

Swift heart surgery

RUSTY WOODGER

ADVANCEMENTS in heart procedures at a Geelong hospital have paved the way for patients to return home a day after their operations.

Three new procedures have been rolled out at St John of God Hospital in recent weeks as part of an expanded cardiac program.

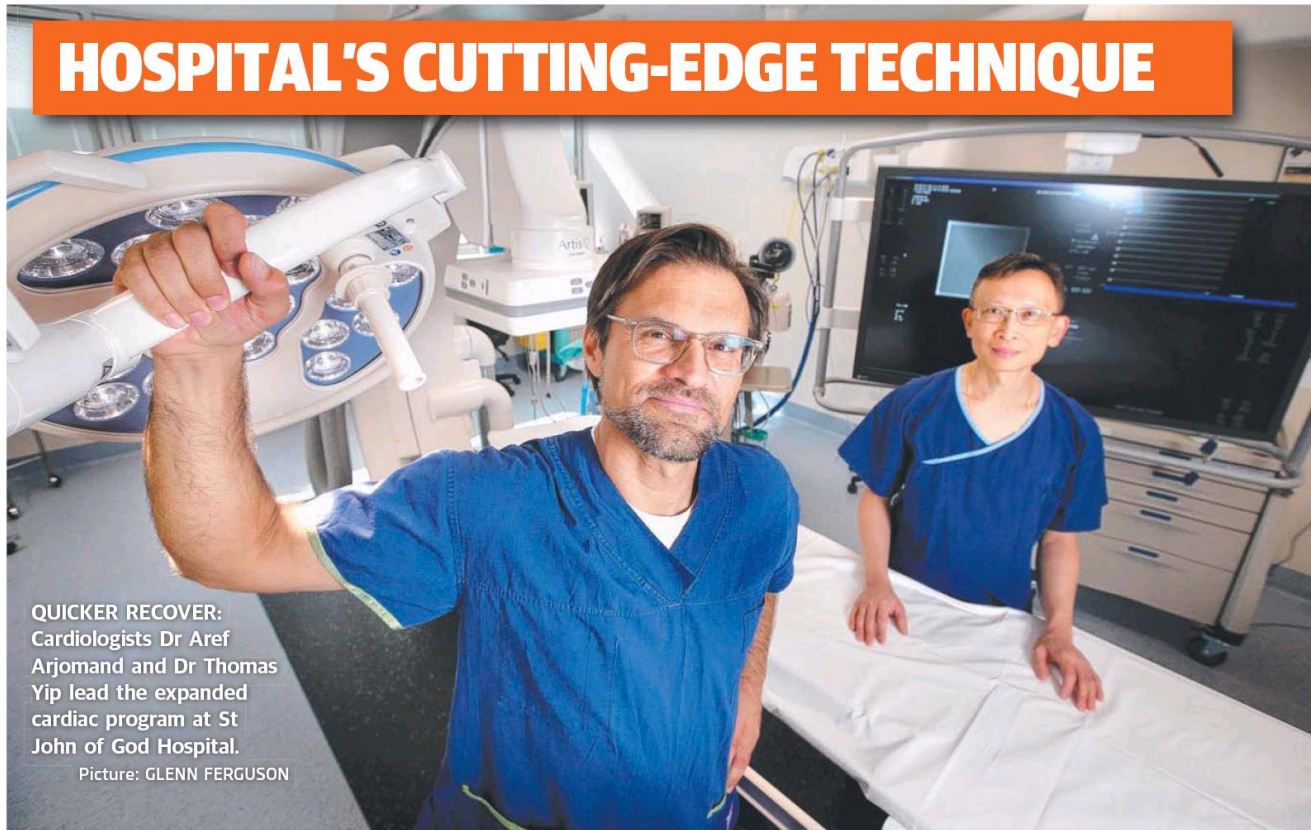
The minimally invasive operations allow cardiologists to access the heart through the groin instead of having to cut open the chest.

The procedures aim to fix defects in the heart's structure and involve inserting devices to improve its function and to reduce the risk of stroke.

Dr Thomas Yip — who is leading the program alongside Dr Aref Arjomand — said the new methods would see patients able to return home after a few nights or, in some cases, the next day.

“Like the heart attacks we have been able to manage via keyhole access, we can now correct some structural heart problems using a similar, minimally invasive approach,” he said.

The initiative follows on from the opening of a \$21 million intensive care unit at the hospital, which included facili-



HOSPITAL'S CUTTING-EDGE TECHNIQUE

QUICKER RECOVER: Cardiologists Dr Aref Arjomand and Dr Thomas Yip lead the expanded cardiac program at St John of God Hospital.

Picture: GLENN FERGUSON

ties for cardiac patients.

It also comes after western Victoria's first private cardiac surgery program was set up at St John of God in 2015.

Dr Arjomand said the new structural heart program rounded out the range of cardiac procedures now available

to patients outside Melbourne.

“Our interventional cardiologists will supplement the excellent work being done by the very talented team of cardiac surgeons already operating in Geelong,” he said.

“Together we will be able to contribute a critical dimension

to the future health needs of Geelong and western Victoria.”

Hospital chief executive Stephen Roberts said the first three procedures had proven safe and successful.

“We are really pleased that St John of God can play an im-

portant role in providing high quality complex procedures,” Mr Roberts said. “Our goal is to be recognised as the leading private hospital in regional Australia for safety and patient experience and continuing to expand our cardiac program is critical to that.”