

Media Release

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Winners of national aged care awards announced

An QLD sub-acute care program that piloted a program to better manage clinical deterioration in residents, an organisation that launched health and wellness centres in SA and NT, and a Victorian aged care professional who pioneered better wound management were the winners of the 2016 HESTA Aged Care Awards last night.

The winners were recognised for their exceptional contribution to improving the quality of life of older Australians in three categories: Outstanding Organisation, Team Innovation, and Individual Distinction.

HESTA CEO, Debby Blakey, said the three winners reflected the vital work of aged care professionals in meeting the challenge of providing high-quality care and support to the growing number of older people in our community.

“Our winners each have an amazing story about how they are making real differences to the lives of older Australians,” Ms Blakey said.

“We are proud to acknowledge the outstanding levels of professional excellence they’ve achieved and give the individuals, their organisations and the aged care profession, the recognition they deserve.”

The 2016 winners are:

Team Innovation Award

**Sub-Acute Care Program
PresCare - Alexandra Gardens
North Rockhampton, QLD**

For their pilot program to better manage clinical deterioration in residents — avoiding unnecessary hospitalisation while maintaining high standards of quality care.

Within the first 12 months of the project, the number of residents transferred to hospital decreased by 50% and the total number of days residents were in hospital decreased by 57%.

PresCare Alexandra Gardens Facility Manager, Sandra Thomson, said the program had significantly increased resident satisfaction.

“The people we care for don’t want to go to hospital, they can feel lost and scared in an unfamiliar environment,” she said.

“Through this program, our skilled staff are able to conduct a comprehensive assessment and an informed decision can then be made to keep them in the facility rather than send them to hospital.”

The value of the pilot was demonstrated in 2015, when Cyclone Marcia hit Rockhampton and Yeppoon and all hospitals and emergency services in the region were struggling at full capacity.

For five days, the facility did not have power and staff continued to care for residents in up to 40 degree tropical heat, with high humidity and no air-conditioning. The Sub-Acute Management guidelines allowed staff to identify residents deteriorating due to the risk of dehydration, with early treatment avoiding the need for hospital transfers or loss of life.

The 12-month program was evaluated by Central Queensland University (CQU) who looked at the improvements in health outcomes and the economic benefits of the program. There are plans to expand this pilot to other facilities, with the potential for it to be rolled out across the industry.

Outstanding Organisation Award

**Southern Cross Care (SA & NT) Inc.
Parkside, SA**

Southern Cross Care launched Health & Wellness Centres (gyms) in 13 residential care homes that are coordinated by qualified fitness coordinators providing individualised fitness programs aimed at improving residents' strength, fitness and general wellbeing.

The Centres were part of an organisation-wide focus on promoting quality of life for all residents through healthy ageing interventions that support their physical health, social relationships, psychological and spiritual wellbeing.

Ultimately, this helps give residents a sense of empowerment over their general health and wellbeing at a vulnerable time of their lives.

Southern Cross Care Director Operations, Jo Boylan, said they have seen extraordinary positive changes in residents, with a 54% reduction in fractures in the first year of the program.

"We are all about keeping our people mobile so they can keep doing all the things they enjoy in life," she said.

"Our health-for-all approach means that, not only residents, but staff as well can use the gyms, which gives them access to fitness facilities that they may not otherwise have, and which are free."

A popular initiative among residents — up to 50% attend the Centres — with personal fitness plans tailored to their individual needs. A bonus of establishing the Centres was that it enabled Lifestyle and Care staff to expand their skills by completing fitness certificates.

Individual Distinction Award

Camille Koch

Macedon Ranges Health -Gisborne Oaks Residential Aged Care

Gisborne, VIC

Camille won her award for her work improving wound management through the establishment of a multi-disciplinary Wounds Resource Team — leading to improved practice, a reduction in the severity of wounds and better documentation.

After identifying a gap, the Registered Nurse took the initiative to research and implement changes to existing wound management practices. She has become a champion for change around policies, procedures and documentation, ensuring the broader team at Macedon Ranges Health is educated on best practice wound management strategies.

Camille said she started her nursing career working in the acute care surgical ward where she saw older patients with severe wounds.

"I really wanted to prevent residents from developing wounds that require hospitalisation and the Wound Resource Team aims to prevent and manage wounds holistically and in an evidence-based manner," she said.

The Wound Resource Team now provides holistic and multi-disciplinary wound management and consists of Registered Nurses, Enrolled Nurses (EN), Personal Care Assistants (PCA's) Occupational Therapists, Dieticians, a Clinical Nurse Manager, Podiatry and District Nursing.

"This award acknowledges the work done by the whole Wound Resource Team. Macedon Ranges Health continues to support further innovation in wound management and prevention, bringing in a broad range of skills from specialist allied health professionals."

Fourteen finalists were celebrated at an event in Canberra on 4 August 2016, where the three overall winners were announced. They share in a \$30,000 prize pool generously provided by longstanding Awards-supporter **ME** with each winner receiving \$10,000 from the bank for further education or team development.

Find out more about the HESTA Awards Program at hestaawards.com.au

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