

Rick Ferdinands

Head of Research, Co-founder & CEO, Bioactive Natural Health **PERTH**

Rick Ferdinands is the Head of Research, Co-Founder and CEO of *Hey Sister!*, the consumer brand behind BioActive Natural Health (BNH) – an Australian biotech company dedicated to developing clinically proven, therapies for pain and inflammation.

Rick leads a team developing a range of female reproductive health products designed to relieve period pain, PMS and support the management of menopausal symptoms.

Driven by a mission to improve women's health globally, Rick founded BioActive Laboratories – the world's first company to gain regulatory listing for *Khaya senegalensis*, a traditional medicinal tree. This led to the development of Khapregesic® – a fast-acting, plant-based medicine targeting women's health.

"After more than a decade of research and development, we're proud to present Khapregesic® as a dual-action, plant-based active ingredient in all *Hey Sister!* branded products, addressing both menstrual pain and common premenstrual symptoms.



"Our first discovery was developing the technology to stabilise and preserve the bioactive compounds in the plant," said Mr Ferdinands..

"That advance laid the foundation for our patents and everything that followed. It gave us the accolade of being the first in the world to achieve regulatory listing of *Khaya senegalensis* with the Australian TGA."

Armed with a double major degree in computer software engineering and commerce from Curtin University, Perth, Rick commenced his professional career in Australia's government sector before moving into pharmaceutical R&D in the UK. There, he held senior software engineering roles at Wellcome Pharmaceuticals (now GSK), where he worked as project manager and principal designer of the clinical trials safety data system for AZT – one of the world's first anti-viral drugs used for the treatment of HIV/AIDS.

After returning to Australia, Rick launched a series of successful ventures, including the award-winning telecommunications start-up, Ergotel; Australia's first *Khaya* plantation business (Kimberley Timber Corporation); and eventually, a series of pioneering biotech companies dedicated to transforming natural ingredients into evidence-based health solutions.

"Menstrual discomfort is a common experience that can significantly compromise daily life for many individuals. It's important that we recognise it as a legitimate health concern and explore evidence-based approaches to support effective management," Mr Ferdinands said.

A passionate advocate for sustainable innovation, female-led research, and pharmacist-driven over-the-counter (OTC) solutions, Rick is now a respected voice in the Healthtech sector. He has also shared his expertise as a guest lecturer in speech recognition technology and statistical modelling at Murdoch and Curtin Universities.

"Khapregesic® is designed to support menstrual wellbeing via three key mechanisms: anti-inflammatory effects, strong antioxidant properties, and unique prebiotic compounds.

"While initial observations suggested a benefit for period discomfort, a clinical trial led by psychologist and Principal of Clinical Research Australia, Dr. Adrian Lopresti, further explored its potential dual-action effect, supporting both physical and emotional symptoms associated with the menstrual cycle," said Mr Ferdinands.

"The clinical trial outcomes confirm what has long been needed in women's health – a fast-acting, non-hormonal, painkiller-free alternative that supports those experiencing moderate to severe menstrual symptoms in more effectively managing their daily lives.

"Supported by professional training for pharmacists and pharmacy assistants under the *Hey Sister!* brand, Khapregesic® offers a meaningful addition to women's health products in community pharmacy," Mr Ferdinands said.

"Our collaboration with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and international researchers enabled us to study the bioactive profile of the *Khaya senegalensis* (KS) tree and its interaction with local groundwater. This led to the development of technology that preserves the full spectrum of therapeutic compounds.

"As a company committed to evidence-based care that harnesses the anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving properties of the traditional medicinal *Khaya senegalensis* (KS) tree, it was essential to demonstrate the clinical validity of our preparation. We are pleased to share these findings, now published in the [*International Journal of Women's Health*](#)," said Mr Ferdinands.

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To coordinate an interview with Mr Rick Ferdinands, please contact:

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