



ODYSSEY HOUSE  
VICTORIA

## Odyssey House Circuit Breaker Program – North East Victoria





- Original owners of the land were the Pangerang people
- Benalla Rural City scores 957.2 on the SEIFA index of disadvantage
- Low income, high unemployment, low educational attainment, high levels of unskilled labour
- Region struggling with drought flood and fire
- Circuit Breaker is located 18 km from Benalla, North East Victoria. 200km north of Melbourne



# Odyssey House Circuit Breaker Program



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# Circuit Breaker – Main House



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# Circuit Breaker Office and Cottage





# Circuit Breaker



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# Circuit Breaker Pool and Olive Grove



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# Demographics

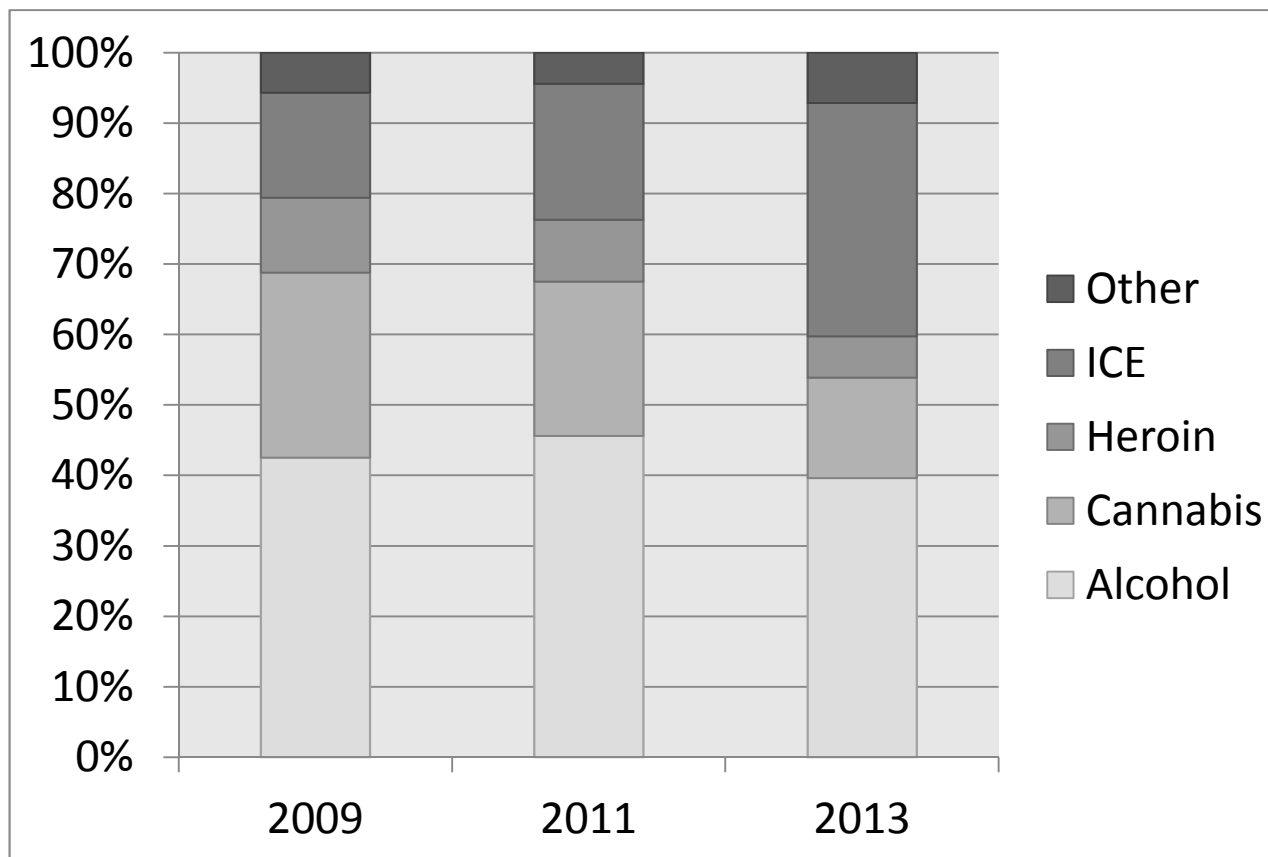
- Average age of residents is 35 years, average age of Indigenous residents is 28 years
- Residents characterised by clinical levels of dysfunction and distress, social maladjustment and depression
- Less than 1% of residents were employed
- 65% + of residents present with mental health disorders
- 5% of clients have severe mental health problems
- 41% of women in the program have children in the care of another person or organisation
- 60% of the resident population graduate from the program





