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‘Home-style’ aged care centre wins national award

The Better Together Cottage Team — from Wairoonga Aged Care in Glen Waverley, Victoria — has won the Team Innovation Award at the 2013 HESTA Aged Care Awards, for a pilot program designed to make residents feel more relaxed in a homely environment.

Residents were moved out of traditional, long-term care facilities, into a designated wing that was re-modelled as a self-sufficient ‘cottage’, designed to give residents more independence.

Under the new Better Together service model, residents were given more say in how the centre was run, while staff in the role of housekeepers, undertook personal care, support and engaged in resident activities.

Wairoonga representative, Mary Fromberger, said clinical nursing expertise was provided by visiting nursing staff, while residents could elect to take over some aspects of the cooking and laundry work.

“We first re-modelled the area so a new smaller environment — with a domestic-style kitchen, laundry, dining and lounge room — was created, to encourage residents’ long-term mobility and independence,” Ms Fromberger said.

“One positive result to emerge from the trial has been that many residents who previously spent the majority of their time on their own in their bedrooms, now spend more of the day in the cottage lounge room, enjoying conversations with staff and other residents,” she said.

“Another benefit has been giving aged care professionals more opportunity to genuinely engage with residents, resulting in higher staff satisfaction and residents enjoying having someone with them for longer periods each day.”

HESTA CEO, Anne-Marie Corboy, congratulated the winners of the three award categories.

“The judges received nominations from around the country and had a difficult decision choosing 15 outstanding finalists. The winners are a credit to their organisations and are all contributing to improving the health and wellbeing of older Australians,” she said.

The winners of the HESTA Aged Care Awards were announced at an awards dinner in Sydney on 4 August 2013.

Wairoonga Aged Care and the Outstanding Organisation Award winner each accepted a \$10,000 development grant to put towards their initiative — courtesy of long-term awards sponsor, ME Bank. The Individual Distinction Award winner received a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* transaction account and \$5,000 towards further education.

HESTA is the leading super fund for health and community services, with more than 750,000 members and \$23 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

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