

# Medicinal ecstasy, magic mushrooms for veterans with PTSD blocked by TGA

Medical health specialists have slammed the blocking of medically prescribed psychedelic drugs, including ecstasy, shown to successfully treat PTSD in war veterans.



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February 17, 2021 - 8:11PM

Veterans young and old are hitting the waves for the first time in a new program teaching ex-servicemen and women how to surf.

Medically prescribed psychedelic drugs, including ecstasy, which have been shown to successfully treat PTSD in war veterans and save the lives of mentally ill patients have been blocked by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in a move slammed by specialists.

The controversial decision was made by the TGA despite overwhelming support from doctors and other interested groups who recently made submissions on the issue.



Almost all submissions supported the use of medicinal ecstasy and psilocybin for veterans resistant to all other treatment for PTSD.

There was 95 per cent of the 478 submissions in support of medicinal ecstasy and 96 per cent of the 575 responses in favour of medicinal psilocybin.

The TGA said it was too early to say whether psilocybin, also known as magic mushrooms, used in combination with psychotherapy for the treatment of depression, PTSD and anxiety, was safe.

But in a bizarre decision, the TGA has already given a number of psychiatrists Special Access Scheme approvals to use both ecstasy and psilocybin on patients.

SAS approvals are only given in cases where patients have proved resistant to all other treatments.

Military veteran and psychiatrist Dr Stuart Saker has 12 veterans with SAS approvals waiting to be treated at his Central Coast clinic.

However he needs ecstasy and psilocybin rescheduled from Schedule 9 to Schedule 8 — a controlled medicine — of the Poisons Standard, which the TGA this month has refused to do, before he can prescribe them.

The executive director of charity Mind Medicine Australia, Tania de Jong, on Wednesday said that veterans deserved a chance to get better.

“It’s an injustice because these patients who are very sick, it’s their only hope for getting better,” she said.

Ms de Jong said overseas research in trials involving more than 3000 patients had shown the medicines were safe and non-addictive when administered in a medically controlled environment.

She said the drugs could lead to remissions in 60-80 per cent of patients after just two or three medicinal sessions in combination with psychotherapy.

The TGA has called for more submissions by the deadline of March 4.