

UNITED APPROACH SUBSTANCE ABUSE REHABILITATION A Big Jigsaw Piece in the Puzzle

The Beginning

In November 2015, Peter Down started work with his spouse Margaret on his vision for a residential substance abuse centre in Bairnsdale East Gippsland, but for all of the Gippsland Region.

Early investigations convinced Peter that Odyssey House was the appropriate operator of the facility.

In early 2016, Peter approached John Glynn in relation to the professional way forward and they identified the need to attract a Patron.

Richard Rijs accepted the approach and, in quick succession, interested Peter Neal and Tony Ward to join in his vision and an incorporated association was set up.

One cold night in June 2016, the first public meeting was well reported by local media – see print article [here](#) [CTRL click]

Our cabaret in September 2016 drew 260 people to hear the extremely compelling journey of Rebecca Slavin into, through and out of drug addiction.

The Objectives

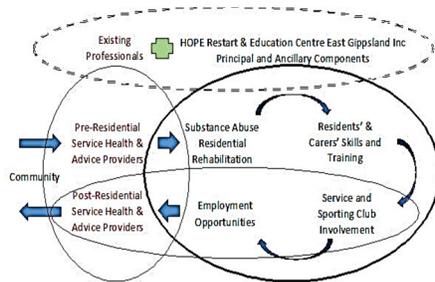
Construction and establishment of a centre for management and treatment of substance abuse clients and families in **Gippsland**

Advancing mental and physical health, education, vocational opportunities, and social welfare for substance abuse clients and their Carers.

Reconnecting clients with family, community and sports.

Utilise professionally trained volunteers and assessed clients to

provide programs to educate community in awareness, tolerance and compassion.



The Need

The need is threefold -

Increase in substance abuse across **Gippsland**.

Reduced opportunity for residential treatment for Gippsland clients due to CBD increase in demand for existing facilities.

Focus existing effective pre- and post-residential care services in providing local solutions.

The Organisation

Our association is an Australian registered charity and not-for-profit organization for residential substance abuse rehabilitation and education centre for the benefit of the whole of Gippsland.

This Centre will fill in the final major piece of the substance abuse jigsaw

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Patron:

Richard Rijs

Executive:

Peter Down (Chair)

John Glynn

Peter Neal

Tony Ward

Committee:

Julie Barling

David Pollard

Adrian Jackson

Rod Parker

Donna McDonald

Project Officer:

Margaret Down

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offering a united and integrated pathway to clients and their carers.

Institutional Credibility

Partnering in this important project for Gippsland are three giants in serving the community.

Odyssey is a founding member of the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA) formed in 1986.

The Odyssey residential rehabilitation programs are structured live-in suites for people who experience severe problems with alcohol and/or drug use, and their associated mental health issues.

Anglicare Victoria has an extensive range of family services programs helping

to understand and overcome serious issues including alcohol and drug dependence.

Federation University and Training are the pre-eminent academic institutions in Gippsland and with established partnerships in education provide suitable assistance programs such as the Clemente Program, Foundation Access Studies (FAST), Satellite Guided Learning, as well as traditional onsite, offsite and online programs.

Cost

Capital cost of the 112 bed centre is a multi-million dollar capital and recurrent operating expense facility.

Construction is expected to be 6 months following all approvals.

The funding strategy comprises the seeking of government, public, private and philanthropic grants and donations.

Regional Development

The treatment component will directly employ 32 staff.

Gippsland is fortunate to have quality hospitals and community health services already providing pre- and post-residential substance abuse rehabilitation services.

This Centre will not only complement these services but provide a major economic boost with direct new employment of 32 therapists, operational and business staff, and consequently indirect employment in the region.

A Local Mother's Story

Having researched first hand all of the services in our Gippsland region providing programs to the community one local mother has a complete understanding of the Alcohol & Drug sector.

"The sector basically doesn't work in a cohesive manner or on a needs basis.

"The destruction of my family began in early 2015, when my teenage daughter overdosed on ice.

"By February 2016, she was pleading to go to residential rehab, but there was NO help available, certainly not in Gippsland, without an extended wait time.

"A home supervised detox program two hours from our home town saw my daughter remaining clean for over two months while I exhausted every avenue to gain placement for her in a residential rehabilitation centre.

"She had a major relapse and is active to date due to lack of residential services and support, not only in our area, but Victoria and Australia wide.

"My daughter became completely dysfunctional and can barely undertake the most basic of normal day to day living tasks. The nearest DAY rehabilitation program is a 90 minute drive, and **she would only benefit after full recovery in a residential rehab program.**

"Had residential help been readily accessible, her current outcome would have been a lot different.

"In country areas, the limited help available is weekly counselling sessions, or weekly appointments with a withdrawal nurse.

"Addicts are addicts 24 hours a day, not once a week. Through my experience trying to help my daughter, the limited resources which are available, are stretched to the absolute limit.

"I rang all services from the border through to Traralgon and was told the same thing every time I rang.

"One needs to do an Australian Community Support Organisation assessment either via the phone or in person and then they will send it off to a Gippsland provider such

as Gippsland Lakes Community Health or Latrobe Health. Someone will be in touch to make an appointment for an intake assessment to establish needs, after which some counselling sessions are offered.

"If detoxing at home, you will be linked up with the withdrawal nurse, and there was only one in Gippsland. It can take a couple of weeks to get an appointment with a counsellor as all resources in the Gippsland region are stretched to the limit. While waiting for appointments, I was told to maybe go and see a local GP, or link in with Narcotics Anonymous (NA) or Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

"If one is in recovery, or has just come out of some sort of rehabilitation, the limited help is the same. All that is offered is counselling, having a good GP, maybe linking in with NA or AA.

"There is limited day rehabilitation in the Gippsland region, and there just is no residential help in country areas on a timely basis. The pre- and post-addiction service providers can actually be quite good and they want to provide better backup and integration through the whole of the rehabilitation process, including residential rehabilitation.

You can support the establishment of this important centre by speaking or writing to your local parliamentarian