



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Student nurse takes out inaugural competition

A group of talented nurses and midwives have put pen to paper demonstrating their compassion for patients, resolve in the workplace and general creative flair, as part of an inaugural statewide short story and poetry competition.

Arch Sirodom, a student nurse from Lewisham, captured the attention of the judges with his short-story, *Her Smile*, about the impact nurses experience when connecting with patients for the first time, both verbally and through touch. *Her Smile* claimed the \$2000 first prize, sponsored by First State Super.

The two runners-up prizes of \$500 each were won by registered nurse Mary Perry of Como for *Those were the days...*, a short story about nurses' preparedness for all situations, and *The Ambulance* by Kathleen Wurth from Hinton about the challenges of palliative care.

All of the entries were commended by the independent judges, including Professor Mary Chiarella, nursing and midwifery expert from the University of Sydney and author, Dr Debra Adelaide, from the University of Technology, Sydney.

Other topics covered included communication; aged care; community nursing; interaction with patients and relatives; loneliness; courage; and being new to the profession.

Professor Chiarella congratulated the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) for hosting the competition and said nurses and midwives often shared their experiences with each other – the funny, the poignant, the sadness and the triumphs.

"All of the entries were well written, evocative and uplifting," Professor Chiarella said.

"All capture the essence of nursing and many were able to demonstrate humour as well as raw emotion."

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said shared experiences can assist when nursing staff are processing challenging events and often can be a form of debriefing.

"Storytelling to each other can also be a learning experience - by talking to each other, it provides the opportunity to learn in an informal way, and for more experienced nurses to give advice to less experienced colleagues," he said.

The NSWNMA launched the inaugural Short Story & Poetry Competition as part of its celebrations for this year's International Midwives' Day (5 May) and International Nurses' Day (12 May).

There were over 60 entries and all were judged anonymously. All entries have been published online at <http://www.nswnma.asn.au/members/short-stories-and-poems-2014>.

In addition, the NSWNMA is currently conducting a reader's choice prize of \$500 for the story or poem voted most popular online by NSWNMA members. The reader's choice winner will be announced later next month.



The Judges

Dr Debra Adelaide is the author/editor of 12 books including novels, nonfiction, and reference works. She joined the permanent Writing staff at the University of Technology, Sydney in 2003 after many years as a freelance writer, researcher, editor, book reviewer, and as a casual teacher.

Professor Mary Chiarella has been involved in a variety of nursing services for over 30 years, both in the United Kingdom and Australia. She joined the University of Sydney's Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery in 2008, having previously served as Chief Nursing Officer, NSW Health Department and as the Foundation Professor of Nursing in Corrections Health at the University of Technology, Sydney.

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