



Mindfulness, Empathy & Compassion:

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A MINDFUL NATION

Report of a forum held at
The University of Melbourne

10 June 2016



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FOREWORD

As the Honorary President of the UK Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group, I want to express my congratulations to Australia21 who, with others are working to bring Australia into the global discussions on the application of mindfulness into government, business and community sectors.

The UK All-Party Parliamentary Mindfulness group was set up to review the scientific evidence and current best practice in mindfulness training; develop policy recommendations for government, based on these findings; provide a forum for discussion in Parliament and beyond for the role of mindfulness and its implementation in public policy.

The Mindful Nation UK report, outlined a number of evidence-based recommendations sourced directly from experienced implementers, that urged policymakers to invest resources in further pilot studies and increase public access to qualified trainers.

Through the Mindfulness Initiative, I am pleased to say that now, well over fifty percent of these recommendations have now been implemented in health, education, and criminal justice sectors.

This Australia21 forum included empathy and compassion alongside mindfulness and with the current level of political uncertainty in the world these issues need urgent attention in creating a better future for all.

I look forward to working with the Australian group who will provide the framework and resources to progress this important initiative alongside the other initiatives already occurring throughout the world.



Chris Ruane

Honorary President, UK Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group

AUSTRALIA21 CHAIR COMMENTS

Australia21 is a public interest think tank, founded some fifteen years ago, which brings multidisciplinary and independent thinking to bear on issues which we believe are important to Australian society. Its underlying purpose is to help deliver a fair, sustainable and inclusive future for all Australians.

On 10 June 2016, Australia21 held its forum Mindfulness, Empathy and Compassion: The Building Blocks of a Mindful Nation at The University of Melbourne.

With a key focus on multifaceted problems, Australia21 pursues solutions which often require new frameworks of analysis, policy design and implementation. It is not surprising then that one of our major current projects is reviewing the new learning from neuroscience on the skill of mindfulness, the competency of empathy, and the motivation of compassion in the decision making of Australia's political, industry, health, education and community sectors.

Through our own expertise and networks we draw on the latest research and the best thinking in areas as diverse as youth wellbeing, Australian resilience, inequality, assisted dying or asylum seeker policy.

The diverse expertise of the speakers at this forum exemplified our approach which is always guided by the evidence, drawn from the widest possible range of relevant disciplines.

The Australia21 Board strongly supports the work being undertaken by its fellow Directors, in particular, Dr Lynne Reeder who is leading this Australia21 project, and Mike Waller, Dr David Morawetz, Lyn Stephens and Young Australia21 representative Rebecca Bunn – they along with Debbie Ling, Dr Liz Temple, Kylie Marks, and Dr Lisa Petheram were involved in organising this forum and developing this report.

I thank them all for their contributions, and thank the University of Melbourne for its support in the staging of the forum.

The Board looks forward to reviewing the forum outcomes and their anticipated impact within Australia and across the world.



Paul Barratt AO
Chair, Australia21

1. BACKGROUND TO THE FORUM

1.1 Forum Overview

The premise of this forum, held on 10 June 2016, was that while mindful, empathic and compassionate approaches can be valuable for individuals, they also offer wide-ranging benefits for government, business, and society as a whole.

The objective of this forum was to investigate how to apply the skill of mindfulness, the competency of empathy, and the motivation of compassion into the decision making of Australia's political, industry, health, education, cultural and community sectors by bringing together leading thinkers, policy makers, practitioners and researchers in these areas.

As neuroscience reveals more about the workings of the brain – we are better placed to understand our mind and improve our interpersonal skills. This new science highlights the potential importance of mindful, empathic and compassionate behaviour in increasing personal, organisational and societal wellbeing.

Research also shows that mindfulness, empathic and compassionate practices can reduce stress, lessen professional burnout, de-escalate emotional states and improve communication skills. This research is bringing a renewed emphasis on the role they can play in improving social connections and in facilitating the decision making capabilities now required for a more challenging policy landscape.

1.2 Forum Presenters

The topics covered at this day-long forum focused on mindfulness, empathy and compassion as they apply to economics, management, political decision making, culture, health, mental health, and education. There were two overseas speakers and seven Australian speakers. Over eighty people attended the forum.

The international speakers who addressed these issues were:

- Dr Dan Martin, Professor of Management at the of California State University and an Adjunct Professor at Stanford University's Centre for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education;
- Chris Ruane, Honorary President of the UK Mindfulness All Party Parliamentary Group, and a Welsh Labour Party politician who was the Member of Parliament for the Vale of Clwyd from 1997 to 2015.

