Alation

Building Trusted Data for Trusted Care at St John of God Health Care

ST JOHN OF GOD Health Care

Industry: Healthcare (Not-for-Profit)
Headquarters: Perth, Australia
Hospitals: 18 (expanding to 19)
Focus Areas: Data Governance, Cloud Migration, Data Standardisation, AI Readiness

A vision-led approach to data transformation

In healthcare, trust is everything: between patients, clinicians, and the data that supports care.

For St John of God Health Care (SJGHC), one of Australia's largest not-for-profit hospital groups, that principle guided a bold decision at the start of its data transformation journey. While many organisations rushed to modernise their data platforms, SJGHC recognised that technology alone could not deliver trusted insights. Instead, the team made a deliberate choice: to build confidence in data first, recognising that governance and integrity must come before innovation.

The challenge: Fragmentation, complexity, and lost clarity

When Chief Data & Analytics Officer Emily Ryder, General Manager of Data & Reporting Laura Pritchard, and Data Governance Lead Jie Xie joined SJGHC, they faced a familiar challenge: a complex data landscape with multiple systems, disconnected definitions, and legacy reports that made it difficult to know which data could truly be trusted across the organisation.

Rather than push ahead with modernisation, the team paused to ask a deeper question: *How could their data reflect the same values that define their care: trust, accountability, and compassion?*

Business Results

10x
faster migration to Google Cloud Platform (GCP)

18
hospitals unified under shared definitions

17,000+ → 3,000
legacy reporting estate reduced

Governance-first strategy recognised as healthcare best practice

Trusted, AI-ready data foundation for future innovation

Objectives: Building a foundation of trust

SJGHC set out to create a governance-first data strategy rooted in its core values of trust, accountability, and care. The team focused on three key objectives:

- **Accelerate migration to the cloud** with clear ownership and visibility into existing systems.
- **Establish a trusted single source of truth** across 18 hospitals to eliminate conflicting definitions and duplication.
- **Embed governance as a cultural practice**, ensuring every data decision reflects SJGHC's commitment to responsible care.

As Ryder explained, "We flipped the typical approach. Most organisations build the platform first and retrofit governance later. Starting with governance has set us up for long-term success."

Implementation: Governance as the blueprint

SJGHC's leadership made the strategic decision to start with governance, embedding clarity, ownership, and shared understanding before investing in the new platform.

To operationalise this vision, the team adopted the **Alation Data Intelligence Platform**. Alation's cataloguing and lineage capabilities gave the organisation its first unified view of data across 18 hospitals, surfacing what existed, how it was used, and where duplication could be safely reduced.

> Alation gave us the visibility to understand which systems had value and which didn't. It allowed us to formalise standards, strengthen curation, and ensure new developments followed the right process.

Jie Xie
Data Governance Lead, St John of God Health Care

This visibility became the blueprint for a cleaner, faster migration to Google Cloud Platform (GCP). By focusing on stewardship and documentation first, analysts and engineers could trace the logic behind legacy reports and migrate critical data with confidence.

Results: Trust, consistency, and accelerated transformation

What began as a governance initiative quickly became a catalyst for efficiency and consistency. Usage patterns revealed which datasets mattered most, simplifying migration decisions and allowing teams to focus effort on high-value data.

“Our migration to GCP would have been almost impossible, or taken ten times as long without Alation,” Pritchard shared. “It gave us the insight and confidence to move forward efficiently.”

The team also introduced standard definitions across all hospitals, replacing ambiguity with shared language. The outcomes speak for themselves:

- **Accelerated transformation:** Clear visibility and governance standards made the GCP migration up to **10x faster.**
- **Consistent business language:** Shared definitions across 18 hospitals eliminated confusion and strengthened confidence.
- **Reduced redundancy:** Usage insights highlighted underused assets, enabling smart decommissioning, including reducing a legacy estate of more than **17,000 reports to roughly 3,000.**
- **Embedded stewardship:** Governance is now part of the organisational DNA, promoting accountability at every level.

Semantic consistency builds trust and eases collaboration. “When someone asks, ‘What’s our current sick leave rate?’, we can now be confident everyone’s talking about the same thing,” said Ryder. “That’s how you build trust in data.”

Leading with responsibility into the future

For SJGHC, this transformation is about more than data; it’s about responsibility. Governance-first is now both a strategy and a philosophy, ensuring that innovation never outpaces integrity.

As Ryder reflected, “Governance-first isn’t just about data; it’s about responsibility. It’s how we build trust, ensure quality, and create the foundations for innovation.”

With a trusted foundation now in place, SJGHC is poised to expand its data strategy: improving data quality, managing unstructured information, and responsibly enabling AI and advanced analytics. This approach is setting a new standard for how healthcare organisations can modernise with confidence, without ever compromising on trust.

About St John of God Health Care

St John of God Health Care is one of Australia's largest Catholic not-for-profit healthcare providers. With hospitals, home nursing, and outreach services across Australia and New Zealand, the organisation is dedicated to delivering compassionate care, and to building a responsible, data-driven future for healthcare.

Technology Environment

Alation

Google Cloud

Power BI