

Pace pick-up on a prostate op

Angie Phelan

CUTTING-edge technology meant Dino Signorelli could leave hospital just two days after undergoing radical surgery.

The grandfather-of-five, 62, had his prostate removed at the Epworth Eastern hospital this month, after prostate cancer diagnosis.

He was the 100th patient to undergo a robotic-assisted radical prostatectomy at the hospital in Box Hill.

The \$3 million "da Vinci Surgical System" allows surgeons to perform delicate keyhole surgery with minimal scarring or post-operative pain.

Now in recovery, Mr Signorelli said a case of unrelated foot gout was giving him more trouble than his surgery wounds.

"It wasn't painful or even uncomfortable," he said, after returning to his East Kew home from hospital.

Urologist Dr Laurence Harewood performed the surgery on Mr Signorelli.

First, he made a number of small incisions in the abdomen, each about the size of a five-cent piece.

Then the robotic instruments were inserted and controlled by the surgeon at the console, which Dr Harewood nicknamed the "elephant's bottom".

"The robotics create a wrist on the instruments that mimics the surgeon's arm and wrist," he said. "It replicates my movements."

The equipment also features three-dimensional binocular vision, magnifying the surgeon's view by up to 10 times.

"It makes a huge difference. There is much greater finesse over one's movements, so we can perform more accurate, meticulous surgery," Dr Harewood said.

This means patients have less post-operative discomfort, less bleeding and are less likely to need a blood transfusion, he said. The



Patient Dino Signorelli and urologist Dr Laurence Harewood were in good spirits following radical prostate surgery.



Dr Harewood operating the robotic surgical instruments from a console.

technology also reduces patients' hospital time from five to seven days to two to five days, while recovery time shrinks to two to three weeks instead of five to seven.

Dr Harewood said the technology also quickened the return of patients' erectile function and reduced the likelihood of incontinence. The technology is also used at the Epworth Hospital.

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