

Welcome to our new

Family Recovery Centre



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Message from the CEO

It was incredible to finally open our Family Recovery Centre!

The centre is one of the first of its kind in Australia and around the world, helping parents who wish to address their substance use while their children remain in their care, who also receive therapeutic supports.

It takes a team to build a village, and we have done it! Special thanks to our partners The APP Group, TCQ Construction, Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects who supported the build.

Your support has allowed us to improve the lives of families who come into our care.

In March we celebrated our social workers on World Social Work Day. This year's theme was 'Respecting diversity through joint social action'.

It gave us a time to reflect on all the hard work and dedication of our valued team. In this newsletter, you'll

read interviews with three of our frontline staff from different parts of the organisation.

A big change is coming...

I have made the very difficult decision to retire in July 2023. This has not been an easy decision to say the least.

I started at Odyssey in March 2016 and seven years later I feel incredibly proud of the achievements of the organisation.

We support more clients than ever before through a range of purposeful programs, we have excellent corporate and clinical governance frameworks, and we have a talented Executive and leadership team who will continue to take the organisation forward. There is much to be proud of and I look forward to celebrating our achievements over the next few months.

I have learned so much and been fortunate to work alongside a great board and executive team and lead



an organisation where every team member gives hope and help to our clients and their loved ones through their recovery journeys.

Thank you for your continued support of Odyssey House NSW.

Julie Babineau, CEO
Odyssey House NSW



ODYSSEY HOUSE

NEW SOUTH WALES

*Reconnecting lives,
families and communities*

WE HAVE A NEW LOOK!

You may notice something a little different about Odyssey House NSW's image - we've updated our logo!

The new logo is part of the ongoing evolution of our organisation. The change came after extensive stakeholder engagement over the past 18 months.

It represents the continuous circle of support we provide our clients in their recovery journeys.

The first Odyssey House opened in New York in the United States in 1966 as a residential rehabilitation program for people with a drug and/or alcohol addiction.

The name was derived from 'Homer's Odyssey'. It follows Odysseus' attempts to return home after the decade-long Trojan War, despite the anger of Poseidon and other forces that delayed his homecoming by a decade.

Odyssey has come to mean a long, arduous journey marked by many changes in fortune.

For our clients, the journey is rarely easy as they are challenged to confront their behaviours so they can grow and develop. And as they take steps, our team wraps around them to provide the holistic supports they need to become their best possible selves.

Official opening: Family Recovery Centre

The new Odyssey Family Recovery Centre provides a home environment where parents can maintain care of their young children during their recovery while we help them develop skills to establish and manage a safe and healthy family.

The Family Recovery Centre is one of a handful of rehabilitation centres in Australia that allows single fathers, mothers and couples, including pregnant women to undertake treatment while their children (0-12 years) live with them.

Our CEO Julie Babineau officially opened the centre, and was joined by our board, Federal MP Emma McBride, former NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard, and other dignitaries.

Ms Babineau said there was already an extensive waiting list of clients.

"It's been quite a journey to get here, but we are so excited to be welcoming our first families," she said. "It's so important to keep families together, if possible, while parents take the challenging journey of learning to live without drugs or alcohol."

"Australian research tells us when families stay together, clients are far more motivated to complete treatment, and children can stay where they belong - with their parents."

Former Minister Hazzard said, *"For more than 45 years Odyssey has been a valuable provider of rehabilitation services for people dealing with the challenges of alcohol and other drug use, and this new \$4.5 million centre will provide vital support to those in need, and their loved ones."*



Our CEO Julie Babineau officially opened the centre, and was joined by our board and local MPs.

Former NSW Health Minister Hazzard recognises the "vital support" our Family Recovery Centre provides.



Supporter Profile: B2C Furniture

A big thank you to B2C Furniture who donated items to help us make the new Odyssey Family Recovery Centre a welcoming home with comfortable furnishings for residents.