The Australian speakers included:

- Dr Nicholas Gruen, CEO of Lateral Economics and Chair of The Australian Centre for Social Innovation and The Open Knowledge Foundation;
- Dr Lynne Reeder, Director of Australia21, is researching empathy as a policy resource and trained as a meditation teacher with Deepak Chopra;
- Lior, one of Australia's most successful singer-songwriters and with Nigel Westlake composed the Compassion Symphony;
- Assoc Prof Craig Hassed, senior Lecturer in the Department of General Practice and coordinates all mindfulness programs at Monash University;
- Jack Heath, CEO of the national mental health charity SANE Australia. SANE has been operating for 30 years and Jack has been its CEO since 2012;
- John Hendry, staff member at Geelong Grammar School since 1980 and current Director of Student Welfare;
- Dr Liz Temple, senior lecturer in psychology at Federation University Australia with almost twenty years' experience researching aspects of wellbeing.

1.3 Neuroscience – a game changer for mindfulness, empathy and compassion

New understandings of how the mind works have implications for how we approach mindfulness, empathy and compassion (MEC).

The research is showing that being able to calmly manage our thoughts, feelings and emotions and then take our time to respond, allows the part of the brain that makes executive decisions to moderate the automatic and survival reactions, that evolution has programed into the emotional brain. Mindfulness, underpinned by empathy and compassion assists us in making conscious choices, rather than automatic and often threat-based reactions.

Training in mindfulness, empathy and compassion has the potential to improve policy outcomes far more broadly. In today's interdependent, yet very uncertain world, it could be argued that policy challenges require an ability to become more aware of and sensitive to the suffering of others. It would seem, for that to happen, the competencies and perspective taking inherent in mindfulness, empathy and compassion need to be intentionally included and rewarded in policy and decision making settings.

2. COMPONENTS OF A MINDFUL NATION

2.1 Overview

The concept of mindfulness has pervaded popular culture as an antidote to our increasingly fast-paced, tech-heavy lifestyles. But its application has far more potential than colouring books and inspiring Facebook memes, and indeed requires a depth of approach that is sometimes lacking in contemporary attitudes to mindfulness. Internationally, work is already underway on developing mindful nations in particular in the UK and the US. This work has at its basis that while a mindful approach can be valuable for individuals, it also offers wide-ranging benefits for government, business and society.

This forum explored the components of a mindful nation by focusing on mindfulness, empathy and compassion. Presenters at the forum highlighted that more discussion needs to be had on the contemporary understandings of mindfulness, empathy and compassion, improved clarification of how MEC is helpful to societal institutions, and investigation of the ways to better implement MEC in policy making.

2.2 Mindfulness as a Skill

In recent years there has been a huge increase in academic research on mindfulness with hundreds of peer-reviewed scientific journal papers now being published every year. In addition developments in neuroscience and psychology are illuminating the mechanisms of mindfulness. At its source mindfulness means paying attention to what's happening in the present moment in the mind, body and external environment, with an attitude of an observer. This innate human ability is the essence of composure and the source of high performance.

Mindfulness has been identified as having a number of components including: awareness, presence, alignment and non-judgement.

One definition of mindfulness is *paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.*" Professor Jon Kabat-Zinn

2.3 Empathy as a Competency

Empathy is an essential competency in social relations and in recent times there has been considerable research on empathy within a range of disciplines including neuroscience, biology, economics, evolutionary biology, psychology and civic engagement. Cultural historian Roman Krznaric, refers to empathy as an 'essential, transforming quality we must develop for the 21st century'. He contends that we should move beyond empathy in individual exchanges towards a collective empathy and the role that plays in tackling the confronting problems of our age.

Empathy has been viewed as having a number of components, including:

1. Emotional sharing – i.e. a capacity to share another's emotions, and is the simplest form of empathy;
2. Empathic concern – i.e. the motivation to care for another's welfare, and involves the neural circuitry to respond to infants to keep the species alive;
3. Perspective taking – i.e. the ability to consciously put oneself into the mind of another and is linked to cognitive and social reasoning.

One definition of empathy is *the art of stepping into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives and using that understanding to guide your actions* – Dr Roman Krznaric

2.4 Compassion as a Motivation

In recent years there has been a global focus on compassion with the development of the Charter for Compassion which has been supported by countries around the world. There has also been significant recent research into the neural correlates of compassion, effects of compassion on brain and behaviour and courses developed to cultivate compassion, including by the Centre for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE) at Stanford University and the Compassionate Mind Foundation at the University of Derby.

Professor Paul Gilbert, Director, Compassionate Mind Foundation who has undertaken significant inquiry on compassion, writes that compassion is strongly correlated with wellbeing and improved psychological functioning. He considers that both the recognition of our interdependence and the increase in scientific data demonstrating the significant benefits of empathic and integrated behaviour are important components in progressing societal wellbeing. Prof Gilbert has a number of components of compassion, including:

- Care for well-being
- Sensitivity
- Sympathy
- Distress tolerance
- Empathy
- Non-judgement

One definition of compassion is *being sensitive to the suffering of others with a deep commitment to try and prevent or relieve it* – Professor Paul Gilbert

2.5 Neuroscience Informing Ethical Considerations

For thousands of years religious and spiritual traditions have included mindfulness, meditation, empathy and compassion in their practices, and of course still do.

