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## QLD team recognised for introducing play-based program

A residential aged care team that implemented a play-based program specifically for people with dementia is a finalist in the 2014 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

The Blue Care South Coast Cluster Team is one of five finalists in the Team Innovation category. They are recognised for introducing the therapeutic Play Up™ Program for dementia clients across seven residential aged care facilities in Queensland and New South Wales.

Blue Care South Coast Cluster General Manager, Linda Taylor, said the program, run by the Arts Health Institute, involves regular visits by a 'Play Up' professional performer who works alongside staff members to creatively engage their residents living with dementia.

"One resident who normally sits quietly with little interaction with others was observed to become animated, dancing and singing with the performer during the session," Ms Taylor said.

"Another resident, a passionate surfer, delighted in the idea of riding a board on the roof of a Kombi van down to Kirra beach, giving everyone big smiles."

Ms Taylor said an evaluation of the program found a significant improvement in the mood and attitude of both residents and staff.

"More than 230 staff members were surveyed on the impact 'Play Up' had on residents, staff and the facility," she said.

"Staff reported the program resulted in positive changes to their confidence in communicating, relationship building and engaging in more positive activities and conversation with the residents.

"The evaluation also analysed mood charts of 50 residents, showing they felt happier after 'Play Up' session.

"There has been a reported drop in the number of falls and after five months of the program, more than half of the participants have reduced their medication use."

Ms Taylor and the other interstate finalists will be flown to Sydney to attend an awards dinner, where the winners will be announced on Thursday 8 May 2014.

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

HESTA is the leading super fund for health and community services, with more than 770,000 members and \$27 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

Visit [hestaawards.com.au](http://hestaawards.com.au) for tickets for the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

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