

Media Coverage

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AusBiotech Ltd. Release: Bottom-line Boost for Australian Biotechs

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28 October 2011 -- Biotechnology companies and international investors are reporting excellent results from this year's AusBiotech conference, with programs and activities dedicated to helping companies and researchers connect with investors and partners, stirring substantial international interest.

AusBiotech 2011, held last week in Adelaide with more than 1,100 participants, facilitated over 2,300 partnering meeting requests and the Australasian Life Sciences Investment Summit, the biggest investment event of its kind in this part of the world, which attracted 120 invited investors - almost half from overseas.

International investor, Tony Sun from New York-based Aisling Capital, which manages \$1.7 billion with a \$650 million fund for investment - of which is portion dedicated to overseas activities, said: "Australia's biotechnology industry is still nascent but it is coming of age with recent successes like Mesoblast and Acrux. I came away from AusBiotech with half a dozen opportunities that I wanted to follow-up on."

This sentiment was shared by numerous investors, says analyst Lawrence Gozlan who works for US-based Scientia Capital, in the Australian office. "The US investors were impressed with the quality of the science and the people, I think they appreciate that the biotech companies are undercapitalised in Australia and see it as an opportunity. Their risk appetite has increased and hence they are looking at markets outside of the US to generate returns," said Gozlan.

"There seems to be a tremendous interest in the work of Australian biotech companies right now and it's very exciting," says AusBiotech CEO, Dr Anna Lavelle. "There are many novel technologies and treatments in later stages of development and now that the Federal Government has 'sweetened' the deal, with the passing of the R&D tax incentive legislation, Australian biotechnology is even more attractive."

Dr Deborah Rathjen, CEO of presenting company Bionomics, says this overseas interest was clear from the conversations her company had during the conference. "Bionomics had a very positive reception at AusBiotech from an excellent group of Australian and international investors," said Rathjen. "Many of these investors expressed great interest in our pipeline and have followed-up since with further questions. The conference was also a very valuable opportunity for us to hold numerous meetings with international pharmaceutical companies, who were well represented at the event."

Orthocell CEO, Paul Anderson, agrees. The West Australian company has a stem cell, tendon regeneration treatment in market now as well as numerous promising tissue regeneration and repair technologies in the pipeline. "There was a lot of interest in our technologies and we held numerous meetings, for example, immediately after our presentation, we were approached by one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies and had a lengthy conversation. We have already scheduled further meetings."

AusBiotech 2011 is the annual conference of AusBiotech and the premier biotechnology conference for Australia and the Asia-Pacific. The conference attracts delegates from across the world each year. It is organised by AusBiotech, Australia's voice on biotechnology which represents more than 3,000 members, encompassing medicines, medical diagnostics and devices, agriculture, alternative fuels and climate change.