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Carers Victoria a finalist in national community sector awards

A Victorian organisation providing support to young carers has been named one of five finalists in the Organisation category of the 2013 HESTA Community Sector Awards.

Carers Victoria, based in Footscray was recognised as a finalist for its work supporting young carers and providing scholarships to enable young people to balance their school and care responsibilities.

The Organisation Award category recognises organisations that have made outstanding contributions to social justice in Australia, through the development of an innovative program, project or specific service.

Carers Victoria CEO, Caroline Mulcahy, welcomed the nomination and described young carers aged between 6 and 26, as the 'unsung heroes' in our community.

"Young carers provide unpaid care and support for family members and friends who have a disability, chronic or mental illness, or the frail aged," she said.

"These caring responsibilities may mean they are at risk of dropping out of school, have difficulty establishing social networks or participating in activities that their peers enjoy.

"Our programs support young people to stay in school, participate in social activities and access services that can support their role as a carer, such as funding assistance and respite care.

"The Young Carer scholarships have also made a huge difference to the lives of young carers. More than 50 per cent of scholarship recipients are primary carers with sole responsibility for the care of a family member and 28 per cent have caring responsibilities for more than one person.

"The scholarships help young carers stay at school, continue their involvement with sporting, cultural and community clubs, as well as learn life skills that assist them in their caring role."

Ms Mulcahy and the other finalists will be flown to Adelaide to attend an awards dinner, where the winners will be announced during the Australian Council of Social Service National Conference on Monday, 25 March 2013.

A \$30,000 prize pool will be shared among the winners, courtesy of long-term HESTA awards sponsor, ME Bank. The Organisation and Social Impact Award winners will each receive a \$10,000 development grant. The Unsung Hero Award winner will receive a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant.

HESTA is the leading super fund for health and community services, with more than 750,000 members and \$21 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

Visit hestaawards.com.au to purchase tickets for the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

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