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WA child health nurse wins top national nursing award

An outstanding child health nurse from Western Australia has won the Nurse of the Year Award at the 2013 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

Mrs Sara Lohmeyer — of High Wycombe Child Health Centre in Perth's eastern suburbs — won the award for her work networking new mothers into the community, strengthening the bonds between them so they are better able to help and support each other.

The Nurse of the Year Award recognises a nurse, midwife, personal care attendant or assistant in nursing who has made an exceptional contribution to improving patient care, delivered health care in challenging circumstances and shown advocacy on behalf of patients or the nursing profession.

Mrs Lohmeyer, who works for WA Health's Child and Adolescent Health Service, was recognised for the care she provides to children, as well as supporting the wellbeing of mothers and families through various initiatives — including a walking group to get mothers out of the house — and the *Act-Belong-Commit* campaign that provides support to improve community mental health.

Mothers in High Wycombe have set up a Facebook page called *Sara's Mums*, which provides a forum for 157 local women to chat online and seek parenting support, 24 hours a day.

"I see many families at their most vulnerable — adjusting to parenting, often struggling with isolation issues. It's a privilege to give support using a variety of strategies," Mrs Lohmeyer said.

"A family partnership approach allows parents to discover their own strengths and problem-solving skills, while building a healthy, happy relationship with their child."

HESTA CEO, Anne-Marie Corboy, congratulated the winners of each category.

"The judges had a difficult decision to make, with hundreds of excellent nominations and 13 outstanding finalists. The winners are a credit to the nursing profession and their organisations. We're proud to honour these exceptional individuals and teams," Ms Corboy said.

The winners of the 2013 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards were announced at an awards dinner in Melbourne on 9 May.

Mrs Lohmeyer, and the Outstanding Graduate Award winner, each accepted a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant — courtesy of long-term HESTA awards sponsor ME Bank. The Team Innovation Award winner received a \$10,000 development grant — also courtesy of ME Bank.

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.

To learn more about the awards visit hestaawards.com.au

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