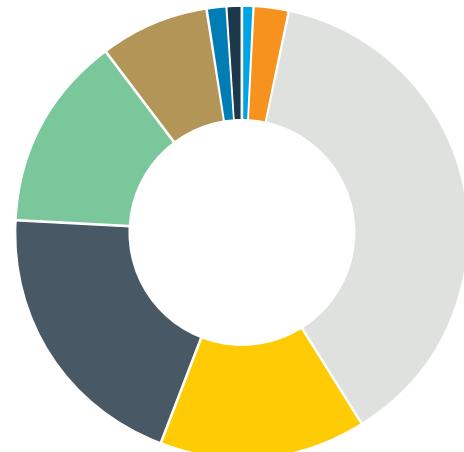
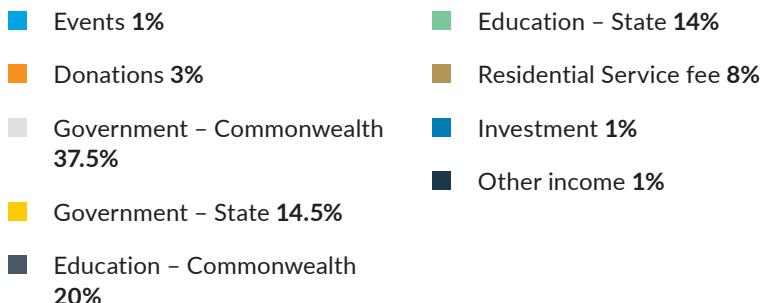
As an essential service we continued to provide treatment throughout the pandemic over the past year, however COVID-19 restrictions prevented scheduled

fundraising events. This resulted in a small decline in fundraising revenue which was offset by an increase in donations, including a contribution towards capital works to expand accommodation for our Parent's and Children's Program.

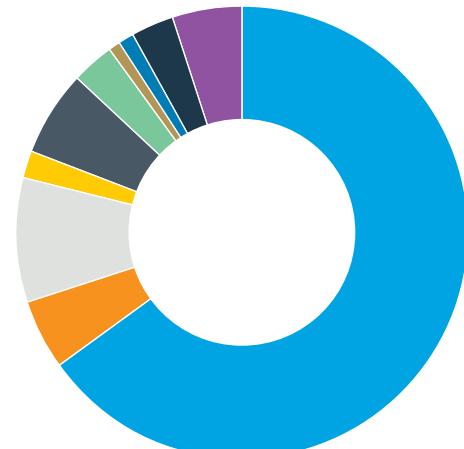
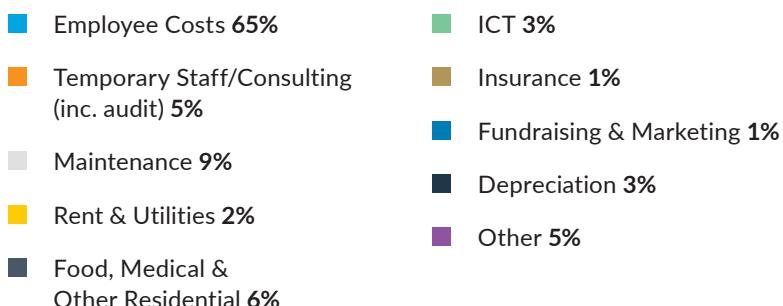
The increase in employee costs of \$820,448 was primarily to fill roles for new services funded by government grants. The increase in operating expenses of \$1,440,779 was due to additional costs associated with these new services.

Total profit of \$1,535,695 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.

Income 2020-21



Expenditure 2020-21





Reconnecting Lives

“I am grateful for the free support and connecting with other people, it makes me feel less alone in my recovery.”

- Community Programs client, July 2020

Reconnecting lives

In 2020-21, we helped 3206 people reduce the impact of substance use on their lives.

Our teams work at 13 sites and online and include counsellors, psychologists, nurses, teachers, support and executive staff. Over the past year, they developed and delivered tailored treatment plans to help each individual break their dependence on alcohol and illicit drugs and address the challenges of day-to-day life.

We specialise in providing mental health support, as more than half of our clients present with at least one co-occurring mental health diagnosis.

Some of our staff work closely with the criminal justice system and community corrections to support those whose substance use has led to arrest, charges and/or incarceration. Over the past year at least 34 per cent of those we assisted were referred to us from the criminal justice system, including those we support through court diversions such as MERIT and Drug Court.

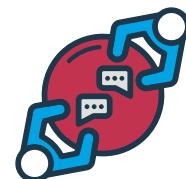
Our treatment framework includes our core program for recovery from harms related to substance use—AOD Recovery. Treatment also includes supervised medical withdrawal, mental health recovery, individual and group counselling, parenting courses, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support and free education at Odyssey College.

Education is key to lasting change and we provide this on three fronts. First, as psychoeducation, so that clients understand their physical and mental health conditions. Second, we create tailored treatment and recovery plans to ensure each client develops skills to meet their physical, emotional and social needs. And third, we provide access to free education at Odyssey College for residential clients.

As part of our ongoing self evaluation, we note early client data trends, for part of 2021, show clients' average days of paid work more than doubled within four weeks of discharge from our programs.

In 2020-21 Odyssey House NSW:

Provided **4951** treatments or series of treatments



Treated **310** people through our Medical Unit

Of the **6147** people who sought our help we provided information to 50 per cent, further help or assessment to 20 per cent, other support to 20 per cent and referral to more relevant care to 10 per cent.

Increased treatment delivery to 18-34 year olds



Treated **712** clients through the AOD Recovery Program

Finalised implementation of **rediCASE software** to leverage case management data for each client from assessment, treatment and discharge to referral

AOD Recovery

This is our core program.

Recovery from alcohol and other drugs (AOD) may require several attempts and usually takes place over several months if not years. Learning outcomes range from harm reduction strategies, stress management and emotional regulation to relapse prevention planning.

Treatment includes psychoeducation, therapeutic groups, one-on-one treatment, emotional recovery and case management. The program also encompasses clinical and medical interventions and case management relating to employment and training, reconnection with family and culture, and managing housing and homelessness.

All AOD Recovery clients, in both the community-based and residential settings, work towards

completion of their own goals through an individual treatment plan.

The residential version of this program is delivered through our 'Foundations of Recovery' Short-term Residential Program. This includes education at Odyssey College in Visual Arts, Technology and PDHPE, and the early stages of the Therapeutic Community model of care with gradually increasing privileges and responsibilities as residents progress.

All 311 people who received treatment in our 'Foundations of Recovery' Short-term Residential Program received initial treatment in the Medical Unit.

