



MEDIA RELEASE

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Small-scale houses provide a future for people with dementia in NSW

An aged care organisation has been recognised for spearheading a new direction in aged care by providing small-scale houses to people living with dementia to afford them greater independence.

Synovum Care Group is moving away from the traditional aged care model, building two smaller houses each accommodating seven people, some of whom are living with dementia. Residents have access to all areas of the home and carry out many of their own daily-living tasks with the support of House Companions.

Synovum Care is one of five finalists in the Outstanding Organisation 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 for older Australians.

Synovum Care Managing Director, Natasha Chadwick, said residents living with dementia in the houses have shown less of the responsive behaviours they were demonstrating in the traditional aged care setting and, in some cases, these responsive behaviours have disappeared altogether.

“The houses include a fully-functional kitchen and laundry, an open-plan lounge and dining room, and a front door which allows residents the freedom to come and go in the outdoor spaces,” Ms Chadwick said.

“The ability to leave through the front door whenever they choose removes some of the frustration that some residents feel in a traditional aged care setting.”

Residents of the houses are also encouraged to help with daily-living tasks such as setting menus, grocery shopping, and preparing and cooking meals in their own kitchen with the support of House Companions.

“By helping to prepare all three meals every day residents gain a greater understanding of what is expected at meal times — sitting and eating with other residents and house companions, and enjoying conversation.”

Ms Chadwick said the organisation had tested two smaller-scale houses in Tasmania and is planning to build an estate with 17 houses in Queensland.

“We believe small-scale living provides residents with greater independence and allows them to live as normal a life as possible.”

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**.*