



Biotech Daily

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Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

Biotech Daily 9th Birthday

Not the best day, on not the best week, of not the best year, to be trumpeting Biotech Daily's ninth birthday.

The conviction of Genetic Technologies founder Dr Mervyn Jacobson by a unanimous Supreme Court of Victoria jury on Wednesday morning was the harbinger for the tragedy that entered its final act in the County Court this morning, with former Phosphagenics chief executive officer Dr Esra Ogru, scientist Dr Robert Gianello and former Progen director Dr Woei-Jia Jiang sent to gaol for stealing more than \$6 million (see below).

Biotech Daily reports on these matters for the same reason all newspapers report criminal activity and the subsequent convictions and sentences – so that everyone knows the law and no one can say that they didn't know the penalties for breaking the law.

As Justice Felicity Hampel said in her sentencing of the Phosphagenics Three, it is hard to understand how someone with a Doctorate of Philosophy from a prestigious university, awarded the degree for providing a thesis of integrity, could not understand what was wrong with issuing false invoices.

And although there are very few direct acts of criminality detected in Australian biotechnology, there have been previous convictions, including Martin Soust at Select Vaccines, who tried to pump the share price for a bonus. Former Acuvax chief executive officer Dr William Ardrey is currently before the courts.

There are other matters that concern Biotech Daily, including extravagant claims for unproven technologies and some companies' inability to report to the ASX transparently.

This year has seen some significant technology and commercialization failures, with Prana's PBT2 not meeting its endpoint for Alzheimer's, QRX failing to win US registration for its Moxduo dual opioid, Alchemia's HA-irinotecan failing to meet its phase III endpoint, Bionomics BNC105 failing a phase II trial for kidney cancer and Phosphagenics acne treatment also failing to meet its primary endpoint.

But there has been good news. Persistence at Clinuvel had paid off, with a takeover bid preceding long-awaited European approval for Scenesse and a significant share price jump reflecting the news. Psivida also showed that tenacity is all and finally won US approval, as well as European approval, for its licenced Iluvien drug.

The sector has had a large number of significant capital raisings, Bionomics won a remarkable licencing deal from Merck for BNC375 for Alzheimer's disease, including \$20 million upfront, Shire acquired the privately run Fibrotech for about \$600 million and on the eve of a State election, the Victoria Government has been a cornerstone for a potential \$200 million Medical Translation Fund

Biotech Daily has pumped out about 250 editions a year for nine years and we believe we have not missed a single major announcement.

None of this would be possible without you, our subscribers. Thank you, kindly.

David Langsam
Editor