

Entheogenesis Australis Symposium: An Educative Antidote to the 'War on Drugs' Debate

On Saturday December 6, 2008, the University of Melbourne's Copland Theatre, will play host to the 2008 Entheogenesis Australis Symposium. One of the few conferences of its kind where the general public are welcomed to attend, the Symposium will bring together more than 300 of Australia's leading thinkers to examine the roles psychoactive plants and chemicals play in modern society.

The Entheogenesis Australis (EGA) Symposium is designed to bring balance to the 37 year-old 'War on Drugs' debate, highlighting the fundamental functions 'altered states of consciousness' have played within human society throughout the ages.

In the midst of public uproar surrounding liquor licensing restrictions and alcohol being linked to twice as many abuse incidents as illicit drugs¹, attendees at the 2008 EGA Symposium will hear thought-provoking presentations such as 'Wine: Medicine or Poison', 'Why are we still taking drugs?' and 'Psychotropic Mushrooms, an analysis of misidentification'.

The EGA Symposium features keynote lectures from respected authorities including Dr David Caldicott (Royal Adelaide Hospital), Dr Des Tramacchi (University of Queensland) and Dr Anna Kokavec (La Trobe University), to examine the anthropology, chemistry, pharmacology, botany, physiology psychology, neuroscience perspectives of plant-based empathogens² and their exciting modern-day applications.

The cultural, public policies and legal precedents surrounding empathogens will also be addressed, illustrating the emotional and highly politicised 'War on Drugs' debate as it continues to play out across the media and in Australian courtrooms.

Jonathan Carmichael, President of Entheogenesis Australis explains the educative and evidence-based approach taken by the EGA Symposium. "In what will be our fourth conference, we see the EGA Symposium as the reasoned antidote to the sensationalist and seemingly single voice of most drug discussion in Australia.

If you have ever asked yourself, has the 'War on Drugs' caused more problems than it tried to solve?' or is 'is MDMA really more dangerous than alcohol?', then EGA is for you", comments Mr Carmichael.

A full list of speakers and their topics may be found at <http://www.entheo.net/2008speakers.htm>.

Tickets to this unique event are limited – in 2007 the EGA Conference was a sell-out success - attended by some with 400 delegates and addressed by Dr Dennis McKenna, world-renowned American ethnopharmacologist and author."

To find out more, please visit <http://www.entheo.net>. Read over EGA's official statement of purpose at http://www.entheo.net/EGA_SOP.doc.

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¹ ABS – National Drug Strategy – Household Drug Survey

² Empathogens – plant based substances used to elicit psychoactive states. Examples include native tobacco, coffee, wine or cactus

Entheogenesis Australis is a not-for-profit association that exists to create a support environment that fosters mature, open discussion about psychoactive plants and chemicals. We seek to explore ways to assess societal impacts and examine the positive applications of such substances.