B2C donated dining tables, chairs and coffee tables to help create purposeful and modern living and dining areas. These are essential spaces for families to socialise and do activities that they've learnt from the program. B2C's bedside tables cater to the design of the rooms as well as families' needs.

Stacey Clarke, B2C's General Manager, was pleased the furniture supported us to build a safe and

nurturing environment, crucial to the recovery process for families.

"Working alongside other businesses that make a meaningful contribution to humanity is a big passion of ours," Stacey said.

"We have loved the opportunity to work with Odyssey House on the opening of their Family Recovery Centre and thank them for their endless commitment to the Australian community."

B2C Furniture is Australia's leading home-grown e-commerce furniture store that creates affordable hardwood furniture from sustainable materials.

Parent's and Children's Program

The Odyssey Family Recovery Centre delivers the Parent's and Children's Residential Program, which for over 45 years has helped parents break the cycle of generational substance use.

The centre is one of the only rehabilitation centres in Australia that allows parents to maintain care of their children aged 0-12 while they undergo treatment.

During a client's stay we help them develop skills to establish and manage a safe and healthy family home, and keep families together. Often this is over a period of 12 months or more.

Parents learn positive parenting and life skills, and tools to support their children's mental health and wellbeing. The program caters to needs of clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including supporting First Nations clients to reconnect with their culture.

Children receive psychological, paediatric and specialist support from our dedicated staff. The program aims



to create lasting positive changes to enhance the children's physical and mental health, to repair the bond between parents and children, and to break the cycle of generational substance use.

The centre offers housing stability while parents are in treatment, as well as an exit plan to ensure a smooth transition back into the community. It avoids the need to find temporary care for children.

We are immensely proud of this program and the parents who graduate from it and return to their communities.

How our programs support people in their recovery journey

People who seek our support in their path to recovery come from all walks and stages of life.

Each person has different backgrounds, influences and needs that require a tailored approach to help them reduce and recover from their substance use.

We took time to reflect on how our trauma-informed programs and services wrap around each individual and give them timely supports when and how they need them in our residential and community programs. This graphic demonstrates how Odyssey addresses an individual's needs in their unique pathway to recovery:



We recognise that clients who use our services have a complex relationship with alcohol and/or other drugs that affects them throughout their lives. So their recovery journey could take months, years, or their whole lives.

Our qualified social workers and clinical specialists provide one-on-one and group treatment plans to help clients:

- **learn practical tools and strategies** to manage addiction and its emotional and psychological triggers
- **create and manage relapse prevention plans**
- **access therapeutic supports and interventions**
- **connect with ours and other support services**, including for housing, medical, employment, and connecting to family and culture.

In these plans, our teams help clients 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.

Programs Director David Kelly says Odyssey teams 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.” - David Kelly

Meet some of our amazing frontline workers

Tracey

Tracey has worked at Odyssey for 18 months and is currently the team leader of our residential assessment team.

Her role is to assess potential clients who are often vulnerable and have made the decision to seek recovery support and get well.



Tracey finds that being at the very start of peoples' journey to change is quite humbling.

Her hopes for the industry are to break the stigma attached to addiction. She believes we can do this by spreading positive messages; being an advocate; sharing our stories of success; encouraging others to engage, and learn about how to support others, and spreading the word that a great model of care can lead to a positive life!

Hiba

Hiba is a creative arts teacher at Odyssey College. She supports residents as students to use different art mediums to explore new interests.



She previously worked at Odyssey as a drug and alcohol counsellor for ten years before earning a Masters in Teaching.

Hiba finds that having a positive impact on the lives of others drives her passion for her work.

Thanh

Thanh has worked for Odyssey Multicultural Programs for the past six months as case manager and team leader, and for 14 years prior to that at Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre.



Thanh provides specialist support and intensive case management to people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities; in particular, people who are leaving custody or who have had contact with the criminal justice system, including community corrections and their families.

