



Biotech Daily

Tuesday August 16, 2022

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

- * **ASX UP, BIOTECH EVEN: GENETIC SIGNATURES UP 6.5%;
- UNIVERSAL BIOSENSORS DOWN 7%**
- * **TATTARANG \$250m FOR TENMILE HEALTH TECHNOLOGY FUND**
- * **RMIT, VICTORIA DEVICES, DIAGNOSTICS SCALE-UP FACILITY**
- * **MICROBIO: UK CONFORMITY MARKING FOR INFECTID-BSI TEST**
- * **EMYRIA PHASE III MARIJUANA EMD-RX5 DISTRESS TRIAL APPROVED**
- * **WOKE, SWINBURNE WP002 PSYLOCIBIN DEPRESSION TRIAL**
- * **APTAR PAYS PHARMAXIS \$7m FOR ORBITAL INHALER**
- * **PRESCIENT: Q-GEN TO MANUFACTURE OMNICAR CELLS FOR TRIALS**
- * **LIVING CELL PIG BRAIN TISSUE TO SYDNEY FOR PARKINSON'S TRIAL**
- * **M&G TAKES 12.6% OF MESOBLAST**
- * **NEUROTECH: TOM DUTHY IN; BRIAN LEEDMAN, KRISTA BATES OUT**
- * **ANDREW METCALFE REPLACES RESPIRI CO SEC ALASTAIR BEARD**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market was up 0.58 percent on Tuesday August 16, 2022, with the ASX200 up 41.1 points to 7,105.4 points. Thirteen of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 14 fell, 10 traded unchanged and three were untraded.

Genetic Signatures was the best, up 6.5 cents or 6.5 percent to \$1.065, with 15,116 shares traded. Avita and Pharmaxis climbed more than five percent; Orthocell was up 4.9 percent; Oncosil and Proteomics were up more than three percent; Clinuvel, Neuren, Next Science and Paradigm rose two percent or more; with CSL, Impedimed, Mesoblast, Resmed and Volpara up by more than one percent.

Universal Biosensors led the falls, down two cents or 6.7 percent to 28 cents with 823,928 shares traded, followed by Resonance down 6.4 percent to 7.3 cents with 77,150 shares traded. Actinogen, Alcidion and Patrys lost more than three percent; Prescient and Starpharma shed two percent or more; Amplia, Immutep, Polynovo and Telix were down one percent or more; with Cochlear, Emvision, Opthea and Pro Medicus down by less than one percent.

TATTARANG

Tattarang, the Perth-based company controlled by Dr Andrew 'Twiggy' Forrest, says it has invested \$250 million in its Tenmile subsidiary to invest in health technologies.

Tattarang said Tenmile was a "dedicated health technology investment business", which would focus on "investing in products and solutions addressing unmet medical needs that support sustainable and equitable healthcare".

The company said that Tenmile was led by executive chair Dr Steve Burnell and would be headquartered in Perth, with staff in Sydney and San Francisco.

Tattarang chair Dr Forrest said Tenmile would help "early-stage companies, researchers and entrepreneurs tap into seed funding to help them when they need it most, and then provide follow-on support, which is often unavailable through government or public sector funds".

Tattarang co-chair Nicola Forrest said that Tenmile was committed to "ethical and sustainable health treatments and technology".

Last year, Emyria said it had raised \$5 million at 25 cents a share from Tattarang, which would hold 7.3 percent of the company (BD: Nov 22, 2021).

Today, Tattarang said that Tenmile had also invested in Adelaide's Carina Biotech, a cancer research company headed by chief executive officer Dr Deborah Rathjen.

Tattarang said that Tenmile had invested in the San Francisco, California-based Rock Health, which according to Wikipedia, was a "seed fund that supports startups working in digital health".

ROYAL MELBOURNE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, VICTORIA GOVERNMENT

The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology says its \$16.7 million facility will assist entrepreneurs and researchers to develop medical devices and diagnostics.

RMIT said that the Victorian Medical Device Prototyping and Scale-Up Facility was announced by Victoria Minister for Higher Education Gayle Tierney and supported by \$12.7 million in funds from the Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund.

Ms Tierney said the "significant investment in medical technology ... will drive innovation to support the healthcare needs of people across Australia".

RMIT deputy vice-chancellor for research and innovation Prof Calum Drummond said the "initiative would create jobs, develop skills and build future opportunities, to advance post-pandemic renewal".