But now the science of the brain, mind and consciousness is providing an improved understanding of the way in which our minds, thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviours all impact each other.

When applied with the motivation of compassion - mindfulness and empathy provide positive outcomes. But we also know that mindfulness and empathy in particular, do not necessarily provide a direct path to moral choices. In fact, mindful attentiveness can sometimes be a source of dishonest action by favouring self-interest. In addition, adopting the perspective of someone from another social group is cognitively demanding. We also need to be aware of the downside in personal development, for example deep empathy with others can activate a high level of attentiveness to potential dangers which can be emotionally tiring.

Incorporating the learning from neuroscience and emotional regulation will assist in addressing the potential negatives of how we can apply mindfulness, empathy and compassion to ourselves and others. This is why the presence of mindfulness, the perspective taking of empathy, and the sensitivity motivation of compassion are all important in overcoming the shortfalls that each on their own can deliver.

If we can manage this integration then mindfulness, empathy and compassion all have a role to play in developing new and more ethical approaches to leadership and decision making in government, business, education, health, and community development.

3. ASPECTS OF MINDFUL INSTITUTIONS

3.1 Introduction

The forum explored experiences from different domains of practice (education/young people, mental health, social policy, the intersection of public policy and markets, music) and different geographies (Australia, the UK, the US) to examine questions around mindfulness, empathy and compassion.

The forum speakers confirmed that MEC practices are already being applied in a range of sectors and these include:

- Companies and organisations providing training in empathy, emotion regulation and mindfulness to their staff;
- Mental health support for conditions such as depression, anxiety, panic disorder, stress, sleep problems, reduced burnout, PTSD;
- Political environments where politicians are bringing mindfulness practices into parliaments;
- Children's health where music is being introduced into hospital settings as a therapeutic intervention;
- Neuroscience in structural and functional changes in the brain, possible prevention of dementia and cognitive decline; improved executive functioning and working memory, reduced default mental activity;
- Criminal justice where mindfulness classes are being increasingly offered in prisons;
- Clinical applications for pain management, symptom control, coping with chronic illness, facilitating lifestyle change (e.g. weight management, smoking cessation), improved immunity (e.g. improved resistance, reduced inflammation);
- Performance improvement through improved leadership qualities, mental flexibility and problem solving, decision-making;

- School and educational facilities introducing MEC related practices to students for improved problem-solving, memory, better focus, and fewer behavioural problems;
- Professional development in the professions, where empathy and compassion training are being included in undergraduate degree curriculum;
- Personal relationships for greater emotional intelligence and empathy, and improved communication.

The Sections 3.2-3.9 provide a few points from each presenter to give a flavour of the topics covered:

3.2 Management and Decision making

Dr Dan Martin spoke about the challenges of the work place where social dominance orientation can be explicit, stating that the importance of empathic listening in leadership, active listening & inspiring leadership is becoming more important, particularly as companies and governments are now operating globally. The issues he covered included:

- Basic and applied research in compassion development, its measurement and applications is developing but there is much more work to do in these areas;
- Business students appear predisposed to select disciplines consistent with pre-existing worldviews. These disciplines (e.g., economics) then further reinforce the worldviews which may not always be adaptive. For example, high levels of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) is a trait often found in business school students (Sidanius et al., *Political Psychol* 12(4):691–721, 1991);
- SDO is a competitive and hierarchical worldview and belief-system that ascribes people to higher or lower social rankings. While research suggests that high levels of SDO may be linked to lower levels of empathy, research has not established the potential relationship between another related adaptive trait in the workplace, compassion. Compassion facilitates workplace performance by lowering levels of litigation, easing stress, and facilitating cooperation;
- He mentioned his study aimed to examine the relationship between SDO and compassion while hypothesizing Economic Systems Justification (ESJ) would mediate this relationship. Because of the importance of compassion in the workplace, the relevance of SDO in the business academic community the study was with business school students;
- Dr Martin is currently applying this approach in Mexico with students for improved retention and decreasing racial bias and tension;
- In Sweden with businesses/Leaders/CEOs/VPs of HR and; in the USA with healthcare providers nurses/universities/middle schools.

3.3 Economics and Public Goods

Dr Nicholas Gruen proposed that broadly speaking there are two modes of human thought and being which can be distinguished – 1) is rationally calculating and well suited to objective goal-seeking and 2) is affective and empathetic towards others. He noted:

- We understand ourselves as some organic mix of these qualities to drive the economic progress now requiring new public goods;
- However, though affect and empathy are the qualities that make human cooperation within organisations possible, those qualities lead a kind of shadow life within them - omnipresent but denied and deprecated;
- He identified some new practices that are helping to recover the world of empathy so as to rebuild social capital where it is damaged, including those around human centeredness and design, including those being developed through the Australian Centre for Social Innovation.

