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Donor network improves access to grants for women and girls

A ground-breaking organisation has been recognised for raising awareness of the need for gender-sensitive practices within the philanthropic sector with the aim of encouraging greater investment in women and girls.

The Australian Women Donors Network has been operating since 2009 and has sought to draw attention to women's social and economic disadvantage and the effectiveness of delivering social change through funding women and girls.

The Australian Women Donors Network is one of five finalists in the Social Impact 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.

Australian Women Donors Network CEO, Julie Reilly, said the impact of the organisation was starting to be felt.

"We are seeing more and more funders such as the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation put gender sensitive questions on grant application forms," Ms Reilly said.

"Widely used grants management system Smartygrants is also bringing a gender focus to their software, encouraging hundreds of grant makers to adopt a gender lens."

"Grant makers and service providers are also starting to understand the importance of disaggregating their data by gender and asking questions, not just in their application forms, but in progress and evaluation reports."

The organisation is also facilitating more philanthropic funding to women and girls through its network of various community, business and government organisations, Ms Reilly said.

Ms Reilly cited recent examples of how the organisation had helped facilitate a significant donation to a Victorian housing project for disadvantaged women and their children. Through its network, the organisation had also enabled a funding partnership between MECCA Cosmetics and 'The Hunger Project' — an organisation dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty in developing countries.

This year, the organisation was also providing its 'Gender-wise' toolkit and training to several of Australia's largest trusts and foundations, Ms Reilly said.

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