

Cleanroom Senator Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research announced this week that Monash V1sion was successful in their bid for the ARC grant to develop the Bionic Eye. Monash V1sion's group of experts (see picture) comprising of commercial partners MiniFAB and Grey Innovation, Monash University and the Alfred Hospital will work together to deliver a cortical implant that will stimulate the visual cortex, and restore lost vision.

"The Australian Government's investment will help us to give and restore sight to thousands of people around the world," Senator Carr said on Tuesday. "MiniFAB is very excited to be a part of this team, working towards achieving the amazing goal of restoring sight," said MiniFAB CEO Erol Harvey.

Monash V1sion's proposal will provide a treatment for 90% of cases of lost sight. By implanting a device into the visual cortex of the eye, any remaining sight will be enhanced rather than replaced. An external camera will capture images, which will then be processed and transmitted to the implant. The implant will then decode the signal and stimulate specific electrodes in the brain, which will effectively create vision.

"We are delighted to have been given the financial backing to develop this concept with our partners," said Monash University Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Professor Edwina Cornish. MiniFAB's microtechnology expertise will be used to design and manufacture key implantable components such as the high-density electrode array, high-density ceramic feed-through and connectors.

The Monash V1sion proposal will receive \$8m from the Australian Research Council's Research in Bionic Vision Science and Technology Initiative, a program that came out of the Australia 2020 Summit in 2008. Senator Carr went on to say that the development of the bionic eye will ensure that Australia maintains its position as a world leader in bionics. This is another recognition of MiniFAB's team and its expertise in applying microtechnology solutions to medical implants."

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