



Mental health nurse honoured for work

By Iliana Stillitano

AN image of local Karitane nurse Marion Stein as a 19-year-old with her head buried in a psychology text book is a curious one.

While her teenage friends were swapping popular novels, Mrs Stein was satisfying her interest in human behaviour.

And so began her path on a 30 year career in mental health nursing that culminated last week in her being named Mental Health Nurse of the Year.

"I feel very proud and honoured," Mrs Stein said of the inaugural award from the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses.

Mrs Stein said the award was fitting public recognition of the importance of mental health nursing.

"It is a reminder to me of the many people I have worked with who have supported me, given me inspiration or challenged my thinking," she said.

"And the many clients who trusted me with their emotions and often inner-most thoughts."

Much of Mrs Stein's nursing career has been dedicated to raising awareness of postnatal depression.

She is a perinatal and infant mental health nurse consultant working at Karitane at Carramar, where she deals with myriad maternal, infant and family mental health issues.

"I feel I have come full circle to now being aware of the importance of the emotional development of infants and how this can affect children's mental health outcomes later in life," she said.

Mrs Stein counts the 16 years she spent at Campbelltown Mental Health Service, and the pioneering of a specialist mental health



Mentally healthy: Mental Health Nurse of the Year, Marion Stein. "I hope I can inspire others to follow in this profession," the Karitane nurse said.

Picture: Wesley Loneragan

service for women and their families experiencing depression or anxiety during pregnancy and postnatally, as one of many highlights of her career.

She also runs a private practice in Elderslie, where she counsels people in the area of perinatal mental health.

"I think mental health nursing has become very fast-paced and there are huge demands, but with this has come the acknowledgement of the significant role mental health nurses have to play in providing a positive impact on the mental health of a diverse range of people living in Australia," she said.