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Port Melbourne kindergarten teacher a finalist in national awards

A Port Melbourne kindergarten teacher leading education service delivery in the start-up phase of a new childcare centre is a finalist in the 2014 HESTA Early Childhood Education and Care Awards.

Alison Gibbons — of the City of Port Phillip's Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre, Victoria — is one of five finalists in the Outstanding Young Graduate category.

Ms Gibbons, who graduated from Charles Sturt University four years ago with a Bachelor of Early Childhood Teaching, has been recognised for her positive practices and leadership in a challenging, new setting.

Centre Executive Officer, Lesley White, said Ms Gibbons was a shining example of a young professional who is dedicated to her role and the children and families she supports.

"Alison joined us in January 2014 when we opened up in a new, state-of-the art facility. The long day care kindergarten services transitioned from another facility and the sessional kindergarten program was a new offering," Ms White said.

"In supporting all of these programs, Alison was responsible for managing operations and ensuring the implementation of appropriate programs and procedures.

"She has worked hard to bring together the staff in each of the services, establishing team meetings and joint activities to share ideas and best practice.

"Alison is committed to making the transition to school a pleasant experience for the children and their families, and puts a lot of effort into planning for this important stage of a child's learning journey.

"She's a member of a local kindergarten network which facilitates interactions between all of the local kindergartens, as well as local primary schools.

"This gives Alison a good understanding of what local primary teachers look for when children transition to school."

Ms Gibbons and the other finalists will attend an awards dinner in Melbourne, where the winners will be announced during the Early Childhood Australia National Conference on Saturday 6 September 2014.

A \$30,000 prize pool will be shared among the winners, generously provided by long-term HESTA awards supporter ME Bank.

The winner of the Outstanding Young Graduate Award will receive a \$10,000 development grant. The Advancing Pedagogy and Practice, and Excellence in Building Inclusion Award winners will each receive \$10,000 to further implement their program or initiative.

HESTA is the super fund for health and community services, with more than 785,000 members and \$28 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

Visit hestaawards.com.au for tickets for the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

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