

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE



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Public patients access state-of-the-art surgery in local private hospital

St Andrew's Hospital Toowoomba and the Toowoomba Hospital have formed a partnership to deliver the highest quality ear, nose and throat surgery in South East Queensland.

This agreement, the first of its kind in Queensland, enabled St Andrew's Hospital to perform state of the art surgery for a public patient with throat cancer using its latest robotic assisted surgery.

Robotic surgery is a surgical alternative to conventional open and laparoscopic procedures delivering many benefits to patients, including a reduced risk of infection and improved recovery time.

St Andrew's ENT surgeons Dr Suresh Mahendran and Dr Roger Grigg led the team who operated on 72-year-old Toowoomba Hospital patient, Mr Mervyn Pennell, two weeks ago.

A visiting surgeon from the Royal Adelaide Hospital Dr Suren Krishnan who has performed many such robotic procedures in the past attended the surgery to assist the surgeons to perform this complex operation.

Mr Pennell presented to the Toowoomba Hospital with a large left neck tumour in a space very difficult to access surgically that resides between the tonsil, the jaw and the skull base bone that separates the brain from the throat. This space known as the parapharyngeal space was traditionally accessed either by a large neck incision with the surgeon working blind to release the tumour from its upper reaches or through the mouth requiring the jaw to be split.

Surgery to remove tumours located near the throat and tongue are challenging, as the surgeon's view of the area surrounding the tumour is difficult.

This area has many blood vessels and nerves injury to which could result in severe uncontrolled bleeding, functional deficit or both.

Traditional open surgery is beset with complications such as disfigurement and difficulty speaking and swallowing, all of which are significantly reduced with robotic assisted surgery.

"The benefits to patients requiring ENT surgery using robotic assisted surgery are that they can expect a shorter hospital stay, faster return to normal daily activities, reduced risk of infection and a less painful recovery," Dr Mahendran said.

