



Biotech Daily

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Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

Biotech Daily Editorial: Federal Election 2022

Saturday's Australian Federal election is less about specific policies to curry favor with the any sector – including our own - and more about the world in which we live.

While the greatest threat to the planet is Global Warming, it doesn't directly affect the biotechnology community, other than to provide opportunities as the burden of disease and the array of infections increase. But it will impact every other part of our lives, from bushfires to droughts, floods and rising sea levels.

The Liberal National Party Government's inertia on Climate Change reflects its disinterest in innovation. The two major policies that affect our industry are the \$20 billion Medical Research Future Fund and MTP Connect, both established in 2015. Both contribute to the expansion of the industry, but that appears to be all. There is no Minister for Innovation and the Industry portfolio has been a dumping ground.

The previous Labor Government implemented the Ausbiotech-designed 45 percent Research and Development Tax Incentive, which was cut to 43.5 percent by LNP Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

On Tuesday, the Labor Opposition said it would provide a \$1.5 billion Australian medical manufacturing fund as part of its \$15 billion National Reconstruction Fund to "provide loans, guarantees and equity to support projects that create secure well-paid jobs, drive regional development, and invest in our national sovereign capability, broadening and diversifying Australia's economy". Labor said it would make Technical and Further Education (TAFE) free and provide \$482 million for up to 20,000 more university places.

The Greens better understand innovation and propose a \$17.5 billion investment in science, research and innovation, \$5.5 billion for universities, \$1.3 billion for the CSIRO and propose to establish a Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology to provide independent scientific advice to Parliament.

The Government's attacks on China (our number one customer) over Covid beggars belief. Foreign Minister Marise Payne lit the fuse, calling for an inquiry into the Wuhan origin of Sars-Cov-2, with Trade Minister Simon Birmingham fuelling the fire.

More recent events with nuclear submarines proposed for 2050 don't help the relationship.

According to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, exports to China increased 21.3 percent to \$179.3 billion in the year to December 31, 2021, but as a proportion of all exports fell from 40.7 percent to 39.1 percent. Pharmaceuticals, and 'medicaments including veterinary products' were hit hard, along with the better publicized fall in exports of barley, wine, wood and crustaceans.

Companies have told Biotech Daily that they are having increased difficulties in access to China, following the unwise interventions.

Labor's expected Foreign Minister, Senator Penny Wong, will have her work cut out for her, should Labor win the election.

Our view is that the Liberal-National Coalition does innovators no favors. Labor, the Greens and the "teal" independents are more likely to take action on Climate Change and repair our relationship with China.

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Editor