

PRESIDENT'S PIECE



As you would be aware, sadly, we were unsuccessful in securing AHPA membership at this time. For those who may have missed the earlier communication, the full response is included in this newsletter.

While this outcome is disappointing, one of the key takeaways is clear: ARTA will not waver in its commitment to advocating for recognition of recreational therapy as an allied health profession. However, I want to put forward to you, our members, that achieving this goal will require more than persistence. It will require increasing our visibility across the broader health community. Now, more than ever, we need to champion our profession, highlight our impact, and ensure that recreational therapy has a strong, unmistakable presence in the allied health landscape.

There are many ways we can work together to build this visibility. I encourage all members to get involved — whether that's through contributing to research, publishing articles or case studies, presenting at conferences, joining one of our community of practices, or engaging actively on social media to share the amazing work recreational therapists do every day.

If you know a recreational therapist who isn't yet a member of ARTA, now is the time to reach out and invite them to join. The stronger and more united our voice, the greater our impact will be.

Every story told, every piece of evidence shared, and every new member welcomed strengthens our collective efforts. Together, we can keep pushing forward towards the recognition our profession deserves.

Thank you for your ongoing passion and commitment - your voice matters. Your work matters. Let's stand tall, speak loudly, and



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show the world the true value of recreational therapy.

Change takes time, but with each step we take together, we are building a stronger future for recreational therapy.

Warm regards,

Renée Smith
ARTA President



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3 April 2025

Charlise Bennett
Executive Officer
Australian Recreational Therapy Association
Via email: Charlise@recreationaltherapy.au

Dear Charlise

Re: Australian Recreational Therapy Association Application for Ordinary Membership with AHPA

Re: Outcome of Membership Application

Thank you for your application to join Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) as an Ordinary (Full) Member. We greatly appreciate the patience and understanding demonstrated by both you and your Board throughout this process, particularly in light of the delay in finalising our response.

After careful consideration, the AHPA Board has made the decision to decline your application. This decision is based on two primary factors:

1. Definition of Allied Health

As you may be aware, the Office of the Chief Allied Health Officer is currently in the process of developing a comprehensive definition of allied health professions. This initiative is expected to lead to an official list of recognised allied health professions, which may subsequently impact our membership categories and allied health policy. Given that this important work is ongoing, the AHPA Board has decided to seek further information and potential implications of this process to inform admittance of emerging professions. The pending federal election will unfortunately extend the timeline until greater clarity is achieved.

2. ARTA Membership Qualifications

The Board has noted that, of the total ARTA membership of 357 (excluding students), only 146 members currently hold qualifications at AQF7 or above. As a result, the majority of your members possess qualifications at the diploma or certificate level. While the Board acknowledges the potential of Recreational Therapy as an emerging profession, it remains committed to maintaining AQF7 as the minimum qualification requirement for full





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membership. Professions with a significant majority membership below this threshold, even if non-voting members, do not meet this standard.

We recognise and value the significant growth potential of Recreational Therapy and the role your profession plays in Australia's health system. We remain open to revisiting this matter when the significant majority of your profession hold an AQF7 or above qualification, or if changes occur once the Office of the Chief Allied Health Officer has completed its work on the definition of allied health.

Furthermore, before applying for Ordinary membership in the future, it is important to note that AHPA would likely need to differentiate membership based on the educational qualifications of your members. We do not anticipate that any Commonwealth definition of allied health professions will alter AHPA's position regarding the inclusion of professionals with qualifications below AQF7, nor its ability to advocate for funding programs or the recognition of allied health professionals at varying qualification levels.

We understand that this outcome may not align with the expectations of you or your Board, and we sincerely appreciate the time and effort you have dedicated to this application. We will be in touch with you as soon as further developments arise in relation to the definition of allied health.

Thank you again for your understanding and commitment to advancing the sector.

