

## PRESIDENT'S PIECE



Hello and Happy New Year to all ARTA members! We're excited to kick off February with a new newsletter format, aiming to keep you well informed about the happenings within each of the portfolios supported by the board. Additionally, we're eager

to foster the development of communities of practice and will be reaching out to you to be part of these groups.

In late December, ARTA received feedback from the Minister for Aged Care and the Minister for Sport regarding the concerns voiced by the Hon. Anika Wells's team. This feedback addresses recent changes to funding and their implications for Recreational Therapists and Leisure and Lifestyle teams. Please find a copy of this feedback in this newsletter.

As we approach Recreational Therapy Week 2024, we're thrilled to announce this year's theme: Choice, Connection, and Community. These elements represent the foundation and core values of the Recreational Therapy profession in Australia. Recreational Therapists play a crucial role in empowering individuals to make choices, fostering connections, and building meaningful communities tailored to each individual.

**Choice** – a powerful and important component of every interaction, approach and intervention. Recreational Therapists ensure each individual is empowered to have their voice heard, understood, and supported.

**Connection** – supporting individuals to explore, reconnect or maintain opportunities for recreation based on desired needs and abilities.

**Community** – facilitating and curating a sense of meaningful community, unique to each individual.



**Australian  
Recreational  
Therapy  
Association**

To celebrate Recreational Therapy Week, we have three town hall events scheduled.

**21st Feb 10am**

**21st Feb 7pm**

**22nd Feb 2pm**

ARTA was recently interviewed to discuss the implications of the AN-ACC funding in an article with HelloCare. You can find the article [here](#). Feel free to read the article and share your comments.

If you've been affected by the recent funding changes, we encourage you, as per the Hon. Anika Wells's suggestion, to provide feedback through ACQSC.

Looking ahead, we have exciting plans for the next 12 months and aim to grow and gain greater visibility and recognition across the sectors we serve. ARTA is always open to feedback and discussions regarding the professional association. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or the board through the office.

Wishing you all a fantastic Recreational Therapy Week and a successful year ahead!

*Renée Smith*

**ARTA President**



ARTA aged care interest group goes barefoot bowling for our Christmas catch up!



**Office of the Hon Anika Wells MP**  
**Minister for Aged Care**  
**Minister for Sport**  
**Member for Lilley**

Ref No: MC23-018374

Ms Renée Smith  
President  
Australian Recreational Therapy Association  
[renees@recreationaltherapy.au](mailto:renees@recreationaltherapy.au)

Dear Ms Smith

Thank you for your correspondence of 5 October 2023 to the Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Sport, the Hon Anika Wells MP, on behalf of the members of the Australian Recreational Therapy Association regarding the impact of the care minutes requirements on Recreational Therapists, leisure and lifestyle staff in aged care, and suggested options to ensure the ongoing provision of lifestyle and recreational therapy. The Minister has asked that I respond on her behalf.

I would like to acknowledge the important role of leisure and lifestyle staff in supporting residents social, cultural, spiritual, cognitive, emotional and physical needs by providing individual visits, small and large group activities, community engagement and outings.

The purpose of the introduction of mandatory care minutes, which commenced from 1 October 2023, is to increase the amount of direct care time delivered in residential aged care in line with recommendation 86 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Royal Commission). The Royal Commission identified staffing levels, particularly registered nursing staffing levels, as vital to the quality of care older Australians receive. In line with the Royal Commission recommendation only the time of registered nurses, enrolled nurses, personal care workers and assistants in nursing are able to be counted as care minutes.

While there is no mandatory minimum time requirement for recreational therapists, leisure, and lifestyle staff, providers are still required to deliver these services appropriate to each person's needs and preferences to meet their responsibilities under the *Aged Care Act 1997* including to meet the Aged Care Quality Standards. Providers are funded to deliver these services under the Australian National Aged Care Classification funding model, which includes a 15% pay increase from 1 July 2023 for lifestyle workers.

How aged care providers spend their funding at the service level, including across recreational and lifestyle services, is becoming clearer with the introduction of the Quarterly Financial Report (QFR). Greater visibility over the use of recreational and lifestyle services will inform future policy discussions in residential aged care. A snapshot of QFR information is published online as part of the Quarterly Financial Snapshot.

From early 2024, expenditure on recreational and lifestyle workers is expected to be published at the service level, including a comparison to median expenditure for the sector. This is part of the Australian Government's election commitment to provide greater transparency on what aged

care providers are spending their money on. It will support older people and their family members to compare lifestyle service provision between different aged care services. As part of the Government's 2023-24 Budget, the National Aged Care Mandatory Quality Indicator Program will be expanding from July 2025. This will include a range of staffing measures (including lifestyle) and requires providers to report quarterly on critical areas of care impacting the health and wellbeing of older people. This will support residential aged care providers to measure, monitor and improve in these critical areas, with data to be published on the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare GEN My Aged Care website at both the national, and state and territory level.

