



HOOVES OF HOPE

**MEDIA RELEASE
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Leading through Horse Power - Lewiston's Renae Gunn Named National Finalist in 2025 HESTA Excellence Awards

From a desire to help individuals reach their full potential and assist some four-legged friends with a new lease on life has seen Lewiston's Renae Gunn, named a national finalist in the 2025 HESTA Excellence Awards for her Hooves of Hope program.

Nominated in the Individual Leadership in Disability Services category, Renae launched Hooves of Hope in 2024, part of Sirian Star Allied Health, aimed at empowering neurodivergent individuals and people facing mental health challenges through equine-assisted therapy.

A qualified counsellor and award-winning rider and trainer, Renae has through Hooves of Hope combined her passion for people and horses, utilising the therapeutic support of animals - in this instance retired racehorses - to provide a safe and inclusive environment for participants, fostering connection, confidence, and personal growth.

Renae's dedication has positively impacted individuals, families, and communities, setting a national benchmark for equine-assisted therapy in Australia.

One of three finalists in her category, Renae is thrilled over this latest recognition for the Hooves of Hope program.

"To be selected as a finalist alongside some inspiring leaders in the sector is an incredible honour," she said. "To say I'm humbled would be an understatement. It has certainly been a team effort, the team here are simply amazing - Sindy, Judith and Zephyr, my family, my clinical supervision team for all the support, our beautiful team of truly remarkable horses and our wonderful clients who have turned a dream into a reality – Thankyou".

"At Hooves of Hope we believe that every individual has the potential to lead a fulfilling and meaningful life. We strive to empower our clients to overcome challenges and achieve their goals through a collaborative and strengths-based approach utilising the power of the mighty racehorse".

The HESTA 2025 Excellence Awards celebrates exceptional contributions across Australia's aged care, allied health, disability services, and community services sectors.

Eight category winners will each receive \$7,500 to support their professional development or enhance services in their workplace.

Winners of the 2025 HESTA Excellence Awards will be announced at a national ceremony on **Thursday, 7 August 2025**.

For further details on the 2025 HESTA Excellence Awards visit www.hesta.com.au/awards/excellence-awards

For further details on Hooves of Hope visit www.sirianstar.com.au

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