



Biotech Daily

Friday February 7, 2020

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

- * **ASX, BIOTECH DOWN: USCOM UP 31%; OSPREY DOWN 18%**
- * **DR BOREHAM'S CRUCIBLE: RESMED**
- * **CANN GROUP CONVERTIBLE NOTES RAISE \$8m**
- * **BENITEC US SCHEME MEETING COURT ORDER**
- * **CORRECTION: OPYL**
- * **OBJ EXTENDS EXPORT CORP TAKEOVER DATE**
- * **ALTERITY BELOW NASDAQ \$US1 BID RULE**
- * **CRONOS COO PETER RIGHETTI RESIGNS, CONTINUES AS DIRECTOR**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market fell 0.38 percent on Friday February 7, 2020, with the ASX200 down 26.6 points to 7,022.6 points. Ten of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 25 fell, and four traded unchanged.

Uscom was the best, up 7.5 cents or 31.25 percent to 31.5 cents with 5.5 million shares traded, up 152.0 percent from last Friday's 12.5 cents close (see BD: Feb 4, 5, 6, 2019).

Proteomics climbed 3.7 percent; Immutep, Impedimed, Nanosonics, Polynovo and Volpara rose two percent or more; Resmed and Telix were up more than one percent; with Medical Developments and Starpharma up by less than one percent.

Osprey led the falls, down 0.4 cents or 18.2 percent to 1.8 cents with 5.9 million shares traded.

Alterity, Genetic Signatures, Prescient and Universal Biosensors lost more than five percent; Antisense and Pharmaxis fell more than four percent; Cynata, Dimerix, Imugene and Optiscan were down more than three percent; Compumedics, Kazia and Resonance shed more than two percent; Amplia, Avita, Mesoblast, Neuren and Orthocell were down more than one percent; with Clinuvel, Cochlear, CSL, Ellex, Next Science, Opthea, Paradigm and Pro Medicus down by less than one percent.

[DR BOREHAM'S CRUCIBLE: RESMED](#)

By Tim BOREHAM

ASX code: RMD (Chess depository interests or CDIs)

New York Stock Exchange code: RMD

Share price: \$25.37

Market cap: \$36.5 billion

Shares on issue*: 1,437,692,440 (CDI equivalents)

Financials (December 2019 first half): revenue \$US1.4billion (\$A2.1 billion; up 14%), non-GAAP net profit after tax \$US311.7 million (up 20%), earnings per share \$US2.14 (up 18%), cash \$US204.1 million

*Ten CDIs are the equivalent of one NYSE ordinary share

Chief executive officer: Michael Farrell

Board: Dr Peter Farrell (founder and chairman), Michael Farrell, Carol Burt, Jan De Witte, Richard Sulpizio, Ron Taylor, John Wareham, Karen Drexler, Harjit Gill

Identifiable major shareholders (US stock): Vanguard 10.3%, Black Rock Inc 8.74%, Fidelity Management 4.96%

The venerable sleep disorders house is starting to sound like a car maker that has exhausted the possible names for its variant models and is now relying on letters, dashes, errant capital letters and numbers.

A case in point is Resmed's latest iteration of its continuous positive airways pressure (CPAP) device, the "AirFit N30i".

Unlike many of Resmed's past models, the air tube on this one protrudes from the top of the patient's head rather than directly from the mask, allowing the person to sleep in any position.

Don't confuse the AirFit N30i with the Hyundai i30 or the Mazda MX-5, let alone the previous AirFit P30i or the AirFit N20.

The products are part of what Resmed CEO Farrell describes as a "steady rhythm" of new launches, intended to keep the home-grown, San Diego-based company competitive.

Unlike its customers. Resmed hasn't been caught napping, with its recent quarterly results suggesting the company has successfully expanded the market for its old markets and is forging new ones.

Not that everything is going right for the company, as we will discuss ...

Giving the Sandman a helping hand

Resmed is a leader in obstructive sleep apnoea (snoring) and other respiratory disorders that occur during sleep.

Along the way, Resmed has expanded into diagnostic products, ventilation and dental devices, portable oxygen concentrators and internet cloud- based services.

Resmed sells in 120 countries - either directly or via distributors - but the US is by far its most important market. Increasingly, the company is emphasizing the out-of-hospital (home care) market.

CPAPs deliver pressurized air through a nasal mask to prevent the collapse of the upper airway - and thus snoring - during sleep. To increase "therapy adherence", the company has heavily invested in the product tweaks such as the "tube up" variants and more comfortable masks.

The company estimates the global sleep apnoea market at more than 900 million patients, male and female. Yep - they're not all fat, middle-aged men.

Noisy hounds spur the Resmed story

We can thank the noisy nocturnal emissions of canines for the first CPAP machine, invented in 1980 by Sydney sleep expert Dr Colin Sullivan.

Doc Sullivan chanced on the idea of using a vacuum cleaner to ameliorate the deafening snores emitted by dogs with pushed-in faces such as pugs, bulldogs and boxers.

