



Spinal injury hopes

BRITTANY VONOW

A YOUNG motocross rider faced with the frightening prospect of never walking again has been given fresh hope thanks to rare surgery in Brisbane.

Toby Price had been riding since he was four and endured plenty of scrapes but the 25-year-old's world was turned upside down when a practice session in Palm Springs, near California, went horribly wrong.

"I don't remember the crash. Apparently I landed on top of my head and was knocked out," Mr Price said.

Rushed to hospital, Mr Price was told he had broken three vertebrae

in his neck, coming close to severing his spinal chord and becoming paraplegic.

But with the promise of life-changing surgery at the Brisbane Private Hospital, Mr Price was flown halfway around the world to meet spinal

surgeon Dr Paul Licina. Dr Licina performed the surgery using BodyTom – machinery that allows surgeons to scan the body and better assess damage during an operation.

"It's only available here outside the US... it's less invasive and that's something that's really clever and helps with recovery

time," Dr Licina said.

KTM Motorcycle Racing Team exercise physiologist Tim Cole said he immediately knew where to send his friend, Mr Price, when he heard about the accident last month.

He said the trio of Dr Licina for spinal, Dr Steven Andrews in upper limb work and Dr Lawrie Malisano with a lower limb specialty at Brisbane Private were second to none around the world.

After the surgery last Friday, Mr Price is already walking, is wearing a neck-brace and hopes for a quick recovery.



RARE SURGERY: Motocross rider Toby Price, 25, with his spinal surgeon, Brisbane's Dr Paul Licina.