

**VivaZome to collaborate with ANU retinal disease experts  
to develop exosome-based therapies**

***Funding for collaborative project via successful ANU grant application***

**27<sup>th</sup> January 2022; Melbourne Australia:** VivaZome Therapeutics Pty Ltd (VivaZome) today announced its participation in a collaborative project with researchers at the Australian National University (ANU) and other expert groups focussing on improved therapies for age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

The project entitled “The use of extracellular vesicles (EVs) for therapeutic RNA delivery as a novel treatment for retinal degenerations” is supported by a grant from ANU under its Research Support Program 2022, and includes researchers from the ANU School of Medicine and Psychology, VivaZome, Canberra Health Services, Sydney University, Save Sight Institute, La Trobe University and Flinders University. This diverse team has expertise in retinal EVs, production and definition of scalable clinical grade EVs, EVs as therapeutics for neurodegeneration, retinal disease models and clinical ophthalmology.

The research project will investigate human EVs as a delivery system for therapeutic miRNA cargo. The key steps are:

1. Identify candidate EV delivery vehicles.
2. Test candidate EV delivery vehicles in a model of retinal degeneration.
3. Load key microRNA (miRNA) cargo into EV and deliver to the degenerating retina.

David Haylock, CEO of VivaZome said: “We are excited and honoured to be working with this powerful group of AMD experts drawn from a number of world-class Australian institutions. Professor Natoli and his team at the School of Medicine and Psychology at ANU are internationally recognised as leading the field in understanding the roles that RNA and EVs play in retinal degeneration. VivaZome will supply its proprietary EVs and provide its expertise in EV biology and analytics.”

Associate Professor Riccardo Natoli of ANU said: “Age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness in the Western World, with no effective treatments. Our preliminary findings show that supplementation of healthy retinal EVs with specific miRNA species protected the retina against degeneration. We are delighted to be working with VivaZome as industry leaders in the EV therapeutic space to explore the use of VivaZome EVs to deliver key defined miRNAs to the retina”.

The project will commence in early 2022.

**Contacts:**

VivaZome Therapeutics Pty Ltd  
Dr David Haylock, CEO  
[david.haylock@vivazome.com](mailto:david.haylock@vivazome.com)  
Phone: +61 0439 617 657

**About VivaZome:**

VivaZome Therapeutics Pty Ltd is a privately-held Australian biotech company, with operational headquarters at the La Trobe University Technology Enterprise Centre in Melbourne, Australia. VivaZome aims to develop and commercialise exosome-based therapies for debilitating and/or life-threatening disorders, with an initial focus on neurological disorders, ischaemia, and fibrotic diseases.

For more information, please visit [www.vivazome.com](http://www.vivazome.com)

**About age-related macular degeneration:**

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in the Western World, with no available treatments for the most prevalent form, atrophic AMD - which comprises 90% of all cases. As there are no currently approved treatments available, there exists a major untapped pharmaceutical market; with atrophic-AMD predicted to affect 1.7 million Australians by 2030, and 288 million worldwide. Any treatments which could slow or halt the progression of disease would have major impacts on an individual's quality of life, and significantly reduce the economic impacts. (\$350 billion annually worldwide)