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Child Wise a finalist in national community sector awards

Australia's leading international child protection charity, Child Wise, has been named one of five finalists in the Social Impact category of the 2013 HESTA Community Sector Awards.

Child Wise received the nomination for its work — both within Australia and internationally — to stop the sex trafficking of children and young people.

The Social Impact Award recognises an individual, organisation or network that has made an outstanding contribution to social justice in Australia, through policy development, advocacy, leadership or representation.

Child Wise Founder and CEO, Bernadette McMehamin, said the nomination was validation of their ongoing commitment to prevent trafficking and exploitation of children into the sex industry.

“Since 1991, Child Wise has been campaigning for tougher laws in Australia and overseas to stop people having sex with children and prevent child sex tourism and exploitation,” she said.

“Every year, two million children across the world are sold into prostitution. We have been working with the Australian Government and with neighbouring Asian countries to establish stricter laws to stamp out this practice.”

Ms McMehamin said Child Wise had recently partnered with The Body Shop Australia to conduct a three-year campaign to raise awareness of the global scale of the issue and its relevance to Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

“The funds raised from the sale of the ‘Soft Hands Kind Hearts’ hand cream through The Body Shop, have helped protect thousands of children and families in small remote villages who are vulnerable to child sexual abuse and child sex trafficking,” she said.

The judges commended Child Wise for its ongoing commitment to protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Ms McMehamin 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 for tickets for the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

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