

HESTA Australian Nursing Awards
PO Box 615 Carlton South VIC 3053
Phone (03) 8660 1600
hestaawards.com



Media Release
23 April 2012

Sunshine Coast nurse is taking it to the streets

A nursing lecturer at CQUniversity's Noosa campus is literally getting the show on the road when it comes to health recruitment, training and education, and health promotion.

Nicholas Ralph had long pondered the idea of a multi-functional mobile clinical unit to promote careers in health, facilitate training and education in the community, and undertake health promotion throughout the Sunshine Coast region.

At a Sunshine Coast community forum last year, Mr Ralph mapped out the idea on the back of a serviette and presented it as a proposal. Now the Mobile Clinical Learning Unit (M-CLU) is becoming a reality.

The 10-metre split-level trailer, towed by a Chevrolet twin-cab pick-up, houses two sophisticated simulation spaces where qualified professionals can sharpen their skills and members of the public can get a taste of what a career in health has to offer.

The upper platform is home to a simulation deck where participants can undertake computer-based simulation training. The lower platform houses a realistic ward environment complete with a patient — a high-tech simulation mannequin that sweats, bleeds, blinks and even talks back, as trainees test their clinical skills in areas such as basic and advanced life support, and neurological examinations.

While mobile clinical units have been used with success in tertiary education before, allowing the public to use leading-edge industry training tools and the combination of health recruitment, health promotion, and training and education are world firsts.

The M-CLU will visit schools, shopping centres, sports grounds and public parks to give participants a taste of the opportunities a career in health can offer.

Mr Ralph believes the unit can aid efforts to tackle a looming skills shortage in a region that will require 50,000 new health professionals over the next 20 years.

It also has huge potential for remote areas such as mining towns where initiatives such as this are of great value to the community.

"The aim of this initiative is improve healthcare in the region — whether it be through opening up career opportunities in health to the public, upskilling the regional health workforce or improving the health of our communities using health promotion strategies," Mr Ralph said.

Mr Ralph is one of five finalists in the Innovation in Nursing category of the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards. If he wins, he will use the prize money to undertake an evaluation of the mobile unit in order to improve its usefulness to the community.

The winners of the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards will be announced at a gala dinner in Melbourne on Thursday 10 May. Interstate finalists will be flown to Melbourne for the event at Crown Entertainment Complex.

Nurse of the Year and Graduate Nurse of the Year will each receive a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant. The Innovation in Nursing winner will receive a \$10,000 development grant to enhance or extend their project.

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.

Media enquiries: Michelle Edmunds (03) 9654 4799 / 0413 120 342