



PO Box 615
Carlton South VIC 3053
hestaawards.com.au

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Toowoomba nursing team a finalist in national nursing awards

A group of Toowoomba general practice nurses, specialising in preventative health care with a focus on Indigenous health care, has been named one of three finalists in the Team Innovation category of the 2013 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

Ms Allison Love and her team at the Iona Medical Centre have been recognised as a finalist for reaching out to the Indigenous community, and using their nursing expertise to tackle diabetes and other health issues head on.

The Team Innovation Award recognises nurses, midwives, personal care attendants and assistants in nursing who has introduced innovation in the workplace to improve clinical practice and patient care.

Ms Love and her team of general practice nurses, along with an Indigenous health worker began by tackling diabetes. They have since expanded the practice to include a wide range of other health services — including a walking group and ‘quick tucker’ cooking sessions to teach patients how to cook quick, healthy meals.

“We originally had just three nurses doing things like changing dressings, and only a handful of Indigenous patients. Now, we have eight full-time nurses, offering a wide range of services and have identified more than 300 Indigenous clients,” Ms Love said.

“As we have seen a need, our nurses have sought out specialist qualifications to address our clients’ needs. Now we can go beyond just treating diabetes, to tackling the full gamut of conditions. Most of us have trained in health prevention so we can get to the heart of any underlying issues.”

The judges commended the eight practice nurses for bringing together their different expertise to focus on chronic disease preventative health, and for expanding to provide other services including immunisation, direct home health assessment and nursing home liaison.

Ms Love and the other finalists will be flown to Melbourne to attend an awards dinner, where the winners will be announced on 9 May 2013.

A \$30,000 prize pool will be shared among the winners, courtesy of long-term HESTA awards sponsor, ME Bank. The Nurse of the Year and Outstanding Graduate Award winners will each receive a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant. The Team Innovation Award winner will receive a \$10,000 development grant.

HESTA is the leading super fund for health and community services, with more than 750,000 members and \$22 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.

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