



Herald Sun (Melbourne)

Friday 22/10/2010

Page: 75
Section: Business News
Region: Melbourne, AU
Circulation: 514000
Type: Capital City Daily
Size: 187.11 sq.cms.



slice
slicemedia.com

press clip

Roving eyes at biotech meet

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Olga Galacho

US pharma giants are eyeing off partnership and takeover opportunities among Australian drug developers.

In Melbourne for the AusBiotech conference, the biggest ripples are being caused by Eli Lilly R & D vice president Rob Armstrong, who is believed to be among the most actively looking to strike a deal downunder.

"I have permanent instructions from the chief executive to identify opportunities," Dr Armstrong told *BusinessDaily*.

While he declined to comment on which companies he was negotiating with, he said Eli Lilly was looking for new partnerships in the oncology, diabetes and autoimmune areas.

A source at the conference said compared with other representatives of big pharmaceutical companies, the

Eli Lilly team appeared aloof this year, "like a shark that has already swallowed something, so maybe they've already bought".

Dr Armstrong said he had a "good idea" which Australian biotechs with products up for US Food and Drug Administration approval would be the first to get the nod, but he would not say who.

Companies whose products are being reviewed by regulators for commercialisation this year or early next year include Pharmaxis, pSivida, Impedimed, Alchemia, QRX Pharma, Chemgenex and Acrux.

Dual-listed eye disease specialist pSivida was yesterday ranked 15th in the prestigious Deloitte's Technology Fast 500 list.

The list, published annually in the US, noted the biotech's revenue grew 9800 per cent since 2005, largely due to milestone payments from its

partners Pfizer, Almera and Bausch and Lomb.

Although still a minnow with income of just \$12 million clocked for 2009, compared to \$1 billion for the number-one ranked Hughes Communications, pSivida's microscopic drug delivery technology is attracting attention from pharmaceuticals looking to minimise toxic effects from their drugs.

Its implant, no larger than an eyelash, slow-releases a steroid to treat eye disease in diabetics and is tipped to get US approval next year.

RBS Morgans analyst Scott Power said in a note yesterday that the company, listed here and on the NASDAQ, was attractively priced. The stock eased 1¢ yesterday to close at \$5.98.

Also, Leon Serry, founder of Circadian, the first biotech to list on the ASX, won this year's AusBiotech chairman's excellence award.



Lookout: Rob Armstrong.



Winner: Leon Serry.