

Media Release



Postcards From The Edge Wins Again!

30 November 2009

On Thursday 26 November 2009 the Annual Premier's Public Sector Awards were held in Sydney to celebrate the best and brightest public sector organisations, projects and individuals across New South Wales.

A local project developed at Calvary Mater Newcastle and known for its multi award winning status, is the 'Postcards Reduce Repeat Suicide Attempts' program which added another string to its bow by taking home the Premier's category five award - 'Succeeding Through Innovation'.

Originally developed by Professor Ian Whyte and Professor Greg Carter, 'Postcards Reduce Repeat Suicide Attempts' is a collaboration of doctors and researchers from Calvary Mater Newcastle, Hunter New England Mental Health and The University of Newcastle.

In a study of 772 patients with deliberate self poisoning (attempted suicide); eight postcards containing the simple message of 'we care' were mailed out over a period of 12 months. The number of repeat attempts at suicide by these patients was halved and the effect was sustained for five years. The program has found particular success with female patients.

Due to its high success rate, the Postcards program has since been implemented in facilities throughout Australia and around the world.

Professor Ian Whyte attended Thursday night's ceremony on behalf of the Hunter Area Toxicology Service, the Calvary Mater Newcastle Department of Consultation Liaison Psychiatry and all members of the research team.

'We were thrilled to win the Premier Award as although our work has already been recognised on a national and international level, it is great for the team to have our hard work validated at a local and state level.

'We were especially pleased to win this year as a record 164 applications were received for the awards, 42 of which were in our category,' said Professor Whyte.

The Premier Awards are held annually to promote and highlight public sector achievements across a number of categories including innovation, leading change, engaging the community and individual excellence.

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Media opportunities with Professor Ian Whyte can be arranged via Laura Jackel.

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