

# DR JOAN FAOAGALI AWARD WINNER 2025

*Meet Michael Ereck, winner of  
the 2025 Dr Joan Faoagali Award*



**The Dr Joan Faoagali Award was set up by the College to honour Joan in celebration of her life and her considerable contribution to the IPC profession. The winner of the scholarship is awarded FIPC course fees. This year's winner is Michael Ereck. We caught up with Michael to congratulate him on his award and discuss his life and work.**

**Can you tell us a bit about your current role?**

I am a Registered Nurse & the General Manager at ibiscare, an aged care provider with home's in the St George & Sutherland Shire area. My role is multifaceted—overseeing clinical governance, infection prevention and control (IPC), quality improvement, and leading a committed team to deliver person-centred, safe, and high-quality care. I work closely with staff across all levels to ensure our practices meet compliance standards while fostering a strong culture of accountability, learning, and continuous improvement. Infection Prevention and Control is an essential part of my leadership focus, especially in proactively managing risk and sustainability in a high-acuity environment.

**What attracted you to working in aged care?**

I've always felt drawn to aged care because of the opportunity to support some of the most vulnerable members of our community. There's something powerful about being part of a person's life journey in their later years. The complexity of care, paired with the human connection, makes the work incredibly meaningful. It also motivates me to drive change that improves both resident outcomes and staff support systems.

**What do you think are the particular challenges for IPC in this setting?**

IPC in aged care presents unique challenges. Residents often live with multiple chronic conditions in a communal environment, which increases the risk of infection spread. Staff shortages, high turnover, and varying levels of clinical training can make consistent IPC practice more difficult to maintain. Another key challenge is ensuring we uphold residents' dignity and autonomy while still implementing robust infection prevention measures. It's a constant balancing act requiring both leadership and frontline engagement.

**What was your experience like doing the Foundations course?**

The Foundations course was both empowering and highly practical. It helped me deepen my understanding of infection prevention and control from a systems perspective while offering real-world examples relevant to the aged care setting. I appreciated the flexibility of the course and the supportive learning environment. It's had a direct impact on the way I lead IPC initiatives at IbisCare, giving me greater confidence and structure in both strategy and implementation.

**What would you say to anyone thinking of doing the course?**

Don't hesitate—do it. I absolutely recommend it. The Foundations course is a worthwhile investment in both your personal development and the safety of the people in your care. Whether you're new to IPC or looking to strengthen your knowledge, the course gives you the tools to create meaningful change. It also connects you to a broader network of professionals who are just as passionate about making a difference in this space.