

## PRESIDENT'S PIECE



As we step into the second half of 2025, it's an exciting time for recreational therapy in Australia. The growing recognition of our profession within aged care reforms—particularly those supporting older Australians to live well and independently

at home—is a testament to our ongoing advocacy efforts. Recreational therapists are uniquely positioned to support reablement, wellness, and social connection, all of which are essential to ageing in place with dignity and purpose.

This month, we also look ahead to our National Virtual Conference, a cornerstone event for sharing innovation, research, and best practice. Abstract submissions remain open, and we warmly encourage members and colleagues to contribute. This is your platform to showcase the breadth and impact of your work. Whether you're in clinical practice, research, education, or leadership, your voice is vital to shaping the future of our profession.

We continue to focus outward, with a growing presence across social media channels, helping raise awareness of Recreational Therapy as a vital part of the allied health landscape. Our campaign aims to better inform the public, health professionals, and decision-makers about the essential role RTs play in wellbeing. Particularly in aged care, disability, mental health, and rehabilitation.

Engagement remains at the heart of our work. We're actively working with members, stakeholders, and policy makers to strengthen recognition of Recreational Therapy within national frameworks. This includes ongoing dialogue with health departments, advocacy bodies, and other allied health associations.

Looking forward, we are exploring opportunities to engage with the Chief Allied Health Officer for the Department of Health and Aged Care, Anita Hobson- Powell. We are working to engage with our leaders to ensure that Recreational Therapy is



**Australian  
Recreational  
Therapy  
Association**

seen - and supported - as the “missing piece” in the allied health puzzle. It is time that our profession is not only included in policy and funding decisions but is recognised for its distinct and measurable contribution to person-centred care.

Thank you for your continued support, passion, and professionalism. Lets keep working together to elevate the profile of Recreational Therapy in every corner of Australia.

Warm regards,

*Renée Smith*  
**ARTA President**



Australian  
Recreational  
Therapy  
Association

# 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](mailto:enquiries@recreationaltherapy.au).  
For use in promos on socials.



## Upcoming workshops June & July

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

### Upcoming workshops for June

| Day/ Date    | Duration   | Topic                                         |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday 3rd  | 1pm – 3pm  | Creating your own research project-writing up |
| Tuesday 10th | 9am – 3pm  | Changes to the NDIS in recreation and leisure |
| 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 18<sup>th</sup> and Friday 19<sup>th</sup> 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 June 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](mailto:enquiries@recreationaltherapy.au) by 15<sup>th</sup> June 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

|                                  |                                                          |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>15<sup>th</sup> May 2025</b>  | Call for abstracts close.                                |                      |
| <b>15<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b> | All applicants successful or otherwise will be notified. |                      |
| <b>30<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b> | Abstract presenters' deadline to register and            | changes to abstracts |
| <b>July 2025</b>                 | 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](mailto:enquiries@recreationaltherapy.au)

[www.recreationaltherapy.au](http://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

We are working on streamlining our processes for conference presenters to compile necessary documents for our virtual conference.

We have also secured our second keynote speaker, Professor Jerome Singleton who will be presenting on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health.

Setting up Board processes to improve handover to new Board members.

Welcome and introduction letter sent to Commonwealth Chief Allied Health Officer.

## EDUCATION

Thank you for those who have submitted abstracts. If you are still interested in presenting at our virtual conference, please see the previous page for prompts.

We are looking at reinstating the Award of Excellence. Keep your eyes out for more details on our socials.

## DISABILITY

We have some members who are interested to develop document on behalf of ARTA for inclusion of RT into NDIS as recognised profession. If you are interested in contributing to this space, please keep an eye out for the call for interest in your emails.

***NSW Health Allied Health Award Reform:*** The term DT has now been replaced with Recreational Therapist (RT) in the award as the recognised profession, with ARTA written as the professional association.

## MARKETING

Exploring potential for inhouse certification to bridge the gap for leisure specific training for those who hold relevant Bachelors degrees.

To celebrate our inclusion in the home care reforms, we are working on producing some marketing material to spread awareness of the services we can offer. Please share these to your extended networks and through LinkedIn.

We are attempting to foster ties with Human Ability (the Job Skills Council for mapping Cert IV L and H courses) to ensure they are reflective of industry standards.

An ABC South Coast radio interview was conducted with one of our members, Jessica Mallinson. Jessica is a mental health RT.

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

## GOVERNANCE & PROFESSIONAL SCOPE

Our CoP has resumed meeting the second Monday of every month at 1pm (except for June as it is a public holiday, meeting rescheduled to 16th June 1pm). We are finalising our scope of practice and developing guidelines for RT practice.

Our CoP has also started looking into the possibility of an Australian Journal for Recreational Therapy and costs associated with this.

## CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Being a month away from the new aged care standards, we have been waiting news and closely following how care providers are implementing the care statement which began at this month.



## MENTAL HEALTH

Looking at developing best practice guidelines for mental health in our community of practice. If you would be interested in contributing to this, please contact the office.

