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South Australian quality-of-life advocate a finalist in national aged care awards

An aged care professional who has developed models of care to improve the quality of life of those in residential and rehabilitation settings is a finalist in the 2014 HESTA Aged Care Awards.

Trudy Sutton, General Manager of Residential Services ACH Group in South Australia, is one of five finalists in the Individual Distinction Award category.

Mrs Sutton has been recognised for developing a model of care that incorporates long-term residential care for frail couples, successfully campaigning for a Healthy Ageing Program and launching the first aged care teaching facility in Australia.

Mrs Sutton developed and implemented an internal quality-of-life audit at ACH Group's Colton Court facility in Southern Adelaide, as a way of training staff, developing strategies and measuring success in improving outcomes for older residents.

"At Colton Court, high-care residents are very frail and, even though staff time is limited, there is a focus on achieving, measuring and reporting the time and quality of engagement on a daily basis," Mrs Sutton said.

"At the facility we are able to ensure that high-care residents get a house — not just a room — and we encourage spouses to move in, which has a dramatic effect on improving the couple's quality of life."

Mrs Sutton also champions a new Healthy Ageing Program at all ACH Group's residential sites.

The Program involves the use of gymnasiums to improve core strength and individual goal-driven programs.

It aims to engage physical health as well as improve overall wellbeing, with residents taking control of themselves and their lives.

Currently, resident participation in the Program ranges from 30 to 80 per cent across all ACH Group sites, depending on how long the program has been established at each site.

Mrs Sutton also established ViTA, a new aged care teaching facility in Daw Park, which will train up to 700 undergraduate students per year in a re-enablement aged care setting.

The program is a joint venture between SA Health and Flinders University and the first student intake was in May 2014.

Mrs Sutton 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 to the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

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