



# Biotech Daily

Thursday September 5, 2024

*Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies*

- \* **ASX UP, BIOTECH DOWN: PRESCIENT UP 9.5%; ATOMO DOWN 9%**
- \* **FEDERAL \$34.5m FOR 6 STEM CELL PROJECTS**
- \* **CURVEBEAM EGM: \$46k INCENTIVES; \$30k DIRECTOR FEES**
- \* **PHARMAUST 'NEURIZON' NAME CHANGE, 83% FEE POOL HIKE AGM**
- \* **PACIFIC EDGE ASKS CHAIR CHRIS GALLAHER TO STAY TO 2025**
- \* **OPTHEA: PETER LANG INTERIM CFO, MIKE CAMPBELL CCO; STAFF**
- \* **ECHO IQ REQUESTS 'CAPITAL RAISING' TRADING HALT**

## MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market recovered 0.4 percent on Thursday September 5, 2024, with the ASX200 up 31.9 points to 7,982.4 points.

Fourteen of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 17 were down, seven traded unchanged and two were untraded.

Prescient was the best, up 0.4 cents or 9.5 percent to 4.6 cents, with 2.8 million shares traded.

Actinogen climbed 5.4 percent; both Medical Developments and Nanosonics were up 3.5 percent; 4D Medical, Avita, Clarity, Orthocell and Proteomics rose more than two percent; Aroa, Immutep and Pro Medicus improved one percent or more; with Neuren, Resmed and Telix up by less than one percent.

Yesterday's 0.2 cents or 10 percent best, Atomo, led the falls, down 0.2 cents or 9.1 percent to two cents, with 360,316 shares traded.

Dimerix and Imugene lost more than five percent; Syntara was down 3.2 percent; Clinuvel, Emvision, Impedimed, Medadvisor, Mesoblast, Paradigm and Percheron shed more than two percent; Alcidion, Amplia, Compumedics, Genetic Signatures, Polynovo and SDI were down more than one percent; with Cochlear and CSL down by less than one percent.

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Federal Government says its Medical Research Future Fund will invest \$34.5 million in six research projects focusing on stem cells.

The Federal Government said Melbourne's Magellan Stem Cells would receive \$6,997,287 to conduct a 12-month, 573-patient, phase III trial to treat and potentially halt the damage caused by knee joint osteoarthritis.

A media release from the Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler said the fund would grant Melbourne's Florey Institute \$4,999,238 to research motor neuron disease treatment and develop drug screening technology using patient stem cells to test whether treatments could keep motor neurons alive.

The Federal Government said it would grant Brisbane's Griffith University \$6,801,842 for a trial to test cell transplantation with rehabilitation to repair spinal cord injury.

The Federal Government media release said that the University of Queensland would be awarded \$4,169,463 to trial proteins from highly specific and effective venoms not yet tested in human cells types for anti-seizure therapeutics.

The Government said that the University of New South Wales would receive \$4,999,499 to develop a screening platform for cardiovascular disease drugs.

The media release said that the University of Melbourne would be granted \$6,509,100.5 to treat gut disorders in children.

Mr Butler said "we are living through a supercharged period of discovery in health and medical research, and the Albanese Government is proud to support Australia's world class researchers".

"Stem cell therapies could provide innovative treatments for many chronic and inherited diseases we can't yet treat effectively," Mr Butler said. "Such therapies could also revolutionize how we test and develop new medications."

"These six projects are truly exciting and hold the promise of new treatments for diverse diseases and conditions like osteoarthritis, spinal cord injury and motor neuron disease, among others," Mr Butler said.

## CURVEBEAM A.I.

Curvebeam says an extraordinary general meeting will vote to grant \$45,965 in short term incentives, as well as issue shares in lieu of cash to board members.

Curvebeam said investors would vote to issue \$A22,932 and \$US15,488 (\$A23,033) in shares to chief executive officer Greg Brown and chief operating officer Arun Singh, respectively, part of their short-term incentive award for the year to June 30, 2024, with both Mr Brown and Mr Singh requesting shares instead of cash.

The company said shareholders would vote to issue non-executive director Rob Lilley 105,430 shares, equivalent to \$18,977, and non-executive directors Hashan De Silva and Kate Robb 31,423 shares each, worth about \$5,656, in lieu of cash payments as part of a cost reduction initiative, with directors agreeing to reduce the cash portion of their salary for the six months to June 30, 2024 by 25 percent, and receive that amount as shares.

The company said Mr Brown and Mr Singh agreed to do the same, and that shareholders would vote to issue Mr Brown 166,667 shares, equivalent to \$30,000, and Mr Singh 311,020 shares, equivalent to \$55,983.52.

Curvebeam said shareholders would also vote to ratify and approve the issue of shares from its recent placement to investors, including 11,111,111 shares to Mr De Silva's KP Rx Healthcare Opportunities Fund (BD: Aug 14, 2024).

The virtual extraordinary general meeting will be held on October 3, 2024 at 4pm (AEST). Curvebeam was unchanged at 18.5 cents.

## PHARMAUST

Pharmaust says its annual general meeting will vote to change its name to Neurizon Therapeutics and increase the directors fee pool 83.3 percent to \$550,000.