Supporting people to make meaningful and positive changes in their lives inspires and motivates Thanh.



Odyssey College

Odyssey College is the educational arm of Odyssey House, and it provides clients in the residential program with free adult education while in treatment.

They learn and develop skills they need as they rebuild their lives and pursue employment after rehabilitation.

Research shows having a career path after rehabilitation is a predictor of long-term success.

Odyssey College has two campuses in southwest Sydney and is registered with the Department of Education. It offers general and vocational courses certified by the NSW Education Standards Authority.

Throughout the year, vocational courses are offered to residential clients to help them earn qualifications as they participate in rehabilitation.

Residents can earn forklift licences, white card and traffic control courses. They also take a financial literacy course to develop their ability to manage their personal finances.

We've introduced online courses including certificate and diploma courses, to extend residents' qualifications.

Graduates of Odyssey College share how it has supported them:

"I learnt new ways to express myself and this helped me process my emotions. The class has re-ignited my creativity and passion for art, and I now use art as therapy, which I lost in addiction. I'm glad I've got it back now. Visual arts has been a huge part of my therapy at Odyssey House." - Taymarrah, residential graduate

"Amazing program. Odyssey has helped me to set real life expectations and boundaries to support my ongoing recovery journey."

- Lewis, residential graduate

Anne rebuilds her life after joining parents program



Anne* grew up in a loving family in a regional area. During her younger years, she identified as an innate helper; always there for friends, and often stepping in to 'rescue' people when they got into trouble.

Anne would see the good in people and try to help them whenever she could. As a deeply empathic person, she sometimes attracted others who needed complex care, and soon found she was mixing in circles of people who used drugs to escape their issues.

Anne struggled to define boundaries that protected her wellbeing. She had three children of her own and then also took over the care of her niece and nephew. She thought she was coping but, in reality, she wasn't. She felt that asking others for help was admitting failure. The stress of her situation caused her to become substance dependent.

For the past eight months, Anne has been living in Odyssey's residential rehabilitation, while her children are back in their home town under care. She has been building valuable skills such as emotional regulation and setting boundaries.

Anne has been engaged in our Parents in Contact program which provides parenting skill development and ensures parents have regular communication and visits with their children.

Anne says residential rehabilitation has changed her life and she is grateful for the opportunity. She would recommend to anyone who needs support for substance

dependence to get it. Looking back, she knew she had an issue but didn't realise how bad it was. Anne says she probably would not have come to Odyssey House if she hadn't been made to.

Because they lived out of Sydney, Anne's children were visiting her once a month. More recently, Anne and her children have been having overnight stays in preparation for the family living together again.

Through open and honest conversations, her children have shared how her former life had impacted them.

When Anne reflects, she thought her children were fine – they had everything they wanted in terms of material things. She now understands what they were missing was her presence and attention.

The connection Anne now has with her children is very different and she's sharing the skills she has learnt about emotional regulation and boundary-setting with them.

Anne is looking forward to leaving Odyssey House soon to be reunited as a family and begin their new life together.

**Names have been changed.*

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

Did you know...

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

who have been affected by alcohol and other drugs? Call **1800 397 739** (press option 2) for more information.

New resource: **Your Alcohol Usage Guide**

Alcohol is ingrained in Australian culture – we drink after a hard day's work and when eating meals. We drink to celebrate and give alcohol as gifts.

But drinking culture can impact how you think, feel, and act.

In social settings, you can feel judged for either drinking too much or choosing not to drink.

'I'm driving, mate' is the easy excuse you feel obliged to explain why you're not drinking with family, friends or colleagues.

And when you have a 'big night' of drinking, the feelings of shame and anxiety the next day can be overwhelming. Not to mention the embarrassing stories you hear from the people who were with you while you drank too much.

