

PharmAust and Walter and Eliza Hall Institute to Evaluate Monepantel on COVID-19 Infection Model

- PharmAust has entered into a Materials Transfer Agreement with the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne, Victoria (“WEHI”).
- Under the Agreement, PharmAust will provide both monepantel and monepantel sulfone to WEHI, which will study their effects on COVID-19 infectivity *in vitro*.
- The study will be overseen by WEHI researcher Professor Marc Pellegrini *MBBS BSc FRACP PhD FAHMS*.

17 April 2020 – Perth, Australia: PharmAust Limited (ASX:PAA), a clinical-stage oncology company, is pleased to advise that it has entered into a Materials Transfer Agreement with the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (“WEHI”) in Melbourne, Victoria, to test the effects of monepantel on COVID-19 infections.

While there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19, there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatments. COVID-19 is an RNA virus that has rapidly spread throughout the world population causing serious respiratory morbidity and mortality in patients. PharmAust has extensively evaluated monepantel in its anti-cancer programmes in humans and in animal models. Monepantel’s mechanism of action in cancer may also prove to be beneficial in the treatment of certain viral diseases.

The studies will be conducted by WEHI researcher Professor Marc Pellegrini (*MBBS BSc FRACP PhD FAHMS*). Professor Pellegrini is joint head of the Institute’s Infectious Diseases and Immune Defence division and an infectious disease clinician at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. He is the recipient of an Australian National Health and Medical Research Council Excellence Award for his work on chronic infections.

The Agreement provides that PharmAust will own all intellectual property results and rights that are generated from the studies. PharmAust will pay a nominal fee to WEHI for undertaking the studies using monepantel and monepantel sulfone.

PharmAust’s Executive Chairman Dr Roger Aston said, “We are delighted to be working with the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research on this timely and important project and delighted that Professor Marc Pellegrini has agreed to be the Investigator”.

PharmAust’s Chief Scientific Officer Dr Richard Mollard stated, “The studies will commence shortly and WEHI aims to provide a preliminary data summary in May 2020.”

This announcement is authorised by the Board.

Enquiries:

Dr Roger Aston
Executive Chairman & CEO
Tel: 0402 762 204
rogeraston@pharmaust.com

Dr Richard Mollard
Chief Scientific Officer
Tel: 0418 367 855
rmollard@pharmaust.com

About PharmAust (PAA):

PAA is a clinical-stage company developing targeted cancer therapeutics for humans and animals. The company specialises in repurposing marketed drugs lowering the risks and costs of development. PAA's subsidiary, Epichem, is a successful contract medicinal chemistry company.

PAA's lead drug candidate is monepantel (MPL), a novel, potent and safe inhibitor of the mTOR pathway – a key driver of cancer. MPL has been evaluated in Phase 1 clinical trials in humans and dogs; was well tolerated and produced a significant reduction in key prognostic biomarkers. PAA is uniquely positioned to commercialise MPL for treatment of human and veterinary cancers as it advances the drug in Phase 2 clinical trials.

About WEHI:

The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (WEHI) is one of Australia's leading biomedical research organisations, with a national and international reputation for performing highly influential basic and translational research.

We are addressing some of the major health challenges of our time, with a focus on cancer, immune health and infection, and development and ageing.

WEHI is at the forefront of research innovation, with a strong commitment to excellence and investment in research computing, advanced technologies and developing new medicines and diagnostics. Situated in the Parkville Biomedical Research Precinct in Melbourne, Victoria, our collaborative culture sees us work with other research institutes, universities, hospitals and industry to make discoveries for humanity. For more information, visit <https://www.wehi.edu.au>.