



HEART-WARMING: John Culvenor and Richard Churcher. Right, Kya and Brit.

Pictures: PAUL MELVILLE and SARA NIXON; -PP312605; -PP312603

\$6000 pacemaker for little Kya

KATRINA ADAMSKI

KYA has lived an extraordinary life for 13 years and she will live to bark a few more tales.

Or wag a few more tails. She has become the second dog in Australia to receive a dual pacemaker, at North Shore Veterinary Specialist Centre, after being diagnosed with a potentially fatal heart condition.

Canine cardiologist Richard Churcher, who performed both operations, described it as "gratifying" to see Kya bounce back to life.

"For a dog who was quiet and lethargic, and ultimately dying, she has been returned to full health," Dr Churcher said.

Kya, who turned 13 a week after the

surgery, was adopted by Brit Sooby when she was six weeks old.

Sooby, a stuntwoman, was working on a film at Warner Bros Movie World in Queensland when she fell for Kya, a German koolie.

"She was bought for the film but they decided not to use her and they were going to take her back to the pet shop," Sooby said.

"Actors Michael Caine and Patrick Dempsey were working on another lot and they had fallen in love with her, like I had.

"So I adopted her and she's travelled with me for 13 years."

But a couple of months ago Kya started to pass out frequently and after she collapsed one morning, Sooby thought her pet was going to die.

Kya was rushed to the Crows Nest centre with an abnormally low heart rate and Dr John Culvenor diagnosed third degree heart block.

Despite the fact that only one dual-lead pacemaker had been implanted in a dog in Australia, Sooby wanted to give Kya every chance.

The \$6000 procedure involved introducing leads into the jugular vein on the side of her neck and placing the pacemaker in a pocket under the skin behind the right ear.

Once the pacemaker was activated, Kya's heart rate returned to normal. She was discharged from hospital the next day.

"The surgery was worth it within the first week – just to see my dog happy again," Sooby said.