MEDIA RELEASE

*Swimming between the flags?* International Conference highlights the changing roles of Mental Health Nurses

Mental health nurses are increasingly expanding their knowledge and skills and extending their scope of practice to provide much needed mental health care to the community. Mental health nurses work with people across the life span and across all service settings.

Nurses form the largest part of the health care workforce and mental health problems affect 1 in 4 Australians. ‘All nurses need to be prepared to meet the challenges of the increasing burden of mental illness,’ ACMHN CEO Kim Ryan said.

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses is hosting the 37th International Conference at the Gold Coast Marriott Resort and Spa from Tuesday 4 October to Friday 7 October 2011. ‘This conference is not just for specialist mental health nurses, but for all nurses and midwives interested in mental health care,’ said Ms Ryan.

The Conference theme, *Mental Health Nurses: Swimming between the flags?* promises participants an exciting opportunity to discuss and contemplate, with colleagues from around the world, how to meet changing conditions in education, practice, research and management.

The Conference program includes:

- An Oration Ceremony at 5:30pm on Tuesday 4 October, which includes
  - an address by Peter Santangelo, President ACMHN
  - the presentation of the Mental Health Nurse of the Year Award
- Frank Quinlan, CEO Mental Health Council will officially open the Conference on Wednesday 5 October at 9:00am
- Workshops, trade displays and four streams of seminars.

Keynote Speakers throughout the days of the conference will include:

- Controversial speaker Dr Rufus May, University of Bradford, *Teaching people to live with their voices*
- Human Rights Commission 2010 commendation recipient Sandy Jeffs, Community Educator, and person with a lived experience of mental illness presenting *Schizophrenia: a madwoman’s reflections on living with madness*,