

RAGE Biotech Founders Awarded \$1M Grant for Chronic Kidney Disease

*Funding will Accelerate the Development of an Injectable RNA Therapeutic
for the Treatment of CKD*

21 December 2022

RAGE Biotech Founder, Chief Scientific Officer and Monash University Professor Merlin Thomas is the lead investigator on a recently announced \$1M NHMRC Development Grant to investigate a novel RNA therapy targeting RAGE activation for kidney disease.

The grant-funded programme entitled ‘Splice-switching Oligonucleotides for the Treatment of Chronic Kidney Disease’ will commence in 2023 and will be administered by Monash University.

Prof. Thomas’s Co-Chief Investigators on the grant are Prof. Steve Wilton AO, RAGE Biotech CEO Dr Christopher Wraight, and Monash University’s Dr Raelene Pickering. Together with RAGE Biotech, Prof. Thomas and his colleagues will explore the therapeutic potential of the company’s RNA therapeutics in different models of kidney disease.

“Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) affects at least one in ten adults globally, and will become the fifth leading cause of years of life lost by 2040¹. Finding new strategies to protect kidney function has become an urgent priority” said Prof. Thomas “as there are currently no treatments that selectively modify the inflammation that drives most forms of CKD.”

RAGE is a ‘damage sensing receptor’ that accelerates inflammation and tissue injury across a range of important conditions, including kidney disease. However RAGE has proven too difficult to target using conventional drug design and there are currently no medicines available to selectively block its activity in disease.

To solve this problem, Prof. Thomas and his team will utilise Splice-Switching Oligonucleotides that target RAGE in the kidneys, building towards the development of a novel therapy for CKD.

“This significant and prestigious Development Grant from the Australian Government’s premier health research funding body will accelerate our efforts to develop a potentially life-changing and completely novel medicine for patients worldwide, including the 1.7 million Australians with chronic kidney disease²”, said RAGE Biotech CEO Dr Christopher Wraight. He added, “This grant is further recognition of the quality and translational potential of our innovative RNA approach to difficult-to-treat chronic inflammatory diseases.”

1 Kovesdy C. *Kidney International Supp* 2022 Apr; 12(1): 7–11

2 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: Chronic kidney disease: Australian facts.
<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/chronic-kidney-disease/chronic-kidney-disease/contents/summary>; accessed 18 Dec 2022



About RAGE Biotech

RAGE Biotech Pty Ltd is a pharmaceutical start-up company developing novel therapeutics for patients with difficult-to-treat inflammatory disease. With our proprietary RNA therapeutics and peptide technologies, we are developing drugs targeting the Receptor for Advanced Glycation End-products (RAGE), a clinically important, pro-inflammatory 'sensing' receptor. Our most advanced programme is an inhaled drug for lung diseases where inflammation and scarring are a problem. RAGE Biotech was formed in 2020 with investments from IP Group, Monash Investment Holdings, the University of Western Australia and the Perron Institute.

www.ragebiotech.com

About Monash University

Monash University is Australia's largest and most international university. Its extensive educational offering, delivered across 10 faculties, includes undergraduate, postgraduate and research courses. Monash is a research-intensive university, known for some significant and lasting discoveries that have delivered impact beyond the academic community. The University is home to a range of world-leading facilities and technologies, giving it wide-ranging capabilities across many fields, sectors and industries. Monash works with a variety of industry, government and community groups, allowing its researchers to share their discoveries with the world.

Monash is a truly global institution, with four Australian campuses, a campus in Malaysia, a joint graduate school in China, a learning centre in Italy, a research centre in India and over 100 international partners.

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