- And spoke about the fractal ecology of public and private goods, noting that we need to better manage both cooperation and competition when developing improved approaches to public goods.

3.4 Policy Making

As a Director of Australia21, Lynne Reeder presented the findings from a recent pilot study on empathy conversations as a policy resource, which looked at a method for creating empathic exchanges between one group in a position to influence policy development and another experiencing financial and employment difficulties. Topics covered:

- This pilot study was considered important because although the capacity to understand another's perspective has been examined for its influence on social relationships, its potential impact on the policymaking process has largely been overlooked;
- The study asked participants in positions to influence policy, to have a guided 'empathy' conversation with government service users experiencing financial difficulty;
- Each participant was provided with background training in mindfulness and emotion regulation, based on the research from Professor Paul Gilbert's work at the UK Compassionate Mind Foundation;
- Participants reported the conversation enabled the two parties to make a connection, improving the influencers' capacity to understand the positions and needs of the other participants, and make decisions accordingly;
- The pilot study validated the results of research and overseas experience that indicates that using empathy and mindfulness as considered tools can deliver direct access to a range of diverse, lived experiences and hence provide enhanced information on which to base fully considered decisions. This applies equally to public and private sector decision-makers.

3.5 Culture and Creativity

Lior sang live from the "Compassion Symphony", which he composed in collaboration with Nigel Westlake. The Symphony has been performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House. In conversation with Lynne Reeder, Lior talked about the creation of the songs as coming from a collection of ancient proverbs, writings and poetry.

- Music was included in this forum because our creativity is a vital component of our ability to connect with others – we need imagination in order to link with others;
- Music has a role to play in 'turning on' our parasympathetic nervous system – which is responsible for calming and soothing us;
- Hospitals are ever more including music as a healing resource, particularly for children and those in palliative care;
- That means engaging in practices such as mindfulness, walks in nature, and listening to music which can de-stress us and allow for us to connect to our creative selves.

3.6 Health and Professional Development

Assoc Prof Craig Hassed stated that mindfulness is the most important life-skill we will ever develop. Mindfulness has many and varied applications including for better mental and physical health, resilience, performance, memory, communication, empathy and emotional intelligence. Craig's presentation noted:

- He said that for these and other reasons mindfulness therefore is of great relevance in professional education for teacher and students alike;
- Noting that mindfulness has been in the Monash medical curriculum on a limited scale since 1991 and then on a larger scale since 2002. It is currently core curriculum in 12 different degree courses at Monash;

- Craig also referenced research relating to burnout and mental health in new medical graduates - 73% (of interns) met criteria for psychiatric morbidity on at least one occasion Willcock SM et al. Burnout and psychiatric morbidity in new medical graduates. Med J Aust. 2004;181(7):357-60.) He also noted that one of the major causes of death in the US and similarly in Australia is medical error. For these reasons mindfulness training has been incorporated into medical training at Monash for over 25 years. However, this still has a way to go to be more widely accepted.

3.7 Mental Health

Jack Heath, CEO of SANE reflected that there is now much greater awareness, normalisation and compassion around mental health than there was just a few years ago. He noted that a recent government initiative called for parity of esteem between mental and physical health. Topics he covered included:

- While beliefs may have started to change, there is a way to go to improve access to high quality mental health services, reflecting that given how frequently mental and physical health problems co-occur there is a long way to go before we have integrated services;
- He said that many environments in which we learn, work and house our most vulnerable citizens could do much more to promote good mental health. Mindfulness practices are being increasingly used in mental health services across Australia as well as universities, schools and leading corporations;
- Importantly mindfulness has been shown to improve wellbeing for people with complex mental illness and histories of severe trauma. Yet mainstream mental health policy is yet to appreciate the critical and cost-effective contribution that mindfulness and associated practices can make to improving lives in times of financial constraint.
- Speaking to his links with Chris Ruane, Jack noted that at a grassroots level, mindfulness is growing fast but public policy on the issue is lagging far behind the United Kingdom where the Oxford Mindfulness Centre has been operating for eight years;
- As CEO of SANE, Jack recommended that mindfulness needs to be a key element in the 5th National Mental Health plan currently under development.

3.8 Education and Schools

In conversation with Dr Liz Temple (Psychology lecturer, Federation University), John Hendry (Former Director of Student Welfare at Geelong Grammar School), noted that MEC supports the development of good mental and physical health and teaching young people the importance of this is vital. So much so that it will soon become unthinkable that children will to get to adulthood without being taught mindfulness and emotion regulation skills.

Issues they covered included:

- That Geelong Grammar School's Positive Education Program has included the introduction of mindfulness and behavioural policies centred upon kindness and forgiveness, guided by two principles based on the Hippocratic Oath and the Golden Rule. The well-being of students is essential to learning and life management.
- Through their daily contact with young people many teachers see the need for schools to provide the knowledge and skills associated with MEC to enable young people to flourish and develop intellectually and morally.
- John said that this program aligns the purpose of education with the complex adaptive needs of the 21st century to take a lead role in emphasizing skills for wellbeing as an appropriate goal of education as well as an enabler for academic success.

3.9 Political Systems

In his presentation the Honorary President of the UK Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group, Chris Ruane told the forum that Mindful Nation UK was the culmination of several years' work to bring mindfulness training into British politics: first by introducing politicians to the practice, and then by exploring its relevance to public life, in the form of a Parliamentary inquiry. Topics covered included:

- More than a hundred MPs and members of the House of Lords have taken a mindfulness course in Parliament and hundreds more witnesses—researchers, teachers, public policy makers and course participants all contributed. Mindful Nation UK examined the role that mindfulness could play in areas of public policy, such as health, education, the workplace and criminal justice.
- The recent Mindfulness All Party Parliamentary Group publication of the UK Mindful Nation Report called for mindfulness to play a role in health, education, workplaces and the criminal justice system and called on policy makers to action a series of tractable recommendations.
- Chris Ruane reiterated that the group was aware that the current popularity of mindfulness is running ahead of the research evidence in some areas, and have tried to steer a balanced course midst the claims and counterclaims reported in the media, concluding that while it is not a panacea, mindfulness does appear to offer benefits across a wide range of contexts.

4. MINDFULNESS, EMPATHY AND COMPASSION IN ACTION

4.1 Sample of current MEC activities

There are already many initiatives around the world focusing on mindfulness, empathy and compassion.

For example in the United States, mindfulness is on the political radar, with Congressman Tim Ryan having established 'Mindfulness on Capitol Hill' and written a book *Mindful Nation: How a Simple Practice Can Help Us Reduce Stress, Improve Performance, and Recapture the American Spirit*. In addition mindfulness practices were established in the Dutch Parliament and the Welsh Assembly in 2014.

As referenced earlier, in 2015, the Mindfulness All Party Parliamentary Group in the UK released its report Mindful National UK⁷ which recommended that "UK government departments should encourage the development of mindfulness programs for staff in the public sector – in particular in health, education, and criminal justice, to combat stress and improve organisational effectiveness". Group president Chris Ruane, himself a former MP, is working with the Mindfulness Centre at Oxford University to train UK parliamentarians in mindfulness.

⁷ http://thefmindfulnessinitiative.org.uk/images/reports/Mindfulness-APPG-Report_Mindful-Nation-UK_Oct2015.pdf

Many Australian and international organisations are also involved in work on mindfulness, empathy and compassion - this is an indicative list of that work:

Research Institutes focusing on Mindfulness, Empathy and Compassion:

Centre for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts

<http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm>

Centre for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford University

<http://ccare.stanford.edu/>

Centre for Healthy Minds at University of Wisconsin – Madison

<http://centerhealthyminds.org/>

Greater Good Science Center at University of California, Berkeley

<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

Compassionate Mind Foundation UK

<http://compassionatemind.co.uk/>

Community Initiatives

Charter for Compassion – global movement for compassion

<http://www.charterforcompassion.org/>

Charter for Compassion, Australia

www.charterforcompassion.org.au

Empathy Nation

<https://www.facebook.com/empathynation>

UQ compassion

<https://www.psy.uq.edu.au/compassion/>

Empathy and Compassion in society

<https://www.facebook.com/EmpathyandCompassioninSociety>

The School of Life

theschooloflife.com.au

Empathy Library

<http://empathylibrary.com/>

Health

Compassion Focused Therapy developed by British psychologist Paul Gilbert

<http://compassionatemind.co.uk>

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy - treatment of choice by the NHS in United Kingdom.

<http://oxfordmindfulness.org>

FutureLearn

<https://www.futurelearn.com>

Open Ground

<http://www.openground.com.au>

Mindfulness Training Institute Australasia

<http://www.mtia.org.au>

Anxiety Online / Mental Health Online Platform & five 12 module CBT anxiety treatment programs

www.anxietyonline.org.au

www.mentalhealthonline.org.au

Education

Roots of Empathy educational program in schools has been delivered to 500,000 children around the world since 1996.

<http://www.rootsofempathy.org/>

Government

115 UK parliamentarians undertook mindfulness classes in 2015

http://themindfulnessinitiative.org.uk/images/reports/Mindfulness-APPG-Report_Mindful-Nation-UK_Oct2015.pdf

Mindful Nation US

<https://www.facebook.com/MindfulNation>

Industry

Companies such as NAB/IBM/Google providing their employees training based on mindfulness, emotional intelligence and neuroscience

<http://searchinsideyourself.com.au>

Mindful Leadership Forum 2016 - leading minds share best practice on developing a focused mind and building an energised work culture, etc

http://mindfulleadershipforum.com/2016/?utm_source=news&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=mlf

Curriculum development

Mindfulness is embedded curriculum in many degree courses now at Monash e.g. in Medicine, Physiotherapy, Nursing, OT, Dietetics, Pharmacy, Nursing, IT, Psychology, Law, MBA, Education – this varies from 6-week courses to one-off introductory sessions. Also Mindfulness for Academic Success for all students and Postgraduate programs. Programs for staff including CEED, Train-the-Trainer and Academic Heads induction programs online resources and, MOOCs.

