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Red Cross a finalist in national community sector awards

Red Cross has been named one of five finalists in the Organisation category of the 2013 HESTA Community Sector Awards, for providing a wide range of support services to refugees and asylum seekers.

Red Cross was recognised as a finalist for its Migration Support Programs that help asylum seekers, refugees, immigration detainees, stateless persons, trafficked people and families separated by war, conflict or disaster. The programs support people's basic needs through access to vital services such as financial assistance, healthcare and counselling and re-establishing contact with loved ones.

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.

Red Cross Director of Services & International Operations, Michael Raper, said that for more than 20 years, Red Cross staff and volunteers have assisted people made vulnerable through the migration process.

"Our programs adopt a humane approach to caring for vulnerable people that results in improved health and wellbeing while they wait for their immigration status to be resolved," he said.

"We support asylum seekers by enabling them to live in the community, instead of detention in remote settings or other inappropriate facilities while they await the outcome of their visa application. Recently, our staff and volunteers successfully placed an unprecedented number of clients — more than 8000 — into the community.

"Red Cross also collaborates with more than 20 agencies and community organisations across Australia to ensure clients are provided with the appropriate level of care and support."

The judges commended Red Cross for its ongoing commitment to dealing with complex issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers in a humane way, while providing tangible assistance.

Mr Raper 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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