

## Victoria's biggest winner gains wellness and a place in national primary health care awards

Today, HESTA announced, a Victorian project that is challenging conventional ideas about weight and wellbeing, as a finalist in the Team Excellence category of the HESTA Primary Health Care Awards.

Shifting the focus away from weight and on to wellbeing, The Biggest Winner project combines research and training, with community and media engagement, introducing a weight inclusive approach to address rising levels of obesity.

Jo van Dort, Program Manager of Health and Wellbeing at Manningham Community Health Service is a health promotion and nutrition specialist driving The Biggest Winner project.

"I'm passionate about achieving equity in health and challenging assumptions and stereotypes based on a person's appearance," said Ms van Dort.

"Our team is addressing misperceptions about diet and the negative shame that surrounds dieting, by presenting a healthier idea based on wellbeing, not weight.

"To know that we are helping those that are most disadvantaged or lack access to services and/or resources to enjoy good health, supportive relationships and quality of life is quite satisfying. And, I feel lucky that I work in a health service that encourages innovation.

"Educating staff is critical to ensure consistent messaging, language and interpersonal care across all of Manningham's health services and I'm proud of the way the teams have embraced the 'health at every size' approach."

The project aims to encourage people to adopt behaviours and make lifestyle choices that promote health and wellbeing, as evidence shows that restrictive diets are ineffective in the long-term, perpetuate weight-related stigma and encourage eating behaviour disorders.

The HESTA Primary Health Care Awards recognise the dedication and professionalism of those working at the frontline of health care, including physiotherapists, dentists, pharmacists, therapists, GPs, rehabilitation professionals, health educators and medical practice managers.

Winners will be announced at the Awards dinner in Melbourne on Tuesday, 10 November.

The Team Excellence Award winner will receive a \$10,000 development grant. The Individual Distinction and Young Leader Award winners will each receive a \$5,000 **ME** EveryDay transaction account and \$5,000 towards further education.

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

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*The HESTA Primary Health Care Awards is a HESTA initiative, proudly sponsored by the bank owned by industry super funds, ME.*

### Media contact

Atika Fraval, Media Manager – 03 8660 1684 or 0488 250 049