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**Rua launches its first medicine in New Zealand. Available on prescription from today.**

Rua Bioscience (NZX:RUA), has today launched its first medicine, marking a significant milestone for New Zealand patients, prescribers and the medicinal cannabis industry.

Available on prescription in New Zealand, GPs and specialists who are registered medical practitioners will now be able to include Rua medicine in patient treatment plans.

Manufactured in Rua's purpose-built facility in Gisborne, and distributed nationally via CDC Pharmaceuticals, sales from the product will be the first revenue for the business, which listed on the NZX in 2020.

Rua Bioscience CEO Rob Mitchell says the medicine's launch, complemented by New Zealand's first compassionate access programme for medicinal cannabis, is an important moment for the company and the community it was created for.

"I am proud that we have been able to work through the medical regulatory system and establish the capability we need to manufacture medicine to world-class GMP standards, all from Te Tairāwhiti. It doesn't just put us on the ladder, it puts us on the map.

"It's a credit to the vision of our co-founders, Manu Caddie and Panapa Ehau, and to our community who have been dreaming of this moment since the very early days of the company's inception," he says.

Rua is one of just two companies in New Zealand manufacturing medicinal cannabis that has met the minimum quality standards as set out by the Medicinal Cannabis Agency. Rua stands alone as the only manufacturer with an explicit social mission to benefit its founding community.

Dr Andi Grant, Chief Commercial Officer, says this is the news Rua shareholders have been waiting for, many of whom have been steadfast in their support throughout the company's journey towards commercialisation.

"Rua is committed to creating a range of quality medicines with significant health benefits. We have a full product pipeline, destined for local and global markets. This has come with

significant investment. We're delighted to now play our part in expanding patient choice here in Aotearoa and deliver some return on that investment for our shareholders."

Dr Grant acknowledges that cost remains a barrier for those looking to add medicinal cannabis to their treatment plans, particularly as they need to pay for their medicines privately.

The company continues to work towards equitable access to medicines and is leading by example, launching New Zealand's first compassionate access programme for medicinal cannabis products.

Through the programme, in the first instance, Rua will make its medicines available at no cost for a limited group of qualifying people in Te Tairāwhiti, dependent on clinical need and circumstance.

"We view this as a meaningful and commercially sustainable way to help some of those most in need access the medicine," says Grant.

Data released by the Ministry of Health under the Official Information Act shows that the number of packs of medicinal cannabis prescribed and supplied in New Zealand is growing at an average rate of 250 per cent annually. The number of packs supplied in New Zealand in the year to 30 June 2021 was over 31,000; compared to just 2,000 in 2018.

According to a study published in the British Journal of General Practice, cannabinoid medicines are commonly prescribed in New Zealand for pain, epilepsy and anxiety<sup>1</sup>.

For more information about the medicine, please read the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) leaflet, available at [www.ruabio.com/cmi](http://www.ruabio.com/cmi)

## **ENDS**

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### **About Rua Bioscience**

Rua Bioscience is a New Zealand pharmaceutical company aiming to be a leading producer of cannabinoid derived medicines. The company was established in 2017 in part to support local economic development in Te Tairāwhiti and is a pioneer in the New Zealand medicinal cannabis sector. Rua holds a licence to operate in the medicinal cannabis sector commercially, has developed two commercial-scale facilities (a controlled cultivation site in Ruatōrea as well as a manufacturing and extraction plant in Gisborne), and holds an exclusive contract with German distributor Nimbus Health to supply dried flower to Germany. Rua also has a well-defined strategy to identify long-term value opportunities in a number of areas including agritech. As well as being a funder, Rua brings

extensive knowledge of the global market, expertise in cannabis plant chemistry and analytics, cultivation and growth optimisation, processing and pharmaceutical manufacturing. [www.ruabio.com](http://www.ruabio.com)

### **Research Cited**

<sup>1</sup>Gulbransen, 2020. Medicinal Cannabis for Chronic Pain, Anxiety, Insomnia and Opioid Overuse: Review of my First 200 CBD Prescriptions in Aotearoa NZ.