Of these 311 clients, 32 per cent progressed to our Long-term Residential Program to complete the rest of their treatment.

"I felt heard and acknowledged in all my sessions. My counsellor was thorough. She is switched on and smart and really knows what she is doing, and helped me work through my trust issues. I have recommended this program to friends who need recovery. Thank you."

- Community Programs client,
February 2021



Foundations of Recovery

Short-term Residential

Odyssey House NSW implemented a three-month residential program in 2020-21 following a trial the previous year. Research by the University of Technology Sydney showed:

- some people were leaving the Long-term Residential Program earlier than the recommended timeframe and,
- those who left early did not achieve the same level of positive outcomes post-discharge.

Our three-month residential program incorporates more mental health support and relapse prevention.

We acknowledge many people seeking AOD treatment don't feel a 9-to-12-month program is possible due to family support needs, employment and housing obligations.

Long-term Residential

This Program continues on from Foundations of Recovery usually for a further six months.

It includes the 3 month Core recovery stage and the 3 month Senior stage, followed by a four month aftercare and transition stage living in the community, should it be required. Our programs are client-centered therefore the length of time spent in long-term residential rehabilitation differs from client to client.

This treatment continues with the model and the gains of Foundations of Recovery. It adds more in-depth groups, psychoeducation, individual counselling and life skills education as well as study, including VET courses, at Odyssey College.

All residential participants have their own individual treatment plan detailing their goals and aspirations, while also participating in the main group program and general activities such as cooking, cleaning and garden maintenance.

Participants progress through the Therapeutic Community model of care.

They take more responsibility for running the residences, provide peer support, visit friends and family and take care of personal appointments and responsibilities.



Rosa's* story

"I'm finally the best version of myself."



My life before treatment was full of trauma and addiction. I was lost, scared and very confused, I made bad choices and had very toxic relationships. I hurt my son the most and as a young adult, he begged me to get help and that's when I called Odyssey House.

I went through withdrawal in the Medical Unit over 10 days. It was scary but I got through with all the support and medical attention I was given. Next, I was transferred to the Long-term Residential Program and put into therapy groups and workshops where, once again, everyone was so supportive.

The assessment team and the therapists helped me put together a treatment plan to improve my mental health and my behaviours and that's when I began to grow. I made some bad choices along the way but was always guided by peers, staff and counsellors who wanted the

best for me. I began to develop new habits and become the person I was before all the trauma and addiction.

I began to love life again.

I made my way through the program at my own pace. When I got to the last level, level four, Odyssey helped me move into their community re-entry house. I've found a job and have begun looking for my own place to live. Even though I live a few blocks away, I'm still part of Odyssey's residential program and continue to have the support of ongoing therapy and connection with my peers in the therapeutic community.

My life has changed for the better thanks to Odyssey House and I am finally the best version of myself.

*Names and images have been changed.

Medical Team

Our Ingleburn Medical Unit specialises in treatment for those seeking detoxification and medical or non-medical withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs. The unit can accommodate up to 12 people.

Following a doctor's assessment and agreement to a tailored detoxification plan, our qualified nursing staff supervise treatment, provide 24/7 emotional support and help manage any additional complex or chronic illnesses. Individual and group activities include AOD recovery support groups, other therapies, nutrition advice and physical exercise. Treatment usually lasts seven to 10 days.

The Medical Team also provides support around Health and Mental Health needs, including supported primary care and case managed referral into specialist support.

Relapse Prevention

Our Relapse Prevention Program helps clients understand and plan for the triggers that lead to relapse. We help them develop coping strategies and a relapse prevention plan for emergencies and the long term. We also expand their understanding of the impact of their AOD use and relapse on their families and friends to return to productive functioning in the family, workplace and community.

The program includes weekly group support sessions but many use these sessions more frequently.

Individual Counselling

Individual treatment and case management provides additional support to some clients already participating in group community programs. This allows staff and clients to focus on individual goals and treatment outcomes.

Our staff provide therapeutic counselling as well as crisis support and intervention in residential and community programs, at no charge, to those who require it.

Mental Health Recovery

Mental and physical health conditions frequently go hand in hand with harms related to substance use.

More than half our clients have at least one mental health diagnosis and the Odyssey House treatment approach includes mental health and wellbeing support. Delivery is slightly different for residential and community programs.

Our Mental Health Recovery Program (MHRP) occurs over two stages and provides counselling, education and support in group and individual settings for those wishing to address issues relating to substance use as well as their mental health.

For residential clients, we offer Stage 1 whether or not they identify a mental health issue. This improves basic mental wellbeing and reduces psychological distress. Stage 2 of the MHRP provides focused support for those who have a mental health diagnosis or need.

For community clients, Stage 1 helps them develop a personalised mental health recovery plan and learn new skills. They identify triggers and negative thinking patterns and learn healthy coping strategies to manage their emotions and improve their lifestyle.

Stage 1 and 2 include weekly peer and counselling support sessions. On completion of Stage 1, our qualified psychologists and counsellors assess each client's progress to determine next steps and whether Stage 2 will be beneficial.

Stage 2 helps community-based clients better understand recovery from addiction and mental health issues. We help them learn how to build resilience and develop positive relationships and support networks.

Participants develop a mental health maintenance plan and receive weekly peer and counselling support for as long as they need it.

As with our other community programs, this one is free.

Samantha's* story

“Mental health treatment helped me quit drinking and look after myself.”

I was in a tight spot. I had been drinking for 30 years, had recently separated from my husband and had moved back in with my parents. I'd managed to stay sober for two months but I was suffering from pain, depression and anxiety. In August last year, I joined three Odyssey House community programs—Mental Health Recovery, Alcohol and Other Drugs Recovery and SMART Recovery, all online due to the pandemic.

By September I'd been sober for three months. I applied to Odyssey House's residential rehabilitation program and was admitted to their Medical Unit to begin my recovery journey. When I became anxious and had panic attacks, I was transferred to the Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre unit at Campbelltown Hospital. They reviewed my case and my medication and transferred me to Northside Clinic, a mental health hospital, where I stayed for three weeks.

I continued attending Odyssey's two recovery groups during hospitalisation and after I returned home. Despite initial improvement, my depression got so bad I started thinking about dying. Then I drank a bottle of wine.

An Odyssey House psychologist arranged to give

me one-on-one counselling through the Individual Counselling Program for as long as I needed it, to supplement group therapy. After rapid improvement over several months, I left all three programs in early 2021.

