

11 May 2017

## Winners of national nursing and midwifery awards announced

A NT nurse who established remote dialysis services for Aboriginal people, a NSW team who implemented an innovative pre-admission midwifery program and a WA graduate nurse that achieved outstanding patient-centred care in mental health received top honours at the 2017 HESTA Australian Nursing & Midwifery Awards last night.

In its 11<sup>th</sup> year, the national awards are Australia's most prestigious for the sector, recognising nurses, midwives, personal care attendants, and assistants in nursing across three categories – Nurse or Midwife of the Year, Outstanding Graduate and Team Excellence.

The winners were selected from 12 finalists from across Australia, and were announced at an awards dinner held in Brisbane.

HESTA CEO, Debby Blakey said this year's winners exemplify the best qualities of their professions and demonstrate the outstanding impact nurses and midwives have in achieving new standards of health care in Australia.

"We are proud to acknowledge the winners of this year's nursing and midwifery awards. Their work has a profound impact on the lives of the individuals they care for and the communities they operate in", Ms Blakey said.

"These winners stood out from an exceptional group of finalists for their outstanding leadership and innovation, in implementing new services and practices that provide enhanced health care outcomes and the highest standard of care to patients across Australia".

Proud Awards sponsor **ME** – the bank for you, generously provided the \$30,000 prize pool, divided among the winners in the three award categories. Winners will receive \$10,000 in a **ME** Everyday Transaction account to use for further education or team development.

### The 2017 Award winners are:

#### Nurse or Midwife of the Year

##### **Sarah Brown**

**Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (Western Desert Dialysis)  
Gillen, NT**

Sarah was recognised for establishing the Alice Springs-based Western Desert Dialysis to provide social support services, allied health and 'on-country' dialysis services for Aboriginal people experiencing kidney disease.

Drawing on her experience as a remote area nurse and educator for Aboriginal Health Practitioners, Sarah worked closely with leaders from Pintupi Luritja communities to establish Western Desert Dialysis, ensuring all the services provided are culturally appropriate.

Sarah's outstanding leadership led to the expansion of Western Desert Dialysis' services to nine remote communities throughout the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

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"The services we provide, mean that people can live in their remote communities and receive dialysis treatment on-country. They live longer, have a better quality of life and an opportunity to pass on their heritage and cultural knowledge to their children and grandchildren," said Sarah.

Sarah said the prize money will help fund services which will enable patients to be treated in South Australia.

"We're working really hard to fundraise to build our first South Australian dialysis service, in the Pukatja community. This money will assist us in employing nurses to help set this up."

### **Outstanding Graduate**

**Rebecca Rich  
Perth Clinic  
West Perth, WA**

Rebecca is recognised for her commitment to achieving patient-centred care in mental health nursing. As a graduate she proactively took part in formal and informal education to improve her skills, applying her learning to improve outcomes for mental health patients.

Rebecca completed online training with Children of Parents with Mental Illness, completed the 'Mandatory Reporting Program' with the Department of Child Protection and completed a short course in Borderline Personality Disorder.

Rebecca said she plans to work on breaking down the stigma mental health patients often face.

"There's still a lot of stigma around mental health, we need to break this down in order to improve the quality of care for mental health patients. This will help create acceptance in society and ultimately improve mental health services and patients' recovery," said Rebecca.

Rebecca said she will use the prize money to visit hospitals around Australia, to research how others are treating mental health and personality disorders.

"I plan to visit hospitals that treat personality disorders, find out how they've been successful and bring this back to the Perth Clinic to help us improve".

### **Team Excellence**

**The Mater (Sydney) Pre-admission Midwife Appointment Program  
The Mater Hospital  
North Sydney, NSW**

Awarded for implementing and developing the 'Pre-admission Midwife Appointment Program' to provide holistic multi-disciplinary care to women in the third trimester of their pregnancies. The program provides women with a free 45 minute appointment with a specially trained midwife, providing the opportunity to discuss the expectations and concerns women may have in their pregnancy, during birth and early parenting.

The program aims to better support women in the later stage of their pregnancy, focusing on addressing a woman's physical as well as emotional wellbeing. This includes: screening for depression and anxiety, domestic violence screening and assistance with concerns or social stresses in the expectant mum's life.

It was implemented with the support of the Gidget Foundation, who aim to promote awareness around perinatal anxiety and depression.

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Antenatal midwife co-ordinator, Sarah Tooke, said the program benefits the women it treats by ensuring they are emotionally supported throughout all aspects of their pregnancy.

“The program makes patients feel more supported, they feel listened to and are asked questions that they weren’t previously asked. This helps with screening and supporting their emotional wellbeing, ensuring risk factors can be picked up early,” said Sarah.

Sarah said with the prize money they will continue run the program, fund research and improve its services.

“We want to provide ongoing training for staff, conduct formal research to self-evaluate and we would like to fund a translator to help with linguistically diverse patients.”

[hestawards.com.au](http://hestawards.com.au)

To download photos from the Awards night please [click here](#).

**Ends**

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