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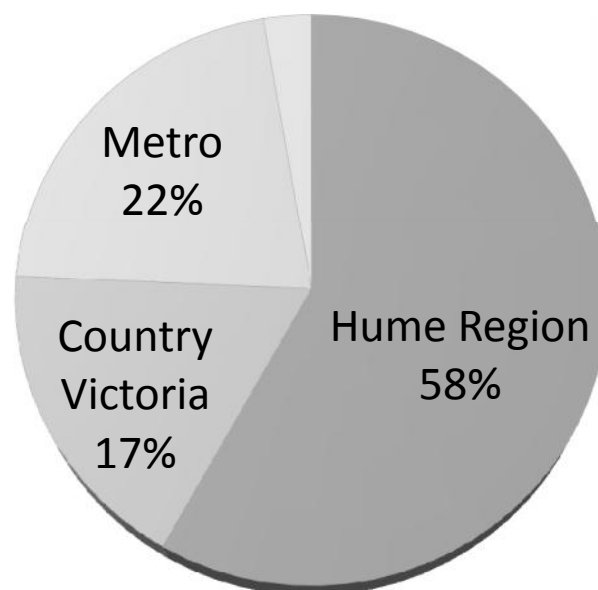
# Drug Use – Circuit Breaker Residents 2009-2013





Interstate  
3%

## Referring Organisations





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RESPECT • CONCERN • HONESTY • TRUST • LOVE



# Indigenous Residents

- Aboriginal Australians make up 1.3% of the rural Victorian population
- 16% of our residents identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 62% of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander residents complete the program, a higher rate than non-Aboriginal
- 71% of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander men complete the program

