

Bruce Hirst



Bruce Hirst is shown with his Midwifery graduating group (1976)

Bruce Hirst trained at Nepean Hospital as a General Nurse and went on study midwifery, becoming the first male midwife to practice at Nepean Hospital.

Bruce Hirst was born in 1954 and grew up in Rooty Hill. Nursing was not a career Bruce contemplated initially. When seeking employment at the hospital he was offered a position in the student nurse program commencing in January 1972 and so a career began. Whilst there were other male nurses who did their conversion training (18 months) at Nepean it is thought Bruce was the first to complete the 3 year program.

Bruce undertook his midwifery training from 1975 to 1976 and then continued as a midwife for the next 2 years becoming the first male midwife to practice at Nepean. He found midwifery incredibly rewarding. The reaction from most women to being attended to by a male midwife was mostly positive. He still gets a thrill when he meets the now adult children he delivered.

Nepean Hospital was very different to the major hospital it is today. For example, the closest ultrasound machine was in Dr Harley Roberts rooms in Lethbridge Street. Very sick or injured patients had to go to St Vincents or North Shore as Westmead didn't exist.

While working in the School of Nursing at Nepean Bruce continued his education completing the Diploma in Nurse Education. He continued in the role of nurse educator in the in the early days of both Westmead and Mt Druitt. A highlight while at Mt Druitt was meeting the Queen.

Bruce felt his career was limited with the move of nurse education to the universities.

He then worked for the AMP Society in National Office Sales training, designing and producing training packages for agents across Australia. During this period, he completed his Masters Degree in Business.

While working for AMP Bruce didn't cut all ties with nursing, continuing to work as a casual nurse and volunteered as a nursing officer in the Army Reserve.

In 1997 he returned to nursing at Nepean first as a casual pool nurse then in a permanent position in cardiology. He also had career opportunities to relieve as Nurse Unit Manager in various wards and speciality areas.

In 2006 he moved to Blacktown Mt Druitt Hospital as Workforce Manager until his retirement in 2012.

In retirement Bruce is one of the principals of Johnny H Adventures based in Jamisontown. Johnny H focuses on the meeting the social and travel ambitions of young adults with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities.