

Media Release
For Immediate Release
Friday 20 May 2011

Geriatric Flying Squad soars to new heights
Winner of Innovation in Nursing Award: HESTA Nursing Awards 2011

The Geriatric Flying Squad from UnitingCare Ageing's War Memorial Hospital in Waverley is reaching new heights, winning the Innovation in Nursing Award category in the HESTA Nursing Awards 2011 on Thursday 12 May 2011.

Established one year ago, the Squad provides comprehensive assessments, a range of care in the home, and referrals to appropriate services to older people in the local community. Team members include a clinical nurse specialist, a doctor specialising in geriatric care, a social worker, occupational therapist, physiotherapist and clinical psychologist.

The service aims to assist clients to continue to live in their own homes and to maximise their quality of life. A key benefit of their hard work and dedication is the reduction in admissions of older people to emergency departments.

The team members were present at the Award ceremony in Melbourne also coincided with International Nurses Day, an annual event which commemorates the birth of Florence Nightingale.

Also present at the gala dinner were Joanne Toohey, Director Operations, UnitingCare Ageing, Brad Williams, Regional Director, UnitingCare Ageing Sydney Region, and Gerard Hyde, Executive Manager, War Memorial Hospital, who were on hand to support the team's nomination.

Mr Hyde described the team's win as "as terrific in recognising the work that the Geriatric Flying Squad has done in the last twelve months.

“This service is about keeping people healthy in the comfort of their own home and surrounds, rather than having them unnecessarily attending emergency departments.”

Mr Hyde said that the program had only been established a year earlier with funding from the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) but that the model had proven successful and he hoped that it would be able to eventually expand.

“This award is a great step forward in acknowledging the effectiveness of the model and the team is looking forward to using the prize money to upgrade vital equipment to enable them to continue helping older people in the local community.”

The Innovation Award recognises the spirit with which nurses embrace their profession and seeks to provide assistance in further developing an innovative product, service or process. The Award also seeks to recognise the hard work and dedication of those nurses who have successfully implemented a product, service or process.

END

For more information or to arrange an interview with Gerard Hyde, Executive Manager, War Memorial Hospital, please contact Ingrid Hoff, Media and Communication Officer, UnitingCare NSW.ACT on 02 9376 1415 or email ihoff@unitingcarenswact.org.au.