MEDIA RELEASE

ACMHN congratulates ACU for taking the lead in mental health nursing education

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) congratulates the Australian Catholic University (ACU) for becoming the first to achieve National Framework Accreditation for their Master of Mental Health (Nursing) program.

“This is a historic day for mental health nursing education and for the profession” said ACMHN President, Professor Wendy Cross. “We are pleased to announce that the ACU is the first university in Australia to achieve accreditation of their postgraduate mental health nursing educational program against the National Framework.

“We congratulate the University for their fantastic work in educating specialist mental health nurses.”

The National Framework for Postgraduate Mental Health Nursing Education in Australia was developed in response to a 2011 scan of Australian postgraduate mental health nursing programs. The scan identified a high level of divergence and inconsistency between courses, particularly in how the education component interacts with clinical competency.

The scan also found that nurses who want to specialise in mental health can face difficulty in choosing a course that will provide appropriate mental health nursing skills and information about recovery and treatment. The development of mental health nursing practice begins at undergraduate level, and requires a clear articulation through Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 8 and 9 (Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Masters) programs.

To improve consistency and clarity for mental health nurses doing post graduate studies the ACMHN established a National Framework for Postgraduate Mental Health Nursing Education in Australia, and last year developed an accompanying accreditation process.

The Australian Catholic University was one of two universities to participate in the pilot of the accreditation process by submitting their Master of Mental Health (Nursing) to scrutiny by a site evaluation team. As a result, ACU’s Master in Mental Health (Nursing) program, and the Graduate Diploma of Mental Health (Nursing), is the first postgraduate mental health nursing course to be accredited against the National Framework.

ACMHN President, Professor Wendy Cross, ACMHN CEO Kim Ryan, and the ACMHN Board congratulate ACU Head of School, Patrick Crookes, and the mental health team including Val Goodwin, Rose McMasters, Michelle Campbell and Brian McKenna, who have achieved this significant milestone in the preparation of specialist mental health nurses.

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