



MEDIA RELEASE: embargoed for June 1 2020

## **Mind Medicine Australia Announces First in Southern Hemisphere – Certificate in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies**

Mental health charity Mind Medicine Australia (MMA) has announced the, first of its kind in the southern hemisphere, Certificate in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies (CPAT). Mind Medicine Australia’s aims are to enable the development of regulatory-approved and research-backed psychedelic-assisted therapies for the treatment of mental ill-health in Australia. To this end, MMA has developed its own Certificate in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies in collaboration with leading relevant practitioners and organisations in the USA and UK.

One in five Australian adults suffer from a chronic mental health condition, and one in eight Australians (one in four older adults) are currently prescribed antidepressants, with deaths by suicide continuing to rise.\*<sup>123</sup> Experts warn that these numbers will increase significantly and a long-term mental health pandemic is looming in Australia that will potentially surpass the physical health impacts of the recent coronavirus.

The treatments involved in psychedelic-assisted therapies use psilocybin for the treatment of depression and anxiety, and MDMA for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and addiction alongside psychotherapy in medically controlled environments. Psychedelic-assisted therapies have been granted “breakthrough therapy designation” in the United States by the Food and Drug Administration to fast-track the approval process and are in Phase 3 trials. They are also available to doctors and their patients on a limited basis through expanded access schemes in the United States, Switzerland and Israel.

The MMA Certificate in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies will give qualified clinicians the additional skills and awareness they need in order to safely and successfully facilitate MDMA and psilocybin assisted therapies within the Australian healthcare system. The CPAT includes a mix of best-practice in face-to-face and online learning.

Renee Harvey, Manager of the Certificate in Psychedelic Therapies Program, says, “ ***The Certificate aims to develop clinicians’ skills in this field beyond academic knowledge, and to provide each individual participant an opportunity to build on their existing skills and experience, to incorporate working with individuals with mental health difficulties in safe and professional settings. Participants will bring their own experiences and skills into the practical***

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\*Impact before recent bushfires and current COVID-19 pandemic

<sup>1</sup> PsychWatch Australia, April 2019 with information from Department of Human Services, Canberra

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, National Health Survey First Results, cat. no. 4364.0.55.001, ABS, Canberra

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009, National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results, 4326.0, 2007. ABS: Canberra



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

***settings, will have the opportunity to learn directly from feedback and integrate these new elements into their own practice.***” Renee was a Clinical Psychologist in the NHS in the UK and was an Honorary Research Fellow at Imperial College London in the study of psilocybin for treatment resistant depression.

Given the impressive clinical evidence, subject to forthcoming data, this program will play a major part in responsibly preparing the Australian healthcare system for regulatory changes in the coming months and years. In the likely event that psychedelic-assisted therapies are registered as a new treatment in Australia, shortly there will be an immediate demand for clinicians trained in the safe and effective provision of psychedelic-assisted therapies at that time. Graduates of the CPAT program will be well positioned to meet this demand.

According to the Chairman of MMA, Peter Hunt AM, ***“A proactive approach to broadening the treatment options available for people who have a mental illness is desperately needed. This course will be the gold standard for the region for anyone wishing to practice in these ground-breaking mental health therapies.”***

Tania de Jong AM, Executive Director of MMA, says, ***“Unlike conventional treatments, which often require patients to endure years of daily medications and weekly support from a mental health professional, psychedelic-assisted therapies have achieved 60-80% remission rates after just two to three dosed sessions.<sup>4</sup> The medicines are considered very safe and effective when used in a medically-controlled environment and there have been no adverse events in over 110 recent trials. We are very excited about this program and already have a large waiting list of psychiatrists, psychologists, GPs and drug and addiction specialists waiting to register.”***

Registrations for the Certificate open on June 1. The application form is available on MMA’s website here: <https://mindmedicineaustralia.org/certificate-in-psychedelic-assisted-therapies/>

For further information on psychedelic-assisted-therapies, please visit the MMA website: [www.mindmedicineaustralia.org](http://www.mindmedicineaustralia.org)

**Renee Harvey, Peter Hunt AM, and Tania de Jong AM are available for interview.**

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<sup>4</sup> Griffiths, R. R., Johnson, M. W., Carducci, M. A., Umbricht, A., Richards, W. A., Richards, B. D., ... & Klinedinst, M. A. (2016). Psilocybin produces substantial and sustained decreases in depression and anxiety in patients with life-threatening cancer: A randomized double-blind trial. *Journal of psychopharmacology*, 30(12), 1181-1197.