

Seven

ALL YOUR NORTH COAST ENTERTAINMENT

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COME ON THE TRIP OF COMPASSION

TANIA DE JONG AND PETER HUNT ARE THE TRAILBLAZING FOUNDERS OF MIND MEDICINE, a not-for-profit organisation committed to promoting the development of research-based and regulatory-approved psychedelic medicines in Australia. Forget the negative press, clinical trials around the world indicate that when properly used, psychedelic medicines can have massive positive impacts and provide long-lasting solutions for the millions of people who suffer from mental illness.

'Our goal' says Tania, 'has been to create charities that are scalable, that can create systemic change. There is no health without mental health. We were fortunate to come across an article of Michael Pollan called The Trip Treatment. It was all about a person with mental illness who had healed his mind using psilocybin. My husband Peter and I have never done drugs. I thought – we need to try this medicine. We were lucky enough to work with a therapist in the Netherlands to take us through a session in a guided environment. It was so profound in terms of oneness and reconnecting ourselves to community. We all carry trauma – I am the daughter of a Holocaust survivor. The experience we had had an enormous impact on our wellbeing.'

They aren't talking 'micro dosing' – the technique of brain enhancement that has become big for Silicone Valley Entrepreneurs. They are talking about supervised medical treatments.

'The medical dose takes you to an altered state where you see yourself as a whole rather than an isolated being – it's really profound and healing,' says Tania.

'We did it again a year later and it was even more profound, so I connected with people around the world, and went to conferences and events, and I started performing and speaking at some events.

'Peter and I had been going to divest ourselves of a lot of our projects because we were full-up and there was no way we were going to start another charity, but this was so compelling, and we had the opportunity to create a real shift and a systemic change in the treatment of mental illness.'

Tania is passionate about the effectiveness of these treatments.

'SSRI's [Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors] and antidepressants came in [to use] over 40 years ago – they talk about diet and they talk about other things, while

antidepressants have remission rates of around 30%, MDMA and psilocybin are over double that at 60–70%.

'One of two of us will suffer from mental health issues, with so many on antidepressants, and with suicide rates rising, it's unethical to withhold effective treatments from people,' says Tania.

These treatments are currently illegal in Australia, but legal in places like Holland.

Mind Medicine Australia will be screening *Trip of Compassion* – the Israeli documentary that shows the use of these psychedelic-assisted therapies and their success.

A Q&A with Tania and her co-founder and husband Peter Hunt, and a panel, will follow the screening. This is groundbreaking stuff, giving hope to many who have had little success with current available medications.

Results from Phase 2 clinical trials over the past decade have been so compelling that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States recently designated MDMA-assisted psychotherapy as a 'breakthrough therapy'. This designation highlights the FDA's anticipation that these therapies may offer a substantial advantage over current treatments. If forthcoming Phase 3 results confirm these

treatments are effective, MDMA-assisted treatment of PTSD may be prescribed as early as 2021 in some jurisdictions of the USA.

That being the case, with Australia following in the footsteps of the US, it soon may also be an available treatment here. For Tania and Peter it's part of their mission to lobby and create conversation about this treatment to ensure that people who suffer get the best help they can.

Trip of Compassion is presented by Mind Medicine Australia, followed by a Q&A with Peter Hunt and Tania de Jong at the Byron Theatre, at the Community Centre, Saturday 7 March, at 8pm. Bookings: byroncentre.com.au.

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 Tania de Jong



the northern

WED 4 JACK BOTTS, JAZZ IN THE RESTAURANT
THUR 5 THE SWAMPS
SAT 7 SAN MEI + THE RUIINS
SUN 8 MOLLY ON VINYL, SARAH GRANT
MON 9 JAFFER
TUES 10 MARSHALL OKELL

THIS-FRIDAY
BELLIGERENT GOAT
THE SQUIDLICKERS
THE CASSOWARYS
COUCH WIZARD
FREE ENTRY

coming soon

13 MAR HOLLI COL
14 MAR TEENAGE DADS & THE MOVING STILLS
19 MAR THE EAST POINTERS
20 MAR THE GROGANS
21 MAR PASIFLOREZ
29 MAR AINT THAT SWELL

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