Pharmaust said the name change resolution was a special resolution, requiring 75 percent of votes at the meeting to pass, and followed the decision “to focus its resources on the development of monepantel as a treatment for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis [motor neuron disease] and, potentially in the future, other neuro-degenerative diseases, deprioritizing other programs in veterinary treatments and oncology”.

The company said that the increase in the non-executive directors fee pool from \$300,000 to \$550,000 would provide flexibility to increase the number of directors to provide additional skills and expertise, enable incremental increases in fees, and attract and retain suitably qualified directors with the appropriate experience, expertise, skills and diversity.

The company said shareholders would vote to grant 11,454,500 shares and options to its chief executive officer, chief operating officer and directors.

Pharmaust said shareholders would vote to grant 960,000 options to chair Sergio Duchini, and 600,000 options each to directors Marcus Hughes and Dr Katie MacFarlane.

The company said it would vote to grant chief executive officer Dr Michael Thurn 1,140,000 performance rights and 4,256,000 options and chief operating officer John Clark 742,500 performance rights and 2,772,000 options, as long-term incentives, with the rights equivalent to 30 percent of their 2025 long-term incentives and their options, exercisable at 20.0 cents each, equal to 70 percent of the incentive.

Pharmaust said the meeting would vote to grant former director Dr Thomas Duthy 54,847 shares in lieu of cash for the period from February 5 to May 9, 2024, as well as 384,000 options, equivalent to his \$48,000 yearly salary, exercisable at 26.0 cents each.

The company said it would vote to elect Mr Duchini, Mr Hughes and Dr MacFarlane as directors, adopt its remuneration report, ratify placement shares and approve its 10 percent placement facility.

The meeting will be held at RSM Australia, Level 27, 120 Collins Street, Melbourne and on-line on October 9, 2024 at 11am (AEDT).

Pharmaust fell half a cent or 2.8 percent to 17.5 cents.

## PACIFIC EDGE

Pacific Edge says chair Chris Gallaher has agreed to delay his retirement until 2025 while it determines US Medicare insurance coverage for its Cxbladder tests.

Pacific Edge said it asked Mr Gallaher to remain as chair to “provide stability and confidence ... amid the ... uncertainty over the Medicare coverage status for the company’s Cxbladder tests” and the recruitment process.

In March, Mr Gallaher said he would retire by the end of the year (BD: Mar 14, 2024).

Last year, the company said its Medicare administrative contractor Novitas had warned its Cxbladder tests would cease to be covered by Medicare in the US because it did not consider the tests “medically reasonable and necessary”; and later, said Novitas had delayed implementing the changes with submissions on the draft local coverage determination (LCD) for non-coverage of Cxbladder, with Novitas and First Coast Service Options to take up-to a year from July 27, 2023 (BD: Jul 6, 28; Sep 11, 2023).

Last month, Pacific Edge said Novitas was granted an extension (BD: Jul 29, 2024).

Today, Mr Gallaher said that the board “believes that delaying my retirement at least until the [local coverage determination] is finalized will enable us to make a smooth handover to the new chair, which is in the best interests of the company and all its stakeholders”.

Pacific Edge was untraded at 8.1 cents.

## OPTHEA

Opthea says Daniel Geffken will replace Peter Lang as interim chief financial officer, with Mike Campbell replacing chief commercial officer Judith Robertson.

Opthea said it had appointed Dr Dayong Li head of biometrics and Anthony Bonifazio head of market access, with Jen Watts to replace head of clinical operations Bruno Gagnon, with all appointments effective from September 9, 2024.

The company said Mr Geffken was the co-founder and managing director of Danforth Advisors, and had been a chief financial officer, strategic consultant and board member to life science companies including start-ups and publicly-traded companies.

Opthea said Mr Campbell had more than 30 years of experience in sales, marketing, market access, patient services and operations, including at Genentech, Novartis and Shire, as well as serving as head of commercial at Viatrix Eye Car.

The company said Mr Campbell held a Bachelor of Science from Alabama's Auburn University and was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business.

Opthea said Dr Li had more than 25 years' experience in the bio-pharmaceutical industry, including as head of biometrics at Marinus Pharmaceuticals, as well as holding biometrics roles at Forest Laboratories (Abbvie) and Astrazeneca.

The company said Dr Li held a Bachelor of Science from the Xinxiang, China-based Henan Normal University and a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Maryland.

Opthea said Mr Bonifazio was previously head of access reimbursement and market development at Astellas (formerly Iveric Bio), and worked at Novartis, Santen and Genentech.

The company said Mr Bonifazio held a Bachelor of Science from Philadelphia's La Sale University.

Opthea said Ms Watts was previously the head of clinical operations at biotech companies including Complement Therapeutics, Oculis and Graybug Vision, and had served as clinical sciences director of ophthalmology at the Novartis Institute of Biomedical Research.

The company said Ms Watts held a Master of Science from Fort Worth's University of North Texas.

Opthea was unchanged at 55 cents with 1.9 million shares traded.

## ECHO IQ

Echo IQ has requested a trading halt "pending an announcement with regards to a proposed capital raising".

Trading will resume on September 9, 2024, on an earlier announcement.

Echo IQ last traded at 16 cents.