The RSPCA's stance on this novel notion of animal testing is not on record.

Anyway, the experiment led to doc Sullivan rigging up a mask and tube for human use, powered by a vacuum cleaner motor.

Further work ensued at the Asthma Foundation (in relation to the then rampant Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) and the University of Toronto.

Resmed's specific CPAP intellectual property was developed by the Baxter Centre for Medical Research and acquired by Resmed founding father Dr Peter Farrell in 1989. Baxter had sold the masks in Australia from 1988.

Believe it or not, before then a tracheotomy was the standard treatment for dangerous snoring - and we're not talking about impromptu procedures performed by a sleep-deprived spouse with a butter knife.

Resmed was incorporated as a US company and admitted to the Nasdaq in June 1995. But in September, the upwardly mobile Resmed changed its home domicile to the New York Stock Exchange.

In a nod to its homeland, the company then listed its chess depository instruments on the ASX in November 1999.

Espousing the 'keep it in the family' philosophy, Michael Farrell took over from his father Peter as CEO in 2013. Dad remains chairman and we're sure he still tells his son to turn out the lights and clean up the mess in the executive bathroom.

From CPAP to SAAS

The CPAP device variants aside, Resmed's growth increasingly is coming from the "connected care" or "software as a service" (SAAS) part of the business.

By that we mean out-of-hospital software that enables the patient to use the devices at home, with data streamed to the clinician. The accrued data itself is also a handy asset in terms of aiding product development.

A string of recent acquisitions has extended Resmed's reach to internet-based monitoring of sleep devices, as well as broadening its presence in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) - an ever-expanding market as the wheezing populace ages.

Resmed kicked off by acquiring software-as-a-service business Brightree in April 2016 for \$US800 million.

The company then gobbled up Healthcarefirst and Matrixcare in late 2018, for \$US126 million and \$US750 million respectively.

Healthcarefirst provides services to home health and hospice agencies, while the Minnesota-based Matrixcare provides software to more than 15,000 providers such as nursing organizations, retirement homes and home-based care providers.

Last year, Resmed went out on a wing and bought the Wisconsin-based Propeller Health Solutions for \$US225 million.

Propeller markets sensors that attach to an asthma inhaler or COPD drug delivery device, pairing with a mobile application to track medication usage.

Propeller also provides "connected health" services for COPD and asthma sufferers.

With its acquisitive appetite yet to be sated, in January, Resmed bought Snapworx, a private software company supporting the re-ordering of medical supplies.

Financials and performance

In late January, Resmed reported second (December) quarter non-GAAP earnings of \$US176.3 million, up 22 percent on revenue of \$US736.2 million (up 13 percent).

Mr Farrell (Mick) highlighted the “superb” performance of the mask division, especially in the US where the company has been increasing market share. “Customers are voting with their wallets and they are voting for Resmed,” he said.

Globally, devices accounted for close to half of Resmed’s sales with a further 38 percent derived from “masks and others”. But reflecting the growing importance of the connected care division, SAAS sales now account for 12 percent of total revenue, compared with 9.6 percent in the December 2019 quarter.

The US, Canada and Latin America remain Resmed’s most important market, accounting for 67 percent of sales compared with 65 percent previously.

Investors liked the January 31 results, sending the stock up 74 cents or three percent, in a coronavirus-infected market.

Broker EL&C Baillieu dubbed the result as “robust”, but said the SAAS growth was a tad soft. “Resmed continues to benefit from having the broadest portfolio, having launched five new masks in the past 18 months,” the firm says.

To keep ahead of pesky rivals, Resmed this year is devoting 6.8 percent of its revenue to research and development.

The company can’t rest easily: rival Fisher & Paykel Healthcare has just launched the Evora, a minimalist nasal mask to compete with the Hyundai i30 ... sorry ... AirFit N30i.

Alleged kickbacks result in \$US39.5 million blowback

Resmed may be in a purple patch but not everything is going its way.

In mid-January the company agreed to settle a civil case with the US Department of Justice for \$US39.5 million, with another \$US2 million payable to various US states.

The payout stemmed from allegations including that Resmed provided products to sleep clinics free or below cost, to induce patient referrals.

Such behavior breaches the Anti-Kickback Statute which relates to services reimbursable by Medicare or Medicaid.

The settlement did not involve the company admitting liability. Resmed's line is that settling the matter was more efficient than satisfying the government's request for screeds of documents.

But the company did enter a so-called Corporate Integrity Agreement, requiring it to implement additional controls around product pricing and sales, with internal and external monitoring of referral sources.

The regulator's key concern was outlined in a statement by the US Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Richard Donoghue.

"When companies give free equipment to doctors for the sole purpose of generating business and increasing their bottom lines, federal health insurance programs should not foot the bills," he intoned. "This case rights that alleged wrong by Resmed."

Dr Boreham's diagnosis:

One might think that Resmed is a mature play in a mature category, but management believes there's plenty of CPAP growth to be achieved.

