

Media Release  
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## Flinders nurse honoured for life saving sign

A nurse whose sign language skills saved a patient from a potentially serious allergic reaction has been named a finalist in the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

Flinders Medical Centre emergency nurse, Lucy Houghton, is one of three nurses vying for the national title of Graduate Nurse of the Year.

“I was doing a double check before administering penicillin when the patient told me he was allergic, using sign language. He had been asked about allergies previously, but it had not been picked up due to the language barrier,” Ms Houghton said.

“I studied AUSLAN and can sign fluently so it was great to use those skills at work.”

Ms Houghton also won praise for her work with a mother who arrived at hospital with a seriously ill 10-day-old baby.

“The baby was being tested for meningitis and was really sick. There were so many doctors crowding around to look after that baby and this brand new mum had no one to look out for her,” Ms Houghton said.

“It was my job to support the mother while the baby had a lumbar puncture and to help track down contact details for a family member.”

Happily, the baby survived and the family thanked Ms Houghton for continuing to support them even after the baby left emergency and moved on to a ward.

A passionate advocate for vulnerable patients, Ms Houghton liaised with a translator for a Sudanese client who had arrived in Australia only a week before her medical emergency. Ms Houghton ensured a female doctor attended the patient, in line with the patient’s cultural beliefs.

Ms Houghton was commended for mentoring other young nurses; appropriately referring patients to services, such as Aboriginal liaison and occupational therapy, and for her volunteer work with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

A self-directed learner, Ms Houghton set her own professional goal to learn more about mental illness. She worked with mental health specialists to improve her care of mentally ill patients coming into the emergency ward.

Ms Houghton is one of three finalists in the Graduate Nurse of the Year category of the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

Graduate Nurse of the Year will benefit from \$5,000 in education and travel grants. Other awards are: Nurse of the Year with \$10,000 in education and travel grants, and the Innovation in Nursing winner who will receive a \$10,000 grant to develop their service or program. The prize money is provided by ME Bank, a supporter of the awards since 2008.

The winners will be announced at a gala awards ceremony in Melbourne on Florence Nightingale’s birthday – 12 May. Interstate finalists will be flown to Melbourne for the event at Crown Entertainment Complex.

HESTA is one of Australia’s largest superannuation funds with more than 700,000 members. It is chosen by more people working in health and community services than any other fund.

Visit [hestanursingawards.com](http://hestanursingawards.com) to book tickets for the event or learn more about the awards.

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