



Media Release: 8th October 2020

Mind Medicine Australia Shines a Light on Breakthrough Therapies for Mental Health this Mental Health Month

This Mental Health Month we are calling on all Australians to [help us shine a light](#) on breakthrough therapies for the treatment of mental illness.

[Mind Medicine Australia](#), the Australian charity paving the way in psychedelic-assisted therapy, has launched a free online Webinar Series for the Australian public. World-leading experts are brought straight into Australia's living rooms for further discussion about the ground-breaking opportunity psychedelic-assisted therapies offer us in times when the mental health security of our nation is under increasing pressure.

In the 1950s and 60s, psychedelic treatments had a major impact on psychiatry, and many considered them the next big thing in mental health treatment. For political reasons, psychedelic research and therapy have been largely prohibited since the 1970's. Over the past decade, that research has finally begun again and is now reaching a tipping point.

The development of psilocybin and MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in Australia follows international research that has been so successful that the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted these medicines 'Breakthrough Therapy Designation'. This is only granted to medicines that indicate significant superiority to existing medicines. The FDA has also approved expanded access schemes to allow people in need to undertake these therapies ahead of the conclusion of clinical trials and is expected to give full regulatory approval for these treatments in the US in the coming year. These medicines have also been used in expanded access schemes in Switzerland and Israel, and the use of psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy for end of life depression and anxiety has recently been approved in Canada.

1 in 5 Australians will be diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime. 1 in 8 Australians are on anti-depressants. These statistics are only expected to deteriorate further with the bush fires of earlier this year and the current COVID- 19 pandemic. Deaths by suicide and self-harm continue to increase. We need new hope for Australia's ailing mental healthcare system. Mind Medicine Australia is shedding light on a conversation held in the dark for far too long.

Mind Medicine Australia has recently submitted Australia's first applications to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to reschedule Psilocybin and MDMA so that they can be more easily used as part of clinical therapies for the treatment of major classes of mental illness. The rescheduling would move these medicines from Schedule 9 of the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons (which deals with Prohibited Substances) to Schedule 8 (which deals with **Controlled Medicines**).

If successful, Australia will become the first country in the world to reschedule these substances for their therapeutic potential.



According to Mind Medicine Australia’s Chairman, **Peter Hunt AM**, **“A proactive approach to broadening the treatment options available for people who have a mental illness is desperately needed. The rescheduling of Psilocybin and MDMA will represent a giant-leap for innovation in mental healthcare, not only in Australia, but globally.”**

Board member and Executive Director of the Ethics Centre, **Dr Simon Longstaff AO** says, **“We should not allow the prejudices of the past to deny relief in the present. If these medicines are safe and effective when applied in a clinical environment, as current research suggests, then Australian governments have an obligation to make them available.”**

Tania de Jong AM, Executive Director, says, **“Unlike conventional treatments, which often require patients to endure years of daily medications and weekly support from a mental health professional, medicine-assisted psychotherapy using these medicines can be effective after just two to three clinically supervised sessions. The medicines are safe and non-addictive when administered within a medically-controlled environment.”**

Mind Medicine Australia is focused specifically on the clinical application of psilocybin-assisted therapy and MDMA-assisted therapy for the treatment of mental illness.

We do not advocate for non-clinical use of psychedelics or any other prohibited substances, nor do we advocate for any change to the law with respect to non-clinical use.

Mind Medicine Australia’s Board, Management team, Ambassadors, and Advisory Panel members consist of leading practitioners in the applied treatment of mental illness, psychedelic medical research, health strategy, ethics, and other relevant fields from both Australia and overseas.

Please visit mindmedicineaustralia.org or our [Campaign Page](#) for more information about our quest to introduce Medicine-Assisted Therapy to Australia.

Please note the following are available for interview:

- The Hon. Andrew Robb AO
- Peter Hunt AM
- Tania de Jong AM
- Dr Simon Longstaff AO

For further information, or to arrange an interview, please contact Ilan Hayman ilan@mindmedicineaustralia.org or Tania de Jong tania@mindmedicineaustralia.org or 0411 459 999.