

# Behind the scenes at Odyssey House Aftercare

The Odyssey House After Care Program provides non-residential support to people who have undertaken rehabilitation through Odyssey House programs or elsewhere. While clients may refer themselves, other referral avenues include health and medical professionals, alcohol and other drug agencies, police and the judiciary, and families and friends of those in recovery.

The program centres on weekly support group meetings that have an educational focus and deal with issues of relapse prevention. Using a holistic approach, the program

assists clients to build recovery-based lifestyles.

Organised activities include a weekly arts and crafts group, cooking classes, library visits (the program also has its own modest library) and monthly recreational outings. Clients also attend a weekly individual counselling session to discuss their own personal relapse issues in more detail. The program recognises that slips and relapses can be a part of the recovery experience and aims to assist clients to manage these occurrences and to prevent a return to sustained misuse of alcohol or other drugs.

Later in 2014 the Odyssey House Aftercare program will launch the STARTup course. This will cater to people with little to no previous treatment experience and is designed to give these clients the knowledge and support to engage in safer practices and not put themselves in danger.

The Odyssey House After Care Program is important for the ongoing wellness, education and support of those undertaking rehabilitation. For further information please call 02 4628 8806.

## Real Men Cook 2014

The Odyssey House Real Men Cook luncheon has been running for the past eleven years and is one of the most anticipated events on the Odyssey House calendar. This year's Real Men Cook will be held on 12 November at the exclusive Glass Brasserie at Sydney's Hilton Hotel, with a range of celebrity chefs who are ready to start cooking! All money raised from Real Men Cook will be used to support the Odyssey House's Parents' and Children's Program.

If you would like more information or are interested in purchasing tickets (\$180pp) please contact fundraising@odysseyhouse.com.au or 02 8307 8838.



## Events for the diary

- Celebrate Recovery Day  
- Sunday 12 October 2014  
Join us at the Residential Rehabilitation Facility for our annual open day, anniversary and client recognition event
- Real Men Cook  
- Wednesday 12 November 2014

## New Odyssey House Website

Odyssey House is proud to announce its new and improved website. The revamped website (at the same address) provides much easier navigation of the site, a safe and secure donation portal, and fast and efficient email assistance for people seeking our help.

[www.odysseyhouse.com.au](http://www.odysseyhouse.com.au)

## The New Odyssey Gambling Counselor

Odyssey House has recently employed Samar Dawidar a cross addictions counselor who will be responsible for identifying residents who have gambling issues in addition to their alcohol and other drug problems. This position has been made possible thanks to the donation from ALH Group.

