

Bio People: Mesoblast, USCOM, AusBiotech and more

Monday, 3 January 2011

LARGE stem cell group Mesoblast has added Cephalon chief executive employee J Kevin Buchi to its board, following a recent strategic alliance between the companies.

Buchi joined the board of the recently expanded Mesoblast group on Thursday and holds no direct or indirect holdings in Mesoblast.

Cephalon holds a stake of some 12.25% in Mesoblast after the parties signed a commercialisation alliance for a particular stem cell product.



Under that agreement Arana-buyer Cephalon may take up to 19.9% of Mesoblast securities.

Before becoming Cephalon CEO in 2010, the certified public accountant and Cornell University-educated chemist Buchi held a number of positions during his 20-year tenure.

Those roles included chief financial officer from 1996 to 2009, and head of business development.

Buchi has a master's degree in management from the L Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University and is a director of Princeton-based Celator Pharmaceuticals .

The executive was a synthetic chemist at Eastman Kodak, previously worked at a large public accounting firm, then joined the biotechnology industry with a stint at EI du Pont de Nemours.

USCOM adds, subtracts

Former Oracle managing director Philip Milton Kiely joined the board of ultrasonic cardiac output monitoring company USCOM as executive chairman.

Kiely joined on December 22 and is charged with reshaping the company into a biotechnology sector global leader, following a recent \$3 million private placement to reinvigorate sales of the award-winning cardiac output monitor USCOM 1A.

The former KPMG director has no holdings in USCOM's securities.

USCOM founder and clinical science director Rob Phillips has moved aside as chairman, but will remain on the board as an executive director.

Retiring from the board after eight years was independent non-executive director and former Agen Biomedical managing director and chief executive Roman Zwolenski.

The Sequence Capital partner and non-executive director was previously chairman of Immuron, a business consultant to CSL and Amrad, and a senior executive at Roche, Technicon and Kontron.

He departed as an USCOM option holder and indirect shareholder.

KPMG corporate finance director Jochen Bonitz will replace Zwolenski as a non-executive director on January 4.

Bonitz is responsible for mergers and acquisitions at KPMG and is corporate-finance lead for clients in the information and communications technology sector.

Roger, back on board

Advanced Surgical Design and Manufacture founder and chief executive Dr Greg Roger has re-joined the AusBiotech board.

University of Sydney school of aerospace, mechanical and mechatronic engineering Adjunct Associate Professor Roger stepped down from the industry body's board in October after new board members were elected by members.

The medical doctor was returned to the AusBiotech board by invitation and was welcomed by chair Dr Deborah Rathjen, who described him as a well-respected prior board member.

"After Dr Roger's years of committed service to AusBiotech and AusMedtech, the board is especially pleased to welcome him back," she said.

Roger's extensive experience in the medical technology and biotechnology sectors would complement the current board's skills and expertise, Rathjen said.

The Sydney-based medical device specialist co-designed and developed the RCI screw for cruciate ligament reconstruction, now marketed by Smith & Nephew, and ASDM's active knee prosthesis.