



**MIND MEDICINE**  
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**For Release: 30 September 2020**

**Covid-19 Significant Societal and Mental Health Impacts**  
**highlights urgent need for Innovation in Treatments for Mental Illness**

**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. We already had a major mental health epidemic prior to this pandemic, and this is being severely exacerbated as noted below. New treatments are urgently needed to heal those who have and are being damaged by this major crisis.**

**Mind Medicine Australia has put together a report documenting [Covid-19 Significant Societal and Mental Health Impacts](#)**

The report includes: **Modelling and Future Predictions, Children and Youth, Mental Health, Unemployment, Domestic and Family Violence, Divorce, Alcohol and Tobacco, Financial Insecurity, Eating Disorders, Refugee and Migrant Issues, Social Media, Hospitalisations and Emergency Department, Crime and Cyber Abuse, Racism, Porn Use**

**Here is a brief overview of some of the most significant impacts:**

- Over the next five years, the additional cost to the Australian economy from those suffering from heightened psychological distress who remain employed but at reduced productivity is estimated at \$114bn. (1)
- Modelling from the University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre suggests the COVID-19 pandemic will contribute to a major surge – 25% – of suicides, with an increase of up to 30% among young people aged 15–25. (2)
- Headspace Knox has seen an estimated 50 per cent rise in referrals for young people who have been admitted to a hospital emergency department because of a mental health crisis. (3)
- Concern about the coronavirus is driving one Australian child to call the Kids Helpline every 69 seconds, new data shows. Kids Helpline data gathered in March showed the service has experienced a 40 per cent spike in calls compared with the same time last year. (4)
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) data shows Victoria has recorded a 33 per cent rise in children presenting to hospital with self-harm injuries over a six week period to the end of August 2020, compared to a year earlier. The total number of self-harm presentations to emergency departments across all ages increased by 9.3 per cent. - August 2020. (5)
- Reports made by members of the public to the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) increased by 122 per cent as the nation went into coronavirus lockdowns through April, May, and June. (6)



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- Nearly four in five Australians say their mental health has deteriorated since the COVID-19 pandemic began with financial stress being a significant driver. (7)
- In May 2020, 2.3 million Australians (one in five employed people) were either unemployed or had work hours reduced for economic reasons, resulting in the steepest rise in rates of unemployment on record — a change from 5.2% in March to 7.4% in Jun 2020 and is now down to 6.8% in Aug 2020 (8) The actual unemployment number is estimated to have been 11.6% in May, which is different to statistical unemployment. (9)
- Almost one in 10 Australian women in a relationship have experienced domestic violence during the coronavirus crisis, with two-thirds saying the attacks started or became worse during the pandemic. More than half of the women who had experienced physical or sexual violence before the COVID-19 crisis said the violence had become more frequent or severe since the start of the pandemic. (10)
- 70% report drinking more alcohol than usual since the COVID-19 outbreak in Australia. 32% are concerned with the amount of alcohol either they or someone in their household is drinking. Over a third (34%) say they are now drinking alcohol daily. 28% report drinking alcohol to cope with anxiety and stress. 28% have been drinking alcohol on their own more often. 24% have started drinking alcohol and ended up drinking more than they thought they would have. 20% report having started drinking alcohol earlier in the day. (11)
- Australians are turning to crisis hotline Lifeline more than ever before, with calls increasing by 25 per cent compared to last year. Lifeline received almost 90,000 calls for help – that is the equivalent of 1 call every 30 seconds: a record for the organisation over its 57-year history. (12), (13)
- The COVID-19 Racism Incident Report Survey was launched on April 2nd 2020 and, to date (July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020), has collected over 410 reports of COVID-19-related racism. (14)
- A study on the impacts of Covid-19 by Relationships Australia, the leading national provider of relationship support services, found that 42% of people had experienced a negative change in their relationship with their partner during the last few months. (Jun 2020) (15)

**Mind Medicine Australia** is a registered charity (DGR-1 status) working to develop evidence-based and regulated psychedelic-assisted treatments for mental illness in Australia. Mind Medicine Australia is wholly focused on the clinical application of psychedelics, and provides a nexus between medical practitioners, academia, government, regulatory bodies, philanthropists and other partners. We support research, and develop therapist training, ethical guidelines, and educational material and events.



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Mind Medicine Australia is focused specifically on the clinical application of psilocybin-assisted therapy and MDMA-assisted therapy for the treatment of mental illness. We do not advocate for non-clinical use of psychedelics or any other prohibited substances, nor do we advocate for any change to the law with respect to non-clinical use.

Mind Medicine Australia's Board, Management team, Ambassadors, and Advisory Panel members consist of leading practitioners in the applied treatment of mental illness, psychedelic medical research, health strategy, ethics, and other relevant fields from both Australia and overseas.

**Please visit [mindmedicineaustralia.org](http://mindmedicineaustralia.org) for more information about our mission to help alleviate the suffering caused by mental illness in Australia through expanding the treatment options available to medical practitioners and their patients. Website:**

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

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