MEDIA RELEASE

Committed and dedicated professional wins Mental Health Nurse of the Year 2011

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) last night named Jon Chesterson from Newcastle as Mental Health Nurse of the Year. The award recognises Jon’s dedication to the rights and needs of people with mental illness.

Jon is an experienced Mental Health Nurse who has shown commitment to professional leadership in several areas, most notably community service. He has also contributed significantly to the development of skilled Mental Health Nurses. He was a founding member of the Mental Health Council of Australia and served as a Board Director for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia and Lifeline Hunter until 2006.

Jon believes it is important for Mental Health Nurses to be involved in community programs. ‘If we want to help people fully recover from a mental illness, we need to have an understanding of how it is they’re living in the community and how this can be improved. You can’t do that from inside a hospital’, said Jon.

Peter Santangelo ACMHN President said ‘I have known Jon for many years and congratulate him on this award. Jon has been a tireless advocate for mental health service, most recently in the Hunter region, and the Mental Health Nursing profession. Jon has been a previous College President and provided leadership to Mental Health Nurses across Australia.’

Established by the ACMHN in 2008, this prestigious award recognises the achievements of Mental Health Nurses and promotes the importance of mental health nursing as a specialty. The award, supported by Wiley-Blackwell, was presented at the International Conference on Mental Health Nursing being held on the Gold Coast this week. Almost 500 Mental Health Nurses and others working in mental health are attending the conference, which is an opportunity for participants to stay up to date on trends in clinical practice, research, education and explore the changing scope of mental health nursing.

Also presented at the Conference was the ACMHN Mental Health Nurse Achievement Award, co-sponsored by Curtin University and won by Timothy Wand, a Nurse Practitioner at Sydney’s Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Clinical Senior Lecturer with the Sydney Nursing School at the University of Sydney. Timothy was one of the first nurses in Australia to become a Nurse Practitioner. He has established a successful mental health clinic based in the Emergency Department at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney providing free care to people who are under served by regular mental health services. Timothy is a worthy recipient of this inaugural award.

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The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses is the professional body representing mental health nurses in Australia.
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