



**MIND MEDICINE**  
A U S T R A L I A

**Media Alert: 25th August 2021**

**Australia's crisis of suffering accelerates while effective treatment remains blocked.**

[Mind Medicine Australia](#) is urgently calling for the Federal and State governments to enable psychedelic-assisted therapies to be used to treat severely ill patients who desperately need safe and effective treatments.

This month, the country's largest suicide prevention line recorded its busiest 3 days in its 57-year history. Over 3,300 crisis calls were made to Lifeline on August 2, 5 and 16. Pre-pandemic, one in five Australians were suffering from a mental illness and 1 in 8 were on antidepressants, including 1 in 4 older adults and 1 in 30 children as young as five. The pandemic and its associated measures are significantly exacerbating these already terrible statistics, which place Australia's mental health only ahead of Iceland out of all OECD Nations. This is contributing to record rates of suffering, suicides and other distress. Devastatingly, current treatments have been unable to alleviate this immense suffering. Remission rates for depression are only about 30-35% with current treatments, and treatments for PTSD even worse, at 5%.

Yet, psilocybin and MDMA assisted treatments for Depression, PTSD and Addictions are showing remission rates of between 60 and 80% after just 2 to 3 treatments, combined with a short course of psychotherapy.

Despite the crisis of suffering and suicides, Australia is in the absurd situation that psychiatrists can get approvals from the TGA to use these medicines as part of psychotherapy in medically-controlled environments for patients with treatment resistant depression and treatment resistant PTSD through the SAS-B pathway, but then can't use them because the State and Territories of Australia don't have any permit systems in place for these medicines whilst they remain in Schedule 9, with the exception of Victoria.

The TGA has recently announced an [Independent Review](#) of MMA's rescheduling applications, with the Panel's Report to be published on the TGA website on 30 September 2021 ahead of consideration by the Advisory Committee on Medicines Scheduling. The [original applications](#) were made by MMA in July 2020.

Commenting on the Government's announcement the Chairman of Mind Medicine Australia, Mr Peter Hunt AM, said that:

*"There is plenty of evidence to show that these medicines should be available to psychiatrists as Schedule 8 controlled medicines under the TGA's Special Access Scheme and Schedule 8 permit systems around Australia. The key touchstones for a Schedule 8 medicine are safety and established therapeutic value. The material in our applications including supporting letters from World recognised experts makes it clear that these standards have been met.*



# MIND MEDICINE A U S T R A L I A

*Given the terrible and worsening mental health statics in Australia and the lack of effective treatments for so many Australians we desperately need innovation and fresh ways of thinking. As a nation, we should be acting now to prevent further suffering and suicides as a matter of urgency.”*

The Executive Director of Mind Medicine Australia, Tania de Jong AM commented that:

*“This absurd Federal-State situation leads to an enormous amount of unnecessary suffering for people with treatment resistant depression and treatment resistant PTSD. There is a wealth of safety and efficacy data from over 160 overseas trials to support the rescheduling and use of psilocybin and MDMA assisted therapies in Australia on a case-by-case basis, as occurs in other jurisdictions such as Canada, the United States, Israel and Switzerland. It is unethical to further withhold these treatments when we are experiencing such an enormous mental health emergency.”*

Mind Medicine Australia exists to help alleviate the suffering caused by mental illness in Australia through expanding the treatment options available to medical practitioners and their patients.

**Enquiries: (03) 8679 6015 and please visit: [www.mindmedicineaustralia.org](http://www.mindmedicineaustralia.org)**

**Please note the following are available for interview:**

- **Peter Hunt AM (MMA Chair)**
- **Tania de Jong AM (MMA Executive Director)**
- **The Hon. Andrew Robb AO (MMA Director)** - Board Director of MMA and former Trade Minister to Australia who has had treatment resistant depression for 43 years.
- **Chris Barrie AC** - Board Director of MMA and former Head of the Armed Forces who says these treatments are the only hope for Veterans suffering with PTSD.
- **Michael Raymond** - Veteran in Canberra who has healed through these treatments
- **Dr Stuart Saker** – A Veteran and Psychiatrist from NSW, and a graduate of the first intake of the Certificate in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies
- **Dr Eli Kotler** - Addiction and Trauma Psychiatrist, and a graduate of the first intake of the Certificate in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies
- **Dr Simon Longstaff AO**, Executive Director of The Ethics Centre **(MMA Director)**

**For further information, or to arrange an interview, please contact Ilan Hayman [ilan@mindmedicineaustralia.org](mailto:ilan@mindmedicineaustralia.org) or Tania de Jong AM [tania@mindmedicineaustralia.org](mailto:tania@mindmedicineaustralia.org)  
Phone: (03) 8679 6015 or 0411 459 999**