"The skills required to design, build, integrate, operate and use data from medical devices cover every sector and will be integral to both economic recovery and sovereign capability," Prof Drummond said. "This new facility bridges the gap between research and impact, supporting the deep collaborations we need to accelerate the translation of brilliant ideas into innovative, home-grown technologies."

RMIT said that the international Standards Organisation-accredited facility was "the first of its kind in Australia and the Asia-Pacific" and would be accessible to universities and industry for collaborations on "wearables" including wireless electronic devices that can be worn as accessories, embedded in clothing or implanted in the body, "nearables" such as 'smart' devices that can sense and send data but do not need to be attached to a person and flexible medical technologies including soft, skin-like and ultralight electronics.

RMIT Functional Materials and Microsystems Research Group co-director Prof Sharath Sriram said the facility "gives us the sovereign capability to go from design to a validated diagnostic product, with sufficient quantities to undertake clinical and field trials".

The Institute said it led a consortium including Swinburne University, Deakin University, Monash University and industry and MTP Connect.

MICROBIO

Brisbane's Microbio says it has a UK Conformity Assessed (UKCA) marking, allowing it to sell its Infectid-BSI bloodstream infection test in the United Kingdom.

In July, the company said it was raising \$3 million to commercialize the Infectid-BSI bloodstream infection test "to detect 26 of the most common sepsis-causing bacteria and fungi in less than three hours" (BD: Jul 6, 2022).

Today, Microbio said the UK marking opened the door for distribution and use in the UK. Microbio co-founder and chief scientific officer Dr Falvia Huygens said that the test had the potential to "significantly advance the detection of bloodstream infections and sepsis, one of the world's biggest killers".

"With the test already cleared for sale and use in Europe and now the UK, we are working towards approvals of Infectid-BSI across South America and in the Caribbean".

Microbio is a public unlisted company.

EMYRIA

Emyria says it has ethics approval for a 300-patient, phase III trial of its "ultra-pure" marijuana-based cannabidiol drug EMD-RX5 for psychological distress.

Emyria said that the phase III trial would be a multi-centre, double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study to assess the effect of one month of treatment with either 50 milligrams EMD-RX5, 150 milligrams EMD-RX5, or placebo, on the symptoms of psychological distress in adults with chronic pain.

The company said the primary endpoint of the study was to determine the effect of EMD-RX5 treatment on symptoms of psychological distress in participants with chronic pain, with secondary measures including sleep, pain and other quality of life scores.

Emyria said the first site to receive ethics approval was Perth's Hatherley Medical Centre, with Dr Zachary Nathan as principal investigator with additional sites to be opened.

The company said that completion of the phase III trial would "support the registration of EMD-RX5 with the Therapeutic Goods Administration as a schedule 3, over-the-counter treatment for the symptoms of psychological distress".

Emyria managing-director Dr Michael Winlo said the start of the phase III trial was "a significant milestone" and a registered over-the-counter medicine in this category was "a large opportunity for Emyria to address a major unmet health need".

Emyria was up 2.5 cents or 10.2 percent to 27 cents with 1.3 million shares traded.

WOKE PHARMACEUTICALS

Woke says with Swinburne University of Technology, it will conduct a 150-patient trial of its WP002 psilocybin tablet with psychotherapy for treatment-resistant depression.

Woke said that the trial would be a two-armed, randomized, controlled, phase IIb study of WP002 tablets containing 25mg of psilocybin, to assist psychotherapy.

The company said that the primary outcome of the study was a measure of patients after 12 weeks using the Montgomery-Asberg depression rating scale, with secondary measures including psychological measures for behavior, "wellness" and quality of life.

Woke said the trial was expected to begin enrolment in "early 2023" and that pending final agreement, the principal investigator would be Swinburne's Prof Susan Rossell.

Last week, the company said that the Queensland Institute of Medical Research would trial WP002 in about 15 patients with prolonged grief disorder (BD: Aug 12, 2022).

Woke is a private company.

PHARMAXIS

Pharmaxis says the Crystal Lake, Illinois-based Aptar Pharma has paid \$US5 million (\$A7.1 million) following the exercise of its option to acquire its Orbital inhaler technology. Earlier this month, Pharmaxis said Aptar would pay \$US5 million to acquire its Orbital inhaler technology, while retaining rights to Orbital for inhaled mannitol (BD: Aug 5, 2022). Today, Pharmaxis chief executive officer Gary Phillips said “over the past two years the Pharmaxis team has generated a total of \$25 million of non-dilutive cash from commercial agreements related to the mannitol business, \$2.5 million in Government funding won in competitive grants and [research and development] tax credits of \$10 million”.

