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NSW mental health nurse a finalist in national nursing awards

A mental health nurse from Kogarah — who works with older Australians experiencing mental illness or challenging behaviours — has been named one of the finalists in the 2014 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

Cindy Stoupas, of the Older Adult Mental Health Service at St George Hospital — was recognised as one of five finalists in the Nurse of the Year category — for her work in developing specific management plans to improve the quality of life for vulnerable older adults.

Mrs Stoupas works at a number of residential aged care facilities as a Behavioural Assessment and Intervention Service Clinician (BASIS). She develops and assesses management plans and strategies to assist staff and families caring for clients exhibiting difficult behaviours resulting from mental illness or cognitive impairment.

“I meet with each client and their carers over several sessions, to determine what the behaviours of concern are, what may be triggering them, and how they can be addressed through a tailored management plan,” she said.

“The subsequent plans are characterised by a person-centred model of care that involves getting to know the client well, including their — history, former work life, cultural and spiritual needs, hobbies, family, and their personality prior to impairment.”

“This detailed knowledge of individuals and their families, enables us to better understand potential causes of clients’ behaviour and what carers could do to reassure them. This may include introducing meaningful activities they previously enjoyed, resulting in good therapeutic engagement and compassionate care.”

Mrs Stoupas said her work also involves providing education and support to the staff of the facilities she works with, to ensure they are well prepared and skilled to manage clients with more complex needs.

Mrs Stoupas and the other finalists will attend an awards dinner in Sydney, 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 Nurse of the Year and the Outstanding Graduate Award winner 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 770,000 members and \$27 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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