

## Finalists announced for national community sector awards

Australia's top community sector organisations and professionals have been recognised, with 12 finalists announced in the 2016 HESTA Community Sector Awards.

The awards acknowledge outstanding contributions to social justice in Australia, through the provision of high-quality services, programs and initiatives across the categories of Unsung Hero, Outstanding Organisation and Social Impact.

HESTA CEO, Debby Blakey, said the finalists were selected from an exceptional field of nominations.

"These organisations and individuals demonstrate outstanding leadership in developing community programs and initiatives that promote greater equity and social justice for those facing disadvantage" Ms Blakey said.

"This important work has a lasting impact and significantly improves the lives of others by advocating for social change and giving a voice to those who otherwise may not be heard. We are proud to acknowledge the contribution they make and help provide the recognition they deserve."

The 2016 finalists are:

### Unsung Hero Award

**Anne Mitchell**  
**Concern Australia**  
**Preston, VIC**

For leading the homelessness outreach program 'Steps'. Steps engage with homeless youth, helping them develop a sense of self-worth and equipping them to create a more positive future for themselves.

**Dr Claire Jones**  
**Australian Care and Trauma Services**  
**Arana Hills, QLD**

Dr Jones was nominated for developing and implementing a unique service model to help refugees and their health care providers overcome the many barriers they face in achieving health equality.

**Janne Bidenko**  
**DeafBlind Association (NSW) Inc.**  
**Berowra, NSW**

Ms Bidenko has demonstrated commitment and made an outstanding contribution to promoting social inclusion and awareness of the unique needs of people who are Deafblind.

**Ronald Briggs**  
**Children's Protection Society**  
**Thomastown, VIC**

For leading a number of community initiatives and programs that provide culturally appropriate support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, fostering better connections with their community and families.

### Outstanding Organisation Award

**Arts Project Australia**  
**Northcote, VIC**

For supporting artists with an intellectual disability by providing sustained and individualised pathways into the professional visual arts.

**Communicare Inc.  
Cannington, WA**

For developing Communicare Breathing Space, which aims to build safety for women and children by providing unique interventions to protect them against family violence.

**Youth Involvement Council  
South Hedland, WA**

'Deadly Hearts' is a positive outreach program developed by the Youth Involvement Council of South Hedland, providing structured activities and care for children aged five to 10 years who have been identified as at risk of social exclusion and family violence.

**SHINE for Kids Cooperative Ltd  
North Parramatta, NSW**

For developing the 'Colourful Dreaming' program to support children of incarcerated Aboriginal men by facilitating a community support network for those affected.

**Social Impact Award**

**Advocare Incorporated  
Victoria Park, WA**

For supporting older people and people with disabilities, by offering independent information, education and advocacy services that deal with aged care issues and elder abuse.

**Fitted for Work  
Melbourne, VIC**

For providing a range of programs to help women experiencing social disadvantage, by assisting them in finding rewarding jobs. The program focuses on building their knowledge, job-finding skills, confidence and self-worth.

**Justice Connect Not-for-profit Law  
Melbourne, VIC**

For providing high-quality, free, and low-cost legal information, advice and training to community organisations across Australia.

**Women with Disabilities Victoria  
Melbourne, VIC**

For contributing to the review and formation of government policy and services, including giving vital evidence and research to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, with the aim of achieving greater social justice and equality for women with disabilities.

The winner of each category will share in a \$30,000 prize pool, courtesy of longstanding awards sponsor **ME** – the bank for you. The Unsung Hero and the Social Impact Award winners will each receive \$10,000 in a **ME EveryDay** Transaction Account with the Outstanding Organisation Award winner receiving a \$10,000 development grant to further implement their program or initiative.

Winners will be announced at the 2016 HESTA Community Sector Awards on 17 November 2016.

Find out more about the HESTA Awards Program at [hestaawards.com.au](http://hestaawards.com.au)

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