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Australia forms world-first consortium to fight global blindness

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The consortium aims to help millions of patients access treatment to restore vision and improve their quality of life



Australian leaders in corneal bioengineering have collaborated to form BIENCO, a consortium to develop bioengineered eye tissue to treat corneal blindness.

It will develop individually tailored, superior corneas that are cost effective and can address significant global blindness and shortage of corneas. The consortium will also provide early treatment to prevent corneal blindness and speed up recovery from laser eye surgery.

BIENCO is a collaboration between the University of Sydney, University of Wollongong, University of Melbourne, Queensland University of Technology, Centre for Eye Research Australia, and the NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service.

Launched by New South Wales (NSW) Minister for Health and Medical Research Brad Hazzard, BIENCO has received grant funding from the Australian Government to take on the global challenge of corneal blindness, the third most common cause of blindness in the world.

BIENCO will bioengineer a total cornea as well as partial thickness grafts for transplant, reducing the amount of donor tissue required.