



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

Media Alert: 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2021

## **Australia's Federal system blocking psychedelic treatments for mental illness.**

Mind Medicine Australia welcomes the Government's announcement to provide \$15 million for the development of innovative therapies for mental illness. Psychedelic-assisted therapies are showing very strong remission rates in overseas trials for conditions such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder and have been shown to be safe and non-addictive when used in a medically controlled environment.

The mental health situation in Australia is amongst the worst in the World so there is clearly a desperate need for treatment innovation. Many of the psychiatric pharmaceuticals currently being used as treatments are based upon discoveries made more than 50 years ago and there has been minimal innovation since then.

Commenting on the Government's announcement the Chairman of Mind Medicine Australia, Mr Peter Hunt AM, said that:

*"This is very exciting news and a recognition of the importance that the Government is placing on innovation in mental health treatments and the failure of current treatments for many suffering Australians.*

*However, we also urgently need the medical use of psilocybin as part of therapy for treatment resistant depression and the medical use of MDMA as part of therapy for treatment resistant PTSD to be rescheduled from Schedule 9 of the Poisons Standard (Prohibited Substances) to Schedule 8 (Controlled Medicines).*

*These medicines have been shown in overseas trials to be safe and non-addictive when used in medically controlled environments and are achieving very high remission rates. They should be available for use in our medical system across Australia with TGA approval on a case-by-case basis"*

Currently Australia is in the absurd situation that psychiatrists can get approvals from the TGA to use these medicines as part of psychotherapy in medically controlled environments for patients with treatment resistant depression and treatment resistant PTSD through the SAS-B pathway, but then can't use them because the State and Territories of Australia don't have any permit systems in place for these medicines whilst they remain in Schedule 9.

The Executive Director of Mind Medicine Australia, Tania de Jong AM commented that:

*"This absurd situation means an enormous amount of unnecessary suffering for people with treatment resistant depression and treatment resistant PTSD. There is plenty of safety and efficacy data from overseas trials to support the rescheduling and their use in Australia on a*



*case-by-case basis as occurs in other jurisdictions such as Canada, the United States, Israel and Switzerland”*

Mind Medicine Australia has applied to the TGA to have these medicines rescheduled as part of psychotherapy in medically controlled environments but the TGA has made an interim decision not to do this. Mind Medicine Australia has now put in detailed final submissions (<https://mindmedicineaustralia.org/tga>) dealing comprehensively with all of the issues that were raised by the TGA and is hopeful that the final decision will be supportive. The final decision will be announced by the TGA on the 22nd of April 2021.

Mr Hunt also commented that:

*“Unfortunately, conservative institutions like the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists are putting out information that is not based on an up-to-date analysis of overseas trial safety and efficacy data. We have offered to put the Royal College in touch with overseas experts in these treatments so that they can be better informed, but they have repeatedly refused to engage. We find this conduct extraordinarily frustrating given the depth of avoidable suffering in this country.”*

Mind Medicine Australia exists to help alleviate the suffering caused by mental illness in Australia through expanding the treatment options available to medical practitioners and their patients.

**Enquiries: (03) 8679 6015**

**For more information please visit: [www.mindmedicineaustralia.org](http://www.mindmedicineaustralia.org)**

**Please note the following are available for interview:**

- **Peter Hunt AM (MMA Chair)**
- **Tania de Jong AM (MMA Executive Director)**
- **Dr Simon Longstaff AO**, Executive Director of The Ethics Centre (**MMA Director**)
- **The Hon. Andrew Robb AO (MMA Director)** - Board Director of MMA and former Trade Minister to Australia who has had treatment resistant depression for 43 years.
- **Chris Barrie AC** - Board Director of MMA and former Head of the Armed Forces who says these treatments are the only hope for Veterans suffering with PTSD.
- **Dr Jamie Rickcord** - who received the first SAS-B approval for a GP to treat a patient with psilocybin-assisted therapy in northern NSW.
- **Michael Raymond** - Veteran in Canberra who has healed through these treatments
- **Dr Stuart Saker** – Psychiatrist from NSW, currently a participant in the first Certificate in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies

**For further information, or to arrange an interview, please contact Ilan Hayman [ilan@mindmedicineaustralia.org](mailto:ilan@mindmedicineaustralia.org) or Tania de Jong AM [tania@mindmedicineaustralia.org](mailto:tania@mindmedicineaustralia.org)  
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