

Strathpine doctor's seven-year battle

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Broad Experience: Dr John Saunders supervises a drug and alcohol treatment program.

One of the region's unsung heroes has been fighting the battle against drug addiction in Pine Rivers for the last seven years. Each Thursday, Professor John Saunders flies from Sydney to oversee the drug and alcohol treatment program he began at Pine Rivers Private Hospital in Strathpine back in 2003.

With 35 years' experience in the field, he knows what works and what doesn't.

“The program is developed on the basis of what we know works, both from accumulated scientific evidence and the experience of clinical experts,” Dr Saunders said.

Patients are hospitalised and supervised as they are weaned off their substance of choice.

Medication helps suppress the nasty side-effects of drug withdrawal and the patient then undergoes therapy.

The program has about 20 inpatients and 20 daytime patients at any one time, with about equal numbers male and female.

Dr Saunders said his patients were everyday people. “Most are just living fairly unremarkable lives in the community but their substance disorder is getting its grips on them and slowly their life is unravelling,” he said.

Phone: 38817222

