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## **Aged care innovator nominated for national nursing awards**

The Director of Nursing at Austin Health's Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital in Melbourne, is one of the five finalists in the Nurse of the Year category of the 2014 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

Sandy Schutte was recognised for leading improvements in the care of elderly patients at the 200-bed repatriation hospital.

Ms Schutte, who is also the co-ordinator of sub-acute care, led practice changes resulting in a 43 per cent reduction in patient transfers to the nearby Austin Hospital, where they are cared for in an acute setting. This eases pressure on the acute health system and allows elderly patients to stay in a familiar environment.

In sub-acute settings patients receive longer term care and there is greater emphasis on behaviour modification and improving functions for daily life. The changes initiated by Ms Schutte, involved modifying the way infectious outbreaks are managed and a more pro-active approach to the management of pressure injuries for aging patients.

Ms Schutte has been instrumental in leading a significant shift in focus and up-skilling of the nursing staff at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital. She was also involved in developing a service model for aged care nurse practitioners and is currently working on a trial encompassing the employment of Victoria's first 'health assistants in nursing'.

The judges commended her work as a "highly innovative" new model of care involving medical staff and families that has a positive impact on the system and patients at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital.

Ms Schutte and the other interstate finalists will be flown to Sydney for the 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 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](http://hestaawards.com.au) for tickets for the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

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