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/mindfulness-wellbeing-performance>

Apps

A21 Empathy App

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=subzdesigns.empathy>

Smiling Mind mindfulness App

<http://smilingmind.com.au/>

5. FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR MEC IN AUSTRALIA

5.1 Closing statement

This forum was an attempt to present and canvass opinions from a range of sectors on the role mindfulness, empathy and compassion have to play in the public and private sectors. It was clear that there is significant interest in investigating how we can incorporate MEC into Australia's political, industry, health, education and community sectors.

The feedback from the forum highlighted the complexity of these areas and that there is an urgent need for more discussion, collaboration and examination of how MEC can be applied, the barriers to implementation and consideration of top down/bottom up approaches etc. In today's world companies and governments will be better served if there is greater awareness and understanding of the benefits of MEC and how these can be implemented.

Therefore Australia21 recognises that it would be of great benefit if a body could take the lead in developing a more systemic approach to integrating MEC into Australia.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Working with other like-minded groups, Australia21 takes a lead role in co-ordinating work on MEC in the Australian context by:

- Establishing an Australian mindfulness, empathy and compassion network, which links to international groups working in similar areas;
- Sponsoring additional forums and dialogues to network more widely with stakeholders, decision makers and policy makers across sectors to discuss issues such as:
 - Further discussions around new approaches to mindfulness, empathy and compassion, their relative importance and how to implement them in organisational practice;
 - Address the practical challenges facing individuals and organisations in adopting mindfulness, empathy and compassion as keystone behaviours;
 - Examine the barriers to implementation, despite the existence of compelling evidence of its positive impacts and the existence of recognised centres of expertise/practitioners;
 - The degree to which existing economic, political and social incentives and reward systems are consistent with the widespread adoption of MEC frameworks in ethical decision making;
 - The extent to which mindfulness practices and training in empathy and compassion necessarily lead to changes in behaviours;
 - The appropriate balance between top down promotions/interventions to implementation (for example, the use of high profile “champions”, policies, standards, education programs) and bottom up approaches (pilot projects, forums, personal advocacy).²

2. A21 to develop a designated page on its website to share information on the demonstrated benefits of in MEC, including the use of free tools, Apps, etc;

3. Research and disseminate outcomes on MEC in Australia with government and industry partners (for example on a larger empathy conversations project);

4. Noting the process that the Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group went through to develop the Mindful Nation UK report - give consideration to supporting a similar process where large scale consultation with a range of stakeholders is undertaken to explore ways in which MEC can be incorporated in the Australian context. (Appendix 3 provides a list of the eight UK parliamentary hearings which were held on topics including workplace, health, education, policing).

² These suggestions are based on feedback from participants – who were sent out a survey a week after the forum

Appendix 1 - Speaker Bios (in order of presentation)

DR DAN MARTIN - Social Psychologist with over 20 years national/international experience as human resources/industrial/organizational/ psychology consultant and researcher for wide range of organizations. High volume of research, publishing, consulting and teaching. Consulting with organizations in EEO, selection, training, compensation, job analysis, performance management, evaluation and recruitment. Web based psychological interventions - research on compassion, discrimination, legal and business ramifications of social environment.

DR NICHOLAS GRUEN - is a policy economist, entrepreneur and commentator on our economy, society and innovation. He advised two cabinet ministers in the 1980s and 90s, taught at ANU and sat on the Productivity Commission (then Industry Commission) from 1993 to 1997. He directed the New Directions project at the Business Council from 1997 to 2000. He is CEO of Lateral Economics and Chair of The Australian Centre for Social Innovation and The Open Knowledge Foundation (Australia). He also chaired the Federal Government's Innovation Australia till 2014 and in 2009 chaired the Government 2.0 Taskforce.

DR LYNNE REEDER - is a Director of Australia21. She completed her PhD at Monash University, where she examined the international relations theory of global interdependence. She is a member of the global compassion e-discussion group run by the Compassionate Mind Foundation at the University of Derby, UK. Recently she completed a research study on the potential of empathy conversations to be considered as a policy resource. She trained as a meditation teacher with Deepak Chopra in the US, and currently teaches meditation to patients at a regional hospital-based Wellness Centre and to students at a regional university. With a long standing interest in meditation and its influence on the brain and nervous system she also runs workshops on mindfulness based on learning from neuroscience.

