

Media Alert: 23 August 2022

[Mind Medicine Australia announces a new fund to support the development of observational trials into psychedelic-assisted therapies in Australia for key classes of mental illness to better understand their translation into widespread clinical practice](#)

Mind Medicine Australia (MMA) is excited to announce a new fund to support the development of observational trials into psychedelic-assisted therapies to treat a range of mental illnesses. The initial commitment of funding of \$1 million will be provided by the Hunt Family Foundation with additional funding sought from other philanthropists.

Applications will be assessed and managed by relevant members of the scientific and clinical advisory panel of Mind Medicine Australia chaired by Professor David Nutt, Head of Neuropsychopharmacology at Imperial College London.

Professor Nutt commented: *“I am thrilled to be asked to Chair the review team that will oversee this exciting new venture. There is growing acceptance that observational trials collecting real world evidence are important in understanding the value and clinical utility of new treatments. They have proven vital to the development of medical cannabis and are likely to do the same for psychedelics.”*

The funding from the Hunt Family Foundation is the largest available philanthropic grant for this rapidly emerging field in Australia. MMA will also seek matched funding support from other philanthropists to leverage the impact of this initiative.

Commenting on the new initiative, the Chairman of MMA Peter Hunt said: *“We are very hopeful that other philanthropists will join us because we urgently need to address the increasing mental health crisis in this country. The elephant in the room is the lack of innovation in treatments for mental illnesses for over 50 years.”*

MMA successfully [advocated in 2021 for \\$15 million to support innovative mental health clinical trials utilising psychedelic-assisted therapies](#) from the Federal Government through the Medical Research Futures Fund. Since then, Australia has seen a dramatic increase in the number of clinical trials involving psychedelic medicines. However, over the same period the mental health crisis in Australia has also worsened. There is now an urgent need to demonstrate that the high remission rates achieved in clinical trials to date can translate to more normalised clinical environments and to further improve the therapeutic methodology and protocols used.



Tania de Jong, Executive Director of MMA, said: *“Unlike conventional treatments, which often require patients to endure years of daily medications and weekly support from a mental health professional, psychedelic-assisted therapies can be effective after just two to three clinically supervised sessions with the medicines supported by a short course of psychotherapy. The medicines have been shown to be safe and non-addictive when administered within a medically controlled environment.”*

MMA will welcome applications for observational trials which focus on specific groups in the community – for example, Veterans and First Responders – where patients often have multiple co-morbidities and are therefore harder to treat.

Just last week Australia commemorated Vietnam Veteran’s Day. Military veterans have the highest incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental illnesses in our community. More veterans die from suicide than on the battlefield. Many veterans with treatment resistant conditions could finally have the chance to heal through access to psychedelic-assisted therapies in medically controlled environments.

MMA is also interested in proposals which develop different therapeutic approaches, including tools to support patients after the course of therapy finishes.

All applications will be processed on merit and the allocation of funds will be based on recommendations from the panel of scientific experts. Applications must contain a detailed timeline for the proposed trial, an estimated budget, sources of co-funding (if available) and details of how the trial will be supported, amongst other criteria. Successful grants will be subject to the applicants receiving approval from an ethics committee for the proposed observational trial

Mind Medicine Australia will be setting out detailed application criteria on its website shortly. As part of the process, we welcome an active and open dialogue with researchers to maximise the impact of this initiative.

Visit: www.mindmedicineaustralia.org

Contact Details:

For further information, or to arrange an interview, please contact Ilan Hayman ilan@mindmedicineaustralia.org or Tania de Jong AM tania@mindmedicineaustralia.org

Interviewees include:

- Professor David Nutt, Head of Neuropsychopharmacology, Imperial College
- Peter Hunt AM, Chair Mind Medicine Australia 0419 271 483
- Tania de Jong AM, Executive Director Mind Medicine Australia 0411 45 9999



About Us: [Mind Medicine Australia](https://www.mindmedicineaustralia.org) is Australia's leading not-for-profit organisation focused on developing the ecosystem for the use of medicinal psilocybin and MDMA-assisted therapies within the medical system to treat a range of mental illnesses. Mind Medicine Australia exists to help alleviate the suffering caused by our accelerating mental illness epidemic in Australia, through expanding the treatment options available to medical practitioners and their patients. Our focus is wholly clinical.