



MEDIA RELEASE

National Honours for People Rebuilding Lives

Senator The Hon Anne Ruston MP, Minister for Families and Social Services, and The Hon Ken Wyatt, AM MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians were among the dignitaries present to assist NESA CEO Sally Sinclair in honouring the outstanding people and organisations recognised in this year's **NESA Awards for Excellence**.

This annual event showcases exceptional effort, achievement, innovation and progress in creating opportunity for all Australians through inclusion and employment. This year's Awards ceremony took place at the Gala Awards Dinner, part of the **2019 NESA National Conference**, held at the Sofitel Melbourne on Collins on the 13th and 14th of August.

In addition to the six Award categories, this year a seventh Award - the *Bright Star Award* - was conferred on a young employment consultant who was considered by the judges to show particular promise and exemplary performance in her professional role.

"It is always a privilege to bring together our award finalists and honour their achievements," said Ms Sinclair. "We congratulate the winners, the other finalists, and the thousands of dedicated employment services professionals and job seekers across the country whose fine efforts and results are reflected in the achievements that we are highlighting here tonight. We have come together this year under the theme 'The Power of Purpose', and nowhere is that power better represented than in the stories that our Awards bring to light. Congratulations to all!"

This year's NESA Awards for Excellence winners are:

ACHIEVER OF THE YEAR

Mr Abu Zahih Wahidi (nominated by Advanced Personnel Management (APM))

Mr Zahih Wahidi is a refugee who has shown particular determination in overcoming language and cultural barriers to secure stable employment and rebuild his and his family's lives after escaping war and persecution in his native land.

Award supported by the **Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business**

CHAMPION EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

Hume Doors and Timber (Victoria) (nominated by WISE Employment)

Hume Doors and Timber (Victoria) have collaborated with WISE Employment for more than 14 years to provide outstanding employment opportunities to hundreds of job seekers with a range of barriers to employment, including people with disability, migrants and refugees, people with mental health issues and those whose lack of experience or qualifications might otherwise prevent them from finding work.

Award supported by the **Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business**

EXCELLENCE IN INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

Workskil Indigenous (nominated by Workskil)

A commitment to culturally appropriate and community-driven initiatives and projects have allowed Workskil Indigenous to develop to a point where the team is supporting nearly 5000 Indigenous job seekers to find and maintain work. The team's dedication extends not only to supporting Indigenous job seekers, but also to providing cross-cultural awareness training and collaborative opportunities to help close the gap and improve the lives of Indigenous Australians.

Award supported by the **Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business**

INNOVATION IN DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

HELP Employment and Training - Toowoomba, nominated by HELP Enterprises

HELP Employment and Training - Toowoomba have revolutionised the experience of job seekers with disability in their region with a new multi-channel service model that provides greater transparency, independence and control, as well as a more personalised service for local job seekers.

Award supported by the **Australian Government Job Access**

INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION IN INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

My Pathway, (self nomination)

My Pathway is realising its vision of "defining future communities" by empowering and supporting local Indigenous Traditional Owners and leaders in Community Development Program (CDP) regions to take control of the social, cultural and economic development of their communities. My Pathway's collaborative approach has helped thousands of Indigenous Australians into sustained employment since 2013.

Award supported by **alfie - A Love For Flexible and Innovative Education**

EMPLOYMENT CONSULTANT OF THE YEAR

Ms Annie Crasti, (nominated by VERTO)

Cowra's Annie Crasti is a pillar of her local community. A farmer falling on hard times, Annie has reinvented herself as a stand-out employment services consultant in her local region, helping VERTO to attain the only 5-star rating in the Central West Employment Region. She is also a volunteer firefighter and member of the local Chamber of Commerce. Annie was the winner of the Cowra Business Leader of the Year in February 2018, and has helped to develop local initiatives to help the farming sector, as well as a suicide prevention program.

Award supported by the **National Employment Services Association**

BRIGHT STAR AWARD

Ms Stephanie Miller (nominated by PeoplePlus Australia)

Moree's Stephanie Miller has a Law degree and was set to become a corporate lawyer, but realised that her true passion was helping people, and so returned to her local community and devoted herself to the employment services. She now travels 5000 km per month to support job seekers in remote and isolated communities in rural NSW. Her dedication to face-to-face relationship building and employer engagement are among the keys to her outstanding success in helping people find and sustain employment.

Award supported by the **National Employment Services Association**

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