My wellbeing didn't last and by April I was drinking a bottle of vodka every day. I once again re-engaged with Odyssey's Mental Health Recovery group and with their psychologist, who advised me to have my medication formally reviewed again and to consider disability support and work options. I quit drinking and smoking and my mood and pain levels improved significantly throughout July, when I felt I no longer needed treatment and support.

My mental health has been stable for several months and I have a job I enjoy. The Odyssey House psychologist monitors me through regular wellbeing checks and I know what to do if my mental health begins to slide.

Odyssey House is just wonderful and has helped me so much.

*Names and images have been changed.



Odyssey College

Education is key to lasting recovery from substance use.

As part of each residential client's treatment program, we teach relevant subjects to help them transition to a new life at home, at work and beyond the Odyssey House NSW therapeutic community.

Odyssey College, on two campuses at Eagle Vale and Ingleburn in South West Sydney, is registered with the Department of Education and provides general and vocational courses certified by the NSW Education Standards Authority. The College has eight members of staff and provides free adult education appropriate to clients' needs and interests and relevant to employment.

Each residential client studies a balanced combination of subjects including Industrial Technology, Visual Arts, PDHPE, Mathematics and English. Vocational training includes Traffic Control, Forklift Driving and White Card certification (Prepare to Work Safely in the Construction Industry CPCCWHS1001). Over the past year, these were available over the school holidays.

Additional staff and improved amenities provided a more balanced learning experience, along with state-of-the-art technology and learning facilities. More learning spaces and a greater variety of subjects helped keep class sizes small, enabling a more personalised learning experience. Clients are eagerly anticipating completion of a new covered outdoor learning area and gymnasium, which promise to enhance every resident's rehabilitation experience.

Staff at the College also expanded and re-wrote the curriculum to improve its relevance to clients. A financial literacy course was introduced to help clients develop the ability to manage their finances. Online qualifications, including Certificate and Diploma courses, were introduced for residents following completion of core studies.

Odyssey College's curriculum will soon include a Certificate II in Hospitality, to enable every client to more ably contribute to the therapeutic community of 100 or so residents, and leave with qualifications that could lead to a fulfilling career. We are working on a targeted approach to vocational training to enable successful transitions back into the workforce.

The invaluable support of the Odyssey House NSW Executive, School Advisory Committee and Board has allowed Odyssey College to make a rich contribution to many residents' healing journeys.



Odyssey College highlights for the 2020 school year

- Administered 129 Wide Range Assessment Tests to determine student entry levels for educational programs.
- Began a program to improve technology and provide more classrooms, a gymnasium and outdoor learning spaces including basketball courts and a covered learning area.
- Developed the vocational program to help students participate in short and long-term courses and gain employment.
- Introduced Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.
- Mean student attendance at the College was 63 days.
- Students were an average of 36 years old and 70 per cent male.

Find out more in the 2020 Odyssey College Annual Report on the Odyssey House NSW website.



Dalton's* story

"Odyssey College helped me look to the future."

I'm thankful to have been given the opportunity to recover from cocaine and alcohol use, at the same time as studying at Odyssey College.

The College has been a huge part of helping me move past addiction and has given me confidence to move forward in my life.

I used cocaine and alcohol since I was 15, when it seemed to help me cope with low self-esteem, until my late 50's when I felt overwhelmed with work. My children were grown up and I was living with my partner in our own home, so I tried detox but it didn't work. I relied on drugs just to keep going. I thought I was high-functioning but along the way I became involved with the Courts.

Last year I lost control of my life.

My lawyer and my sister both recommended Odyssey

House and I entered their Long-term Residential Program. I completed the four levels of recovery in just over a year, while I learned about financial management and fitness at Odyssey College.

At first it was intimidating. I hadn't studied for a long time and didn't think I needed education, but soon realised it was worthwhile. I learnt how to write a resume, create a budget, and to manage my money, superannuation and tax. My dream is to become a personal trainer so I'm now completing a certificate course in Fitness. Studying has helped improve my focus and clear up my mental state.

Odyssey staff helped me mentally, financially and spiritually. One of the worst things about my life has led to one of the best.

*Names have been changed.

A photograph of a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a denim jacket, smiling warmly at a baby she is holding. A young boy with glasses is visible in the background, looking towards the camera. The scene conveys a sense of family and support.

Reconnecting Families

“I am grateful for the free support and connecting with other people, it makes me feel less alone in my recovery.”

- Community Programs client, July 2020

Reconnecting families

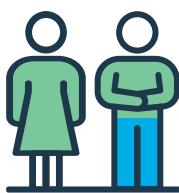
Family life can be challenging for children living with the adverse effects of one or both parents' use of alcohol and/or other drugs.

There may be high levels of disruption, psychological or emotional neglect, violence and other challenges to children's normal development.

Odyssey House NSW has a suite of programs for parents and families which address these harms and provide treatment and lasting change.

In 2020-21 Odyssey House NSW:

Treated **183** parents through our Reconnecting Families Suite of Services



Treated **16** families and **18** children through the Parent's and Children's Program



Helped **49** clients through the Bringing Up Great Kids Program

Finalised planning to **DOUBLE** family accommodation and capacity for the residential Parent's and Children's Program

Reconnecting Families Suite of Services

- **Bringing Up Great Kids:** our targeted parenting intervention program delivered online and in person
- **Parents in Contact:** support for parents not living with their children during residential treatment
- **Parent's and Children's Program:** our Long-term Residential Program for parents maintaining care of their children during recovery. We have also worked in close partnership with Family Drug Support (FDS) for many years. FDS provides information, advice, counselling, tools and training to the friends and families of our residential clients on site, and through our community hubs across Greater Sydney and elsewhere.

Our family services help clients develop a safe home and effective parenting skills to raise happy, resilient children who engage positively in our communities.



Bringing Up Great Kids

This six-week program is our targeted intervention to break the cycle of mental health issues and other harms relating to substance use, from one generation to the next.

The six-week course is delivered over two hours each week. It's face-to-face and/or online, facilitated by trained counsellors and supported by tools, workbooks and personalised action plans. As with all of our community programs, this one is free.

Participants learn about the origins of their own parenting style and how it can be more effective. They learn about children's brain development, how to deliver key messages for effective parenting and techniques to overcome parenting challenges to develop resilience and self-esteem in a child.

We also provide information about how parents can look after their own wellbeing, develop support networks and gain access to those available locally. The program is particularly important for those engaged with the Department of Communities and Justice as it decreases the risk of children's removal from their parents to out-of-home care.

Bringing Up Great Kids helps parents establish positive parenting habits and community connections, while improving family wellbeing.

Parents in Contact

This program provides family support for residential clients not living with their children during treatment.