Yours sincerely,

Antony Nicholas
Chair, Allied Health Professions Australia



Upcoming workshops for May, June, & July

If less than 4 people are registered for a workshop, it may be cancelled and rescheduled at another time.

Upcoming workshops for May

Day/ Date	Duration	Topic
Monday 5th	12pm – 1pm	Transference and counter transference
Wednesday 7th	9am – 3pm	Changes in the new Aged Care Bill (Act from July) Implications for recreation, leisure and lifestyle
Thursday 8th	9am – 1pm	Degree Focused – International Classification of Functioning
Tuesday 13th	9am – 1pm	Using evidence-based practice in your services
Tuesday 20th	12pm – 1pm	Using Excel and spreadsheets in your workplace
Thursday 22nd	12pm – 4pm	Nonpharmacological therapies for PBSO (dementia care)

Upcoming workshops for June

Day/ Date	Duration	Topic
Tuesday 3rd	1pm – 3pm	Creating your own research project-writing up
Thursday 5th	12pm – 1pm	Cultivating empathy and compassion
Tuesday 10th	9am – 3pm	Changes to the NDIS in recreation and leisure
Wednesday 18th	12pm – 4pm	Grant writing and budgeting for service provision
Friday 20th	9am – 1pm	The co-creation of goals with clients
Monday 23rd	12pm – 1pm	Doing presentations using PowerPoint
Monday 30th	9am – 3pm	Reablement project introduction- group 2

Upcoming workshops for July

Day/ Date	Duration	Topic
Friday 4th	12pm – 1pm	Therapeutic relationships conflict resolution
Wednesday 9th	9am – 10am	Positive emotion as a basis for treatment
Friday 11th	9am – 3pm	Using the recovery model with trauma informed care
Wednesday 16th	12pm – 1pm	Using ChatGPT: Benefits and cautions
Thursday 17th	12pm – 4pm	Intergenerational programming – Playgroup Australia
Friday 25th	9am – 1pm	Starting your own recreational therapy business Pt 1

CALL FOR PAPERS 2025 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

“Recreating the Recreation Revolution”

**Virtual Conference
Thursday 18th and Friday 19th September 2025**

Australian Recreational Therapy Association invites presentation abstracts for our virtual conference. The conference provides an excellent opportunity for recreational therapy professionals, health professionals, academics, researchers and students across Australia and internationally to showcase their work, engage in networking, and critical discussion to encourage growth in clinical practice, research, and education, policy and workforce development. Abstracts from a range of practice areas should explore, lead and inform delegates on recreational therapy interventions, service development and current industry trends.

Themes

Authors are encouraged to submit an abstract summarising interesting and topical programs, initiatives and research as they align to the conference themes “Recreating the Recreation Revolution”.

Presentation formats

Authors are encouraged to submit an abstract for consideration by the conference committee. Abstracts will be accepted by email until 15th May 2025. Submissions may be accepted after this date with special prior arrangement. As part of the submission process, authors are asked to indicate the presentation type they are interested in:

- Leisure Bite – big ideas in a small window (15 minutes)
- Recreation Recharged- sparking new ideas (30 minutes)
- Leisure Labs – deep dive into recreation innovation (45 minutes)

Guidelines will be provided to those authors whose abstracts are accepted and these will vary depending on the presentation type.

Abstracts should be submitted electronically to:
ARTA Conference Convenor, c/- enquiries@recreationaltherapy.au by 15th May 2025

Abstract Submission Details

Abstracts should be a summary of the material that is to be presented at the conference:

Microsoft Word format, Arial 12pt font or similar, and **single spaced**

Abstract must be clearly written in English and a maximum of **300** words.

Presentation title

Preferred presentation format

Author name/s, qualification, or course of study

Position and employment details

Contact details including phone and email address.

The ARTA Conference Committee encourages submissions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health professionals, students, researchers and educators, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and community workers.

Selection and notification

Abstracts will be assessed for originality, quality, relevance and professional interest. The conference committee is keen to ensure that new graduates/early career therapists as well as experienced presenters are included in the conference program.

