

MEDIA RELEASE

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Exciting collaboration looks to the future of corneal health

ARC Centre of Excellence for Electromaterials Science (ACES), headquartered at UOW's Innovation Campus is joining forces with the *Lions NSW Eye Bank* and *Sydney University's Corneal Bioengineering Group* to implement an exciting new collaborative corneal bioengineering program on Thursday, 27 July 2017.

These organisations will work together to revolutionise the treatment of corneal ulceration by developing a novel device, the 'iFix Pen', which will deliver a special bioink formulation that has the capacity to facilitate healing and prevent infection in treating the disease.

"We have joined forces with Professor Sutton and his team to bring together the skills needed to tackle this challenging area," said Director of ACES, Professor Gordon Wallace.

"We are confident of having real impact in a short period of time".

Corneal Ulceration is a significant cause of severe eye pain, visual morbidity and visual loss. It accounts for 55,000 hospital admissions in Australia each year. It can be complicated by infection and in extreme cases melting of the eyeball. Current treatments involve antibiotics and the use of a contact lens.

"I am looking forward to working with Professor Gordon Wallace and his internationally recognised team at the ARC Centre of Excellence at the University of Wollongong. Our collaboration and research into corneal bioengineering has the capacity to make a significant impact on corneal blindness in Australia and around the world," said Professor Gerard Sutton.

Professor Sutton will be attending the event in Wollongong, where his father, Professor Gerard Sutton senior, was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong for 17 years.

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Media Contact:

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The ARC Centre of Excellence for Electromaterials Science (ACES)

Based at the University of Wollongong's Innovation Campus, ACES is a multidisciplinary research group with a focus on developing functional devices for applications including batteries, solar cells and systems that interact with living tissue.

The NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service

The NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service, incorporating the Lions NSW Eye Bank, NSW Bone Bank and Australian Ocular Biobank, is the state-wide service for the coordination organ and tissue donation in NSW. The NSW Eye Bank is responsible for eye donation and providing ocular tissue for transplantation.

The donation of eye tissue is a valuable gift – one single eye tissue donor can transform the lives of up to four people. Both the cornea (the clear window at the front of the eye) and the sclera (the white of the eye) can be used for transplant.

Almost anyone can become an eye donor. As long as the cornea is healthy it can be used to restore sight.

To become an eye donor it is important to discuss your donation decision with your family. It is also important to register your decision to become an eye donor on the Australian Organ Donor Register by visiting donatelife.gov.au.