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Disabled carer since the age of 14 honoured

A southwest Sydney man who started as a volunteer disability support staffer at the age of 14 has been recognised for his career-long efforts to bring dignity and respect to locals with a disability.

Sean Langshaw's teenage volunteer work helped him to move quickly through the sector to become CEO of a disability support agency in Liverpool that has enhanced the lives of thousands of people.

Mr Langshaw is among five finalists in the Unsung Hero 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.

"I am inspired by people with a disability and have been lucky to have built up a strong rapport with the clients of our service as they've come through the agency," Mr Langshaw said.

"Every client and family within the service knows me and I know them and that has enabled me to offer support, reassurance and occasionally just a friendly face when times are difficult.

"Above all, our focus is on trying to ensure that people with a disability in southwest Sydney have as much choice and control over the support they receive as it's possible for them to have."

Mr Langshaw, the CEO of Disability South West Limited, is also a Justice of the Peace, Scout Leader and has served on various community boards while advocating for the needs of locals with disabilities throughout a 23-year career.

"I want to see people with disabilities given dignity and respect and to have their voices heard and acted upon, whether that involves our agency or others depending on the particular needs of individuals," he said.

"Equally, we think it's important to honour the often under-valued contribution that people with a disability make to our own community in Liverpool, Fairfield and the surrounding area.

"To make that happen we started our own local awards program in 2006 to recognise the achievements, mateship and service to the community provided by people with a disability. Watching those people win awards is how I know I've made my mark."

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

MEDIA CONTACT: Luisa Saccotelli 0400 149 901 or Aileen Muldoon 0419 112 503

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