Receipt of abstracts will be confirmed by an acknowledgement email.

Abstracts will form part of the conference program and distributed to delegates prior to the conference. Some minor edits may be made, if necessary to enhance readability for the conference program.

Presenter Registration

Presenters will be required to register at least 6 weeks prior for the conference. A special conference rate is available for presenters.

Key dates

15th May 2025	Call for abstracts close.	
15th June 2025	All applicants successful or otherwise will be notified.	
30th June 2025	Abstract presenters' deadline to register and	changes to abstracts
July 2025	Full programme available	

Awards

A number of awards will be presented at the virtual conference including 'People's Choice' and 'Best first time' or 'Student' presenter. More information to come.

For more information

Conference Convenor

E: enquiries@recreationaltherapy.au

www.recreationaltherapy.au

Enquiries T: 1300 113 395 or T: 02 9887 2111

You can register for the 2025 conference and register for the call of papers using this link:
<https://www.recreationaltherapy.au/learning/conference/>

Register early to receive an early bird discount! The early bird bookings are available until 30/6/25.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A group of 20 students with 2 staff are visiting in May from Slippery Rock University. Three of our members will be hosting our guests from Pennsylvania, USA. A special thankyou to our members that have offered their time, expertise and facilities to our international colleagues to experientially learn about the different elements in the Australian Health Care landscape.

While we continue to represent members at the National Aged Care Alliance, the board are reviewing the cost benefit of this membership and what other avenues for raising our profile within this specific industry.

We have also provided a response to The Department of Health and Aged Care - Public Consultation on an emerging mental health curriculum framework for undergraduate health degrees.

EDUCATION

We have locked in our international keynote speaker Jessica Luh-Kim and we would like to welcome Charlise as our conference convenor. If you would like to assist with the conference, please email the office.

We have taken down Teachable (the learning site) from the website for the moment. Please contact the office and they can organise a list, the pricing, and access for you. We are working to make our education platform more economically viable. We are looking for alternative hosting sites currently, to maximise the benefits for our members.

MENTAL HEALTH

Meetings ongoing with members from various MH settings and states. We are working on developing competences for those working in the mental health space and resources in EBP.

GOVERNANCE & PROFESSIONAL SCOPE

CoP Meeting will resume on 12/5/25 at 1pm for those interested in contributing to the governance portfolio.

CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

CoP - ARTA members were invited to attend an Aged Care Community of Practice meeting on April 28 at lunch time.

Quality indicators released and we will be looking to understand the new parameters and the impact on the sector and our roles.

MARKETING

Conference Logo update – we have received our logo designs and our socials will be updated to reflect this.

If you are interested in joining our marketing CoP, please email the office. If you love making short videos, we would love to have you on board.



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WE NEED YOU



- to record a short video
- explaining why they are members of ARTA
- what being an RT means to them.

You can send them in via email link to
enquiries@recreationaltherapy.au.
For use in promos on socials.



INTERNATIONAL

Working on international qualifications across the board – SA, Canada, Aus, NZ.

Charlise to be a speaker at NZ conference.

DISABILITY

CoP meeting to be set up in May (TBC).

OFFICE NEWS

The end of our membership year is fast approaching and most of you would have now received your email about your renewal. If you haven't received anything yet or if you have any queries, please contact the office.

There is still time to add to your CPD before 30th June – we have some great workshops coming up! Everyone (except students) needs to complete 20 hours of CPD per membership year.

A huge thank you to our first 2025 GOLD sponsor - NeuronsVR. They have continuously supported our conferences. You can contact them (see next page for details) if you are looking to a new experience for your consumers/clients.



