



Biotech Daily

Monday March 10, 2025

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

- * **ASX UP, BIOTECH DOWN: 4D MEDICAL UP 5%; PERCHERON DOWN 8%**
- * **POLYNOVO: 'ISSUES RESOLVED; WORKPLACE SAFE, INCLUSIVE'**
- * **S&P: 9 BIOTECHS UP, 5 DOWN; PRO MEDICUS TO ASX50**
- * **ANATARA FALLS 74% ON 'UNLIKELY' GARP IBS PRIMARY ENDPOINT**
- * **ADHERIUM EX-CEO DR PAUL MASTORIDIS 'CONSCIENTIOUS' LAW SUIT**
- * **MING LONG REPLACES CSIRO CHAIR KATHRYN FAGG; BOARD CHANGES**
- * **BIOTRON DELAYS RIGHTS OFFER**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market was up 0.18 percent on Monday March 10, 2025, with the ASX200 up 14.1 points to 7,962.3 points.

Twelve of the Biotech Daily Top 40 companies were up, 18 fell and 10 traded unchanged.

4D Medical was the best, up two cents or 5.4 percent to 39 cents, with 1.5 million shares traded; followed by Alcidion, up 0.4 cents or 5.1 percent to 8.3 cents with 439,339 shares traded.

Polynovo recovered 4.6 percent; Actinogen, Immutep, Micro-X, Nanosonics and Proteomics were up more than three percent; Dimerix rose 2.4 percent; Cochlear, Orthocell, Resmed and SDI were up more than one percent; with Pro Medicus and Telix up by less than one percent.

Friday's 9.1 percent best, Percheron, led the falls, down 0.1 cents or 8.3 percent to 1.1 cents, with 2.5 million shares traded.

Medical Developments lost 5.7 percent; Curvebeam and Cynata fell more than four percent; Aroa and Opthea were down three percent or more; Clarity and Imugene shed more than two percent; Amplia, Compumedics, CSL, Genetic Signatures, Mesoblast, Neuren, Syntara and Universal Biosensors were down more than one percent; with Avita, Clinuvel and EBR down by less than one percent.

POLYNOVO

Polynovo says “some issues were raised” about interactions between chair David Williams and some executives and it has ensured “a positive, safe and inclusive workplace”.

In an announcement filed after the market closed on Friday, Polynovo said it was responding to media speculation last week regarding corporate governance issues.

In an earlier response, Polynovo said that following media speculation, it was proposed that chief executive officer Swami Raote cease his employment from June 2025 and director Dr Robyn Elliott would be the acting chief executive officer but no agreement had been reached (BD: Mar 7, 2025).

In Friday’s 5.18pm announcement, the company said it was responding to “alleged interactions between [chair, Mr Williams] and some members of [its] management team”.

Polynovo said its board “recognizes the importance of providing a safe and inclusive workplace, and treating everyone equally and respectfully”.

The company said the board took the matters seriously and in October 2024, engaged barristers Philip Crutchfield and Katherine Brazenor “to hold discussions with some management team members and the chair regarding those issues and to provide the board with their recommendations as to the ongoing working arrangements and professional relations between the chair and management”.

Polynovo said that the board engaged in a range of steps to address the matters and to review its governance arrangements, engaging Alice DeBoos of workplace law firm Kingston Reid to provide training on appropriate workplace behavior and employee and director responsibilities.

The company said that it appointed Westpac Bank chair Lindsay Maxsted to advise on governance matters, including the interaction between directors and executives.

Polynovo said that the board adopted a protocol in relation to interactions between the board, individual board members, including the chair, and management team members and engaged executive search firm Spencer Stuart to assist with skills assessment and succession planning across the entire board including the chair Mr Williams.

“The board is confident that the actions it has taken, as detailed above, have appropriately addressed the various matters raised, to ensure a positive, safe and inclusive workplace for all our staff,” Polynovo said.

“This outcome, balanced with the significant contribution of the chair to the success of the business, ensures the ongoing focus of the company on delivering quality patient care and positive outcomes for all stakeholders,” the company said.

