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NEWS | COMMUNITIES

Community Heroes Receive Top Honours At National Awards

SEARCH NEWS

A project supporting migrants and refugees find employment, the designer of a service helping people access historical children’s home records and a campaign to increase funding for Queensland community legal centres have received top honours at the HESTA Community Sector Awards.

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HESTA Winners: (L-R) Cathy Baker, Jenny Glare & Tarni Perkal

Wednesday, 25th October 2017

at 10:35 am

Lina Caneva (<https://probonoaustralia.com.au/author/lina-caneva/>), Editor

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The winners, announced on Tuesday, were selected from 11 national finalists (<https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2017/09/social-justice-leaders-recognised-community-sector-awards/>), and recognise exceptional service provision, advocacy, and leadership in social justice and community services across the three categories of Unsung Hero, Outstanding Organisation and Social Impact.

The award for Unsung Hero went to Jenny Glare from the Heritage and Information Services at Mackillop Family Services ([http://www.mackillop.org.au/heritage-and-information-se](http://www.mackillop.org.au/heritage-and-information-services)) in Melbourne. ↑

Glare was recognised for her work helping Australians raised in orphanages and children's homes to access historical records from their time spent in child institutions across Victoria.

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pioneering service enables people to access vital information about their family and childhood history.

In her role as general manager of the service, Glare led the release of the records, helping thousands of Australians raised in child institutions. Her work assisted them to construct their life stories, access the information required to establish a sense of self and identity, and reconnect with long-lost family members.

Glare said their services helped people "rebuild crucial parts of their life stories, forming a vital part of Australia's social history".

"Our service means the men and women that grew up in homes and orphanages can access their records with minimal intervention; we act as custodians to help them access these. These records are like pieces of gold that form a part of Australia's social history, helping these men and women complete the unfinished business of their childhoods," Glare said.

"We plan to use the prize money to add to the uniqueness of the displays in our heritage centre. We also plan to record more stories of people who experienced out-of-home care in the past so that people can learn for the future."

The Outstanding Organisation Award went to WEstjustice (<http://www.westjustice.org.au/>) which is based in Melbourne's west.

WEstjustice was recognised for establishing the 'Employment Law Project' which helps migrants and refugees living in the western suburbs of Melbourne overcome disadvantage in employment. The Project helps migrants and refugees to better understand and enforce their workplace rights by providing free legal advice, legal representation and community education.

Functioning as the only legal service in Australia that focuses on the employment needs of migrants and refugees, WEstjustice has helped its clients recover unpaid entitlements, retrieve monetary compensation for unlawful termination and discrimination, and help them to return to work or get new jobs.

WEstjustice employment project senior solicitor, Tarni Perkal said employment was "crucial" in ensuring migrants could build their lives in Australia and through their services they help them to know and understand their work entitlements.

"Employment plays a big part in refugee and migrant settlement. It's at the heart of their identity and unfortunately they're not always afforded the respect they deserve," Perkal said.

"Over the last few years since the program was established, we've managed to retrieve orders for over \$300,000 in unpaid wages and super, and compensation for unfair treatment which goes some way to making sure they get the fair go that Australia is known for."



Perkal said they would use the prize money to boost their services in order to continue to help more people, and advocate for changes to help all migrant workers.

“We
client

The Social Impact Award went to Community Legal Centres Queensland (https://www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=oahUKEwiCk9P3q4rXAhWLXuoQmF_dPjacUv).

The organisation was recognised for successfully campaigning for increased government funding (<https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2017/04/government-reversal-cuts-community-legal-centres/>) for their services, which provide support and advocacy to 33 independent, community-led legal centres across Queensland.

Titled ‘Reverse the Cuts’, the campaign was initiated in response to proposed government funding cuts in their services – which includes the provision of legal advice, information and representation to vulnerable people needing legal help and advice.

Following extensive community and government engagement, the campaign resulted in the federal government granting \$55.7 million nationally over three years to the legal services sector, \$39 million of which will be directed to Community Legal Centres Queensland and \$16.7 million to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Services.

Communications manager, Cathy Baker said they started the Queensland component of their campaign so they could continue to provide their vital services which support people experiencing disadvantage.

HESTA CEO, Debby Blakey said this year’s winners displayed outstanding leadership in addressing social justice in their communities and in developing services that promote equality.

“This year’s winners have proven themselves leaders in addressing social disadvantage. Through their programs and services they have helped individuals and communities overcome inequality to build better lives,” Blakey said.

“Their work has provided an avenue for people to access life changing assistance and community services, contributing to building stronger more resilient communities. We are proud to be able to recognise them through the HESTA Community Sector Awards.”



Lina Caneva (<https://probonoaustralia.com.au/author/lina-caneva/>) | Editor |
@ProBonoNews (<https://twitter.com/ProBonoNews>)



10/26/2017

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Lina Caneva has been a journalist for more than 35 years, and Editor of Pro Bono Australia News since it was founded in 2000.

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Lina Caneva

Thursday, 20th July 2017 at 9:14 am



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Wendy Williams

Monday, 19th June 2017 at 4:57 pm

