

## PRESS RELEASE

Ellex Medical Lasers Ltd (ASX:ELX)

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Topic: **Ellex 2RT™ Research Program Awarded Government Grant**



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**Adelaide, Australia, 13 November 2009:** Ellex Medical Lasers Limited (ASX: ELX), a global leader in the design and manufacture of ophthalmic laser and ultrasound systems, announced today that the Ellex 2RT™ Research Program has been awarded a \$0.54 million Victorian Government grant to conduct a clinical trial investigating the efficacy of laser treatment for age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

The grant was awarded as part of the \$41 million Victoria's Science Agenda (VSA) Investment Fund, with the trial to be conducted by the Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA), in partnership with Ellex R&D Pty Ltd.

Head of Macular Research at CERA, Professor Robyn Guymer said the trial is particularly exciting because unlike existing AMD treatments, Ellex 2RT™ treatment targets the disease in its early stages, before vision is lost.

"Currently, when a patient is diagnosed with early AMD, they're told that nothing can be done until the disease reaches its late stages, by which time some patients have suffered irreversible vision loss," Professor Guymer said.

The treatment involves a novel laser device developed by Ellex that delivers a controlled nanosecond dose of laser energy into the eye.

"In applying the laser therapy we hope to halt, or partially reverse, the progression of AMD before it threatens a patient's sight."

According to the Macular Degeneration Foundation, AMD is the leading cause of blindness in Australia, affecting one in seven people over the age of 50 – and its prevalence is expected to increase due to aging demographics. It is estimated to cost the community more than \$2.6 billion annually.

The trial, to be conducted at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, will involve 50 patients with early AMD.

"Since launching the Ellex 2RT™ Research Program in 2007 we have made significant progress with our laboratory research and clinical trials, and this marks an important next step in our program. We are particularly pleased to be working with Professor Guymer, who has an outstanding track record in AMD research both locally and internationally," said Ellex CEO, Mr. Simon Luscombe.

"We are grateful that our application has been selected by the VSA Investment Fund in order to further our clinical progress, and believe that it reflects the potential of Ellex 2RT™ to positively influence the lives of millions of people worldwide. Should we be successful in our treatment aims, then this project will show considerable commercial potential."

## **ABOUT ELLEX 2RT AND AMD**

Ellex 2RT™ research is at developing a non-damaging laser treatment that stimulates the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE) to preserve vision. A possible therapy for early AMD and other retinal diseases, Ellex 2RT™ aims to treat the cause of the disease, before vision loss occurs.

AMD causes irreversible central visual loss and is the leading cause of blindness for people over the age of 50. When AMD occurs it is categorized into dry or wet forms.

The dry form is associated with changes in Bruch's membrane that lead to atrophic cell death of the central retina or macula, which is required for fine vision used for activities such as reading, driving or recognizing faces. The wet form is caused by growth of abnormal blood vessels under the macula, also known as choroidal neovascularization (CNV) or ocular angiogenesis. These vessels are of poor quality and tend to leak fluid and blood and cause scar tissue that destroys the central retina. This results in a deterioration of sight over time.

## **ABOUT ELLEX**

Ellex Medical Lasers Limited (ASX:ELX) designs, manufactures and markets a complete line of lasers and diagnostic ultrasound systems used by ophthalmologists to diagnose and treat eye disease. With more than 14,000 systems delivered to the market, Ellex has evolved since 1985 from a manufacturing company of primarily OEM products, to direct marketing of its own branded products through subsidiaries in the United States, Japan, Germany and Australia, and a network of distribution partners in more than 100 countries. In December 2006 Ellex acquired Innovative Imaging, a leading provider of diagnostic ultrasound systems for ophthalmology, initiating the expansion of our product line beyond lasers.

Ellex R&D Pty Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Ellex Medical Lasers Ltd.

For additional information about Ellex and its products, please visit [www.ellex.com](http://www.ellex.com)

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