



Centre for Eye Research Australia

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Centre for Eye Research Australia wins Minister's Award for Excellence**

Predicting the risk of cardio-vascular disease has won Professor Tien Wong of the Centre for Eye Research Australia the Minister's Award for Excellence in Health and Medical Research for 2006 presented at the Australian Society for Medical Research annual dinner last night.

Professor Wong's research works towards developing special retinal software that can analyse images of the eye and show predictors of cardiovascular disease including stroke, hypertension and heart failure.

"It is an ambitious goal but our ultimate aim is to develop a web-based imaging system from which optometrists and ophthalmologists can upload images which will then be assessed for retinal markers of future cardiovascular disease," he says.

Development of this retinal imaging system follows on from Associate Professor Wong's research which is the first in the world to categorically demonstrate that subtle damage to blood vessels in the retina can predict cardiovascular disease.

"The idea that the eye is a window to the human body and can predict other areas of human health has been around for more than a century," he says.

Associate Professor Wong has authored more than 80 articles on this subject in the past three years, published in prestigious journals including the New England Journal of Medicine, the Lancet, the Journal of the American Medical Association and the British Medical Journal.

The Retinal Vascular Imaging Centre (RetVIC) is a collaboration between: The University of Melbourne, Centre for Eye Research Australia, Baker Medical Research Institute, Diabetes Australia, The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, St Vincent's Hospital, Royal Melbourne Hospital, Centre for Vision Research at the University of Sydney, International Diabetes Institute, Pfizer Australia, National Stroke Research Institute and Monash University. Additional support is provided by: National Heart Foundation of Australia, National Stroke Foundation, Save Sight Institute at the University of Sydney and BSC Electronics.

The Retinal Imaging Centre is one of five units within the Centre for Eye Research Australia which the pre-eminent centre for eye research in Australia focusing on the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of eye disease, vision loss and blindness.

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