# Circuit Breaker Meeting Place



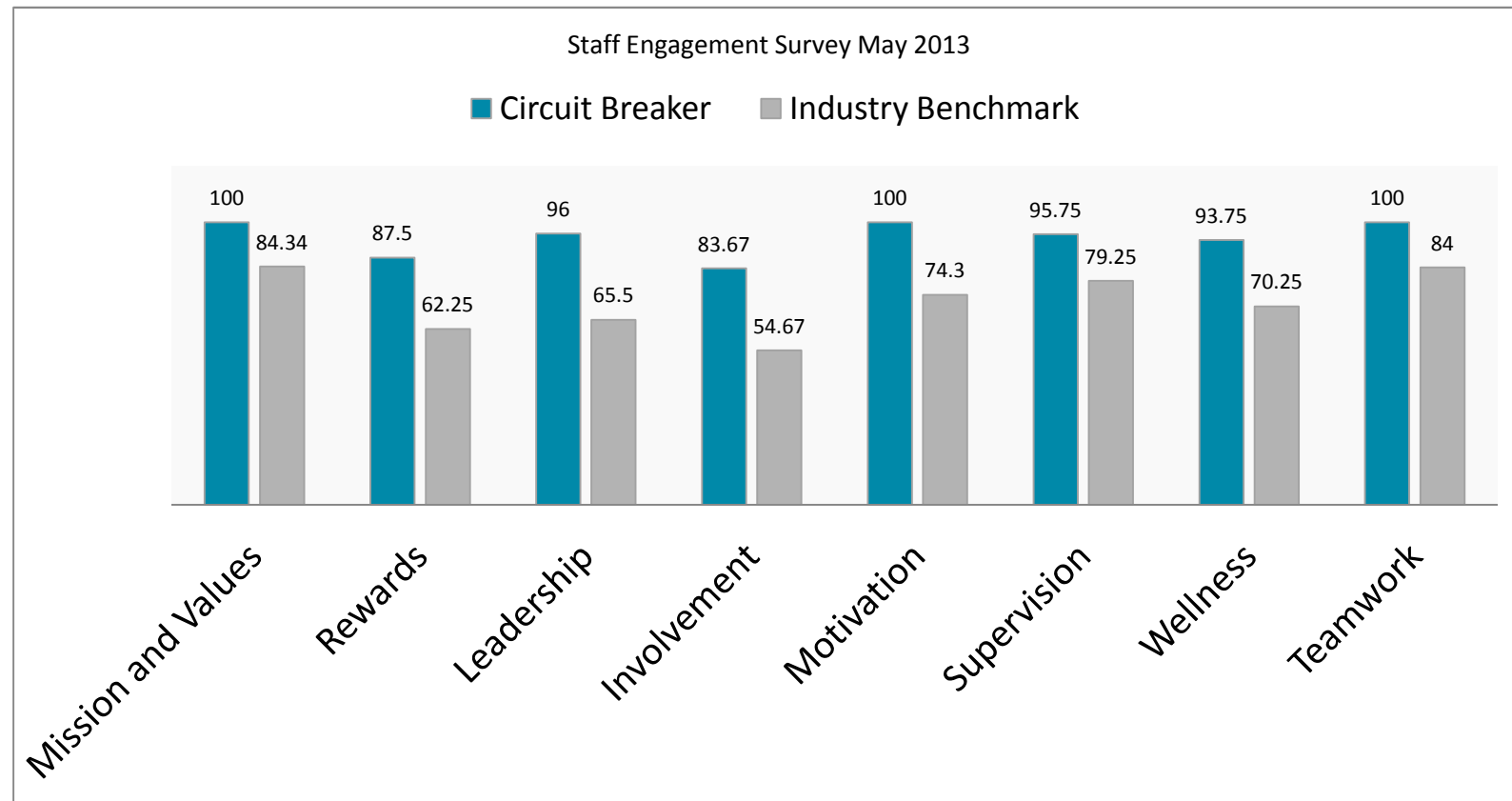


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# Circuit Breaker Indigenous Conversations

- **Humility** – Not embarrassed to admit knowledge was limited
- **Authenticity** – Genuinely interested
- **Pride** – If you are not proud of your own country, people and land. Then how can you know what it is for another to feel the same?
- **Development** – Not just a flag and a plaque







# Does it Work?

Psychological measures of distress for graduates of Circuit Breaker fall within the expected normal range, suggesting that ex-residents could not be distinguished from the general population in terms of somatic distress, immediate social functioning, anxiety and depression.



# Residents

- 83% were satisfied or better with group therapy helping change their attitude and behaviour towards drugs and alcohol
- 80% were satisfied or better with group therapy in helping them cope with stressful situations
- 47% reduced concerns relating to their offending while 31percent ceased entirely
- 22% reduced concerns about committing property crime while 69percent ceased entirely
- 34% reported reducing their drug consumption since leaving the program, while 44percent ceased entirely
- 34% reported reducing their alcohol consumption since leaving the program, while 49percent abstained entirely





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# Friends and Family...

- 61% observed good or better improvement in their loved one's communication skills
- 65% observed good or better improvements in the quality of the relationship with their loved one
- 63% observed good or better improvements in their loved one's attitude and behaviour towards drugs and alcohol use
- 65% observed good or better reductions in the likelihood of their loved one committing a crime
- 23% observed good or better reductions in their loved one's drug consumption; 49% reported their loved one's had abstained from drugs entirely



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**Odyssey House Circuit Breaker Program,**

**P. O Box 671,**

**Benalla**

**VIC 3671**

**(03) 5766 6399**

**[www.odyssey.org.au](http://www.odyssey.org.au)**