Jeff Tinsley – 2015 Nurse of the Year (Darwin)

Award Recipient: Education, Research and Innovation in Nursing

Sponsored by School of Health Charles Darwin University

Jeffrey Tinsley first came to work in the Northern Territory in July 2003 and is currently the Clinical Nurse Manager of the Coronary Care Unit and the Chronic Disease Coordination Unit at Royal Darwin Hospital. For a considerable number of years Jeff has provided excellent leadership and management for two of the busiest, clinically diverse units in Royal Darwin Hospital. He is known for always striving to ensure that cultural safety is preserved for Aboriginal people and is a strong advocate for patients who are scared and/or alone. In 2014 Jeff was key to the planning and development of three Cardiac Outreach Clinical Nurse Consultant posts covering Darwin, East Arnhem and the Katherine/Barkly region. Jeff recently played a lead role in the production of ‘The Cardiac Story’ DVD, which describes common tests and procedures carried out for cardiac patients and which patients are able to access prior to arriving in RDH. Through the many facets of his work Jeff has made a significant contribution to improving health outcomes and ‘closing the gap’ in the care of Aboriginal people with cardiac disease in the Northern Territory. Together these attributes make him the ideal recipient of the education, research and innovation award. His stand-out commitment to the people of the Northern Territory led to his selection as the 2015 Nurse of the Year.

NT Administrator’s Medal for Lifetime Achievement in Midwifery – Mo Davy (Darwin)

Presented by His Honour the Honourable John Hardy and sponsored by NT Branch of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

Mo Davy has over 40 years of service as a midwife to Darwin women and families. She was one of the small cohort of health professionals who remained in the aftermath of cyclone Tracy working long, chaotic hours at Darwin Hospital providing care for people under the extenuating circumstances created by the disaster. She was one of the first midwives to work at Darwin Private Hospital, and went on to work in the community as a member of the team of three privately practising midwives providing continuity of care for women across their antenatal, birthing and postnatal experiences. When Private Practise was no longer an option Mo has contributed to establishing the Community Midwifery Practice (CMP) where midwives provide antenatal care and birth in the Darwin Birth Centre (DBC) and postnatal visits in the home, and the unique NT Government public home birthing service. Mo was also one of the founding members of ‘Cradle NT’ a support group for families experience the grief and loss of miscarriage, still birth and neonatal death. Her volunteer activities also extended to birthing education for women and families, teaching nursing students and promoting professional activities for colleagues through the NT College of Midwives.

Graduate Nurse Program Participant of the year – Michelle Mason (Katherine)

Sponsored by the Department of Health, Office of the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer

Michelle Mason completed the Katherine Hospital Graduate Midwife Program in January 2015. Michelle came to this program as an experienced Registered Nurse with a remote health background completing her midwifery qualifications in 2013 whilst managing Mataranka community health centre. Michelle’s previous role has given her skills in leadership, and well developed interpersonal skills, which she utilised extensively during the Graduate Year. Her emphasis on people and cultural safety and commitment and motivation beyond expectation was demonstrated by presentations on diabetes in pregnancy, her participation in reviewing Katherine Hospital Nursery guidelines, and her membership of the
Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) accreditation committee. Through her personal drive and integrity Michelle has influenced the change of breast feeding culture though innovative health promotion for culturally and linguistically diverse groups and so has contributed to a model of care that improves client and family outcomes. Michelle has demonstrated the nursing/midwifery values of care, passion and pride in professional practice.

Excellence in Aged, Disability and Residential Care nursing—Sarah Louise Ryan (Darwin)

*Sponsored by HESTA and the Australian Association of Gerontology*

Sarah Louise Ryan commenced work with Carpentaria Disability Services in 2011. She is the manager of twelve residential care homes in metropolitan Darwin where she has used her nursing expertise to its fullest extent to solve complex issues for some of the Northern Territory’s most challenging health care recipients. This client group is culturally and socially diverse and includes people referred by the criminal justice system. Sarah has made a difference to the life of these vulnerable clients by introducing programs centred on holistic monitoring of health care status, improving therapeutic management, and introducing programs that promote long term integration into the community. A particular initiative has successfully assisted clients enter or re-enter the paid and volunteer workforce, transforming their lives.

Excellence in Enrolled Nursing—Maureen Stevens (Darwin)

*Sponsored by Fox Education and Consulting Services*

This award honours Maureen Stevens for her commitments to education, holistic care and effective communication in the field of palliative care nurse, which has been described as confronting, difficult and rewarding at the same time. Maureen is a strong advocate for ‘quality of life’ for patients and the needs of their families. She assists them to feel at ease through challenging physical and psychological events and times when they are most in need of professional empathy and support. Maureen is popular with her colleagues as a team player and highly regarded for her dedication to all aspects of her job who report: “Maureen possesses skills to a high level while juggling a heavy workload. She is able to build relationships and establish good patient care as a result. She always shows respect to patients and their families in the hospice by caring for them above and beyond what many other nurses might do”.