Polynovo was up 5.5 cents or 4.6 percent to \$1.255 with 6.3 million shares traded.

STANDARD AND POOR’S DOW JONES INDICES

Standard & Poor’s says it has promoted nine biotechnology companies and demoted five, with Pro Medicus promoted to the ASX50, effective from March 25, 2025.

Standard & Poor’s said it promoted Botanix to the ASX300 Index, with Arovella, Dimerix, Emvision, Imricor, Medadvisor, Orthocell and Race promoted to the All Ordinaries Index.

The company said Impedimed, Imugene, Mach 7, Paradigm and Vitura had been removed from the All Ordinaries Index.

Last week, Standard & Poor’s said it had promoted Mesoblast to the ASX200 Index, replacing Arcadium Lithium following its acquisition by Rio Tinto (BD: Mar 3, 2025).

Previously, Standard & Poor’s has told Biotech Daily that inclusion in the indices is based solely on market capitalization.

The Biotech Daily Top 40 Index (BDI-40) is based on quality of science, benefit to human health, board and management, investment potential and market capitalization.

ANATARA LIFESCIENCES

Anatara fell as much as 74 percent on news that the primary endpoint “is unlikely to be met” in stage two of its phase II ‘Garp’ for irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) trial.

In 2023, Anatara said its stage one, 61-patient, phase I/II trial of gastro-intestinal reprogramming, or ‘Garp’, for irritable bowel syndrome met its primary endpoints, including reducing irritable bowel syndrome by 56 percent (BD: Oct 6, 17, 2023).

At that time, the company said the trial met safety objectives and showed statistical significance for anxiety and depression, but did not show improvement in quality of life.

Last month, Anatara said that it expected results from the 71 patients in stage two of the trial in March 2025, “in-line” with company expectations, and that it had ethics approval to study its anti-obesity project, in mice (BD: Feb 20, 2025).

Today, the company said its expectation from a preliminary review of non-finalized data of stage two was that the primary efficacy endpoint of irritable bowel syndrome severity scoring system (IBS-SSS) reduction versus placebo was “unlikely to be met”.

Anatara said fully assessable participants had been reduced from 71-to-62 subjects “following the removal of those not meeting minimal compliance requirements and those with an unacceptably low IBS-SSS at baseline”.

The company said the secondary endpoint of a more than 20 percent improvement in irritable bowel syndrome severity from baseline appeared “highly likely to be achieved”.

Anatara said it expected headline results analysis “in March 2025”.

Anatara chair Dr David Brookes said the company was “obviously extremely disappointed that the preliminary analysis ... reviewed has left little doubt that the statistically significant primary efficacy endpoint that had been our focus from stage two will not be achieved”.

“The final headline results with some secondary endpoints that are expected later in the month will still be of interest, especially as the IBS-SSS is a subjective measure and the trial has the expected high placebo response,” Dr Brookes said.

In 2023, the company said that after eight weeks of treatment, stage one of the study showed the 20 placebo patients had a 36 percent reduction from baseline in irritable bowel syndrome severity score compared to a 56 percent reduction in low-dose patients and 50 percent in the 21 high-dose patients (BD: Oct 6, 2023).

At that time, Anatara said it was “not surprised or concerned about the high placebo response as the medical literature shows that IBS clinical trials typically have a high placebo response on average of about 40 percent”.

Today Dr Brookes said Anatara would “be endeavoring to maximize the value of the Garp project, while progressing our exciting anti-obesity concept work”.

The company said it had allocated “more than \$250,000” to proof-of-concept studies for its anti-obesity drug research in mice, to determine the best drug candidate.

Anatara said the University of Newcastle would conduct the studies, which were expected to take about six-to-nine months “depending on the extent to which weight control is sustained in the animal model”.

The company said the anti-obesity project was “designed to develop an oral medication to assist weight reduction and sustaining weight control in conjunction with other contemporary treatments and approaches”.

Anatara said the product was “being developed with the target of assisting the maintenance of weight loss and limiting rebound weight gain following cessation of contemporary weight loss medications”.

