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Australia launches national cancer programme

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A new, Australia-wide initiative intends to wipe out childhood cancer in a program that will see multiple healthcare facilities collaborating to create personalised medical treatments for children suffering from cancer.

The Zero Childhood Cancer is a world-leading initiative, and will focus on improving survival rates and quality of life for children whose cancer currently has no prospect of cure. Childhood cancer kills more children than any other disease in Australia with three children and adolescents dying each week.

Scientists from 13 leading Australian and international research institutes and doctors from all eight of Australia's kids' cancer centres will work together to identify and recommend new treatment options. These will be specifically tailored to suit the individual cancers of children with the highest risk of treatment failure or relapse and give their families hope.

The program recognises that each child's cancer is unique, so they respond differently to anticancer treatment. Detailed laboratory analysis of tumour samples will help identify the drugs most likely to kill each child's specific cancer.

The clinical trial expands the program to give hope to families across the country and will enrol more than 400 Australian children over the next three years, bringing the most advanced diagnostic technologies close to home. The clinical trial is opening in Sydney with other cities set to open in a staged rollout over coming months.