



Immunology Company Kira Biotech launches with A\$20M Series A Funding

Brisbane, 29 October 2019: Kira Biotech today announced it has secured Series A funding of A\$20 million to develop therapeutics targeting difficult-to-treat immune system disorders.

The round was led by OneVentures, with significant investment from IP Group and support from the Advance Queensland Business Development Fund. The funds will help advance Kira Biotech's lead candidate KB312 through phase 1 human studies.

According to the American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association, more than 50 million Americans are affected by an autoimmune disease.¹ The National Institutes of Health estimates the direct annual costs for these diseases to be in the range of \$100 billion.²

Dr Dan Baker, founding CEO of Kira, noted: "Kira's research program focuses on immune tolerance and targets cells and pathways that are key activators of the immune response in patients with autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus and type 1 diabetes."

"We're also keen to look at how KB312 might address transplant complications seen in graft-versus-host disease and rejection associated with heart and kidney transplants."

Kira's lead program KB312 is an antibody with a novel target that is common to many immune system disorders and is key to restoration or induction of immune tolerance.

"Unlike existing treatments which broadly target immune cells, Kira's antibody targets a specific activated cell which directs the immune response. In doing so, KB312 limits the negative impacts of broad immunosuppression and preserves beneficial immune cells that protect patients against infections and malignancies," Dr Baker said.

Dr Baker brings extensive experience in immunology drug development to Kira Biotech. Dr Baker joined Centocor/Janssen (the pharmaceutical arm of Johnson and Johnson) in 2000, after a career in academic medicine as a rheumatologist and immunologist. As Vice President, Immunology, Janssen Research and Development, he was instrumental in the development of an extensive immunology portfolio which had combined sales in excess of US\$13 billion in 2018.

Sarah Meibusch, Principal at OneVentures, said: "OneVentures is delighted to have completed Kira's Series A fund raising round, secured Dr Dan Baker to its leadership team and in doing so established a new Australian company. The OneVentures Healthcare Fund III is backed by the

¹ <https://www.aarda.org/news-information/statistics/#1488234386508-a9560084-9b69>

² Ibid.



Australian Government's Biomedical Translation Fund which is focused on commercialising world-class biomedical innovations here in Australia, and Kira is a terrific example of this."

Michael Molinari, Managing Director of IP Group Australia, said: "We are delighted to be investing in Kira and excited to be working with an expert and experienced team. At IP Group we work closely together with our partners, which include the Group of Eight universities and University of Auckland, to identify science-based innovations with the potential to change the world. Kira is a great example of world-class research that can potentially benefit millions of patients and deliver global impact."

Kira Biotech's research program is based on decades of research led by the late Professor Derek Hart and Associate Professor Georgina Clark while working at the Mater Medical Research Institute, the Anzac Research Institute and The University of Sydney. Many Australian collaborators over the past decade have also contributed to the research, in particular, those researchers involved in the CRC for Translational Biomarkers, Sydney Local Health District, the University of Queensland and the University of California, San Francisco.

Associate Professor Clark said the launch of Kira Biotech marks an important moment in her career and highlights the enormous effort by many dedicated scientists to translate research from the bench to bedside.

"I am thrilled our research has attracted the capital and management team necessary to move it towards the clinic and closer to helping patients. KB312 is an example of an Australian technology that has potential for global health impact with its differentiated treatment approach," said Associate Professor Clark.

Venture capital investment from OneVentures' Healthcare Fund III has been supported by the Australian Government's Biomedical Translation Fund (BTF). The BTF program was established jointly by the Australian Government Department of Health and Department of Innovation to provide a pool of public and private funds for investment in promising biomedical innovations with commercialisation potential.

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About Kira Biotech

Kira Biotech is an emerging Australian biotechnology company developing novel immunomodulatory compounds for the treatment of immune system disorders. Kira Biotech has attracted venture capital funding and is progressing KB312 through preclinical development and phase 1 clinical trials with a team of drug development experts led by US-based rheumatologist and immunologist, Dr Dan Baker.



About KB312

KB312 is a first-in-class, selective, immune-cell depleting monoclonal antibody which targets activated immune cells and aims to restore homeostasis through induction of immune tolerance.

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