

Past Student Spotlight

Peta Backhouse (1992)



My name is Peta Hart (née Backhouse), I was born and raised in Dirranbandi where I attended Dirranbandi P-10 State School followed by Year 11 & 12 at St George High School. I am a proud mother of two boys who both attend St George State High School.

After finishing Year 12, I had no clear direction for my career but knew that was okay and that I would eventually find my path. I explored various fields, including meatworks, hospitality, and retail, but nothing felt right until May 2009, when I began working as a medical receptionist at St George Medical Centre. I finally felt content. Helping others in a non-clinical role can also have a big impact. By 2012, I had worked my way up to Office Manager. In June 2016, I was offered the Practice Manager position, which I officially took on in July 2016. This role motivated me to return to study and I enrolled in the Certificate IV in Business (Practice Management) through UNE Partnerships, to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to manage a general practice's operations.

Balancing full-time work and motherhood, I initially doubted if I could manage studying again. However, starting this journey was the best decision I made, proving to myself and my family that I could achieve my goals. I completed the certificate in June 2017. I believe learning is a continuous process essential for both professional and personal growth. Education enriches us, and in 2019, I went back to UNEP to pursue a Diploma of Professional Practice Leadership.

My goal was to enhance my ability to perform key roles, delegate responsibilities, and work effectively in an evolving primary health care environment. In March 2021, I left the Medical Centre and joined SWHHS as the General Practice Manager for the Eastern Sector. In 2023, I transitioned to the role of Service Director General Practice, a position I continue to hold.

Throughout my journey in Practice Management, I've learned a lot from my experiences, teamwork, and studies. I've realised that while being a good leader is challenging, practicing professionalism simplifies it. Professionalism and leadership (either leader of self or leader of others) are two essential qualities that everyone should possess, both grounded in respect.

Online study allowed me to have a flexible timetable, accommodating my busy life. My only advice to the graduates of 2024 is to embrace uncertainty: It's okay not to have all the answers right now. Life is a journey, and each step you take will bring clarity and new opportunities. No matter where or when you start, the sky's the limit.

Peta Hart

