

MEDIA RELEASE

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Hostel for Newcastle's most vulnerable wins national aged care award

A unique Newcastle-based aged care program for Australians suffering from mental illness has won the Team Innovation category at the 2015 HESTA Aged Care Awards.

The program, 'A Safe Place to Call Home' — run by Catholic Healthcare's Charles O'Neill Hostel — has been recognised for providing care to people who have often been turned away or referred from other facilities without the resources to provide adequate care for people with a mental illness.

Residential Manager, Kristen Grainger, said of the 40 residents in the hostel, 28 have been diagnosed with one or more mental health disorders, some requiring significant support with behavioural symptoms.

"The care team recognised that many people with mental health disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, personality disorder and depression, were being turned away from other facilities in the region," Mrs Grainger said.

"Over the past eight years, our care team has developed strong relationships with other specialist mental health services in the area, to ensure our hostel is the preferred service for seniors with a mental illness.

"Due to the level of education we have delivered to our team, we are offering tailored support services and provide a standard of accommodation that meets the diverse needs of the vulnerable and often displaced elderly members of our community."

HESTA CEO, Debby Blakey, presented Mrs Grainger with the Award at the annual HESTA Aged Care Awards dinner in Canberra on 27 August 2015.

"We are pleased to be able to recognise this program and the team at Charles O'Neill Hostel for providing outstanding care services to some of the most vulnerable members of the community," Ms Blakey said.

The program received a \$10,000 development grant, courtesy of proud Awards sponsor, industry super funds' owned bank, **ME**.

Mrs Grainger said the prize money would help fund the introduction of an art therapist to work with residents on a weekly basis and contribute to further staff development and education.

The Outstanding Organisation Award winner, Southern Cross Care (Vic), also received a \$10,000 development grant. The Individual Distinction Award winner, Paul Brophy — from the Brotherhood of St Laurence — received a \$5,000 **ME EveryDay** transaction account and \$5,000 education grant, also courtesy of **ME**.

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**.*