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Psychological Symptoms of
Dementia (BPSD)**



**Lifestyle & Resident Wellbeing –
Facilitating Meaningful
Engagement**



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encouraging movement



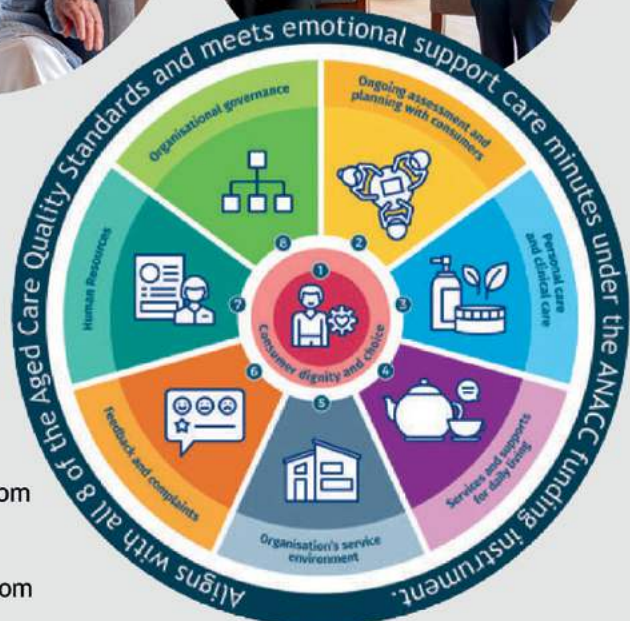
info@neuronsvr.com



1300 70 99 29



www.neuronsvr.com



STATE	GROUP NAME	GROUP LEADER	PHONE	EMAIL	FREQUENCY
NSW	Hospital Interest	Renee Rizzo	02 8738 5557	Renee.rizzo@health.nsw.gov.au	2 nd Wednesday of the month 2pm
NSW	Sydney Aged Care Interest	Rachel Askew	0420 526 909	artaagedcaresyd@gmail.com	1 st Wednesday of the Month 6.30pm Canterbury-Hurlstone RSL club
NSW	The Hills	Mary Morris	0404 170 860	hillsdiversionaltherapygroup@gmail.com	2 nd Tuesday of the Month
QLD	Toowoomba	Chris Gauld Lynda White	0428 171 001 0422 789 327	Chris.gauld54@yahoo.com Lynda_c65@hotmail.com	1 st Thursday of the Month (5.30pm EST)
SA	Adelaide	Sallie Shippies	08 8389 5030 0419 933 203	marsal03@bigpond.com	TBC
SA	Lower North	Lisa Anders	0439 852 523	lisa.anders@sa.gov.au	TBC
TAS	Tasmania Network Group	Emma Preston	0452 070 875	epreston18@hotmail.com	Online Group
VIC	East Gippsland Remote	Dawn Sulley	0438 560 253	dawn.h.sulley@gmail.com	3 rd Wednesday Tri-Monthly (Feb - Nov)
ALL	Online Dementia Specific Group	Eira Steane	Zoom meeting	https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85447858183?pwd=zwFXGkziPEYQe9Ez1dQZx5xVuB2EQ1.1 Meeting ID: 854 4785 8183 Passcode: 851827	Zoom Meeting Second Wed of every month 6.30pm EST
ALL	Associate Member NG	Kim Bromley	Zoom Meeting	https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82336918415?pwd=r6bBs0S9RgDOjMULbn6uLbk4WRcBng.1 Meeting ID: 823 3691 8415 Passcode: 267385	Zoom meeting 1 st Wednesday every month 7.00pm EST

Do *YOU* attend your **Network Group?**

The purpose of network groups is to foster peer support and information exchange amongst ARTA members. Access to ARTA network groups are a membership benefit of Australian Recreational Therapy Association (ARTA). By attending network groups, members are able to use the ideas, skills, knowledge and resources of those members on a regular basis.

Only financial members of Australian Recreational Therapy Association are eligible to attend network groups.

The list of ARTA Network Groups is above – find the closest one to you and get in touch – they will warmly welcome a new member!

(Free with your membership!)