

Media Release



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Geelong nurse wins top graduate award for helping cancer patients

Narelle Place, a graduate nurse at Barwon Health in Geelong was named Outstanding Graduate at the 2015 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards in Brisbane last night.

The Geelong nurse was recognised for her strong advocacy work on behalf of patients and for improving procedures for patients requiring sedation while undergoing cancer treatments. Ms Place initiated changes to advance patient labelling on intravenous medication at the hospital.

Ms Place said she was pleased that her advocacy on behalf of a patient requiring a naso-gastric tube while receiving radiotherapy treatment ensured he received the necessary pain relief.

“Working in the oncology ward presents plenty of challenges, often patients experience a lot of anxiety and/or distress—it’s important to speak up on behalf of them especially when they might not be strong enough to do so themselves,” Ms Place said.

“Often difficult conversations result in positive departmental changes regarding the processes, such as documenting sedation requirements, so unnecessary anxiety and discomfort can be avoided in future.”

Ms Place also demonstrated a proactive approach to creating awareness among staff regarding the importance of patient labelling on intravenous medication lines and led a project highlighting the risk of patient falls in the hospital.

HESTA CEO, Debby Blakey presented Ms Place with the Award at an awards ceremony in Brisbane on 15 October 2015.

“We are pleased to recognise the drive and initiative shown by Narelle—particularly given she is only in her first year of nursing since completing her nursing degree. I would encourage all nursing graduates and graduate program coordinators to think about the innovation they bring to their profession and nominate for the next HESTA Australian Nursing Awards,” Ms Blakey said.

Ms Place received a \$5,000 **ME** EveryDay Transaction Account and \$5,000 towards further education, courtesy of proud awards sponsor, **ME**.

When asked what she would do with the prize money, Ms Place said she would use some of it to complete her post-graduate studies in oncology/haematology and then travel to Cambodia with her mother who has worked as a rural remote nurse practitioner in small villages there.

Other Award winners were Nurse of the Year, Catrin Dittmar from Lake Macquarie, NSW, who also received a \$5,000 **ME** EveryDay Transaction Account and \$5,000 towards further education. Street Health from Homeless Healthcare (Mobile GP) in Perth took out the Team Innovation Award and received a \$10,000 development grant, also courtesy of **ME**.

For more information about the awards visit hestaawards.com.au

Follow the Twitter conversation [@HESTANurseAwdz](https://twitter.com/HESTANurseAwdz)

*The 2015 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards is a HESTA initiative, run in partnership with the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) and proudly sponsored by the bank owned by industry super funds, **ME**.*

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