Excellence in Hospital Care—Alison Bucklar (Darwin)

*Sponsored by HESTA*

This award is testament to Alison’s excellence in nursing care and over 40 years dedication to the nursing profession. Alison Bucklar started working in Darwin as a new graduate at the Old Darwin Hospital. She has been a Clinical Nurse Specialist on Ward 4B for over 20 years. She received a record number of nominations that paid tribute to a “kind, caring and compassionate nature”. Alison has been an example to others for the important role of educating, mentoring and nurturing junior nurses and team leaders. She is renowned for her passion in tropical medicine, infectious diseases and Indigenous Health. Alison has worked determinedly to improve the care of patients with severe, resistant-crusted scabies and has made a significant contribution to the formulation of the crusted scabies clinical pathway. Alison is known for her expert hands on nursing care. She is widely acknowledged by multidisciplinary teams for her holistic approach to caring for patients and their families, commitment to patient advocacy and ensuring cultural safety is maintained throughout the in-patient journey.
Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Leadership – Wendy Corkill (Alice Springs)  
**Sponsored by Flinders University School of Nursing and Midwifery**

Wendy Corkill is an outstanding Territory nurse, advocating for people in remote Central Australia to have access to specialty cardiac services. Her clinical leadership capabilities in Cardiac care, specialist knowledge and wisdom have made the vision of an outreach cardiac service for Central Australia a reality. Tennant Creek residents have been saved the long journey to Alice Springs through Wendy’s leadership of professional development for nurses who can now oversee Exercise Stress Testing and Holter Monitoring in the Barkly. In 2013, Wendy assisted in setting up CT Cardiac Angiography in Alice Springs, which now provides state of the art cardiac diagnostic care in the absence of a resident cardiologist. She has contributed specialist knowledge of nursing care in remote and regional areas by authoring chapters in nursing textbooks, presenting at local and national conferences, and volunteering with *Open Heart* to provide specialist care in developing countries. Wendy participates in cardiac research and is the longest serving member of the Central Australian Research Ethics Committee.

Excellence in Mental Health Nursing – Ali Thorn (Alice Springs)  
**Sponsored by NT Medicare Local and the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses**

Ali Thorn has demonstrated exceptional practice in mental health nursing. She has learnt the Yolngu Matha language which has assisted her to foster therapeutic individual and community relationships within north east Arnhem Land. She has demonstrated leadership in the mental health specialty by promoting partnerships specifically for closing the gap in health inequity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. One such partnership incorporates primary mental health care into the community setting through the development and implementation of an education program at the Ramingining School. Ali has presented at a range of conferences showcasing mental health nursing in the NT. She is also dedicated to her own education, currently undertaking a Master of Public Health. She is the Chair of the NT Branch of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses. Ali has recently taken up the challenge of working in the Mental Health Services in Rural and Remote Areas primary health care program for the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Central Australia where she will continue to make significant contributions to the well-being of remote and Aboriginal people.

Excellence in Midwifery – Rosie Downing (Alice Springs)  
**Sponsored by the Australian College of Midwives**

Rosie is acknowledged by her colleagues as a strong advocate for women and their families, and a positive role model who demonstrates exemplary practice in providing women-centred midwifery care. Rosie has worked in Midwifery-led models of care in both the Top End and Central Australia and currently works in the Alice Springs Midwifery Group Practice. In her role she has problem solved many complex situations, collaborating widely with members of the multidisciplinary health team and assisting women navigate the often complicated health journey between remote and urban settings. Remote colleagues refer to her as a wonderful resource for them and she is an active member of both the Central Australian Rural Practitioners Association core group and the NT branch of the Australian College of Midwives.

Excellence in Primary Health Care – Melissa Mills (Nhulunbuy)  
**Sponsored by NT Medicare Local**

Melissa Mills was nominated by the parents of Nhulunbuy for her positive and reassuring...
presence in the community during a time of high anxiety and uncertainty with the curtailment at the Rio Tinto Alcan Refinery. Numerous testimonials describe ‘Millsy’, as “fantastic … really in tune with parents and mothers …. providing family services and support at times that suit families and the needs and wishes of the mother and baby”. Melissa has initiated an informative yet social parents group, adding to her depth of knowledge by conducting many sessions with other professional co-presenters. Melissa’s wealth of knowledge about child development is demonstrated through a range of informative resources to parents that provide current evidence and research in an understandable way. Melissa also ensures that mothers are networked with community groups such as Playgroups, MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) and the Australian Breastfeeding Association. She participates in these groups herself, stepping in to host playgroup when it looked like closing. Her capacity to work with people at grass roots level makes Melissa is an outstanding representative of the Primary Health Care nursing workforce.

Excellence in Remote Area Nursing – Richard Van De Veerdonk (Jabiru)

Sponsored by Centre for Remote Health and CRANApplus

Richard has a Master’s degree in Indigenous Health and has worked in the Northern Territory as a nurse and midwife since 1992. He is currently the clinic manager at Jabiru, but over the past 23 years has worked in remote communities in both Central Australia and the Top End. Richard received nominations that related to his excellence as a manager, role model, teacher, and clinical expert. He is seen as a leader amongst the primary health care team, assisting other health centre managers in the region to achieve the same high level of community engagement he has established in Jabiru. He has recently assisted in setting up a ‘Men’s Shed’ which has also seen an increase in young men attending for health checks. A commendation for his participation in the WOW program identified his engagement with students from Jabiru and Gumbalunya schools. Richard also received a nomination from the 86 year old wife of a man who received care from Richard that exemplifies why he has received this award: “On a scale of one to ten, we give him a 15”.