



Vito FERRO

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Vito Ferro completed his Ph.D. in 1992 at the University of Western Australia under the supervision of Prof Bob Stick. Following postdoctoral studies at the Carlsberg Laboratory, Denmark (with Profs Klaus Bock and Morten Meldal), and the University of British Columbia, Canada (with Prof Steve Withers), he returned to Australia in 1996 to join the Australian biotechnology company Progen Pharmaceuticals Ltd where he spent 12 years in various positions, including Director of Drug Discovery. He was involved in the development of two out of only four heparanase inhibitors to have reached the clinic and led the medicinal chemistry team that discovered PG545 (pixatimod), a heparan sulfate mimetic with immunomodulatory activity that was recently in Phase II clinical trials in cancer patients. Following a brief period at Queensland University of Technology as a Principal Research Fellow he moved to the University of Queensland (Brisbane, Australia) in 2010 where he is a Professor and the Biomolecular and Medicinal Chemistry Theme Leader in the School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences.

Prof Ferro's research interests are in carbohydrate and medicinal chemistry, with a focus on the synthesis of compounds to probe and/or inhibit carbohydrate-protein interactions involved in disease processes, and in the development of new synthetic methods in carbohydrate chemistry. Of particular interest is heparan sulfate (HS) and the development of HS mimetics as potential drugs for cancer, infectious diseases and lysosomal storage disorders. Prof Ferro is a Fellow of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute (RACI) and the Association of Carbohydrate Chemists and Technologists India (ACCTI).