Parents in Contact provides a range of supports as parents may still have full custody of their children and see them on family and visit days, before completing treatment and returning home to their children. Others may have lost custody or not seen their children for a long time or perhaps only through supervised visits.

This program includes general parenting education as well as assistance with Department of Communities and Justice, Family Court and other family related matters.

Parent's and Children's Programs

This is one of just a few long-term Australian residential services in which couples and individual parents of any gender can receive treatment for harms associated with AOD use, while maintaining care of their dependent children aged under 12 years in a safe learning environment that enables positive and lasting change.

Some parents enter the Residential Program initially without their dependent children to focus solely on the early part of their recovery, with a 'dual track' approach of AOD treatment and parenting support. The program addresses the mental, social and economic harms and family relationship issues that often go with substance use.

If a child is restored to the parent/s during treatment, the family moves into the Parent's and Children's Program and dedicated family accommodation. Their AOD treatment continues alongside family and parenting support, education and on-site guidance to help them learn to develop a safe home environment and raise happy, healthy children.

Whether parents enter from the main program or directly into the Parent's and Children's Program, they receive guidance from family support workers and participate in group therapy, Positive Parenting and Circle of Security training. Children attend early childhood centres or primary school in the local area and receive psychological, paediatric and specialist support to meet age-appropriate social and motor skill milestones.

We are immensely proud of this program, and the parents who graduate from it to return to their communities. They and their children experience significant personal growth during this challenging and complex treatment, which often takes more than a year.





Gabriella's* story

“I learnt parenting skills and used cultural values to reunite my family.”



I grew up in regional New South Wales, the third eldest in a family of 12. My parents were strict and, as Aboriginal people, we were taught to respect our elders and live by family values.

We also used illegal drugs. At the age of 23, I began using ice (methamphetamine) socially and giving it to my parents as a gift. I saw it as a way of helping my family. I held this belief after leaving home and having children of my own. A few years ago, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) took my children and put them in my parents' custody.

In 2018, the DCJ referred me to Odyssey House's group educational programs. I was enrolled in the Bringing Up Great Kids parenting program to learn new coping skills and positive communication styles to use with my children. I became aware of the negative impact of my drug use and poor mental health on my parenting and my children alike.

Over the following year, I became withdrawn and depressed.

In 2019 I was diagnosed with postnatal stress disorder.

I cut some people out of my day-to-day life to make lasting changes and get my kids back and recently completed a nine-month residential rehabilitation program in regional NSW.

I also re-engaged with Odyssey House and the **Bringing Up Great Kids program**. It was helpful and supportive and reminded me how to look after myself and my children.

This program helped me align my personal and cultural values with my parenting responsibilities and, best of all, the DCJ is now in favour of restoring my children to me.

*Names and images have been changed.

We're doubling residential capacity for family treatment

Building big dreams

The social and economic impacts of alcohol and other drugs use are related but not limited to healthcare, pain and suffering, loss of life, reduced quality of life for individuals and their families, child maltreatment and protection, harm reduction, and premature mortality.

We're helping families reconnect through our Long-term Residential program, so treatment doesn't trigger family separation and further challenges for parents, children and extended families.

Funding

We have received commitments of a \$1m private donation followed by \$3.25m from the Commonwealth and NSW State Governments to build new family accommodation. This will double capacity of the Parent's and Children's Program as there is large unmet need for this specialised residential treatment.

We require a further **\$1,000,000** to complete construction of the \$4.8m project, plus additional operational funds.

Project management

In July 2020, we appointed APP Corporation Pty Limited, an integrated property and infrastructure consultancy offering services across all phases of the capital investment lifecycle from strategy, definition, planning and delivery to transition.

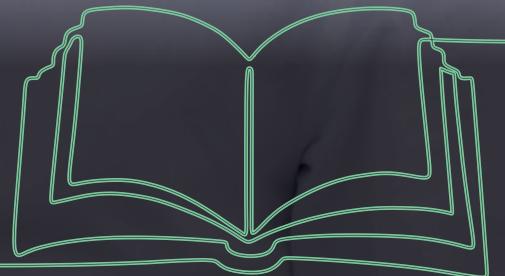
Our partly pro-bono partnership will ensure funding generates exceptional value.



A close-up photograph of a man with a shaved head holding a young child. The child, wearing a light blue shirt, is smiling broadly with their arms wrapped around the man's neck. The man is also smiling. They are outdoors with greenery in the background.

Zayn's* story

Feeling loved and safe with Daddy



At the age of one, Zayn went to his aunt's while his father got help from Odyssey House through the Long-term Residential Program.

His son was his biggest motivation for change.

Zayn regularly visited his father at Odyssey House and, with support from the Department of Communities and Justice, came to live with him in the family accommodation for the Parent's and Children's Program.

Zayn goes to daycare with his friends from Odyssey while his father attends counselling, group therapy and parenting sessions as part of his treatment program. He

also takes Zayn to speech therapy to get him on track for age-appropriate development milestones.

Zayn can now sing his ABC's!

We can see the parenting programs here are helping Zayn's father better understand his son and his needs.

Their favourite time is playing on weekends. They play outdoors, go to the park or play under the sprinkler and spend quality time connecting. We can see Zayn feels loved and safe at home with his Daddy now.

*Names and images have been changed.

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair and a denim jacket, smiling warmly at the camera. In the blurred background, a young boy with curly hair is visible, looking down. The lighting is soft and natural.

Ariel's* story

"My parenting odyssey."

My childhood was painful, and as an adult I numbed it all with drugs and alcohol.

I kept using drugs after I had children—I know it compromised their safety—and I became increasingly unwell and emotionally disconnected.

Several years ago, my children were removed from me and put into care. I dreamt of a life of sobriety, with my children. In 2020, I entered the Odyssey House NSW Residential Rehabilitation Program.

Treatment at Odyssey House is thorough and as I delved into my past, I became aware of how my behaviours and addiction had affected me and my children. I seized the opportunity to identify and address the issues underlying my reliance on drugs before stepping back into parenting, and staff were supportive. I learnt new skills and new habits and realigned my values.

After four months of hard work and determination, staff helped me submit a Section 90 application to the Courts,

so my daughter could return to my care. I was overjoyed when it was successful.

I transferred into the Parent's and Children's Program with my daughter. We continued to develop a strong connection. Alongside my rehabilitation program commitments during the day, I also enhanced my positive parenting skills and became the parent I wanted to be.

I've now completed the Parent's and Children's Program and will soon graduate. My daughter and I love being creative and exploring our environment. My son has continued to live with his father, and we have maintained a healthy co-parenting relationship.

