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## Shouldering the future

Townsville Bulletin, Townsville

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# Australian first performed at Townsville hospital

## Shouldering the future

A Townsville grandmother has become the first person outside the United States to receive a groundbreaking shoulder surgery procedure using a robot.

The Mater Private Hospital Townsville has become the sixth hospital in the world to perform a shoulder surgery using the Stryker Mako Ortho Robot.

Eight months ago Kerry Stubbings had a fall and severely injured her right shoulder.

"The pain and loss of function meant that I needed a shoulder replacement," Ms Stubbings, 66, said.

She had the surgery on Tuesday and was discharged on Wednesday.

"I feel very comfortable, more comfortable than I thought I was going to be," said Ms Stubbings.

"I'm not in any pain, even though I've got a few things on

board to help, it's been marvelous."

Townsville orthopaedic surgeon Dr Levi Morse performed the surgery and declared it a success.

"Everything went very well and according to plan," said Dr Morse.

"The robot function worked remarkably well, and I think it's going to be a very good outcome."

"The process and technology enables doctors to perform surgeries in a reliable, accurate and predictable way."

"It's very exciting – it's an Australian first and a significant achievement for Mater and healthcare in Townsville."

The Mako shoulder application uses advanced biomechanical modelling to deliver precise, patient-specific surgery in a less invasive way.

Studies of robotic surgeries in knee and hip replacements have shown improved recovery

times for patients, a reduced need for pain medication post-surgery, and a reduction in soft tissue injuries.

"This operation changes people's lives, significantly improving quality of life and function," Dr Morse said.

Mater Townsville general manager Stephanie Barwick said the use of the robot for shoulder surgeries put the Mater at the forefront of orthopaedic innovation in Australia.

"This furthers our commitment to world-class patient care and will mean people in North Queensland will get access to this advanced technology in Townsville and won't need to travel out of town," said Ms Barwick.

The Stryker Mako Ortho Robot was purchased for \$2m in 2021 with donations and funding from Mater Foundation.

The robot was upgraded recently

to include new technology for the shoulder application.

The first robotic assisted surgery in Australia was performed in 2003 and since then there have been significant advancements in robotic technology and in surgical techniques.

The latest robotic surgery first at Mater Private Hospital Townsville comes just weeks after Ivy Napiorkowski became Australia's youngest-ever robotic surgery patients.

The three-year-old from Weipa, on the Cape York Peninsula, underwent robotic-assisted surgery at Mater Private Hospital Townsville to correct a painful kidney problem.



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