



MEDIA RELEASE

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TOPIC: DRUG LAW REFORM MAY UNLOCK NEW MEDICINES

One of Australia's newest drug research organisations has expressed strong support for the Australia21 Illicit Drug Policy Report released this week. PRISM or Psychedelic Research in Science & Medicine is a non-profit organisation formed to investigate the potential health benefits of some Schedule 9 (Illicit) drugs.

PRISM President Martin Williams said: 'Recent overseas research into the therapeutic potential of drugs like MDMA, LSD and Marijuana has been extremely encouraging.'

'The social stigma which arose after prohibition meant that, although it was still technically legal to conduct research on illicit drugs people were very reluctant to do so, fearing it would affect their career or social standing. But we're now seeing a shift in public perception.' PRISM is currently planning a clinical trial of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy to treat Australian war veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder.

'We're working closely with the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) who have seen very favourable results from their initial MDMA trials in the USA and Switzerland. A recent three and a half year follow up study showed that the treatment benefits have been sustained over time.' Mr Williams said.

'Much of the research that's been done on illicit drugs was government funded and aimed at supporting existing policy by proving harms. This has given rise to some bad science, particularly in the case of MDMA where numerous observational studies have been published despite having no scientific evidence that the subjects actually took MDMA.'

'Due to prohibition, what's sold on the street as ecstasy or even explicitly as MDMA, may be a different substance altogether. This is one source of harm that could be greatly reduced through drug law reform leading to quality control.' Mr Williams said.

Drugs such as LSD and MDMA have been used in psychotherapy in the past. In fact the term 'psychedelic' (from the Greek 'soul-manifesting') was coined by American psychiatrist Humphrey Osmond in 1957, in reference to the potential therapeutic applications of this class of drugs.

Mr Williams said: 'PRISM looks forward to participating in a wider public debate about drug law reform. As well as reducing harms for recreational users, law reform may also unlock some very effective medicines that are currently off limits.'

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