

MEDIA RELEASE

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Chinese aged care leader a finalist in national aged care awards

A retired engineer who spent 35 years establishing aged care facilities for thousands of Chinese Australians throughout Sydney and Wollongong, has been recognised for his commitment to the sector.

Henry Pan OAM is the honorary Executive Director of the Chinese Australian Services Society Ltd. His leadership is credited with building an organisation that operates several care homes and provides services for newborns to seniors — caring for more than 2,000 families a week and employing 200 staff.

Henry Pan OAM is one of five finalists in the Individual Distinction category of the 2015 HESTA Aged Care Awards. The Awards recognise those in the aged care sector who make an exceptional contribution to improving the quality of life of older Australians.

Mr Pan said his work grew out of a realisation that there were no Sydney aged care services for Chinese Australian seniors.

He lobbied to open a hostel in Croydon in 1987, seven aged day care centres in Sydney and Wollongong between 2004 and 2015 and opened a residential aged care facility in Campsie earlier this year.

Mr Pan saw that Chinese seniors had a strong desire to maintain the lifestyle that they were accustomed to. A lack of culturally appropriate aged care services forced families to take on caring responsibilities and many were struggling.

“There was a need for centres that understood the cultural backgrounds of Chinese Australians — what they wanted to eat, through to the kind of recreational activities they enjoyed,” Mr Pan said.

“We now run residential and home care services that allow older members of our community to lead dignified lives. Our services also cater to Korean Australians and others from south-east Asian backgrounds.

“Our aim is to reduce social isolation so our seniors live a healthy lifestyle, in a respectful environment, while moving through the ageing process.”

Mr Pan has also overcome difficulties of his own, including a lengthy rehabilitation and recovery process after a violent assault that left him severely incapacitated.

“In 2006 I was assaulted while assisting a vulnerable client to resolve a custody case. Unfortunately, the assault resulted in my total blindness and to overcome this disability I have had to learn and adapt to new technology.

“Through all of this I have been able to continue my advocacy on behalf of the community and, together, we are continuing to mobilise resources, and develop the skills and knowledge to make our services even better.

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

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*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**.*