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NEWSLETTER

HANDOVER COMPLETE

The Building Journey is Over

After four and a half years of community presentations, fundraising, planning, negotiation and discussions, the Hope Restart Centre (HRC) Board was pleased to be able to hand the building over to Odyssey House Victoria (OHV) on 1 April 2020.

Residents have started to arrive at the Centre to undertake OHV residential programs. COVID-19 has caused some impacts on the operational establishment of the Centre.

A group of trained dedicated staff are now in place and it is fantastic that local people have been appointed to these roles.

OHV has identified several additional works for the facility and surrounds and, gladly, our budget allows for these to be implemented.



View at the Back of the Building



View along the eastern side

Exit Strategy

The Board is currently preparing a strategy for a 30 June exit with their objectives of completing the building and appointing OHV as the operator achieved.

The balance of the Board's objectives of advancing mental and physical health, education, vocational opportunities, and social welfare will now be handed over to existing professionals in primary, secondary and tertiary health.

This will lead to reconnecting individuals to family, community and sports.

Further building and grounds planning on the site will be continued by OHV.

A Message to Our Many Supporters

While the Board takes pride in their achievements it could not have gotten off the ground with the early support of local Federal Member, Darren Chester, and former BRHS CEO, Therese Tierney.

Where many doubted the concept would ever become a reality, these two had their "lightbulb moment" at the same time in a meeting of many minds in December

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Patron:

Richard Rijs

Executive:

Peter Down (Chair)

Peter Neal

Tony Ward

Secretary/Treasurer:

John Glynn

Committee:

Julie Barling

Ricky Ross

Simon Anderson

Project Officer:

Margaret Down

Postal:

PO Box 583

Bairnsdale Vic 3875

Contacts:

Peter Down

M: 0428 516 372

John Glynn

M: 0409 529 167

E: info@hopecentre.asn.au

Website:

www.hopecentre.asn.au

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/hoperestartcentremedia

[hoperestartcentremedia](http://www.facebook.com/hoperestartcentremedia)



OHV Bairnsdale Manager:

Andrew Adam

M: 0400 026 116

2016 when the vision was presented. They recognised the need, saw the opportunity and put their full backing behind the project.

At this point, the land had been identified and everyone should express gratitude to the Bairnsdale Seventh Day Adventist Church for their incredibly generous access under a long-term peppercorn lease.

Native Plants and Habitat Planning

In 2019, the Board received a generous Grant from East Gippsland Water for a 5-year native plants and habitat planning project.

The first phase of the project has been completed, and the second will be by 30 June. OHV is taking over the balance of the project which will involve resident's involvement.

These images show some of the preparation works around the two bodies of water which will be fenced and vegetation planted.



View across the planned habitat pond



View of the yet to be filled treatment pond on the right

Official Opening

This was planned for 20 April but has been postponed due to Covid-19.

DONATIONS

Over 300 individual donations nearing \$1m have been received since August 2016

Donations to Hope Restart Centre Inc will be taken up to and including 30 June 2020, after which they can be made directly to OHV to be specifically identified for the continuing needs of this facility development.

Details will be published in our next Newsletter.

How to Contribute

Cash contributions can be made –

- By cheque made payable to Hope Restart Centre Inc to PO Box 583, Bairnsdale, Vic 3875
- Via the Donations Page on our website (automatic tax deductible receipt will be issued)
- By transfer to Bendigo Bank Bairnsdale BSB 633000 A/c 157891169 (name as a reference, and email details to info@hopecentre.asn.au for receipt)
- Workplace Giving through employers (Contact us for further details)



Media Release

New Hope for Gippsland Residents

The new Hope Centre drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility in Gippsland has opened its doors and accepted its first residents.

Located at Lucknow near Bairnsdale, the facility has been some four-years in the making.

Managed by Odyssey House Victoria, the Hope Centre will provide vital services for individuals and their families across the region who are dealing with addiction.

An initial group of nine residents were transferred from Odyssey's Melbourne facility last week, helping to establish the culture and orienting the new staff.

These nine residents have already completed much of their residential rehabilitation journey and have volunteered to move to the new facility in Gippsland. They are senior residents who will also provide support to new clients as they are admitted.

"Our model utilises a therapeutic community approach, providing values-based rehabilitation in a structured environment," said Odyssey House Victoria chief executive officer Dr Stefan Gruenert.

"The residents, the staff, and any visiting consultants all work together to facilitate the positive changes and choices that residents make on their pathway to recovery. Peer support from residents who are well-established in the program is critical."

Executive Manager of residential services at Odyssey House, Eric Allan, will spend a significant amount of time in Bairnsdale to oversee the start-up period, and is working closely with locally-based health service workers employed at the centre.

Additional residents, many coming from across Gippsland, will be admitted to the facility in the coming weeks. Numbers will be increased gradually, building up to 30 to match the current and recurrent funding being provided by the Victorian Government.

Several community leaders who established a Board of Management and sought a partnership with Odyssey House Victoria, have worked tirelessly to achieve this significant milestone. They led a fundraising effort to lobby state and federal governments for capital and operational funding, securing philanthropic grants and enormous support from local businesses and the broader community.

Construction began in February 2019. The Hope Centre facility is currently licensed to accommodate up to 58 residents, with the potential to be expanded in future if needed. It includes large group-training rooms, a commercial kitchen and dining room, recreation areas, greenhouses and courtyards.

"The need for a residential rehabilitation facility in this area has been well documented and we are very pleased to be finally up and running, especially in the current climate" said Dr Gruenert.

"This project was initiated by Peter and Margaret Down in 2016 and would not have been realised if it wasn't for their vision.

With the support of local member Darren Chester MP, the Hope Board secured \$3.8 million from the federal government toward the capital works.

Significant financial contributions were also made from Odyssey House Victoria, the Peter & Lyndy White Foundation, and Loy Yang B Power Station - Alinta Energy Australia, among others.

Odyssey House Victoria was established in 1979 and has become a leading provider of treatment, training and support. In addition to residential rehabilitation services, it provides community-based counselling and outreach services in over 30 locations throughout Victoria.

"While addiction continues to be a major social and public health issue, Odyssey House will be at the forefront of addressing the issues and reducing the stigma associated with addiction," said Dr Gruenert.

Dr Gruenert also said, "Odyssey House has measures in place to minimize the risks associated with COVID-19 in a therapeutic community. All new clients, staff and visitors will be appropriately screened before entering the new Hope Centre."

* * *

Note: *Called Hope Restart Centre during its development, the facility is now known as the Odyssey House Victoria - Hope Centre.*

About Odyssey House Victoria

An international leader in drug and alcohol rehabilitation, training and support, Odyssey House Victoria is a major provider of treatment services in Victoria through both residential and non-residential programs. Its residential programs help over 700 people a year, while more than 16,000 are treated annually in community-based drug and alcohol programs. It currently provides around half of Victoria's rehabilitation beds through facilities in Melbourne, Molyullah (near Benalla) and now the new facility near Bairnsdale. It is also involved in planning for a new residential rehabilitation facility near Wangaratta. Odyssey House Victoria has provided drug and alcohol rehabilitation services for 40 years and helped more than 65,000 to overcome addiction.

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For further information:

Janet Beaumont

Odyssey House Victoria

T: 03 9420 7633

M: 0438 383 655

E: JBeaumont@odyssey.org.au