Aged care providers not delivering the required lifestyle and recreation services may be subject to regulatory action by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Commission). The Commission considers providers' compliance with the Quality Standards. Quality Standard 4 specifically requires providers to deliver safe and effective services and supports for daily living which can help residents maintain a sense of well-being based on their goals, needs and preferences. If the Australian Recreational Therapy Association or its members are concerned about a provider not meeting this Standard, a complaint should be lodged with the Commission.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Chris Garry  
Acting Chief of Staff

21 December 2023

## EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Goal:** To have AHPA application completed by end of March.

**Action:** Looking for ARTA council members - contact office for more information.

## AGED CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

**Goal:** The Care and Support portfolio will focus on responding to industry changes in aged care such as the new Aged Care Act and Quality Indicators and on being proactive in defining our profession moving forward.

**Action:** NACA meetings are being attended regularly with our first one being held in February.

**Action:** Representatives of the Board are attending the upcoming meetings regarding new aged care standards to offer feedback.

## EDUCATION

**Goal:** Scaffolding the 3 levels of educational qualifications.

**Goal:** Investigate number of training organisations that offer Cert IV. Both are important steps to improve quality of education and further steps in our push for recognition as Allied Health.

**Action:** Please contact the enquiries@recreationaltherapy.au if you are interested in joining the Conference Committee/for more information.

**Action:** Keep an eye out for our updated training calendar.

## DISABILITY

**Goal:** : Increase visibility of RT and ARTA in the disability space.

**Action:** Write 2 more articles for Link Magazine.

**Action:** Review findings from the Disability Royal Commission.

**Action:** Prepare a discussion paper on RT and disability.

**Action:** To understand the application process with NDIS as an association to be recognised with our own item number.

## MARKETING

**Goal:** Increase ARTA visibility across industry and stakeholders.

**Action:** This has been broken down into multiple steps with one focus being engaging with younger generations of RTs.

**Action:** Revamping the newsletter to better engage and keep members updated.

**Action:** Developing a trial video as a marketing tool.

## MENTAL HEALTH

**Goal:** To develop MH competencies as grads mostly entering workforce as sole practitioners.

**Action:** Source and support MH specific assessments for RT.

## OTHER

- Aged care quality indicators have been released. The Board are in the process of reviewing literature to prepare a statement.

 **LIVE**  **LOVE**  **LAUGH**

**Seniors Happy Life**

**SENIORSHAPPYLIFE.COM.AU**

**CHECK US OUT**



Seniors Happy Life is a unique magazine style resource and among its aims, is to bring pleasure and enjoyment to those in aged care facilities. It helps overcome boredom, loneliness, low morale etc.

Seniors Happy Life is printed in **LARGE PRINT** and features no ads and no news or issues, just entertaining reading including inspiring stories, nostalgia, trivia, puzzles, jokes and more.

Please check out our website to see a full issue sample and to consider if people in your care would enjoy it. Residents in other facilities across Australia love it!

PICTURED: 93 year old Mona enjoying Seniors Happy Life

ARTA are incredibly grateful for the amazing range of sponsors at the 2023 conference. You will be hearing more from these sponsors throughout the year.

Our sponsors were:

- Carolyn from Box and Dice
- Meadhbh from Freedom Solution
- Aged Care Music Resources



Link

freedom solutions

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Our sponsors were:

Jacqueline Quirke from Southern Cross Care Living

Shane from Neurons VR.



**Southern Cross Care (NSW & ACT) is seeking highly motivated Recreation & Engagement staff.**

**ROLES AVAILABLE:**

Diversional Therapist: Turramurra & South Coogee

Lifestyle Coordinator: Cootamundra & Moama

Lifestyle Officers: Greystanes, South Coogee, Turramurra, Bateau Bay, Cootamundra, Moama & Young

SCC (NSW & ACT) has a long history of providing exceptional care that empowers older people to live life to the full. Our 'Care and Engagement Model' ensures all our programs and activities are resident-focused and resident-driven, from special interest groups, virtual quizzes, animal assisted therapy, and intergenerational activities to technology base- programs, social groups and creative pursuits.

**Why is SCC (NSW & ACT) a leader in Engagement and Purposeful Living?**

- \* Diversional Therapy Advisors provide mentoring and support to each of our homes, and this is supported by the Engagement & Purposeful Living Manager.
- \* Access to quality resources and innovative programs
- \* Allocated monthly budget that enables the creation of high-quality engagement opportunities.
- \* Regular professional development opportunities through an internal education series.
- \* Opportunities to network with other SCC (NSW & ACT) Recreation and Engagement teams members.



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