

18 May 2018

## Search for Australia's best early childhood educators begins

If you know an outstanding early childhood professional who deserves recognition, now is the time to nominate them for the 2018 HESTA Early Childhood Education & Care Awards.

The Awards recognise early childhood educators and carers – working with children from birth to eight years of age – who demonstrate innovation, quality improvement and enhanced learning outcomes for young children in a variety of settings including preschool, long day care, primary school or outside of hours care.

Nominations for the awards are being sought from employers, colleagues and families and are open until Friday 29 June.

HESTA CEO, Debby Blakey, said early childhood education and care professionals play a pivotal role in supporting young children learn, grow and develop.

"Across Australia early childhood educators and carers create inclusive environments for children, nurturing their physical, emotional and educational development," Ms Blakey said.

"Their vital work ensures that children receive the very highest standards of care and education. Submitting a nomination is an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of those who have enhanced learning outcomes for children and demonstrated outstanding leadership, innovation and professionalism."

ME - the bank for you – a longstanding Awards sponsor, are generously providing the \$30,000 prize pool, to be divided among the winner in the three award categories – **Advancing Pedagogy and Practice**, **Outstanding Graduate** and **Building Inclusion**.

Winners will receive \$10,000 in a ME Everyday Transaction account towards further education or team development.

### The 2017 winners were:

#### Advancing Pedagogy and Practice

**Bundjil Nest Project Team**  
**Balnarring Pre-school**  
**Balnarring, VIC**

Awarded for developing the 'Bundjil Nest Project' and wider educational program for children. This initiative acknowledges and embeds the beliefs and values of the First Peoples into the service's practice and learning.

---

media  
contact:

Sam Riley  
Media Relations Manager  
(03) 8660 1684

...  
your stories,  
our inspiration

## **Outstanding Graduate**

**Rachael Sydir**  
**Explore & Develop – Penrith and Penrith South**  
**Penrith, NSW**

Rachael was awarded for strengthening children’s understanding of Aboriginal culture and practices by facilitating the creation of and applying a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to the services’ curriculum.

## **Building Inclusion**

**The Infants’ Home**  
**Ashfield, NSW**

The team at the integrated early learning childhood education service were awarded for their holistic approach and innovative strategies to embed and promote inclusion across the entire organisation.

Finalists will receive complimentary registration for the Early Childhood Australia National Conference, with interstate finalists flown to Sydney to attend the awards dinner on 21 September 2018.

Submit an online nomination today at [hestaawards.com.au](https://hestaawards.com.au).

Ends.

---

**media  
contact:**

Sam Riley  
Media Relations Manager  
(03) 8660 1684

...  
your stories,  
our inspiration