LIOR – is one of Australia's most successful singer-songwriters, renowned for his beautiful voice and songs that radiate truth and sincerity. His debut album - 'Autumn Flow' was recorded and released entirely independently, the album was spearheaded by the much loved and timeless opening track 'This Old Love'. 'Autumn Flow' went on to become one of the most successful independent debut albums in Australian music history. Many accolades followed, including three ARIA nominations including Best Male Artist, as well as Triple J's prestigious 'J Award' nomination for Australian Album of the Year. In April 2015, Lior was invited as the sole Australian artist to perform at the prestigious 100 year anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli in Turkey, performing his song 'Safety of Distance' with the Gallipoli choir leading in to the dawn service.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR CRAIG HASSED - works at the Department of General Practice and is coordinator of mindfulness programs at Monash University. His teaching, research and clinical interests include mindfulness-based stress management, mind-body medicine, meditation, health promotion, integrative medicine and medical ethics. He was the founding president of the Australian Teachers of Meditation Association and is a regular media commentator. He writes regularly for medical journals and has published eleven books; "New Frontiers in Medicine", "Know Thyself" on mindfulness-based stress management, "The Essence of Health" on the lifestyle approach to health and chronic illness, a textbook co-authored with Kerryn Phelps, "General Practice: the integrative approach", a book written with Stephen McKenzie, "Mindfulness for Life", a book written with Richard Chambers, "Mindful Learning" on the role of mindfulness in education, a book on epigenetics titled "Playing the genetic hand life dealt you" and "The Mindful Home" with Deirdre Hased. Craig

also featured in the documentary, *The Connection* and wrote the companion e-book, "The Mindfulness Manual" and co-authored with Richard Chambers a free online Mindfulness course in collaboration with Monash University and FutureLearn. Craig's most recent book with Patricia Dobkin, "Mindful Medical Practitioners" is about mindfulness in medical education.

JACK HEATH - is CEO of the national mental health charity SANE Australia. SANE has been operating for 30 years and Jack has been its CEO since 2012. A law/arts graduate from the University of Melbourne, Jack has taken leadership courses at Harvard and Stanford Universities. He is a former diplomat and served as a Senior Adviser to Prime Minister Paul Keating and Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd. Jack became involved in mental health following the suicide of his 20 year old cousin. In 1996, he founded the Inspire Foundation with the idea of using the Internet to address Australia's then escalating rates of youth suicide. He then established the Inspire Ireland Foundation and the Inspire USA Foundation serving as US CEO in 2010-11. From 2011-14, he sat on the Executive Committee of the US National Alliance for Suicide Prevention. Jack has had a daily mindfulness practice since 1995.

JOHN HENDRY (OAM) - is known throughout the Geelong Grammar School (GGS) community as a wise, caring and inspirational leader. He has made a significant and lasting impact on the culture of the School and has led the development of GGS's highly regarded relationship management model. John has been a staff member at GGS since 1980. He is the Director of Student Welfare. He has overseen the development of pastoral care policies and practices at the School. John's focus is the area of relationship management. He has provided keynote addresses at numerous national and international conferences focusing on student wellbeing, the management of mistake, the reparation of relationships damaged through mistake, and the role of forgiveness in wellbeing for individuals and institutions. He contends that institutional culture determines wellbeing and the capacity for each teacher and student to thrive. Wellbeing is fundamentally determined by the capacity to forgive.

DR LIZ TEMPLE - is a senior lecturer in psychology at Federation University Australia. She has almost twenty years' experience researching aspects of wellbeing in a broad range of population groups, including young people experiencing early psychosis, early childhood educators, university students, local government employees, and recreational and problematic drug users. This experience, gained in university, NGO, and health settings, has informed Liz's holistic and empirical approach to investigating wellbeing across the lifespan. In particular, Liz's research focuses on exploring the complex interrelationships between physical health, psychological functioning, and social and emotional wellbeing. It also includes investigating the life circumstances and societal factors that can act to either support or undermine wellbeing, such as those contributing to ill-health, psychological distress, and/or problematic drug and alcohol use.

CHRIS RUANE - is a Welsh Labour Party politician who was the Member of Parliament for the Vale of Clwyd from 1997 to 2015. He is the President of the UK Mindfulness All Party Parliamentary Group. Meditation has always been a part of his life and looking beyond Parliament, he is aware of people struggling with stress and mental health difficulties. He believes that mindfulness can be central to how government responds, provided we approach it in the right way – grounding what we do in science and taking a cross-party approach. It is too important to be party-politicised.

