



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

Media Release

## **Mind Medicine Australia's Submission to the Productivity Commission's Mental Health Inquiry**

**Urgent Need to Establish a Government-Appointed Steering Group to Fast-Track Consideration of Medicine-Assisted Psychotherapies in Australia**

For immediate release: Monday, 24 February 2020

**Mind Medicine Australia (MMA), an Australian-registered charity established to support the development of research-backed and regulatory-approved medicine-assisted psychotherapy in Australia, has publicly released its written submission to the Australian Productivity Commission (APC) in relation to its current inquiry into mental health. The document can be read on the APC Commission website [here](#).**

MMA has recommended that a Steering Group be established as soon as possible to advise the Federal Government on the application of medicine-assisted psychotherapy in Australia and that the government support the establishment of a Centre of Excellence to maximise their potential application and the effectiveness of these psychotherapies in this country.

Medicine-assisted psychotherapies, using psilocybin for depression and MDMA for post-traumatic stress disorder, have both been granted breakthrough therapy designation by the Food and Drug Administration in the United States and are achieving high remission rates in overseas trials. Psychotherapies using these medicines are also being trialled for other mental illnesses, such as addiction, anorexia and obsessive-compulsive disorder. The medicines involved have a strong safety record when used in a clinically controlled environment.

Peter Hunt AM, Chair of MMA, says that that one of the main reasons for the high rates of mental illness in Australia (according to the APC Interim Report, today, one in five Australians are suffering from a mental illness) is a lack of effective treatment options. *"The APC has acknowledged that many of those who seek out mental health support in Australia are receiving an inadequate level of care. One of the fundamental reasons for this is a lack of treatment innovation. We believe that it's critical for the APC to explicitly recognise this in its Final Report and that its recommendations to the Government include the urgent establishment of a Steering Group to proactively investigate the introduction and application of Medicine-Assisted Psychotherapies. These therapies have a strong safety record when used in a medical environment and could help an enormous number of people, as shown by the extraordinarily high remission rates being achieved in clinical trials overseas."*

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Tania de Jong AM, Executive Director of MMA, believes that the remission rates that are achieved with Medicine-Assisted Psychotherapies could release vast financial resources to support Australians with other intractable mental illnesses and enable Australia to invest more in prevention measures. *“According to the Productivity Commission, the total direct and indirect costs of mental illness and suicide to the Australian economy is a staggering \$180 billion a year. This represents an enormous amount of suffering and emphasises the urgent need for new treatment options. Medicine-Assisted Psychotherapy is currently being made available in the United States, Israel, and Switzerland through special access schemes even before Phase 3 trials have been completed; such is the promise and safety associated with these psychotherapies. It’s time to bring these ground-breaking treatments to Australia in a properly controlled manner to help fix our country’s mental health crisis and relieve the suffering of so many people.”*

The APC, a national advisory body on microeconomic policy, regulation, as well as other social and environmental issues, is undertaking the inquiry into mental health to understand the role of its improvement in supporting economic participation and enhancing productivity and growth in Australia. The findings are to be delivered by the APC to the Federal Government in May 2020.

Visit [mindmedicineaustralia.org](http://mindmedicineaustralia.org) for more information about Medicine-Assisted Psychotherapy in Australia.

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