



MEDIA RELEASE

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Berwick's companion therapy initiative for aged care recognised

A Berwick aged care home team that successfully trialled companion therapy to support a grieving resident living with dementia, has been recognised as a finalist in the 2015 HESTA Aged Care Awards

Bupa Berwick developed the initiative to address a resident's need for attachment and comfort following the death of his partner, who was also a resident at the facility.

The Companion Therapy team is one of five finalists in the Team Innovation category. The Awards recognise those in the aged care sector who make an exceptional contribution to improving the quality of life for older Australians.

Bupa Berwick's Care Manager, Ling Pang, said residents living with dementia have the same psychological needs as other individuals including the need for companionship and love.

"A resident living with dementia began exhibiting signs of grief and loss not long after his dear friend and companion died," Ms Pang said.

"In addition to addressing the clinical needs of the resident, the team also considered how they could address his emotional needs."

Companion Therapy was initiated under the close supervision of a multi-disciplinary team, including a general practitioner, care manager, team leader, carers and support staff.

"The resident's anxiety and distress has reduced and emotional needs are fulfilled because he feels useful and is experiencing companionship again. The resident enjoys spending time talking, laughing and caring for his companion."

Ms Pang said the initiative demonstrated the importance of Bupa's "Person-First" approach in aged care.

"By putting the person first, we can ensure that each resident is cared for in a way that is responsive to their individual needs and while helping them maintain their quality of life," she said.

Finalists are in the running for a share of the \$30,000 prize pool provided by proud sponsor, industry super funds' owned bank, **ME**.

The Team Innovation and Outstanding Organisation Award winners each receive a \$10,000 development grant. The Individual Distinction Award winner will receive a \$5,000 **ME EveryDay** transaction account and \$5,000 towards further education.

ME CEO, Jamie McPhee, said, "we're delighted to give these outstanding individuals, the opportunity to develop and continue to progress their profession, and support innovative health programs that ultimately benefit the entire industry and community."

The winners will be revealed at the HESTA Aged Care Awards dinner on Thursday 27 August in Canberra.

Learn more about the Awards at hestaawards.com.au

MEDIA CONTACT: Luisa Saccotelli 0400 149 901 or Aileen Muldoon 0419 112 503

*The 2015 HESTA Aged Care Awards is an initiative of HESTA, run in partnership with the National Aged Care Alliance and proudly sponsored by **ME**.*