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Victorian wins national award for care that connects communities

A Victorian aged care professional, whose work has improved access to health services in Aboriginal communities across three states, has won the Individual Distinction Award at the 2014 HESTA Aged Care Awards.

Graham Custance of Care Connect, won the award for developing a model of engagement and service provision that increased the number of Home Care Packages provided to Aboriginal Elders and older adults.

It also built capacity in Aboriginal communities to enable them to access services that meet their specific needs.

Mr Custance collaborated with state and federal departments and community service agencies, and gained the acceptance and trust of Aboriginal communities.

He successfully secured 70 Aboriginal-specific Home Care Packages from the Federal Department of Social Services.

“This involved reconfiguring traditional case management models to meet the requirements of the Aboriginal community, advocating on their behalf and developing an Aboriginal Community Action Plan that included a goal of self-determination for Aboriginal communities,” Mr Custance said.

“Elders of Victorian Aboriginal communities in the Eastern Region of Melbourne and the Loddon Mallee Region now choose the service providers they believe meet their specific requirements in a culturally respectful and appropriate way.”

HESTA CEO, Anne-Marie Corboy presented Mr Custance with his award during a dinner in Melbourne on 5 August 2014.

“We are honoured to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of Mr Custance in improving access to health and aged care services to Aboriginal communities across three states,” Ms Corboy said.

Mr Custance received a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* Transaction Account and \$5,000 towards further education courtesy of long-term HESTA awards supporter, ME Bank.

“I’d like to use the some of the prize money to research paths toward shared governance and self-determination in Aboriginal communities or establish an industry project to develop a model of engagement for Aboriginal communities,” he said.

The Team Innovation Award winner, the Re3 Wellness Program from Ageing Wisely in Western Australia, and Outstanding Organisation Award winner, Feros Care in Queensland, each received a \$10,000 development grant from ME Bank.

HESTA is the leading super fund for health and community services, with more than 785,000 members and \$28 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

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