

Media Release

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Two ACH Group finalists in ACSA Awards

ACH Group has two finalists in the Aged & Community Services (ACS) SA & NT Awards for Excellence, to be announced at the National Wine Centre on Friday.

The ACSA Awards promote and recognise excellence in a range of areas that contribute to the quality of life of older people, people with disabilities and or their carers.

The Awards also acknowledge efforts to increase public confidence and community involvement in aged and community care services.

Winners from each state and territory will join nominees for ACSA's National Aged Care Awards, to be presented in Melbourne in October.

ACH Group finalists are:

ACSA Employee of the Year Award: *Teresa Moran, ACH Group Product Co-Design Manager*

Teresa is a passionate advocate for people living with dementia and the delivery of evidence-based best practice. During her time at ACH Group, Teresa has helped shape the delivery of services and the organisation's dementia learning and development program. She has developed training to target specific job roles, including recent trials of empathy suits as part of care and support worker training in partnership with the University of Sydney.

ACH Group Head of Service Design and Production Innovation Ivy Diegmann said: "Teresa leads and inspires the ACH Group workforce, students and volunteers to change the way they deliver dementia services through risk reduction, earlier diagnosis and support, living well with dementia through to comfort, care and maintenance of dignity at end of life. Teresa is unrelenting in challenging the myth that dementia is an inevitable part of ageing and that there is nothing that can be done to support or indeed improve quality of life. She is a passionate champion of evidence-based best practice."

Teresa's advocacy and approach to service co-design is informed by the latest research and clinical guidelines. Examples of her leadership include:

- Part of leadership team partnering with University of Sydney to introduce 'empathy suits' as part of ACH Group's Dementia Learning and Development Competency Level Three training requirement for more than 800 care and support workers
- Redesign of Positive Behavior Support tools and processes
- Developing new business models to provide flexible respite options
- Reviewing practice against the Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre 'Clinical Practice Guidelines for Dementia in Australia'
- Co-designing new reablement services informed by the Cognitive Decline Centre 'Supporting independence and function in people living with dementia guidelines'

- Piloting a frontline dementia evidenced-based mentoring program

With almost 80 per cent of people living in residential care and between 30 and 60 per cent of people receiving community care identifying with memory loss and or living with dementia, Teresa's role is central to ensuring best practice and the promotion of good lives for all.

ACSA Innovation in Service or Design Award: *Empathy Suits*, ACH Group

ACH Group is the first aged care provider in Australia to trial 'empathy suits' as part of an innovative workforce training pilot through the use of three Premature Ageing Unisex Leisure (PAUL) suits.

Partnering with the University of Sydney, ACH Group has introduced the suits as part of its Dementia Learning and Development Competency Level Three training requirements for nearly 900 care and support workers.

Workforce participants wear a suit to carry out daily activities that allow them to experience a range of conditions including vision impairment, hearing loss, a hunched posture, reduced tactile sense and shortened gait.

Since the initial training pilot held in January 2019, more than 130 support and care workers had completed empathy training to the start of May 2019. The aim is for all of the organisation's 900 care and support workers to complete the training by the end of October 2019.

ACH Group General Manager, People, Culture, Business Quality Nichole Tierney said in time, the training would be rolled out across ACH Group's 1700+ workforce as part of onboarding and induction training.

"An ageing population worldwide makes it increasingly important that people employed in the aged care industry understand issues that older people face," she said. "This innovative workforce training is designed to enable the workforce to experience what it feels like to be in the shoes of an older person or a person living with a disability. Developing the suits is in keeping with ACH Group's person-centred approach and extends its toolkit to help the workforce build empathy, challenge stereotypes, respect uniqueness and individual identity, raise awareness of potential limitations in the environment and communicate effectively with customers."

End Media Release

About ACH Group

ACH Group is a not-for-profit aged care organisation that has been offering services to support good lives for older people in South Australia since 1952. As well as accommodation options across Adelaide, the Fleurieu Peninsula and East Melbourne, the group offers a range of health, wellbeing, respite and support services, help at home and social activities. Our 1700 specialist staff and hundreds of volunteers share the belief that older people should be valued and respected, connected to their communities and in control of their lives.

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