



Media Release
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NICTA sees bright future with Bionic Vision Australia

NICTA, Australia's ICT Research Centre of Excellence and a founding partner of the Bionic Vision Australia (BVA) research consortium, today celebrated BVA's official launch. Held in Melbourne this morning, the launch event featured the first public display of the design concept of the future bionic eye.

In developing the bionic eye concept, NICTA will provide its low-powered wireless technology to support the implant of a tiny computer chip in the patient's retina. In addition, NICTA will contribute its expertise in visual processing technology to make sure that patients receive accurate visual information.

"NICTA will be working closely with other BVA partners to develop the bionic eye implant," said NICTA's Victoria Research Laboratory Director Professor Rob Evans. "In collaboration with the University of Melbourne, we will bring our ICT expertise to develop a microelectronic chip consisting of more than 1,000 electrodes and an ultra-tiny wireless data link, which will be implanted in a patient's eye."

The bionic eye is expected to improve the vision of people suffering from age-related macular degeneration, allowing them to recognise faces, read large print and see small objects. People suffering from retinitis pigmentosa will also be helped. Last year, the Federal Government awarded \$42 million to Bionic Vision Australia to develop the bionic eye.

"We are making a vital contribution to this important research endeavour," said Dr David Skellern, NICTA's Chief Executive Officer. "I am delighted that the BVA consortium has come together so well and thank the Federal Government for supporting this exciting project."

BVA is a partnership of leading Australian research institutions working together to develop a functional bionic eye, to restore the sense of vision to people with degenerative or inherited retinal disease. The BVA partners are the University of Melbourne, the University of New South Wales, the Bionic Ear Institute, the Centre for Eye Research Australia and NICTA.

About NICTA

National ICT Australia Ltd (NICTA), Australia's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Research Centre of Excellence, is developing technologies which will meet the current and future needs of the community in fields which will lead to large economic, social and environmental benefits for Australia. NICTA has five laboratories around the country. Since NICTA was founded in 2002, it has created four new companies, developed a substantial technology portfolio of patent applications and continues to supply new talent to the ICT industry through the NICTA-enhanced PhD program.

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