

Aussies on verge of cancer revolution

CARLEEN FROST

SYDNEY researchers have uncovered a gene they believe could stop aggressive cancers in their tracks and are "quietly confident" they can use it to devise a world-first therapy.

Scientists at the Children's Medical Research Institute in Westmead are working with the ATRX gene, which they think is responsible for a cancer-spreading process called alternative lengthening of the telomere, when damaged by more hostile cancers including bone, brain and lung.

In regular cells, telomeres — structures that cap the end of chromosomes — shorten as part of the normal ageing process but cancer cells develop methods to stop telomeres from shortening so they can continue to multiply.

Dr Christine Napier said her team was working on a therapy to stop this process, which they hoped to achieve in the next few years.

Although they are not far off the correct formulation, Dr Napier said it would still have to be tested on both mice and humans before it became publicly available.

"We are confident we are on the right track," she told The Daily Telegraph yesterday.

The work is being continued at the Australian Telomere Analysis Centre, which opened within the grounds of the institute last week.

It is the only dedicated telomere research centre in the world, bringing together a consortium of medical researchers and boasting cutting-edge equipment including state-of-the-art microscopes.



Australian troops return from the trenches at Pozieres in 1916 and (inset) NSW Governor David Hurley with pupils at St Clair High School.

Campaign to save a school

NAOMI WHITE

SYDNEY students have hosted the launch of a historian's heartfelt bid to save a school in a French town that Australian WWI soldiers died to defend.

Day One of author and military historian Will Davies' mission to build a new school building for the children of the French village of Pozieres in the Somme Valley began at St Clair

High School with project patron NSW Governor David Hurley on hand to discuss the Pozieres Franco-Australian School Project.

The bid began after Mr Davies heard that the Pozieres school had to relocate from the building they had been sharing with the council chambers since it opened in 1925, and that the small village of just 250 people could not independently fund a new school.

He then set about trying to

reignite an initiative of school children in Victoria in the 1920s where they were asked to donate a penny, with the money used to rebuild a school in the northern village of Villers-Bretonneux.

Mr Davies is hopeful constructing a school in Pozieres will offer a permanent tribute to the 7000 Australian soldiers who died saving the town from a German invasion in one of the bloodiest battles of WWI.



Gold coin donation days are planned at schools across NSW for Remembrance Day and the first soil for the school is hoped to be turned on the centenary of the battle, on July 23 next year.

half price
COROLLA

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