

Safer scans are a spine of the times

Alice Coote

IT looks like a phone booth and it is described as the X-ray equivalent of the A380 super-jumbo.

But the revolutionary scanner, which dramatically cuts the amount of radiation patients are exposed to, is expected to be a huge benefit for children with spinal curves who need to undergo regular scans.

The \$1 million EOS Imager — the first one in the southern hemisphere — was unveiled yesterday at Dalcross Adventist Hospital in Killara.

Emitting up to 10 times less radiation than a conventional X-ray and up to 1000 times less than a CT, its 2D and 3D scans can capture a full body image while a person is standing or sitting in less than 20 seconds. The lower radiation dose will make it safer for patients, particularly children with scoliosis and others who require several X-rays a year.

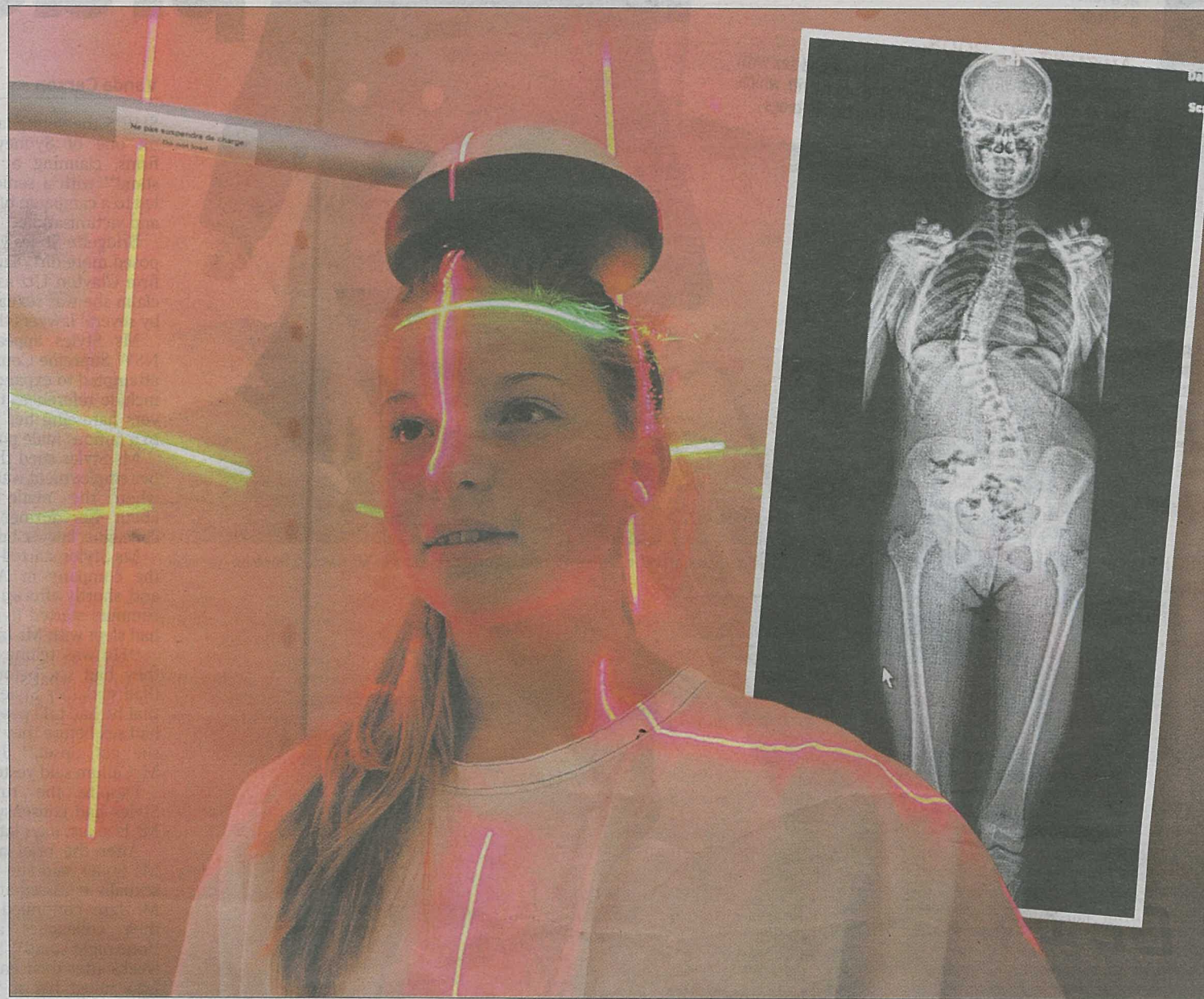
Jaimi Nuttall, 14, was the first paediatric scoliosis patient in Australia to undergo an EOS scan yesterday. The Year 9 student, who was diagnosed with the curved spine condition in February, said the process was much smoother than traditional X-rays.

"It was really easy, it was quicker than an X-ray and I didn't have to move which was good," she said.

Jaimi's physician and Dalcross Adventist Hospital spinal and orthopaedic surgeon Dr Davor Saravanja compared the new scanner to the A380.

"We were managing before, but this is safer and it gives us better images, so it just makes our job easier," Dr Saravanja said.

"We now have the opportunity with the best imaging tool to become world-leading researchers in spinal imbalance."



Rays of hope: Spinal patient Jaimi Nuttall, 14, tests the new low-radiation EOS Imager yesterday

Picture: Bob Bark

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