The Parent's and Children's Program brought my daughter back into my life and helped me develop healthier relationships with my son and his father.

I'm thankful for all the support I received to become a confident parent and discover myself again.

*Names have been changed.



Reconnecting Communities

“Positively connecting to communities leads to improved collaborations, strong enduring relationships to support those who need it most.”

- Julie Babineau, CEO Odyssey House NSW

Reconnecting Communities

Harms related to substance use extend beyond the individual and their family to the whole community.

The most obvious harms are crimes such as drink and drug driving, theft and assault. Others range from relationship breakdown, loss of employment or productivity to the loss of community participation. While not all substance use leads to offences such as these, our treatments help reduce adverse community impacts.

We work closely with the criminal justice system to support diversion, treatment and intervention.

Odyssey House NSW is particularly focused on supporting communities through the NSW CDAT Program. This Program helps individuals and communities prevent the uptake of alcohol and other drugs through local activities, engagement and support.

We help communities repair and prevent impacts relating to harmful use of alcohol and other drugs.

Mingu Yabun means '*spiritual speaking and sharing*'.

Formed more than 17 years ago, the group provides proactive care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients to help them complete Odyssey's residential and community-based treatment programs.

"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."

- Residential client, 2021



In 2020-21 Odyssey House NSW:

Provided community-based programs to
19% more people than last year



Maintained program delivery as an essential service throughout the pandemic



Began our leadership role to support **more than 60** NSW Community Drug Action Teams

Treated **84** people through the Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment Program

Delivered
19 programs



Created the **1st Mingu Yabun Train-the-Trainer AOD Program Facilitator Staff Guide** to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients

Mingu Yabun

Weekly sessions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients reduce the impact of isolation and trauma.

The group helps connect and reconnect clients with their culture and build self-esteem while they receive treatment for harms related to substance use. In 2020-21, approximately 11 per cent of all Odyssey House NSW clients identified as Aboriginal.

Members develop new interpersonal skills and enrich their recovery through yarning, narrative therapy, storytelling, art and craft, Dreamtime Stories, Dadirri (deep listening and contemplation) and Smoking Ceremonies.

Odyssey House NSW currently has six Aboriginal staff (6 per cent of total staff) including three Aboriginal identified positions. Mingu Yabun is supported by Odyssey's Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Wiradjuri woman Leonie Murdoch, who has been running the program for almost 15 years.

Residential clients are also supported by local elders through Memorandums of Understanding with both the Tharawal and Illawarra Aboriginal Corporations.

The program is delivered to clients online as well as face to face.

It is also being delivered as an outreach program to a range of Aboriginal and other organisations across Sydney such as Nelly's Healing Centre, Kooricare, Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation and the Wayside Chapel.

Mingu Yabun has become an integral part of the Odyssey House NSW program and one that is highly valued.

MERIT

The Magistrate's Early Referral Into Treatment Program (MERIT) provides the opportunity of rehabilitation for those appearing in the Local Court on matters relating to their harms related to substance use.

MERIT allows Magistrates to adjourn hearings for 12 weeks, the duration of Odyssey's Short-term Residential Program.

In addition to dedicated beds in the Residential Programs, we case manage clients in the MERIT program at Waverley Court in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs. The MERIT team works with the court and other support services whether clients are in community or residential programs.

In 2020-21, Waverley MERIT referred 113 people to Odyssey House NSW for review, resulting in our assessment of 109 people. Of these, 84 were found suitable and received the Magistrate's endorsement to participate in the MERIT Program. Over the past year, 81 per cent of these clients completed the Program, up from 69 per cent in 2019-20.

Odyssey House NSW MERIT clients reported a 100 per cent satisfaction rating, above the average of 97 per cent for NSW.



Our work

Dreamtime Stories

Stories help us heal and connect back to culture. Mingu Yabun's strong focus on Dreamtime Stories provides a way for us to talk about creation, lore, law, behaviour, family relationships and our relationship to the land. These stories are timeless and just as relevant in our lives today as they were to our ancestors.

Group members learn the significance and meaning of each story and explore what it means to them and how that might relate to their lives and their journey of recovery.

Dadirri

Dadirri is deep listening—our version of meditation, reflection and contemplation. We use Dadirri as part of our healing journey to help manage separation, isolation, trauma, grief. We all need time out for contemplation.

Smoking Ceremony

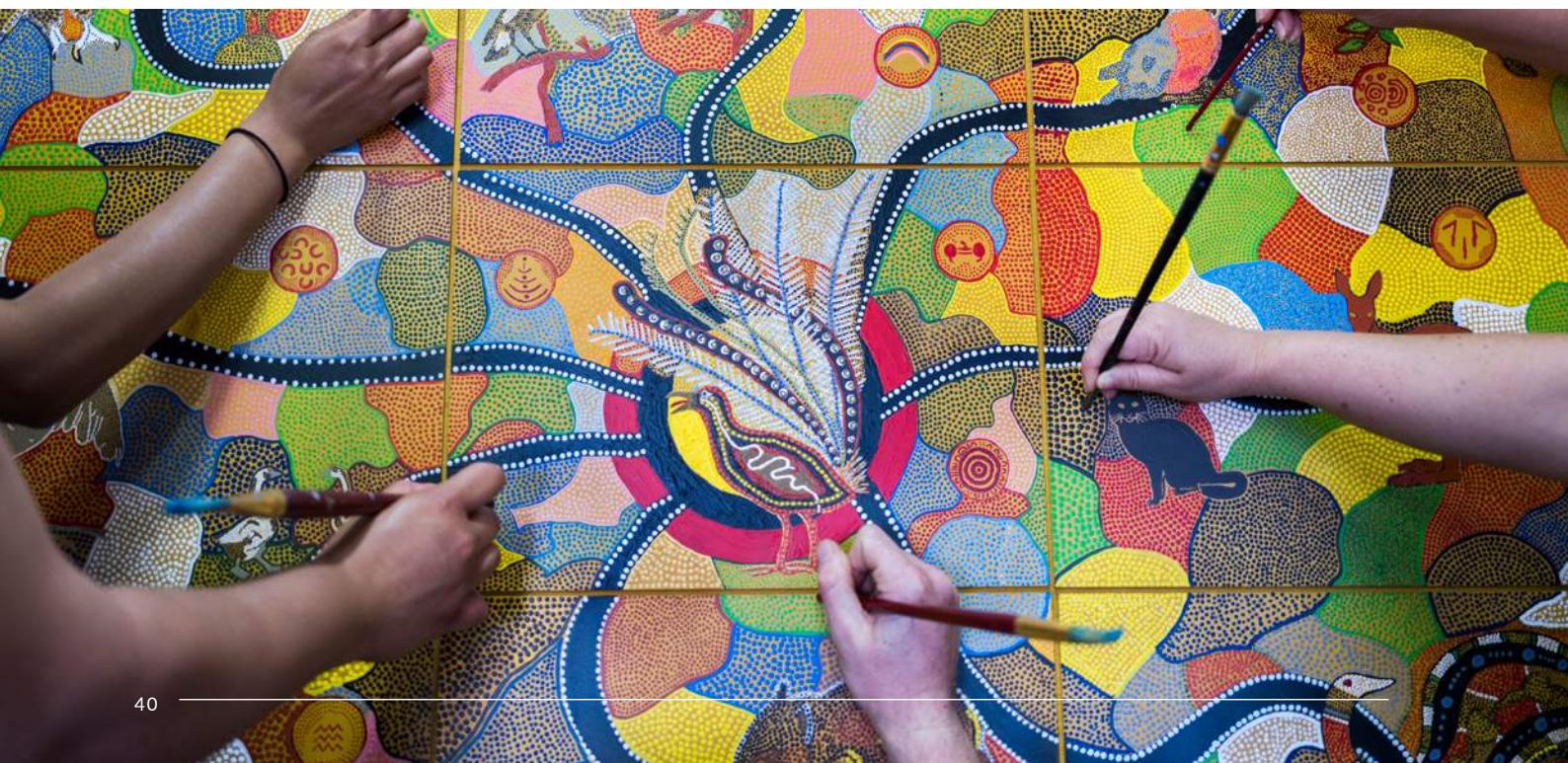
Aboriginal People still use a Smoking Ceremony for healing today. It's about looking after ourselves and connecting back to culture and community.

