

# Media Release

Tuesday 29 September 2015



## Geelong nurse a finalist in national nursing awards for innovative approaches to care at end of life

Today, HESTA announced Helen Newell, a Geelong nurse who spearheaded innovations in residential aged care facilities while caring for the elderly, as a Nurse of the Year finalist in the 2015 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

A nurse practitioner at Barwon Health, Ms Newell works to ensure patients receive timely and appropriate clinical care while in residential aged care facilities throughout the region.

“Primarily, as a nurse practitioner my focus is on residents whose health is deteriorating. This involves ensuring other nurses and allied health professionals are more clinically competent to identify and respond to residents who show signs of deterioration”, Ms Newell said.

“By identifying gaps in the delivery of care, we were able to develop an electronic ‘tag’ process where staff alert the nurse practitioner when they discover a deteriorating resident, via an electronic documentation system”.

“The electronic tag process meant residents received active and appropriate clinical management within their environment, while minimising the need to seek emergency hospital treatment”.

“Being able to recognise residents at a critical time improves the transition to palliative care, meaning we can also respect residents’ end of life wishes and more proactively communicate with families, doctors and other health care professionals,” Ms Newell said.

“Having these difficult conversations isn’t easy, but it’s important to enhance the palliative approach to care within the aged care sector, while also responding quickly when a resident’s condition appears to be worsening.

“Our hope is to make a difference to the lives of the residents and their families through a patient centred approach, providing the right care, at the right time, in the right place to improve the end of life experience.”

Ms Newell has also had a significantly positive impact on improving the clinical practice through training, mentoring and coordinating activities to improve processes and the knowledge of other staff within the clinical practice setting. Her innovative approach to care also sought to introduce opiates to residents as part of a pain management program.

HESTA Australian Nursing Awards finalists are in the running for a share of \$30,000 in prizes, from proud awards sponsor **ME**.

The Nurse of the Year and Outstanding Graduate Award winners will each receive a \$5,000 **ME** EveryDay transaction account and \$5,000 towards further education. The Team Innovation Award winner will receive a \$10,000 development grant.

**ME** CEO, Jamie McPhee, said, “We’re delighted to give these outstanding individuals the opportunity to develop their careers, while also supporting innovative health programs which benefit the entire sector and community.”

Winners will be announced at the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards dinner on Thursday, 15 October in Brisbane.

For more information about the awards visit [hestaawards.com.au](http://hestaawards.com.au)

Follow the Twitter conversation [@HESTANurseAwdz](https://twitter.com/HESTANurseAwdz)

*The 2015 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards is a HESTA initiative, run in partnership with the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) and proudly sponsored by the bank owned by industry super funds, **ME**.*

### Media contact

Luisa Saccotelli 0400 149 901 or Aileen Muldoon 0419 112 503.

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