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**Media release 17 July 2014**

## Wimmera aged care nurse a finalist in national awards

An enrolled nurse who is pioneering a unique role at an aged care facility in Victoria's Wimmera region, is a finalist in the 2014 HESTA Aged Care Awards.

Catherine Ramsdale, who works in Rural Northwest Health's Yarriambiack Lodge aged care facility at Warracknabeal, is one of five finalists in the Individual Distinction Award category.

Ms Ramsdale has been recognised for introducing new activities to keep residents active and stimulated. along with her role in organising community fundraising activities that helped fund a \$22,000 upgrade of amenities at the facility.

As a result of the many and varied programs introduced by Ms Ramsdale, residents are much happier and psychotropic medications have reduced from 75 per cent to just 10 per cent.

Ms Ramsdale has worked in aged care for many years and began her unique position as a cognitive rehabilitation therapist at the facility's 15-bed memory support unit, Wattle Crescent, in 2011.

The role involves keeping residents living with dementia stimulated.

Ms Ramsdale has helped develop a 'use it or lose it' sequencer and has initiated several key programs.

In 2012, she organised the inaugural 'Walk for Wattle', a 60-kilometre walk from Rural Northwest Health's Hopetoun Campus to the Warracknabeal campus.

Walkers raised more than \$7,000 which helped erect a pergola with heavy-duty vinyl blinds and a large roof fan so Wattle Crescent residents could comfortably enjoy the outdoors.

Ms Ramsdale organised the Walk again in 2013, raising more than \$15,000. The funds were used to buy an outdoor musical instrument to stimulate hearing.

Raised garden beds and plants were installed to help stimulate smell and touch, ensuring Wattle's backyard was more dementia friendly.

Ms Ramsdale transformed a storeroom near the Wattle unit into a lolly shop. Residents take it in turns to work in the shop for an hour a day, with the assistance of outside volunteers.

She also organised an intergenerational program where residents attend the local preschool and assist children with reading, painting and other activities.

Ms Ramsdale and the other finalists will be flown to Melbourne to attend the awards dinner, where the winners will be announced on Tuesday 5 August 2014.

A \$30,000 prize pool will be shared among the winners, generously provided by long-term HESTA awards supporter ME Bank. The Individual Distinction Award winner will receive a \$5,000 ME Bank EveryDay Transaction Account and \$5,000 towards further education. The Outstanding Organisation and Team Innovation Award winners will each receive a \$10,000 development grant.

HESTA is the leading super fund for health and community services, with more than 770,000 members and \$27 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

Visit [hestaawards.com.au](http://hestaawards.com.au) for tickets to the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

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