

## Media Alert: 26 June 2023 – Melbourne, Australia

### Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies are about to be available in Australia. What Does This Mean for Australia's Mental Healthcare System?

In just a few days psychiatrists will be able to apply to become Authorised Prescribers of MDMA and psilocybin. Authorised Prescribers will be able to [prescribe](#) these substances as part of therapy, in controlled clinical settings for patients with treatment-resistant depression (psilocybin) and treatment resistant post-traumatic stress disorder (MDMA). To become an Authorised Prescriber, psychiatrists are required to submit an application to a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

The TGA's Authorised Prescriber scheme is the culmination of Mind Medicine Australia's (MMA) rescheduling applications lodged in March 2022 and our objections to the interim decision lodged in November 2022. The decision to reschedule and implement a compassionate access pathway recognises the tens of thousands of Australians who actively supported rescheduling, and the fact that treatment resistant patients aren't benefitting from currently available treatments.

#### **What does this mean for Australia's mental healthcare system?**

A new and promising treatment approach is about to become available for patients with treatment resistant depression and PTSD. However, access will be limited in the early stages.

So, what can patients and healthcare providers who are interested in these therapies do?

#### **For patients**

Patients who are interested in accessing MDMA or psilocybin-assisted therapy can speak to their doctors, to let them know they want to know more about these promising treatments.

While very few doctors will be prescribing them to begin with, they will educate and train themselves much faster if they hear from patients who want to know more and need access to these treatments.

#### **For healthcare providers**

Healthcare providers who are interested in offering these therapies need to begin by getting trained.

MMA's Certificate in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies (CPAT) is the leading course in Australia offering healthcare professionals training in psychedelic-assisted therapies (PAT). The course was described by Professor David Nutt as the "best course in the world for educating people about how to use psychedelics" on ABC Radio National and features a [world class International Faculty](#). Many graduates have [described the course](#) as life-

changing and the most outstanding professional development program they have completed. It is important to note that psychedelic-assisted therapies require a multidisciplinary team approach, so that whilst psychiatrists will be screening patients and prescribing treatments where suitable, the actual treatments will be supervised by a range of therapists.

Our 2023 intakes begin in July and are fully subscribed. Upon graduating, another 120 clinicians will have successfully completed training in the delivery of psychedelic-assisted therapies. MMA is [accepting applications](#) for its 2024 cohorts.

### **For trained psychiatrists**

Psychiatrists who have undergone training in PAT will need to go through the application process to become an Authorised Prescriber and will then need to secure access to MDMA and psilocybin. MMA has prepared documentation to support psychiatrists who may not be familiar with the Authorised Prescriber application process.

In addition, MMA has arranged for psilocybin and MDMA to be supplied to Australian psychiatrists via a [partnership](#) with Optimi Health, a manufacturer of GMP psilocybin and MDMA based in Canada. Licensed pharmacists holding Schedule 8 permits will be responsible for holding and delivering the medicines around Australia. The supply chain will be tightly controlled at all times in strict accordance with Australian and State/Territory regulatory requirements.

Once psychiatrists are ready to begin delivering treatment, they may require guidance and supervision from experienced clinicians. MMA's supervision program will begin in July, offering graduates of the CPAT the opportunity to learn from some of the leading clinicians in the field globally. Supervisors include Dr William Richards (USA), Dr Ben Sessa (UK), Dr Lauren Macdonald (UK), Sara Reed (USA) and Dr Brian Richards (USA).

Clinicians interested in any of these resources can reach out to MMA.

In commenting on the way forward for Australia, Professor David Nutt, Head of Neuropsychopharmacology at Imperial College, said: *"This is a landmark day for the tens of thousands of Australian families who are blighted by depression and PTSD as they will have access to powerful new treatments with unique mechanisms of action. And congratulations to Australia for leading the world in this vital treatment innovation."*

Executive Director of MMA, Tania de Jong AM said: *"We are so pleased that some of the immense suffering being experienced in families, communities and organisations around the nation can be alleviated through these transformational therapies."*



Mind Medicine Australia is Australia's leading not-for-profit organisation working on the use of medicinal psilocybin and MDMA-assisted therapies to treat a range of mental illnesses. Mind Medicine Australia exists to help alleviate the suffering and suicides caused by our accelerating mental illness epidemic in Australia, through expanding the treatment options available to medical practitioners and their patients.

Visit: <https://mindmedicineaustralia.org/>

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- Professor Nutt is also available for interviews on request.