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**Media release: Wednesday 21 May 2014**

## **Alice Springs foster carer a finalist in national community sector awards**

A carer and long-term community advocate on social justice issues affecting vulnerable families in Alice Springs is a finalist in the 2014 HESTA Community Sector Awards.

Jonathan Pilbrow from Alice Springs was recognised as one of five finalists in the Unsung Hero category for his policy work, and his efforts in assisting Indigenous families with a range of issues whilst being foster carer to three high-needs children.

Mr Pilbrow has been involved in many social justice campaigns over a 15-year period, in his previous roles working with both the Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) and Northern Territory Shelter, addressing issues facing families, such as housing, transport, rising utilities bills, alcohol and youth justice issues.

“Some of the policy work I have been involved in over the years has been campaigns for lower utility prices and appropriate concessions for vulnerable groups. Like additional public bus routes in Alice Springs, in particular to cater for Aboriginal children and residents living in town camps, community transport options in Tennant Creek, and the development and implementation of a life skills program for people living in public housing,” he said.

Mr Pilbrow is an active member of the ‘People’s Alcohol Action Coalition (PACC)’ that has lobbied for the introduction of stronger alcohol measures around price and availability to reduce alcohol-related harm in the community.

He has also been a member of many community organisation boards and school councils and has contributed countless volunteer hours to community sporting groups including cricket and AFL football in Alice Springs. He was recently an ambassador for Relationships Australia’s National Neighbour Day, supporting local neighbourhood events.

Mr Pilbrow and his wife Christine have been carers for ten years and have advocated tirelessly for appropriate support for the children they look after. Mr Pilbrow said, where possible they worked closely with indigenous families in particular; to ensure that children received the assistance and support they needed while maintaining kinship connections in a safe and meaningful way.

Mr Pilbrow and the other interstate finalists will be flown to Brisbane to attend the awards dinner, where the winners will be announced during the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) National Conference on Wednesday 11 June 2014.

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

The HESTA Community Sector Awards are presented in partnership with ACOSS the peak body for community services in Australia, as part of their commitment to building a strong, sustainable community sector supporting the needs of people affected by poverty, disadvantage and inequality.

HESTA is the leading super fund for health and community services, with more than 770,000 members and \$27 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

Visit [hestaawards.com.au](https://hestaawards.com.au) for tickets for the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

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