Appendix 2 - Mindful Nation UK

The Mindful Nation UK Report was the culmination of over a year of research and inquiry including eight hearings in Parliament when members of the Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group were able to hear first-hand and question some of those who have experienced the transformational impacts of mindfulness. The lists of expert witnesses are:

May - December 2014 Parliamentary hearings of the Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group (MAPPG)

20 May 2014: Mindfulness in the Workplace Chaired by Madeleine Bunting Speakers included: Roland Lamb, entrepreneur and founder of roli.com; Gary Heads, Durham-based mindfulness trainer; Michael Chaskalson, Mindfulness trainer; Alison Dunn, Transport for London; Joel Levey, US-based mindfulness trainer and author; Dr. Clara Strauss, Sussex Mindfulness Centre; Sharon Hadley, Bangor University.

16 July: Mindfulness and Mental Health Chaired by Madeleine Bunting Speakers included: Helga Dittmar, Mike Hales, Helen Leigh Phippard, Julia RacsterSzostak, service users from Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust; Professor Willem Kuyken, University of Oxford; Dr. Clara Strauss, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust; Jerry Fox, Devon Integrated Children's Services; Dr. Kate Cavanagh, University of Sussex; Devin Ashwood, Centre for Addiction Treatment Studies, Warminster; Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone, Bangor University; Val Moore, National Institute of Health and Care Excellence; Paul Bernard, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust; Dr. Jonty Heaversedge, Commissioner, Southwark CCG; Rebecca Crane, Bangor University.

21 October: Mindfulness in the Criminal Justice system Chaired by Lorely Burt (MP and co-chair of the MAPPG) Speakers included: James Docherty, Violence Reduction Unit, Scotland; Rebecca Remigio, then Assistant Chief Executive, Probation Service Wales, now Head of Public Protection and Approved Premises for NOMS in Wales; Ken Dance, Operations Manager, Medway Youth Offender Team; Mark Ovland, Mindfulness teacher; Henrietta Ireland, Youth Offender Team Devon; Professor Richard Byng, Plymouth University; Selina Sasse, Prison Phoenix Trust and MindUnlimited; Vishvapani, mindfulness teacher.

5 November: Mindfulness and Health II (Covering physical pain; NHS staff) Chaired by Dr. Jonty Heaversedge Speakers included: Vidyamala Burch, Breathworks; Dr. Christina Surawy, Oxford Mindfulness Centre; Dr. Stirling Moorey, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust; Dr. Trish Lück, Paediatric Palliative Physician; Dr. Lana Jackson and Dr. Catherine Cameron, Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust; Dr. Angela Bussutil, Faculty of Clinical Health Psychology, British Psychological Society; Lisa Graham, Kevin Donohoe, Sue Brown, Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust; Alice Passmore, University of Bristol; Dr. Julia Wallond, Exeter Mindfulness Network; Dr. Kate Cavanagh, University of Sussex; Dr. Clara Strauss, Sussex Mindfulness Centre; Dr. Robert Marx, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust; Michael West, King's Fund.

19 November: Mindfulness in Education Chaired by Madeleine Bunting Speakers included: Paul Burstow MP; Professor Katherine Weare, University of Southampton; Richard Burnett, co-founder, Mindfulness in Schools Project; Amanda Bailey, Chief Operating Officer, Bright Futures Educational Trust; Fergus Crow, Director of Partnerships, National Children's Bureau.

25 November: Mindfulness in the Workplace Chaired by Madeleine Bunting Speakers included: Chris Tamdjidi, Kapala Academy, Germany; Dr. Jutta Tobias, Cranfield University; Emma Wardropper, David Bolt, Capital One; Sue Cruse, Dr. Philip Gibbs, GlaxoSmithKline; Marion Furr, Department of Health; Michael Chaskalson, Mindfulness Works; Geoff McDonald, Bridge Partnership.

9 December: Mindfulness and Policing Chaired by Jamie Bristow Speakers included: John Murphy, Chair of Health & Safety Committee, the Police Federation; Paul Quinton, Evidence & Evaluation Advisor, College of Policing; DCI Mark Preston, Major Crimes Team, Surrey and Sussex Police; Mark Davies, consultant and mindfulness trainer; Zander Gibson, Borough Commander, Southwark, London Metropolitan Police.

9 December: Mindfulness and Gangs Chaired by Chris Cullen Speakers included: Gwen Williams and Philippa de Lacy, Hackney & City MIND; Ade Afilaka and Leslie Mitchel, Wise Youth Trust; Edward Kellman, Nilaari; Fabian Kellman, Kids' Company; Baroness Lola Young.

Appendix 3 - Forum Organising Group

The organising group for this forum and report comprised:

- Dr Lynne Reeder - Director, Australia21, Chopra meditation teacher
- Mike Waller – Director, Australia21
- Debbie Ling - Social worker, meditation and mindfulness teacher
- Lyn Stephens – Director, Australia21
- Dr David Morawetz – Director, Australia21, psychologist
- Dr Liz Temple – Senior Lecturer, Federation University Australia
- Kylie Marks – Co-founder, Empathy Nation
- Dr Lisa Petheram - Social scientist, community practitioner
- Rebecca Bunn – Young Australia21, university student