



## Issue 3: November/December

### FROM THE EDITOR

Dear ABSA-ites,

***'Tis the season to be merry!***

I'm writing this as I fly back from the **AusBiotech National Conference** (or "Nat Con" as it's affectionately referred to) in Melbourne. This was my third



Nat Con and by far the most exciting yet! Each year I get to know more and more of the industry players, which makes networking not just easier but fun too! Adding to the **fun and excitement** was the Queensland crew of ABSA committee members who joined the AusBiotech staff in the **behind-the-scenes running of the event!** Be sure to check out our insider's report in Be Seen Be Heard: "Nat Con: A Volunteer's Perspective".

***'Tis the season to be stressed!*** In far less exciting news, **exams and assessment** are upon us all (well, those of us crazy enough not to do a PhD!). ABSA wishes you all the **best of luck** and urges you to study hard and make it count.

***'Tis the season to come together!*** Set the date for **November 16** (yes it's a Sunday) and come to the **ABSA Annual General Meeting**. What can ABSA do for you next year? Have your say and get the most out of ABSA in 2009.

■ Caroline Hopkins

Got news? Got comments? Let us know!  
[absa.eneews@gmail.com](mailto:absa.eneews@gmail.com)

**"You know you've worked too long in a lab when..."**

**1. Warning labels invoke curiosity rather than caution**

**2. You rejoice when grabbing a handful of eppendorfs and it turns out to be the exact number you needed**

- Facebook group

### BE INFORMED

#### Special Interest Interview: The Financial Crisis

ABSA e-News editor Caroline Hopkins caught up with Dr Michael Lusic, Director of Corporate Finance at Wilson HTM for a quick Q&A on how the current financial environment will affect Australian Biotech.

**CH:** We've all heard about the financial crisis in the media: is the Australian biotech industry any better off than it's overseas counterparts?

**ML:** *I'd argue it's going to be worse off in the short term – the issue here is that of the 130 listed companies, 85 of them have a market cap of less than \$20m, as well as limited cash backing and high cash burn. With capital markets closed and difficulties raising money, there are big question marks in terms of survival for these small cap companies.*

**CH:** So how will the "crash" actually affect the Australian biotech industry? What are the immediate and long term effects?

**ML:** *In the short term there will be difficulty in raising money, compounded by dependence on specialist investors. Eventually though, it will unquestionably bounce back partly because numerous companies are looking to make first sales in 2009/2010, which will remind people why they've invested and increase investor sentiment.*

**CH:** In terms of job-hunting, what type of businesses are better placed to survive the downturn and continue hiring?

**ML:** *More stable jobs will be in academic research labs with long standing government grants, as well as big pharma – there's safety in numbers.*

For more industry news check out Industry Spotlight at [www.ausbiotech.org](http://www.ausbiotech.org)

■ Caroline Hopkins

## INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

### Quick Stats

**Name:** TetraQ/QPharm

**Location:** UQ, St Lucia  
Campus, Brisbane, QLD

**Combined Staff N<sup>o</sup>:** 50-70

**Started:** TetraQ/QPharm began  
their strategic alliance in June  
2008.

**Vision:** Enhance the delivery of  
bioanalytical services to clients  
in the biotechnology and  
pharmaceutical industries

#### Area of Expertise:

**TetraQ** – Preclinical research  
including ADME, efficacy,  
pharmaceutics and toxicology  
**QPharm** – Phase 1 clinical trial  
provider, especially early phase  
trial requirements

## - TetraQ & Q-Pharm Strategic Alliance -

In June 2008 TetraQ, the integrated preclinical contract research organisation based at The University of Queensland (UQ), and Q-Pharm, a leading early phase clinical trial facility in Australasia, announced a strategic alliance to enhance the delivery of bioanalytical services to clients in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries.

The alignment of the two organizations at the interface of the preclinical and early phase clinical stages of the drug development pathway presents significant opportunities for capturing operational economies, co-marketing of services, cross-referral of potential clients and providing a more complete and streamlined service.

Since its announcement in June, this alliance has been positive and has already resulted in 6 projects of significant size being undertaken at TetraQ with many more in the pipeline. TetraQ and Q-Pharm will continue to co-market their services, co-exhibiting at the AusBiotech 2008 conference in Melbourne, and other industry events.



### Dear DR *Expert career advice from AusBiotech's own Dr Olga Bucu*

- How can I get to know the people in my industry? I feel like I'm just a student and don't have much to offer...

Go along to ABSA and AusBiotech events and offer your assistance on committees. Not only will you meet industry committee members but it gives you something to do and not just "think about what you are going to say". Offer to assist at events and you will get a good reputation with those whom you assist.

- Networking can be scary when you don't know anyone! Can you suggest a few icebreakers?

*Icebreaker for girls:* Find a lady with a very interesting bag or shoes and ask her about it. Then talk to her about her role in the industry etc.

*Icebreaker for guys:* Wear a funny but tasteful pin with your favourite sporting team etc on it to give people a reason to chat to you. Stand in a thoroughfare or perhaps stand in the queue to chat to the speaker after the presentation.

Got questions for Dr Bucu??  
Email [absa.enevs@gmail.com](mailto:absa.enevs@gmail.com)

### OUT & ABOUT

*Don't miss these upcoming events!*

#### ✓ AGM

2pm 16th November 2008: Meet outside the main entrance to the SS&H UQ St Lucia Campus – members only  
Where do you want to see ABSA in 2009? BioBeers, Industry Site Visits or even a BioBall? Have your say at the AGM for all student members. Also, find out how to get more involved in ABSA and cast your vote for the 2009 Chair!

#### ✓ E&Y QLD Breakfast

Late November 2008: *Indooroopilly Golf Club*  
Join Queensland's industry players for the last E&Y breakfast of the year. RSVP online at [www.ausbiotech.org](http://www.ausbiotech.org)

#### ✓ WiT Rendezvous

5pm 27 November 2008: *Onyx Bar and Restaurant, Milton*  
Network with colleague and catch up with friends at this drinks and nibbles session. More info at [www.wit.org.au](http://www.wit.org.au)

Check out more events at [www.ausbiotech.org](http://www.ausbiotech.org)

**BE SEEN BE HEARD**

## Nat Con: A Volunteer's Perspective

• *written by AusBiotech National Conference Volunteer Kate Mackinson*

The Melbourne conference was a really great experience. It presented a lot of opportunities that no other industry functions could provide, and being a student volunteer provided me even more of these opportunities.

Running around after AusBiotech CEO Anna Lavelle on the first day (I was Anna's helper) involved giving select delegates messages and exclusive invitations, and for someone who is usually terrible at approaching people "cold", this gave me the perfect opportunity to liaise with some of industry's busiest and most influential people later on. Other highlights included the vast amounts of fantastic food, working with and getting a better insight into the national AusBiotech team, and the buzzing environment created by everyone who seemed so excited to be there.

Sore feet became a theme of the conference unfortunately, but the support of the wonderful AusBiotech staff and the student volunteer team kept everyone smiling. Working in teams, the volunteers had meetings each morning and were able to get to know each other better. As a result many of the folks



*Queensland's Kate Mackinson and Victoria's Daniel Buchanek as 2 of 30 Ausbiotech-GSK student volunteers for the AusBiotech 2008 National Conference*

I met in Melbourne have now been facebook'd! It was great to meet my future colleagues in the industry.

In summary, it was a really enriching experience and I only wish that this was not my first and last conference as a student. I would most certainly recommend volunteering to any and all willing students next year...and the busier you keep yourself, the more rewarding it is!



### STUDENT PROFILE

*Kylie O'Keefe has just graduated with honours from BBiotech Innovation at QUT and has landed a job at Peplin Pharmaceuticals. ABSA e-News gets the good oil on the career transition.*

**•What was your role in ABSA this year?**

I was the Project Leader of Student Excellence Awards.

**•What does a typical work day for you entail?**

Building a comprehensive market model of the BCC and AK market in Australia, implementing possible market scenarios into the model, co-coordinating market research projects, building a strategic marketing plan, tracking data sets of competitor sales, presentations of competitor data, market research results and marketing figures. Assisting in clinical development duties if necessary.

**•You did work experience at a few places during honours: what made you pick Peplin?**

I enjoyed the type of work I was able to do at Peplin and the independence. Also, working for a small company allows for a wider experience base and I work well with the colleagues I have at Peplin. Peplin as a company also takes good care of their staff which was another deciding factor for me!

**Where are you living at the moment?**  
Valley

**What's the one thing you can't live without?**  
Music

**What makes you laugh (and why)?**  
Quick witt (one liners) because I find it is a sign of a good humour

**What will you miss most about being a student?**  
Sleep ins and afternoon naps

**Where are you spending Christmas this year?**  
Japan