Resmed cites a global market of 936 million people with mild to severe sleep apnoea - 54 million in the US - with about 80 percent of them undiagnosed and untreated.

(Mrs Crucible included, just quietly).

The company also says it has "helped" 100 million out-of-hospital patients to date and wants this coverage to rise to 250 million patients by 2025.

Management also estimates a global COPD market of 400 million sufferers. "We don't believe these people are well served by the global healthcare system today," Mr Farrell says. "Many are frequent visitors to emergency wards."

Research house Markets and Markets estimates the global value of respiratory care at \$US20.6 billion in 2019 and forecasts the sector to grow to \$US31.8 billion by 2024 (a compound annual growth rate of nine percent).

These days, have-a-go Aussie hero Resmed is worth an eye watering \$35 billion – a healthcare sector feat surpassed only by the \$143 billion market cap CSL.

The aforementioned legal hitch aside, it's business as usual as Resmed continues to roll out the medical device equivalent of turbo-charged models with sports trim, sun roofs and heated leather seats.

Disclosure: Dr Boreham is not a qualified medical practitioner and does not possess a doctorate of any sort. Hopefully he is not boosting Resmed's customer base by boring his readers to snores.

CANN GROUP

Cann Group says it will issue two years convertible notes to raise \$8 million, at a base rate of 7.5 percent, for working capital requirements.

Cann said the notes would be convertible by February 10, 2022 at the lower of 70 cents a share, the five-day volume weighted average price to the most recent \$5 million or more capital raise or 85 percent of the issue price of a capital raise of more than \$5 million.

The company said it would issue one option per note, exercisable on or before March 31, 2022 and at a 35 percent premium to the conversion price.

Cann Group said interest would accrue daily at 7.5 percent per annum for any month the company does make an interest payment and 9.5 percent per annum for any month it does not make an interest payment.

The company said noteholders would be able to convert either 50 percent or 100 percent of the convertible notes any time before the 24-month maturity date, if the company announced a takeover or scheme implementation agreement or if the company suffers an insolvency event.

Cann said PAC Partners and E&P Corporate Advisory were joint lead managers.

Cann chief executive officer Peter Crock said it was continuing discussions "with a tier one Australian bank on a loan facility".

Cann Group fell 10 cents or 7.6 percent to \$1.21 with 1.9 million shares traded.

BENITEC BIOPHARMA

Benitec says the Supreme Court of Queensland has ordered a shareholder scheme meeting to vote on Benitec Biopharma Inc or Holdco, to become its parent company.

Benitec said that if approved, shareholders would receive one share in Holdco for every 300 Benitec shares held at the April 6, 2020 record date (BD: Nov 27, 2019).

The company said that a second court hearing to approve the scheme would be held on March 30, 2020 and if approved, it would be suspended from trading on the ASX, a share sale facility would be held on April 6 and shares would be implemented to shareholders and trading would commence on the Nasdaq.

The meeting will be held on March 26, 2020 at Grant Thornton, Collins Square, Tower 5, 727 Collins Street, Melbourne at 10am (AEDT).

Benitec fell 0.3 cents or 7.9 percent to 3.5 cents with one million shares traded.

CORRECTION: OPYL (FORMERLY SHAREROOT)

After the market closed on Friday, January 31, 2020, Opyl said receipts from customers for the six months to December 31, 2019 fell 3.1 percent to \$464,000.

Opyl said at that time and Biotech Daily published on Monday February 3, 2020 that it had cash and cash equivalents of \$464,000 at December 31 and expected to spend \$726,749,000 for the three months to March 31, 2020.

Biotech Daily alerted the company to the apparent error on Monday and last night, Opyl corrected its Appendix 4C saying it expected to spend a more modest \$393,000 for the three months to March 31, 2020.

No sub-editors were hurt in making this correction.

Opyl was up half a cent or 3.3 percent to 15.5 cents.

OBJ

OBJ says it has extended the end date of a share sale agreement with Export Corporation Australia, owner of Nutrition Systems, to May 4, 2020 (BD: Nov 7, 2019).

OBJ said a meeting to approve the acquisition of Export Corporation would be held on February 18, 2020.

OBJ was in a suspension and last traded at 1.5 cents.

ALTERITY THERAPEUTICS (FORMERLY PRANA BIOTECHNOLOGY)

Alterity says it has received a non-compliance letter from the Nasdaq requiring it to ensure its share price is above \$US1.00 within 180 days.

Alterity said that the Nasdaq had informed the company that its American depository share price had been below the \$US1.00 minimum for the mandated minimum number of business days and it had 180 days to August 3, 2020 to regain compliance, with the minimum bid price at or above \$US1.00 for 10 consecutive business days.

The company said that the deficiency notice only applied to the Nasdaq and not the shares trading on the ASX.

Alterity fell 0.1 cents or 5.3 percent to 1.8 cents with one million shares traded.

CRONOS AUSTRALIA

Cronos says chief operating officer Peter Righetti has resigned and will continue as a director.

Cronos fell one cent or 5.3 percent to 18 cents.