

# Daily pill to treat dementia gets nod

## Aussie firm cuts US deal

Zoe Smith

A once-a-day "holy grail" pill that could change the way Alzheimer's disease is treated has reached a major milestone.

Sydney-based company Actinogen Medical has made a huge step forward in the development of the drug Xanamem after making an agreement with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The agreement, which provides clarity on a future US marketing application for Xanamem, is being viewed as a major win and strengthens the Australian biotech's position in discussions with potential development and marketing partners.

Key outcomes of the agreement include the confirmation of regulatory starting materials for the commercial manufacturing of the Alzheimer's pill as well as the FDA's endorsement of a single 10mg dose versus placebo design for the pivotal trial.

Dr Steven Gourlay, the CEO and managing director of Actinogen, said Xanamem is the first and only drug to test whether you can slow or halt Alzheimer's disease by lowering tissue levels of the "stress hormone" cortisol, which has long been associated with brain toxicity.

The drug targets the frontal lobe and hippocampus – the areas of the brain that are most affected by Alzheimer's.

This potential could extend to other dementias such as Lewy-Body disease, frontotemporal dementia, and dementia associated with Parkinson's disease, Gourlay said.

"The new agreement confirms a clear path to approval of Xanamem by the FDA and all-

ows Actinogen to proceed with its planned clinical trials in Australia and globally with confidence," he said.

Dr Gourlay said the FDA feedback on the Xanamem program was positive and meant that Actinogen had the option to take it to market with or without other biopharmaceutical partners.

"Alzheimer's disease is the leading cause of death in women in Australia and number 2 for men," he said.

"The reasonable and measured feedback from the FDA on the final stages of the Xanamem program shows that the FDA is keenly interested in safer and more effective therapies for this terrible disease.

"Currently available drugs for Alzheimer's disease are modestly effective at best, and Xanamem has the potential to be a safer, more effective and more convenient once-a-day pill, which could revolutionise the field."

The drug, which is currently being trialled across 35 sites in Australia and the US, recently acquired its 100th trial patient.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recently granted Actinogen Medical the non-proprietary name 'emestadastat' for Xanamem, and gave it a first-in-class, which Actinogen said was a rare global endorsement that placed Actinogen as one of the most promising players in neuroscience worldwide.

Alzheimer's disease, which results in worsening symptoms over years, affected 411,100 Australians in 2023, according to Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates.

**Dementia funding crisis: P17**



Queen Mary and Her Majesty Queen Margrethe. Picture: Instagram

## Mary joins mother-in-law

Maria Bervanakis

Queen Mary has made a rare joint appearance with her mother-in-law, Denmark's former reigning Queen Margrethe.

Tasmanian-born Mary was in her element as the duo took a tour of Møns Klint, a famous natural attraction in Denmark popular for fossil hunting, hiking trails and breathtaking ocean views.

For the outing, Mary looked chic in a brown merino wool blazer by Harris Wharf London, a midnight

flora patterned cotton blouse by ME+EM, and burnt orange straight-leg trousers by The Fold London.

Details of the appearance were posted on the Danish royal family's official Instagram account together with photos from the day.

"Møns Klint constitutes an exceptional Ice age landscape and a new UNESCO World Heritage site, and today Her Majesty the Queen and Her Majesty Queen Margrethe visited GeoCenter Møns Clint and the exhibition 'Everything is connected – Biodiversity on

Høje Møn," read the caption.

The exhibition is part of the large EU project LIFE Orchids, which works to protect and promote the unique nature and the many rare species on Høje Møn, the royals explained.

"The Queen also took part in a guided hike to the project area. At the Stengården exaggerated, Their Majesties got an introduction to the efforts of the LIFE Orchids project, and the Queen planted merian here, which is an important host plant for the black-spotted bluebird," the post continued.

## Lawyer to reveal his gold holder

Vanda Carson

The former lawyer for billionaire Clive Palmer has been ordered to reveal the identity of the person he gave \$2.5m worth of gold bullion, five watches worth \$200,000 and silver coins to, for "safe keeping".

The order, with a deadline of Monday September 15, was made by Supreme Court Justice Melanie Hindman on September 12, along with a caveat that Sam Iskander may avoid revealing who he gave the valuable items to, if he believed it "may tend to incriminate" him.

The court had previously heard that Mr Iskander had been accused of stealing \$30m from Mr Palmer's mining company Mineralogy between 2016 and last month.

The legal demand required Mr Iskander to reveal "printed documentation relating to the purchase of" between 12 and 15 gold bullion bars of 1kg each, five watches and silver coins worth \$5000.

The court order comes after lawyers for Mineralogy submitted to the court that they had asked Mr Iskander to disclose details of who was holding the \$2.7m in precious metals and watches but he had failed to respond.

On August 8, Justice Hindman ordered Mr Iskander and his various companies to list all their assets in Australia and give their value, location and details by August 15. Mr Iskander failed to do this, counsel for Mr Palmer, Brian O'Donnell KC submitted. The deadline for this was later extended until September 8.

Mr Iskander did reveal some of his assets in an affidavit filed at the end of August, stating he owns \$126,374 worth of cryptocurrency, and is a director of a company that runs a cafe called Gavel and Grind in Caboolture.

Mr Iskander told the court in his affidavit that he owns 17 properties, including 11 that he rents out and six that are vacant or he lives in himself.

The case is due back in court on October 20.



Sam Iskander

## Nurse charge dropped

Prosecutors have dropped a charge against one of two Sydney nurses over a video in which they allegedly threatened Israeli patients.

Ahmad Rashad Nadir and Sarah Abu Lebdeh made international headlines in February after a video of them allegedly bragging about killing Israeli patients at Bankstown Hospital, in Sydney's west, spread online. Abu Lebdeh was charged

with threatening violence to a group, using a carriage service to threaten to kill and using a carriage service to menace, harass or offend.

The court was told that prosecutors had withdrawn the charge of using a carriage service to threaten to kill. She has yet to enter any pleas.

Nadir is charged with using a carriage service to menace, harass or offend, and possessing a prohibited drug.



Landlord Edward Amos

## Landlord loses land tax battle

Vanda Carson

The state government is a step closer to forcibly seizing and selling various Brisbane investment properties to recoup its legal costs after it battled landlord Edward "Ted" Amos in court a decade ago over his failure to pay \$486,000 in land tax, a court has heard.

In a decision handed down by the Court of Appeal in Brisbane on Tuesday, the three

judges threw out an appeal filed by Amos.

He was appealing a Supreme Court decision handed down by Justice Paul Smith in April stating that the Commissioner of State Revenue could sell some of his property to recoup their legal costs racked up in the decade-old court battle with Amos over his land tax bill. He owns properties in Albion and Virginia in Brisbane's northern suburbs.

"Mr Amos' evidence ignores the fact that court orders had been made against him," the appeal decision by Justices Debra Mullins, Shane Doyle and Sean Cooper states.

The legal costs in question related to a June 2014 summary court judgment ordering Mr Amos pay \$486,509, together with interest and costs, for unpaid land tax for 10 properties for a period up to June 2013.