

Scope of Professional Practice

Recreational Therapy professionals work with individuals of all ages to optimise their leisure involvement and experience. The primary goal of Recreational Therapy is to empower and enable participants to make choices and decisions to maximise their participation in leisure experiences that suit their individual needs and wants. This is achieved through the facilitation, co-ordination and planning of leisure and recreational programmes that are designed to support, challenge and enhance the social, physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual well-being of individuals.

Recreational Therapy professionals recognise that leisure participation is the right of all individuals within society and that a positive leisure lifestyle contributes significantly to health and wellbeing. Utilising their understanding of human behaviour and functioning, Recreational Therapists draw on the multiple benefits of leisure participation to enhance individual's quality of life outcomes.

Areas of practice:

Recreational Therapists work in a range of health, community and leisure settings. Employment areas and the areas in which Recreational Therapists practice are continually expanding. Employment areas include:

- Consultancy and private practice
- Day and respite services
- Dementia services
- Disability leisure programmes and services
- Mental Health services
- Palliative Care
- Rehabilitation and hospital based units
- Residential aged care services
- Retirement Villages
- Specialty health and community services
- Youth programmes

Scope of practice:

The Recreational Therapy Association supports two key membership types in practice.

Recreational Therapist (Certified Members of the Association). Certified members hold a degree equivalent to AQF7 from a course approved by ARTA. The role of the recreational therapist includes management and co-ordination of a Recreational Therapy department, leading teams of Recreational Therapy staff, undertaking comprehensive client assessment, developing individualised programme plans with specific goals, evaluating these programmes, initiating and leading continuous quality improvement, developing and evaluating leisure education programmes.

Recreational therapists have specialised knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Application of leisure theories and relevant models of practice
- Human behaviour and functioning
- Comprehensive assessment based on the social, physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual needs and abilities to meet leisure and recreational needs and wants
- Development of individualised client centred programmes
- Facilitating client choice and decision making through offering a range of options for leisure participation.
- Evaluation of individual and group programmes
- Advanced communication and advocacy skills
- Leisure programming for individuals and groups
- Leisure education
- Activity analysis and modification designed around flow theory
- Documentation of professional practice and client care
- Continuous Quality Improvement and evaluation
- Teaching and facilitation
- Health promotion through leisure programming
- Management of teams and departments

Recreation Therapy Assistant/ Recreation Officer (Associate Members of the Association). Members at this level hold a qualification meeting AQF6 or below or studying an approved course recognised by ARTA. Members holding an AQF5 or AQF6 qualification, have additional training to manage staff and are able to coordinate programs in some settings. Members with the equivalent of an AQF4 are integral to supporting the overall program.

Generally, the role of the Recreation Therapy Assistant/ Recreation Officer includes working with clients with specific needs to plan, facilitate and evaluate individual and group leisure and recreation programmes, collect data on clients' leisure and recreational needs, abilities and limitations and complete associated documentation. Members at this level generally work under the supervision of a Recreational Therapist.

Recreation Therapy assistants/ Recreation Officers have skills and knowledge in the following areas:

- Appreciation of the importance of leisure and recreation participation
- Base understanding of human functioning and behaviour
- Communication skills
- Facilitation and group work skills
- Creative and expressive recreation
- Collection of data for the development of leisure and recreational programmes
- Evaluation of individual and group participation
- Leisure and recreation programming
- Provision of a range of leisure and recreation activities covering psychological, social, emotional, spiritual, cognitive and physical domains.
- Team and group work