



MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW home-coaching program creates 'stronger carers' for elderly

A NSW aged care team that developed a home-coaching model to support carers of people with dementia is one of five finalists in the Team Innovation category of the 2015 HESTA Aged Care Awards.

The Stronger Carers Program — developed by BaptistCare NSW and ACT — has helped more than 300 carers across metropolitan Sydney develop care skills, access support services and better balance their own needs with their caring responsibilities.

The Awards recognise those in the aged care sector who make an exceptional contribution to improving the quality of life of older Australians.

BaptistCare Dementia Consultant and Project Manager, Marleina Fahey, said the Program was developed on recognising a gap in the support available to carers of people with dementia.

"Many services and support mechanisms are aimed at the person with dementia, rather than the family member providing care. They also require carers to leave the home, which can be difficult," Ms Fahey said.

"The 10-week Program includes an in-house coaching model using skilled carer coaches who work directly with the carer.

"The first six weeks of the program consist of in-home sessions between a carer and their carer coach. The carer coach discusses carer expectations, goals and care strategies. Goals for the person with dementia are also established.

"During the final four weeks, the coach follows up with the carer via phone or email to ensure they are supported or referred to other services, as appropriate."

Ms Fahey said an evaluation of the Program by Alzheimer's Australia NSW found it was an effective way to improve carer wellbeing, impart information and knowledge, and support carers on a one-on-one basis during, what can be, a very difficult time.

The Stronger Carers Program was funded by the Australian Government under the Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing grants. If successful, the prize money would be used to design and develop a new program 'Stronger Carers – Peer Support' that would involve training volunteers in our caring model.

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**.*

HESTA is the super fund for health and community services, with more than 800,000 members and \$32 billion in assets.