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## Victorian mental health nurse receives top national nursing award

Steve Brown — of NorthWestern Mental Health (the mental health arm of Melbourne Health) — was named Nurse of the Year, at the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards in Sydney last night.

Mr Brown, a mental health nurse, was recognised for his role in implementing the Police Ambulance Clinical Emergency Response (PACER) system. PACER incorporates mental health nurses into the police and ambulance call-outs involving people in a critical state due to mental illness.

Mr Brown said, “People living with mental illness, who are in crisis, can now be attended by trained police and clinicians, in their home. This eases the impact on hospital emergency departments and significantly reduces the individual’s distress and anxiety. Ultimately, reducing the number of hospital admissions.”

Since the introduction of PACER, there has been a decrease in mental health presentations to the Northern Hospital’s emergency department, one of the busiest in Melbourne.

Speaking with Virginia Trioli, emcee of the awards dinner, Mr Brown said, “Last week the Victorian Government announced \$15.1 million will be made available to roll out initiatives such as PACER across the state.”

On 5 May, the Victorian Minister for Mental Health, Mary Wooldridge, and Victoria Police Deputy Commissioner, Lucinda Nolan, announced the new Mental Health and Police Response (MHaP Response) funding for each of Victoria’s 21 Area Mental Health Services.

Funding for the initiative will be provided in the upcoming 2014/15 Victorian State Budget and will deliver a more targeted and timely response to a person needing urgent mental health support in the community, while also reducing pressure on police, ambulance and emergency department resources.

Mr Brown accepted a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant, courtesy of long-term HESTA awards supporter, ME Bank.

When asked he would do with the prize money Mr Brown said, “I would like to use part of it to investigate the issue of violence and aggression in emergency departments. This is an area of concern to clinical staff working in these services.”

The Nurse of the Year Award recognises a nurse, midwife, personal care attendant or assistant in nursing who has made an exceptional contribution to improving patient care, delivered health care in challenging circumstances and advocated on behalf of patients or the nursing profession.

HESTA Chair Angela Emslie and ME Bank CEO Jamie McPhee, presented Mr Brown with his award, at the eighth HESTA Australian Nursing Awards. Recipients of the Outstanding Graduate and Team Innovation categories were also announced.

“The winners in all three awards categories demonstrated high quality nursing and the real difference it can make to improving people’s lives,” Ms Emslie said.

“We are proud to acknowledge these exceptional individuals and teams.”

The awards are timely, given its International Nurses Week, when members of the community are encouraged to thank a nurse for their wonderful contribution.

Outstanding Graduate, Zoe Sabri, from Melbourne, also accepted a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant. The Team Innovation Award recipient, from North Queensland, received a \$10,000 development grant, all courtesy of ME Bank.

HESTA is the leading super fund for health and community services, with more than 770,000 members and \$27 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

To learn more about the awards visit [hestaawards.com.au](https://hestaawards.com.au)

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