

ResApp investors angry over Pfizer bid

DANIELLE LE MESSURIER

The chief executive of digital health company ResApp Health has defended the board's decision to recommend shareholders support a \$100 million takeover offer from Pfizer Australia.

Tony Keating faced heated questions over the endorsement on a call with frustrated investors — many of whom said they planned to vote down the “under-priced” bid in mid-June — after the release of ResApp's quarterly results.

Pfizer is offering 11.5¢ a share for the WA-founded company, representing a 27.8 per cent premium to the closing price of 9¢ just before the offer was lobbed.

Many shareholders bought in when ResApp's share price was higher and are concerned about the company being sold on the cheap. Despite a promising product, ResApp has disappointed on the market, trading between 4¢ and 38¢ over the past five years.

One shareholder said he was concerned about long-term investors being “hung out to dry”. Another said she was “annoyed” the board continued to refer to the 11.5¢ offer as a “premium”.

Pfizer's offer comes just weeks after ResApp announced positive results for its smartphone-based COVID screening test, which successfully detected the virus in nine out of 10 infected patients.

Mr Keating said the board understood shareholders' concerns but maintained Pfizer's offer represented a “good premium” to ResApp's share price in recent weeks, which has been trading around 10¢.

He encouraged shareholders to read through a scheme booklet on the offer, to be released in mid-May, before making their decision.

“Our position was we thought the premium to the current share price was a good deal to our shareholders,” Mr Keating said.



Katie Liew and Amanda Walker.
Picture: Jackson Flindell

CAMPAIGN FIZZER

Albo & ScoMo don't impress small business owners

CHEYANNE ENCISO

Perth small business owners say they are so far underwhelmed by the Federal election campaign, arguing neither major party is targeting their sector.

Amanda Walker, founder and chief executive of WA online accommodation booking platform Aussie Holiday Stays, said the small business community was not being looked after by Labor leader Anthony Albanese or Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

“I think they play to big businesses, where campaign money comes from, and smaller businesses are kind of just taken along for a ride,” she said. “None of the leaders are really instilling anything that makes you want to get behind them.”

“However, I will say that the quick action of the Federal Government to provide small business support when COVID hit was a huge relief.”

Ms Walker also argued that the initiatives outlined in the Federal Budget for small businesses were not enough and said more investment in the tech sector was needed.

Josh Frydenberg's fourth Budget announced that for every \$100 small businesses

spend on digital technologies, \$120 would be tax deductible.

“It's all very important but you're basically talking about operating tech,” Ms Walker said. “I can't see where it actually helps with innovation and transformational tech because I think that's where you really start to make a difference.”

“(Investment in the tech sector) secures our economy for the future and ensures we're not just reliant on digging up materials from the ground, which is an incredible income source for our country but is finite.”

Amanda Healy — director of Aboriginal-owned fashion label Kirrikin and board member of WA Social Enterprise Council — said neither of the major parties were hitting the issues social enterprises were trying to solve, such as poverty, equality and climate change.

“If you're not on top of that, you just don't really understand what's going on in Aus-

tralia, that's for sure,” she said.

“It's been an interesting campaign and yes, underwhelmed is probably a good term to describe it.”

Both parties have committed to net zero emissions by 2050, with Labor pledging to reduce emissions by 43 per cent by 2030. It also said it would upgrade the electricity grid to cope with more renewable energy.

Ms Healy, pictured below, said both leaders failed to understand small businesses and their needs.

“There's a really large gap in the market there — the way we're taxed, the way we pay GST, the constant payments out to the government — you start to feel like an ATM eventually and what do (small businesses) get back for it? Not much,” she said.

“We are so diverse and widely dispersed across the country and have very few strong representative bodies, we just get

ignored time and time again.”

Perth-based Katie Liew founded not-for-profit social enterprise The Underground Collaborative with the aim to help break the cycles of homelessness for women and young people.

“Not only as a small business but also as an organisation which exists to tackle social issues, I haven't seen nearly enough focus and resourcing to address these wicked problems,” Ms Liew said.

She said the next elected government would need to prioritise looking at current regulatory and legislative frameworks to further address issues such as homelessness and mental health.

Alex Gonzalez — owner of Perth-based supplier La Tortilla — said his concern was the halt in his business induced by COVID-19 isolation rules.

“Because we supply to restaurants, if people don't go out, we don't sell. Hopefully, now that the borders are open and restrictions are eased, we can get back on track,” he said.

Ms Liew and Mr Gonzalez said they were not fully engaged with the campaign and had chosen to direct their focus on ensuring their businesses remained viable during the pandemic.

It's been an interesting campaign and yes, underwhelmed is probably a good term to describe it.

Amanda Healy



Financial Services

A A A A A

G W SANSOM

& ASSOCIATES

Fixed Interest Mortgages
Funds Readily Available
Investment/Business Loans
PHONE: 9481 2999
gws1@inet.net.au
5 MILL ST PERTH

LOAN FUNDS AVAIL

• No / Low Doc Funds Avail
• First Mortgage / Second and
• Cash Out / Construction
• Quick Settlements
1300 995 707

www.aml.net.au 0439 968 389

THE WEST CLASSIFIEDS

Call 13 22 80.

Give yourself the best chance to sell it. Be it Motoring, Real Estate, For Sale or whatever. We can help you advertise it.

It's easy
Don't delay
Ring now