



**Media Release**  
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## **Ex-construction worker makes nursing award finals**

A young man who swapped construction work for a career in nursing has been named a finalist in the 2012 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

Jason Mills is one of five nurses in the running for the national Graduate Nurse of the Year award for his work at Eastern Health in Victoria.

Mr Mills was inspired to change careers after the death of someone close to him.

“It was a trying time in my life which led to some pretty deep reflection. I decided I wanted to do something more meaningful,” Mr Mills said.

“I began taking night classes and worked as a hospice volunteer and Lifeline counsellor to build my experience before joining Eastern Health for my graduate year.”

Mr Mills was nominated for outstanding work in the acute adult mental health unit, in palliative care, and for the holistic care he provided to patients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

During his time at Eastern Health, he completed postgraduate studies in health promoting palliative care and mental health, and trained in mindfulness-based counselling and applied suicide intervention. His practice development work was presented at three national conferences.

Now Vice Chair of the New Generation of Nurses Faculty Advisory Committee at the Royal College of Nursing Australia, and Secretary of the National Committee for Palliative Care Nurses Australia, Mr Mills wants to play a significant role in the future direction of the nursing profession.

“Nursing has a proud history and I feel privileged to be a part of the next generation of nurses who will carry it into the future with our enthusiasm, creativity and vision,” he said.

He is currently undertaking his Honours and hopes to complete a doctorate towards improving patient outcomes and building the nursing workforce capacity to care for an ageing population.

Now based in Canberra, Mr Mills gave credit to the team at Eastern Health for their support.

“A large part of my professional growth came from following the examples set by my mentors at Eastern Health. To be honest, this honor is a reflection of those I’ve worked alongside,” he said.

Mr Mills will be flown to Melbourne for the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards gala dinner on 10 May. The winner of the Graduate Nurse of the Year award will receive a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant.

The prize money is provided by ME Bank, a supporter of the awards since 2008.

HESTA is one of Australia's largest superannuation funds with more than 730,000 members. It is chosen by more people working in health and community services than any other fund.

Visit **hestaawards.com** to book tickets for the event or learn more about the awards.

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