## Supporter Thank you



Interface Australia



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**ODYSSEY HOUSE**

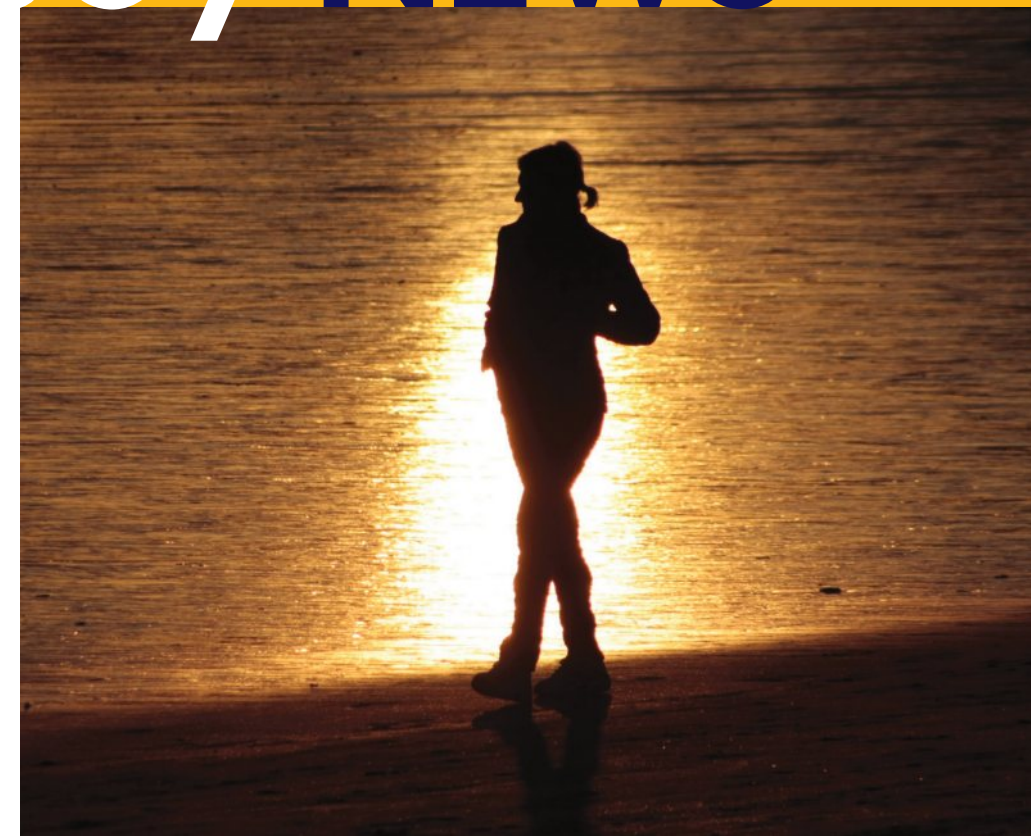
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September 2014



'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'

# odyssey NEWS



## Katie's Story

**"I've always been a hard worker: at school, at college, in my hospitality career and bringing up my daughter. But looking back (I'm now 35), I worked the hardest at hiding my drug dependence and mental health problems from my family, friends, colleagues and employers."**

"From an early age I was crippled by feelings of low self-worth and lack of belief in myself. I probably had depression, but I just thought that was the way you felt growing up. I started using drugs at 13 in an attempt to control my emotions and feel 'normal'.

"At first it was marijuana and alcohol, but I've also used amphetamines and pharmaceutical drugs. Drinking and drug-taking became a regular part of my life.

"I managed to complete school and hoped to be a professional tennis player, but my career went downhill at 18 so I turned to coaching others, but it wasn't as satisfying.

"I studied hospitality and tourism management and eventually achieved a Diploma with double honours, but I sometimes couldn't get to class or complete course work because of my drug use.

"I enjoyed hospitality, but it wasn't enough to stop me using alcohol and other drugs. I sometimes went to work under the influence and my performance suffered. If I was feeling really bad, I'd call in sick. I was sacked from two jobs, and after that I would resign before my employer could sack me.

"I did try a few short detox and rehab programs, but they just scratched the surface and I would soon go back to using.

"My family eventually became aware of my drug dependence and I'm grateful for their support, particularly when I separated from my daughter's father when she was three. My sister and grandparents also looked after her eight years later when I finally entered Odyssey House in September 2013.

"I started in the Withdrawal Unit and then entered the Residential Rehabilitation Program to undertake what's turned out to be a 12-month 'odyssey' to identify and deal with my personal issues, drug dependence and mental illness, and relearn ways of living without drugs.

"I thought about leaving every day for the first few months, first because I found it confronting and uncomfortable to change my thinking and behaviours, and later because I thought I'd learned enough. Thankfully my peers and Odyssey House staff convinced me I was worth

the effort. As I know now, when you've been in addiction and living with mental health issues for twenty years, it takes more than a few months to get your feet firmly on the road to recovery.

"I'm proud to say I will officially graduate at Celebrate Recovery Day 2014 on 12 October. I'm looking forward to reconnecting with my family, and getting back to work in hospitality.

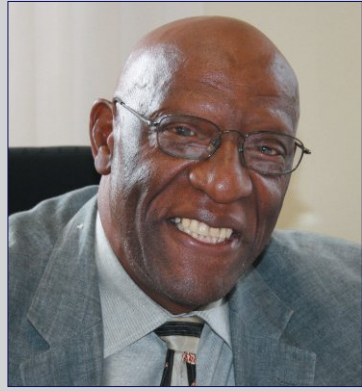
"There is no longer any need to hide who I really am... and my new life begins at 35!"

**Your donation will help people like Katie overcome their addiction. Donate online at [www.odysseyhouse.com.au](http://www.odysseyhouse.com.au)**

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## Odyssey House Survivors Group: An empowering journey to deal with childhood sexual abuse

A staggering 90 per cent of adults - men and women - seeking professional help for alcohol and other drug dependence and/or mental illness have experienced childhood sexual assault, according to the Council of Social Service NSW.

Yet many people, particularly men, are frightened of being judged and find it very difficult to reveal their abuse. In fact, men are just as likely as women to experience sexual assault as children. The challenge is to encourage survivors to speak up so they can receive help to deal with their trauma and rebuild their lives, and avoid relapsing into substance misuse in an attempt to block out their feelings and self-medicate emotional pain.

The impacts of childhood sexual abuse are devastating and may have life-long negative consequences.

Low self-esteem, poor self-worth, shame, self-blame, guilt, grief and anger are common, as are mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, personality disorders and phobias. Survivors may experience relationship problems, fear becoming a perpetrator themselves, question their sexuality, have trouble regulating their emotions, and engage in self-harm such as substance misuse, eating disorders, mutilation or suicide.

In recent years, more male survivors of childhood sexual abuse have been coming forward for help, encouraged perhaps by high-profile cases. This has enabled Odyssey House (where 70% of clients are male) to seek funding for specialised services.

The Odyssey House Survivors Group was launched in 2010 and is based on the Masters work of Chief Clinical Officer, Sharon Mestern. During their residential rehabilitation program, male and female clients can participate in the unique eight-week course with up to five other clients of the same sex, with weekly group sessions facilitated by two trained counsellors.

Based on 'transformation learning', the sessions

encourage healing, personal growth and action-oriented change using proven psychological approaches such as acceptance and commitment therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy.

The aim is to free survivors from the restrictive bonds of their abuse.

Clients are made aware of the common tactics perpetrators use to enforce children's compliance and normalise the abuse, and how this - along with the assault itself - has moulded survivors' beliefs about themselves.

Through information, discussion, sharing with other survivors and practising skills, clients are assisted to acknowledge their experiences, critically reassess and question previously held beliefs and feelings, separate themselves from the problem, see the abuse in a new light, and hand back responsibility to the perpetrator.

They identify their strengths and personal qualities and create a new 'story' about who they really are, their true beliefs and values, and what their life stands for. Clients also learn a 'toolkit' of skills and develop an action plan to enjoy healthy relationships, take care of themselves and others, and lead productive lives without needing alcohol and other drugs to cope.

While individual counselling is also provided, the validation and affirmation from Odyssey House Survivors Group members is very empowering. It enables clients to help themselves while helping others, explore shared experiences, reinforce fresh ways of thinking and interacting, promote a novel sense of worth and celebrate the 'new them'. The experience of being supported and accepted by others within the protective, compassionate environment of the group and the wider Odyssey House community has profound therapeutic benefits, setting the stage for a new and happier chapter in people's lives.



## A message from the Chairman

It has been another busy financial year at Odyssey House. Demand remained high for our Assessment and Referral Centre and Withdrawal Unit, and the residential facility operated at full capacity for much of the year. Our new Admissions and Intake Centre in Redfern is proving a better work environment and a more welcoming face for our services.

We achieved a modest operating surplus thanks to the continuing support of donors and the efforts of our Fundraising and Marketing team. This is a great result given the current economic climate faced by charities, and we celebrate it in conjunction with our many supporters.

However, as always our financial position is a challenge. Accordingly, we remain selective in our capital works and welcome in-kind donations. We

received significant assistance from ICAP Australia to refurbish our kitchen and will be re-carpeting some areas thanks to Interface Australia.

