

## St Vincent's Private Hospital, Lismore

St Vincent's Private Hospital, Lismore, offers a comprehensive range of specialist medical and surgical services, supporting the Lismore region and surrounding communities throughout every stage of their healthcare journey. The hospital features five operating theatres and 86 inpatient beds, along with dedicated medical and surgical wards, endoscopy and oncology units, and palliative care and rehabilitation services. Located on the same campus are the St Joseph's Nursing Home, a 130-bed aged care and dementia facility and the Friends Child Care Centre. With a strong commitment to innovation, and the wellbeing of both staff and patients, the team delivers high-quality, compassionate care tailored to the unique needs of their community.

In October 2023, with the appointment of a new CEO, the St Vincent's Lismore team recognised the need for change - with a strong focus on enhancing staff experience and engagement, planning for a sustainable future, and continuing to delivery high-quality healthcare to the community. A partnership with Studer Group was established, leading to the development of the organisation's StriVe strategy, grounded in the Studer Group's Evidence-Based Leadership<sup>SM</sup> framework.

## What We Did

The team at St Vincent's Lismore started their Evidence-Based Leadership<sup>SM</sup> journey by identifying the key priorities and defining what success looks like for individuals, teams and the broader community. Through a series of workshops, employee experience and engagement emerged as a central focus. The Values of Compassion, Respect, Integrity, Courage and Kindness were established as the foundation for all ways of working. Staff actively contributed to developing the CRICK behaviours, which bring these Values to life in daily practice. To embed the Values into everyday interactions, StriVe chats were introduced, ensuring they are consistently reflected across the organisation.

To further support this work, Leadership Days and ongoing professional development sessions were introduced and continue to be offered, aligned with the organisation's priority goals and staff needs. Leader Rounding conversations with staff were implemented, along with traffic light reports to clearly communicate progress and actions being taken.



**18%**  
(Staff  
Engagement)

**Increase in staff  
engagement from  
Striving to Surging**



**24%**

**Strong sense of  
purpose & direction**



**6%**

**74% truly a great place  
to work.  
An increase of 6%**



**89%**  
(Patient  
experience)

**Patient experience  
consistently maintained  
in the high 80's.  
Accreditation successfully  
achieved.**



**9%**  
(Revenue)

**Increased revenue per  
patient bed day by 9%**

## continuing ... What We Did

Thank you notes were also introduced as a way to strengthen proactive engagement, partner with staff on key priorities, enhance recognition, and improve communication across the organisation.

A strategic and operational plan was developed for the organisation, then workshopped, customised and cascaded across all services. Departmental communication boards were introduced, featuring organisational updates, alongside the launch of staff forums to strengthen communication, build understanding of organisational goals and actions, and celebrate successes.

Our medical teams play a vital role in the success of St Vincent's Lismore and in delivering high-quality care to our consumers. To enhance their experience and partnership in care and service delivery, we introduced regular rounding with medical staff and local GPs to support referral pathways. Additionally, we began surveying our medical staff to ensure their voices are heard and that we are proactively addressing their needs.

As we continue to embed our StriVe strategy and behaviours, the team have now commenced a focus on enhancing our Communicating for Safety framework, with a focus on introducing AIDET® (Acknowledge, Introduce, Duration, Explanation and Thank You) as our communication standard for every interaction with colleagues and consumers, to strengthen safety, quality outcomes, partnerships and overall experience.

To date, we've seen outstanding outcomes, thanks to the dedication of our teams and the positive impact their efforts have had on our community. Notably, staff engagement has increased by 18% over a 14-month period, moving us from Striving to Surging on the Best Practice Australia scale. Revenue per patient bed day has increased by 9%. Patient experience has consistently remained in the high 80's, with patients rating their care as "very good" - the highest possible rating, and we have continued to successfully achieve accreditation. There is a sense of pride and an aligned purpose to continuing to deliver the results for our staff and communities.



Alan Cooper, Chief Executive Officer, St Vincent's Private Hospital, Lismore, receiving the Australian Excellence Award for August 2025 from Jaime Thomson, Coach, Studer Group

*In October of 2023, I assumed the role of CEO at St Vincent's Private Hospital, Lismore. My first action was to announce the adoption of Studer Group as our Leadership Framework. Having previously implemented Studer Group twelve years prior at the Friendly Society Private Hospital in Bundaberg, I was fully aware of how effective this framework is in turning and guiding Values based culture. The early establishment of a new Strategic Plan with clear Vision and Values, was paramount in implementing one of the many Studer Group tactics such as "Above and Below the Line Behaviour" to engage with employees and doctors and build a culture of Accountability. In less than one year, we have seen a substantial positive cultural change, where the Nine Principles® guide decision making, employees are expressing a renewed passion for change and our expert Studer Group Coaches keep us moving along our planned journey. Studer Group is a proven universal Evidence-Based Leadership<sup>SM</sup> strategy which has been the framework for my management for the past 13 years.*

**Alan Cooper, Chief Executive Officer**