COVID-19 IMPACTS

Pandemic restrictions, including lockdowns, prevented the Mingu Yabun group from connecting to local Aboriginal community groups through workshops and cultural events which were postponed over the past year.

Achievements this year

- Hired three new Aboriginal members of staff.
- Continued our alliance with Gamarada Universal Indigenous Resources to leverage opportunities for continuous development.
- Completed our third large group artwork, Lyrebird Dreaming, through the Campbelltown Community Programs hub.
- Created a 90-second mini film about Mingu Yabun.
- Began the last Odyssey House Staff Development Day with an Acknowledgement and Smoking Ceremony.
- Acquired cultural resources for arts and crafts, groups and workshops—emu eggs, clap sticks, message sticks, boomerangs, didgeridoos and bullroarers.





Louise's* story

“Mingu Yabun helped put the pieces of my life together.”



I entered Odyssey's residential rehabilitation a few years ago 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 because I needed to sort my life out.

My grandfather was part of the Stolen Generation but we never spoke about it at home. On admission to Odyssey House, the assessment team put me in touch with their Aboriginal Liaison Officer.

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. However, my grandfather's name had been changed and I'm really 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.

After 18 months, I graduated from residential rehabilitation and moved to my sister's place outside Sydney. For another six months, I maintained one-on-one counselling through Odyssey's community programs and did everything possible to regain custody of my son. Sadly that didn't happen, as it was felt he'd been with his new family too long. But I did find a new way of living. I found a job in real estate, a house and a new partner. We'll do up our investment property at Christmas and rent it out next year.

I've had a lot of heartbreak and learnt a lot of lessons, particularly around losing my children. I thoroughly enjoyed my recovery journey and found a piece of me that was missing—I'll always be grateful to Odyssey for that.

*Names have been changed.

NSW Community Drug Action Teams

We're supporting 60 Community Drug Action Teams throughout NSW.

Last year, NSW Health appointed a new consortium, led by Odyssey House NSW, to support NSW Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs). Volunteers form teams who develop and run tailored activities to reduce uptake of alcohol and other drugs and reduce harms related to their use in their local area.

Since January 2021, we have led the Community, Engagement and Connection Consortium to provide grass-roots CDAT activities through our partners across NSW:

- The Butterly in Northern NSW, Mid North Coast and New England areas
- Karralika Programs in Shoalhaven, Southern NSW and Murrumbidgee
- Bila Muuji Aboriginal Corporation Health Services Incorporated in Western and Far Western NSW
- Odyssey House in the Central Coast, Hunter Region, Greater Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains and Northern Illawarra.

Teams are also supported through collaboration with government and non-government partners in their area. We're excited to leverage our infrastructure and expertise for this great program.



What's Your Plan? Condobolin CDAT works with publicans and their staff to discourage patrons' drink driving. Taxis and public transport aren't an option for this remote community and road safety had become a community concern. This CDAT gives staff t-shirts to licensed venues in their area to promote the 'What's Your Plan' campaign.

Our leadership role

As program leaders, Odyssey House NSW provides guidance and helps consortia partners sustain motivation, innovation, communication and activity amongst all NSW Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs). Involvement in this program supports our own strategic goals to build scale, align and sustain our resources, and develop our workforce.

In January, we carried out a survey to ask how we could best help each team immediately and to confirm communication preferences. We have since provided funding to several CDATs and supported employment of Community Development Officers for each region.

The team aims to reactivate another 13 CDATs and recruit additional teams to build the CDAT footprint to 80 teams across NSW in the next few years.

Our partnership role

Each of the four consortia partners have supervisors who work with their Community Development Officers and regional CDATs. These Officers bring a range of experience to the Program and are complemented by the collective expertise of consortia partners.

CDATs received funding for a range of activities and collateral including, but not limited to, secondary supply, information about safe partying and the development of pop-up health promotion booths.

Consortia partners and Community Development Officers meet face to face when possible given the pandemic, and online to share their vision for the program, devise plans to work together and support CDATs. This provides insight into local issues, opportunities, information and activities that increase communities' understanding and awareness while also disrupting the cycle of AOD harm.

Community-led change

Over the past 20 years, CDATs have led thousands of activities to provide local support and change outcomes for individuals, families, groups and communities. During this time CDATs have embraced the approach of 'from little things big things grow'. It never ceases to amaze us how CDATs do this, no matter what challenges are thrown their way, especially throughout the pandemic.

CDATs are well practised at engaging communities face-to-face. When the pandemic precluded this, they still provided vital harm minimisation information. After rethinking how they would meaningfully maintain engagement, one CDAT saw the value of a humble fridge magnet to provide factual, reliable and usable information to put the pieces of harm minimisation together.

With more than 60 CDATs in similar situations, this concept was shared across the program, resulting in six other CDATs adopting the concept and adapting the information for their communities.