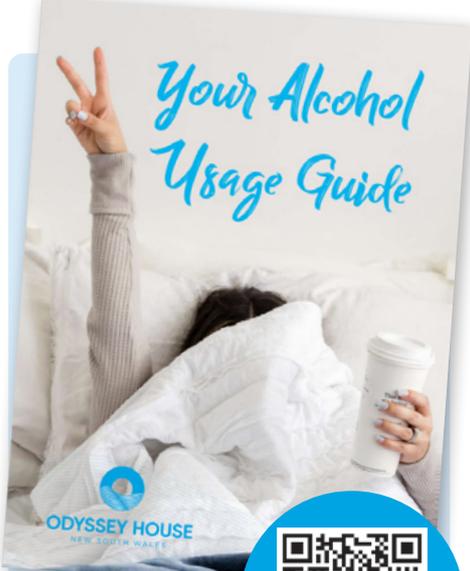
If alcohol becomes 'a problem' for you, you see the ripple effect in your life.

How family, friends and colleagues act differently around you. How your thoughts and feelings can become negative, and you turn to alcohol to cope.

Our new resource, **Your Alcohol Usage Guide**, helps you navigate safer drinking choices. It's a practical guide for you, or to share with someone you're worried about.

In the guide you'll find useful tools such as:

- an alcohol self-assessment tool
- tips to manage your drinking
- alcohol FAQs, and
- how to access support services.



Your Alcohol Usage Guide



Download Your Alcohol Usage Guide HERE

If you or someone you're worried about needs immediate support for substance use, call Odyssey House NSW on **1800 397 739**



Book now

to attend our **Business Women's Lunch!**

**BUSINESS
WOMEN'S
LUNCH**

The Business Women's Lunch on 5 May is a wonderful celebration of resilience, connection and community.

Book your table for the opportunity to network with accomplished professionals like yourself, enjoy a delicious three-course lunch, and hear from inspiring women leaders who'll share their personal journeys of success, leadership and resilience.

We'll also be joined by an Odyssey client who will share their recovery journey, and how our support helped them to take control of their life.

The proceeds from the Business Women's Lunch provide crucial funding towards Odyssey's Parent's and Children's Program.

Our program supports parents through rehabilitation treatment and services, while their children receive specialist supports to mitigate harms and break the cycle of generational drug and alcohol use.



**SCAN HERE FOR
MORE INFORMATION**

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

For tickets and further details visit odysseyhouse.com.au/bwl-2023

Behind our board:

Meet new director Douglas Isles



Douglas Isles is a newly-elected member of our board, joining in December 2022.

We sat down with him to find out more about why he wanted to join Odyssey House, and learn more about his life outside of his work.

"I first came across Odyssey House NSW 20 years ago when I joined the Australian Fund Manager Awards committee, for whom Odyssey is a core charity.

My main involvement has come from facilitating AFMA's fundraising efforts through an annual event.

While my friends, family and colleagues all know that I no longer drink alcohol (I stopped in 2018), it always surprises people I meet for the first time.

I feel it reflects the culture we live in, and I guess it helps me to – at least in a small way – appreciate how hard it is for people to escape from the triggers of addiction.

Having heard the stories of various clients over the years underpins how important the work is that Odyssey does.

For me, it's one thing to raise money for a not-for-profit, it's another to try and apply skills and experience that contribute to the oversight of the group's future success and impact."

Q: What's a goal you have for yourself outside of your work in financial services and as a director on our board?

"I have been working in financial services since 1996, and never had more than four weeks off. My 'bucket list' is in focus, having just qualified for long service leave... Though things are busy, so it might have to wait a few years.

I have a long list of things I would love to see from polar bears in the wild, to the Himalayas, the Okavanga Delta, exploring Chile, and simply sitting in European cafes enjoying the ambience."



*Do you or someone you know need help
to address your substance use?*

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



If you have any queries please contact us on **02 9030 3901** or marketing@odysseyhouse.com.au

odysseyhouse.com.au

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