“Funding our business in this manner has only been possible because of the inherent value in our exciting pipeline of small molecule drugs and the mannitol business,” Mr Phillips said.

Pharmaxis was up 0.4 cents or 5.3 percent to 7.9 cents with 1.3 million shares traded.

PRESCIENT THERAPEUTICS

Prescient says it has a manufacturing agreement with Brisbane’s Q-Gen Cell Therapeutics to produce its Omnicar cell lines for upcoming clinical trials.

Prescient said that Q-Gen was the cell therapy manufacturing arm of the Queensland Institute for Medical Research, and that it had begun the technology transfer process for Omnicar-T-cell manufacturing.

The company did not disclose the terms of the agreement, but said it covered the production and delivery of autologous Omnicar-T-cells for clinical trials for up to five years.

Prescient managing-director Steven Yatomi-Clarke said the company was “working steadily towards our first in human studies of Omnicar, which will be an important milestone for the company”.

“This important agreement secures Prescient’s crucial supply of Omnicar cells for our clinical trials and ensures we are producing the best possible cell therapy products for doctors and patients living with hard-to-treat cancers,” Mr Yatomi-Clarke said.

Prescient fell half a cent or 2.7 percent to 18 cents.

LIVING CELL TECHNOLOGIES

Living Cell says it has shipped pig brain choroid plexus tissue from New Zealand to the University of Technology Sydney for manufacturing NTCell for a Parkinson’s disease trial. Living Cell said that the tissue had been provided by the Invercargill, New Zealand-based NZeno from its pathogen-free facility for the trial.

In March, the company said the University would optimize its NTCell encapsulated pig choroid brain cells for a Parkinson’s disease trial in 2024 (BD: Mar 30, 2022).

Today, Living Cell executive chair Prof Bernie Tuch said the company was “delighted to have received the shipment of choroid plexus tissue in Sydney in preparation for the manufacturing of NTCell in Australia for the very first time”.

“This is another key step as we advance our potentially ground-breaking research into Parkinson’s disease, with no current treatment available to prevent progression of the disease,” Prof Tuch said.

Living Cell said that optimized NTCell would be implanted into the brains of people with early to mid-stage Parkinson’s disease, with regulatory approval from Australia’s Therapeutic Goods Administration required prior to the first clinical trial, with similar trials having previously been undertaken in New Zealand.

Living Cell was unchanged at one cent.

MESOBLAST

The London-based M&G Investments says it has increased its substantial holding in Mesoblast from 53,272,228 shares (9.1%) to 93,150,226 shares (12.64%).

M&G said that between September 1, 2020 and August 10, 2022, it bought and sold shares and American depository shares, each equivalent to five ordinary shares, with the single largest purchase 19,773,000 shares on August 10 for \$14,829,750 or 75 cents a share.

Earlier this month, Mesoblast said it had raised \$US45 million (\$A65.5 million) in a placement at 75 cents a share, led by its largest shareholder, M&G (BD: Aug 9, 2022). Mesoblast was up one cent or 1.1 percent to 90.5 cents with 3.8 million shares traded.

NEUROTECH INTERNATIONAL

Neurotech says director Mark Davies will replace chair Brian Leedman, it has appointed Dr Thomas Duthy a director and consultant and Krista Bates has resigned.

Neurotech said it would appoint non-executive director Prof Allan Cripps as director of science and innovation, with non-executive director Gerald Quigley as director of public relations.

The company said that Mr Leedman and Ms Bates had resigned to “pursue other corporate interests, effective immediately”.

Neurotech said that Dr Duthy would act as a consultant to the company and be appointed to the board, effective from September 1, 2022.

Neurotech said Dr Duthy had established the corporate advisory company, Neman Group in 2018, was currently a director of Invex Therapeutics and had previously worked for Sirtex Medical as head of corporate development and investor relations.

Neurotech was unchanged at 11 cents with 2.5 million shares traded.

RESPIRI

Respiri says Andrew Metcalfe will replace Alastair Beard as company secretary, effective from August 15, 2022.

Respiri said that Mr Metcalfe had more than 25 years of experience in a variety of board and senior management positions.

The company said that Mr Beard had resigned to “focus on other business activities”.

Respiri fell 0.1 cents or 2.2 percent to 4.5 cents.