Program Objectives

- Build strong partnerships, engagement and participation among community members, local service providers, government and non-government organisations across a range of sectors.
- Identify legal and illegal drug and alcohol related problems in local communities.
- Increase community knowledge and awareness of social, health and wellbeing harms related to alcohol and other drug use.
- Develop local initiatives to reduce uptake of illicit drugs and the misuse of alcohol and other drugs.
- Collaborate to identify, prioritise and address local issues relating to alcohol and other drug use.

NSW CDATs have received funding for activities to develop local partnerships and open up local conversations.



"The CDAT slogan 'We're Stronger Together' remains as true as ever. The passion and dedication of hundreds of volunteers across NSW has sustained the CDAT program for more than 20 years.

On behalf of NSW Health and throughout our coming three-year contract, we will work hard to minimise risks and increase protective factors among 80 communities in collaboration with our consortia partners and volunteers.

We look forward to strengthening their activities and providing them with opportunities for confident, incidental, accidental and purposeful conversations to reduce and prevent harmful use of alcohol and drugs in their communities."

- Gail Easton, CDAT Program Manager.



Tamworth CDAT helped increase awareness about the impacts of drinking while pregnant.

Therapeutic Community treatment model

Each year, hundreds of residential clients receive treatment and support within the Odyssey House Therapeutic Community across two campuses at Eagle Vale and Ingleburn in South West Sydney.

This provides the environment, structure and support for life experiences that help clients learn, grow, and recover.

"I made some bad choices during recovery but was always guided by peers, staff and counsellors who wanted the best for me. I began to develop new habits and become the person I was before all the trauma and addiction. I began to love life again."

- Residential client, 2021

Residential clients stay for many months, sometimes more than a year, and receive individual counselling, group therapy, structured education and support. They also work alongside staff to manage and operate the facility, contribute to the community and develop new skills and behaviours in a safe learning environment where change can occur.

Our Eagle Vale and Ingleburn residential sites have all the elements of a home, school and business and the facilities and activities that go with them.

According to the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association, of which Odyssey House NSW is a member, a therapeutic community has a focus on social, psychological and behavioural dimensions of substance use, with the community being key in helping to heal individuals emotionally and support the development of behaviours, attitudes and values of healthy living.

The model provides a structured system with graded levels of responsibility for residents as they move through the program. On arrival they are only asked to take responsibility for themselves. They are assigned a 'buddy' and as their emotional, physical and mental health improves they are able to begin the change process and eventually help others within the program and beyond.

Alongside formal, structured individual and group treatment and support our clients also learn through shared experiences. These relate to all aspects of healthy living such as cooking, cleaning, laundry and office work, maintenance and grounds management, decision-making, problem-solving, reaching out, empathising, leisure, relaxation, helping and teaching.

Odyssey House residents come with a range of experiences, skills, educational backgrounds and contexts. Some have owned their own business or have university degrees and others have not worked or experienced the responsibilities that go with that and need to develop social and organisational skills and be given opportunities to take responsibility.

Whatever their background, taking on roles and responsibilities in the Therapeutic Community and supporting others in their recovery is an amazing experience with lifelong benefits.

"Odyssey staff helped me mentally, financially and spiritually. One of the worst things about my life has led to one of the best."

- Residential client, 2021

This information is a précis of findings by De Leon G. (2000). *The Therapeutic Community: Theory, Model, and Method*. New York, Springer Publishing Company.

Living our values

Professionalism

Creativity

Respect

Integrity

Governance

Our governance framework helps us deliver safe, high-quality clinical care.

The responsibilities and policies endorsed by the Board and executive management provide strategic direction, ensure we provide high-quality clinical care and education and manage risks and resources responsibly, ethically and transparently.

Good governance is central to both corporate and clinical processes. The key pillars of effective governance at Odyssey House NSW are transparency, accountability and security. These factors are essential in establishing professional relationships with all stakeholders, including the Board, employees, community, clients and funding bodies. Effective management of these systems provides a sense of safety for our staff, clients and the communities in which we operate.

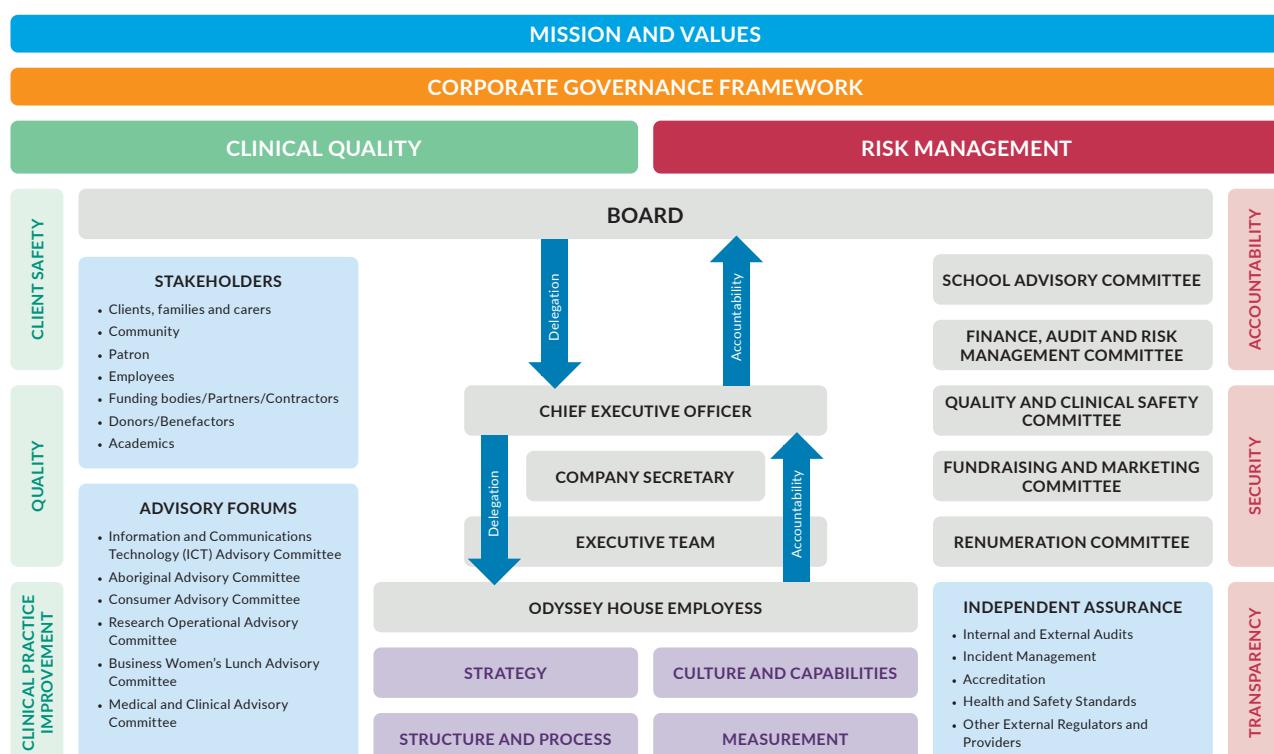
Appropriate governance, clinical quality and work safety systems ensure performance monitoring and continuous improvement of client care.

