

# Walk to aid

By Eleanor Wilson

Inner Wheel Club of Narre Warren members are inviting locals to step out with them at Wilson Botanic Park next Friday, as they walk to raise money for stem cell cord blood research.

The tranquil setting of the gardens will be the backdrop for the club's Two for Ten walk - where participants donate a \$10 registration fee to take part in the two kilometre charity walk.

The largest female service club in the world, Inner Wheel's Australia branch has been supporting stem cell from cord blood research for 20 years and has raised more than four million dollars for the cause.

Inner Wheel Narre Warren cord blood director Anne McGill was responsible for establishing the project when she was Inner Wheel Australia president in the early 2000s.

"It was in its infancy at that time and we wanted to work with a project that would grow with Inner Wheel," she said.

Current club president Linda Wallace encouraged members of the public to join in the club's second annual walkathon.

"Anyone can join us and they can register on the day," she said.

Cord blood is regarded as one of the most valuable tools being used in blood disease research and is contributing to finding cures for the treatments of leukaemia, strokes, heart disease and other autoimmune diseases such as Cystic Fibrosis and Cerebral Palsy.

It contains a diverse mixture of important cells, including stem cells and is a particularly rich source of haematopoietic stem cells (HSCs), which have the ability to create and heal our organs, blood and the immune system.

Because of their "youth", stem cells from umbilical cord blood are among the most flexible and potent in the body.

Earlier in the month the local club invited prominent cord blood researcher Professor Suzie Miller to chat about her work in the field.

Professor Miller, who is research group head

of neuro-development and neuro-protection at Hudson Institute of Medical Research, explained Inner Wheel's grants allow researchers to assemble 'seed funding' - enabling initial research to be completed and essentially lifts the ground-breaking project off the ground.

The local Inner Wheel club, along with scientists from the Hudson Institute will be meeting at the entry gate to Berwick's Wilson Botanic Park for a 10am start next Friday.

If you would like to participate in the walkathon, contact Linda on 0466 774 714.



Inner Wheel Narre Warren members are looking forward to stepping out for a good cause. 277825