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Virtual Dementia Experience a ‘game-changer’

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic has been recognised for developing a ground-breaking interactive experience designed to show people what it’s like to live with dementia.

The Virtual Dementia Experience (VDE) uses leading edge games technology to simulate what it’s like to see life through the eyes of someone with dementia.

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic is among five finalists in the Organisation category of the 2015 HESTA Community Sector Awards. The Awards recognise those in the community sector who’ve made an exceptional contribution to social justice in Australia, by enhancing the wellbeing of disadvantaged individuals and communities.

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic CEO, Maree McCabe, said the VDE offers a unique insight into the impact of dementia on an individual’s cognitive functioning.

“The Virtual Dementia Experience is about giving people insight into the realities of living with dementia. The technology will equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to improve their approach to caring for people living with dementia,” Ms McCabe said.

“More than a thousand people have been through the VDE and we know from their feedback that they’re putting what they’ve learnt into practice, in some cases literally on the same day. This is testament to how effective the experience is.

“To be able to give such a stimulating demonstration of the issues confronting people with dementia is an absolute game-changer in aged care. People are immediately empowered to change the way they care for people with dementia, which ultimately improves their quality of life.”

Visitors to the installation in Melbourne’s Parkville included representatives of aged care facilities, community organisations and businesses. The project team is examining the feasibility of setting up installations in other states and territories.

The Organisation Award winner will receive a \$10,000 development grant, courtesy of proud Awards sponsor **ME**. There are two other categories — Unsung Hero and Social Impact and the winners of those Awards will each receive \$5,000 in a **ME EveryDay** Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant, also courtesy of **ME**.

Finalists will be flown to Sydney for the awards dinner on 25 June 2015, where the winners will be revealed.

The HESTA Community Sector Awards are presented in partnership with the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) as part of the ACOSS National Conference 2015 and have been sponsored by ME since they started in 2012.

Learn more about the awards at hestaawards.com.au

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HESTA is the super fund for health and community services, with more than 800,000 members and \$32 billion in assets.

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