Looking ahead, we developed priorities and actions for the next two years at our bi-annual strategic planning meeting with board members, senior staff and Level 4 residents.

Lastly, we congratulate James Pitts on being named one of Australia's True Leaders for 2014 by The Australian Financial Review's BOSS Magazine, and being profiled on ABC's 7.30 NSW (watch online at <http://tinyurl.com/lso4yq2>).

**Doug Snedden, Chairman**

## A note from the CEO's Desk

I am often interviewed about rehabilitation and alcohol and other drug issues. Making headlines recently has been Harriet Wran, daughter of the former NSW Premier, who is reportedly dependent on 'ice' (crystal methamphetamine). It's newsworthy because amphetamine-type stimulants are an increasingly dangerous scourge on our society - they are the primary drug of concern for Odyssey House clients - and because it involves someone apparently privileged, challenging misconceptions that drug dependence only affects 'other people' of lower socio-economic status.

Yet drug dependence doesn't discriminate based on where you live, your income, education or occupation, or who your parents are.

No one chooses to become addicted. People make poor choices to use drugs to cope with life or 'have fun', and unfortunately some go down the slippery slope of dependence with serious consequences for themselves and others.

Odyssey House treats people from all walks of life - privileged or not, they all have insecurities, regrets and personal problems, from family conflicts or ill health to domestic violence or childhood sexual assault (read about our Survivors Group in this issue). Our clients also share hopes and dreams of a better life without the ball and chain that drugs have become in their lives. I'm proud Odyssey House is here to help them.

**James A Pitts MA, CEO**

## ASX Art Union Tickets

Odyssey House is again a beneficiary of the ASX Thomson Reuters Charity Foundation and will be selling Art Union raffle tickets with the proceeds supporting Odyssey House.

This year there is over \$62,419 worth of prizes available, purchase tickets in the raffle for the chance to win:

**1st prize - Lexus CT200h Luxury- The world first Luxury Hybrid Hatch valued at \$45,839**

**2nd Prize - Autore South Sea Pearl Diamond and White Gold Pendant, valued at \$13,500**

**3rd Prize - Captain Cook Murray River cruise for 2 people, valued at \$3,080**

To purchase tickets simply follow the link <http://artunion.asxreuterscharity.com.au/console/rafflepages/320> or fill in the included card and return to Odyssey for your tickets to be posted or emailed to yourself.

\* \$20 per ticket or 6 for \$100, draw closes 25/2/15

## Dick Smith Foods will give away \$1million to charities

In 2014, Dick Smith Foods Foundation will give away \$1 million to charities. Odyssey House is one of the nominated charities and it is up to you...please vote for us!

Submit a photo of yourself with any Dick Smith Foods product, name Odyssey House as the charity you want to support and text or email it to [charity@dicksmithfoods.com.au](mailto:charity@dicksmithfoods.com.au), along with your name and contact details if you wish.

If enough votes come in, we could receive up to \$50,000.

Visit [www.dicksmithfoods.com.au/charity-breakthrough](http://www.dicksmithfoods.com.au/charity-breakthrough) for more information.



### Yes! I want to make a difference to Odyssey House to help those individuals and families affected by drug and alcohol misuse.

\$20 to help provide 3 nutritious meals for a child whose parent has entered the program

\$100 to provide 2 counseling sessions for a resident and their family to help them rebuild their relationships damaged by drug and alcohol misuse

\$50 to provide a private counseling session

\$  Other amount. A gift of any size will make a difference.

*Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible 09/14*

OR I would like to make a monthly gift to Odyssey House of \$

Name on Card

Visa  M/C  Amex  Chq

Card number

Expiry date

Signature

Contact details

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Address

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Please send me information on:  Remembering Odyssey House in my Will  I have already made a gift in my Will

Please remove me from the mailing list (Include contact details and return to Odyssey)

**PO Box 459 Campbelltown 2558**