The company said although it needed “to protect the project at this early stage, the mechanism of action involves the stimulation of endogenous [glucagon-like peptide-1]”.

Anatara fell as much as 74.4 percent or 2.9 cents to one cent before closing down 2.8 cents or 71.8 percent at 1.1 cents with 50.9 million shares traded.

ADHERIUM

Adherium says former chief executive officer Dr Paul Mastoridis has issued proceedings against it in a New Jersey court under an Employee Protection Act.

Last year, Adherium said Dr Mastoridis would replace chief executive officer Rick Legleiter, on a base salary of \$US350,000 (\$A533,000) a year (BD: Feb 1, 2024).

Later, the company said Dr Mastoridis' would cease his employment on January 7, 2025, that he was employed for an initial 12-month term and it had "not been able to agree terms to enable him to continue in his role" (BD: Oct 30, 2024).

At the time, Adherium said that until Dr Mastoridis' departure he would be on 'gardening leave' and that the business would be managed by its board and management.

In its half yearly report and accounts announced to the ASX on February 28, 2025, the company said it was "continuing dialogue with Dr Mastoridis and his US lawyers regarding his cessation of employment".

Adherium said in those discussions Dr Mastoridis had "alleged, among other matters, that the company violated the New Jersey Conscientious Employee Protection Act, which the company strenuously denies".

The company said in February that discussions were "on-going, however Dr Mastoridis has the right to issue court proceedings should he wish to resolve his allegations in a court".

Today, Adherium said it "denies Dr Mastoridis' claims and intends to continue to strenuously contest them".

Adherium was up 0.1 cents or 10 percent to 1.1 cents.

COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

CSIRO says it has promoted deputy chair Ming Long to chair following chair Kathryn Fagg's resignation and it has appointed Vanessa Sullivan to its board.

A media release from the Minister for Industry and Science Ed Husic said Ms Fagg had been on the board since August 2018, chair since October 2021 and had "made the decision to step aside for personal reasons".

The Organisation said Ms Long had been deputy chair since May 2024 and had "broad governance experience across financial services, real estate, infrastructure and telecommunications, and significant executive experience in financial stewardship".

CSIRO said Ms Long had worked for the Australian Institute of Company Directors in climate governance and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission's Corporate Governance Consultive Panel.

The Organisation said Ms Sullivan had "strong commercial, financial, project and strategy experience gained over 20 years working across the energy, water and sustainability sectors and more recently in hydrogen industry development".

Mr Husic thanked Ms Fagg and said "CSIRO had benefitted from having such a pioneering woman in [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] at the helm and I wish her all the very best for the future".

"I welcome Ms Long as the new chair, an accomplished executive who brings with her exceptional corporate governance insight," Mr Husic said. "Ms Sullivan's experience in the renewable energy and sustainability sectors makes her a welcome addition to the board."

"I know these appointments will help ensure the strong leadership and governance of CSIRO into the future," Mr Husic said.

According to her LinkedIn page, Ms Long held a Bachelor of Economics and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sydney and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Technology, Sydney.

BIOTRON

Biotron says it has delayed the opening of its rights issue and expected the offer to open on March 17, 2025, with the timetable to be confirmed “as soon as practicable”.

Last month, Biotron said it would offer a share purchase plan at 1.0 cent a share to raise a minimum \$500,000 with a closing date of March 12, 2025, and if unsuccessful would go into voluntary administration or be wound-up (BD: Feb 21, 2025).

Later, the company said that it had withdrawn the previous share purchase plan and instead hoped to raise up-to \$2.7 million in a one-for-one rights issue at 0.3 cents a share, opening on March 5 for shareholders on the record date of March 6 and closing on March 19, 2025 (BD: Feb 28, 2025).

Today, Biotron said the delay of the prospectus and opening date was “a result of queries raised by [the Australian Securities and Investments Commission]” but did not disclose the queries.

Biotron was unchanged at 0.4 cents with 2.2 million shares traded.