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Tasmanian 'Bingo Queen' a finalist in national aged care awards

A compassionate aged care volunteer from Tasmania has been named a finalist in the 2014 HESTA Aged Care Awards.

Sally-Anne Wallace of Hobart is one of five finalists in the Individual Distinction Award category.

Ms Wallace has been recognised for volunteering at St Ann's Homes, Davey Street — on an almost daily basis, over the last eight years — to assist high-care residents with meals, leisure and lifestyle activities, and for her capacity to connect with all 111 residents and their families.

Soon after introducing regular bingo sessions for residents, Ms Wallace earned the moniker of 'Bingo Queen'.

During bingo sessions, residents look forward to hearing stories about Ms Wallace's hobby farm, where she looks after a number of animals — her favourite being her chooks.

The Facility Manager, Angela Holzberger, describes Ms Wallace as 'absolutely brilliant'.

"She has a remarkable ability of bringing joy into the lives of our residents, especially those living with dementia or other challenging illnesses," Ms Holzberger said.

Ms Wallace demonstrates an extraordinary level of commitment to building and maintaining personal relationships with residents, so they look forward to her visits and her storytelling.

Residents and staff speak highly of her dedication, warmth and compassion.

She supported one blind resident so she could continue playing bingo once a week, visits people in their room when they are sick, makes personalised birthday cards, and organises various activities in a way that makes it pleasurable for everyone.

Ms Wallace completed Level III Certificates in Home and Community Care, and Aged Care Work, by her own volition, so she could be a more effective volunteer at the facility.

She and the other interstate 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 for tickets for the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

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