Compliance and risk

Odyssey House NSW has embedded compliance and risk management checks and processes into all aspects of strategic, organisational and operational activities. These include mechanisms to report on and escalate risks to the Executive Team, the Board and its sub-committees responsible for finance, audit and risk, quality and clinical safety and Odyssey College.

We regularly review policies and our policy framework to ensure accreditation and legislative compliance. In March 2021, the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards carried out a Periodic Review and subsequently approved ongoing accreditation for Odyssey House NSW.

Odyssey House NSW Governance Framework



Board of Directors



Douglas Snedden AO *Chairman*

Douglas Snedden has been Chairman of Odyssey House NSW since October 2011.

Formerly Managing Director of Accenture, he is also Chairman of Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, director of OFX Ltd and a member of the National Library of Australia Council.



Julie Babineau

Julie Babineau has held leadership positions in the health and community services sectors in Australia and Canada.

She has a wealth of experience in policy, planning and strategy as well as an extensive knowledge of the health sector in relation to populations in need.



Christine Bishop

Christine Bishop spent 25 years in legal practice, then eight years with the Department of Juvenile Justice as a psychologist specialising in AOD issues with young people.

She has an interest in pathways to recovery that balance medical, legal, and social issues so clients leave treatment with skills to lead pro-social and productive lives.



John Coughlan

After eight years in chartered accounting, John Coughlan enjoyed a 25-year career as Chief Executive in the thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing industries in NSW and Queensland.



Professor Michael Farrell

Professor Michael Farrell is the Director of the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) at the University of New South Wales, Sydney NSW and Faculty Theme Lead of Mental Health, Neuroscience, Ageing and Addictions, UNSW Medicine.

Prior to his appointment at UNSW, Professor Farrell was a Professor of Addiction Psychiatry at Kings College London.



Stewart Hindmarsh

Stewart Hindmarsh is Chief Executive Officer of retirement living business Hindmarsh Retirement.

Prior to this, Stewart was Chief Executive Officer of World Nomads Group, a leading global provider of travel insurance now owned by private health insurer nib, and a director at investment bank Grant Samuel.



Valerie Hoogstad

Valerie Hoogstad has lectured in communication studies and international education at several universities and is currently at Sydney University. She has written sixteen related textbooks. She was the director for International Education at Australian Catholic University.

Valerie is deputy Chair of the Centre for Volunteering NSW and is on the Board of Together for Humanity and Gateway International College.



Dr Debra Kelliher

Debra Kelliher's career in education has spanned more than twenty-five years.

She has a Doctorate in Education from the University of New England and a Master of Arts with First Class Honours from Auckland University.

Debra's doctorate examined effective ways to increase girls' leadership capacity in schools. Debra currently facilitates courses in leadership for women.



David McGrath

David McGrath runs his own independent consultancy business and advises governments and non-government organisations on areas of social policy.

He was previously Director of Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Programs at NSW Health for nine years and was the COO on the NSW Special Commission into the drug 'Ice'.



Susanne Taylor

Susanne Taylor has over 25 years' experience as a communication specialist in Australia, south-east Asia and the UK.

She has held senior communication and public affairs roles at various state agencies in Queensland and NSW.



Garry Wayling

Garry Wayling is a Chartered Accountant. He was an Audit Partner at Arthur Andersen and then Ernst & Young Australia. Garry is an experienced independent director of ASX-listed companies.

He is currently the Executive Director of the Australian Olympic Foundation Ltd.



Judge Peter Johnson

Peter Johnstone is President of the Children's Court of NSW.

In that role he has promoted and expanded community services and resources to assist disadvantaged families and children at risk across NSW.

Art in therapy

Helping clients reconnect with the world.

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 a subject accredited by the NSW Education Standards Authority and in the past year Odyssey College delivered regular classes in art, woodwork and ceramics for residential 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 they usually create three artworks during treatment

“What we are offered here, particularly Visual Art and the different approach to therapy, makes the whole experience unique and special. It helps so many people.”

- Odyssey College student, July 2021





Obi's* story

“Art in therapy led me from darkness to a world of colour.”



In 2019, the suicide prevention team in NSW Health's Seasons Program referred me to Odyssey House.

I was living with my ex-partner and using cocaine and alcohol despite their extremely bad impact on my life.

I entered Odyssey House's Long-term Residential Program and stayed for a year and a half. I had daily counselling, group therapy and regular case reviews and signed up for Visual Arts onsite at Odyssey College.

I discovered new techniques and art tools, developed my creativity and learnt to express myself and process my emotions.

With art in therapy re-igniting my passion for creativity,

Odyssey staff helped me enrol in a Diploma of Social Media and Marketing elsewhere.

I want to finish my Diploma and get involved in graphic or hair design, or possibly tattooing. My dream is to buy a property and give back to the community.

Visual art is a different approach to therapy and makes the whole experience unique and special. It helps so many people. In addiction I lost my creativity, my passion for art and the ability to use art as therapy and I'm glad they're all back now. It's been a huge part of my therapy at Odyssey House.

*Names have been changed.

“My AOD counsellor has been very effective for me. Before I met him I didn’t think AOD counselling could help me much. Rehab never really offered the overall holistic approach to understand and control my drug use patterns either. But working with support from my counsellor offered me what these two general services have failed to offer in past attempts.

I have been able to get to the bottom of what has contributed to my life stresses and to get and maintain control of them. I am currently enjoying a lifestyle free from the bondages of drug addiction.”

“Constantly witnessing little miracles. So thankful.”

“I really enjoy these groups and try to make them every week. I love that we can do these groups via Zoom and it makes me feel more comfortable as I’m doing them from my home and a lot more accessible being a busy single mother of a child with special needs.”

“I don’t know where you found my counsellor but I wish I found her a long time ago. She’s done more for me than anyone else has ever done. She listens to me and gives me advice like a regular person and not like a walking, talking textbook. I’m forever grateful that she’s a part of your organisation.”



**ODYSSEY HOUSE
NEW SOUTH WALES**

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