## 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.

Introducing our newest sponsor - Queensland Community Care Network. Thank you for your silver sponsorship and support!

## SILVER SPONSOR



**Queensland  
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*One-on-One Volunteer  
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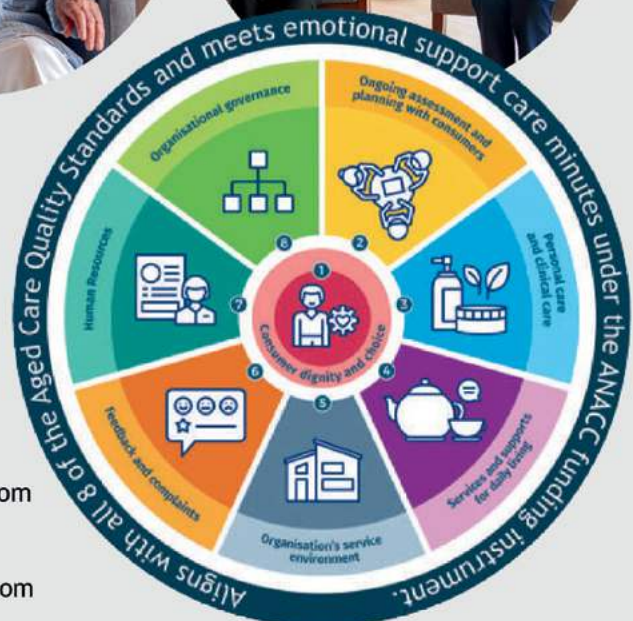
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# INTERNATIONAL

## Celebrating International Collaboration: Slippery Rock University visit

- During May we had the pleasure of hosting 20 students and 2 faculty members from Slippery Rock University, Pennsylvania, USA. It was jammed pack with students learning about the Australian health care system and how it applies to Recreational Therapy.
- The visit, coordinated by the Australian Recreational Therapy Association, showcased a variety of service settings and approaches that reflect the diversity and depth of recreational therapy in Australia. Over several days, the SRU cohort had the opportunity to tour three key facilities, each offering unique insights into how therapeutic recreation is delivered across different populations and care contexts. They spent one day focussing on rehabilitation, another in aged care, and a third day in mental health.
- A special thankyou to Suzanne Stacey and her team at the Royal Rehab Centre in Sydney, to Rachel Askew, Bryce, and the team at Southern Cross Care North Turrumurra, and Kylie, Kelsey, and the mental health team at Campbelltown Hospital. What a wonderful opportunity for international collaboration and understandings.





## INTERNATIONAL

The visit marked a memorable exchange of knowledge, practice, and culture, enriching everyone involved and strengthening the bonds of international collaboration in therapeutic recreation.

Their Australian Recreational Therapy learning journey began with a visit to **Royal Rehab**, a leading provider of rehabilitation and disability support services. Students observed firsthand the role of recreational therapy in supporting people with spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, and other complex conditions.

Engaging with staff, the group learned how person-centred, evidence-based programming helps improve physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. Student were also privileged to tour the facility from a recreational therapy perspective with a focus on assistive technology, adaptive sports equipment, and the outdoor spaces for adaptive recreation.





## INTERNATIONAL

Aged care was on the itinerary following day to **Southern Cross Care in North Turramurra**, where students explored recreational therapy's role in promoting quality of life for older adults. Education on the new aged care act and the strengthened standards with the funding mechanisms also touched on. Students interacted with residents with crafts, word games, golf, and volleyball. From dementia-specific programming to intergenerational activities and creative therapies, this visit offered a powerful look at how meaningful engagement can enhance connection, joy, and dignity in later life.



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## INTERNATIONAL

**Campbelltown Hospital mental health unit** was the final destination for the study tour, providing a glimpse into how therapeutic recreation supports recovery-oriented care in acute and sub-acute settings. Staff shared their approaches to using leisure and recreation as tools for building resilience, reducing anxiety, and fostering a sense of agency among clients.

Beyond the clinical learning, the visit was filled with cultural exchange, laughter, and genuine connection. The Australian hosts were impressed by the SRU students' curiosity, engagement, professionalism, and passion for the field, while the students expressed deep appreciation for the hospitality and openness they received.

This visit not only strengthened global ties but also inspired new ideas and perspectives on how recreational therapy can adapt and thrive across healthcare systems and cultural contexts. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the team at SRU, and we look forward to more opportunities to collaborate, learn, and grow together in the future.

**Welcome anytime, SRU — you've left a lasting impression!**





| STATE | GROUP NAME                     | GROUP LEADER      | PHONE                        | EMAIL                                                                                                                                                                                                                | FREQUENCY                                                           |
|-------|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NSW   | Hospital Interest              | Renee Rizzo       | 02 8738 5557                 | <a href="mailto:Renee.rizzo@health.nsw.gov.au">Renee.rizzo@health.nsw.gov.au</a>                                                                                                                                     | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month<br>2pm                       |
| NSW   | Sydney Aged Care Interest      | Rachel Askew      | 0420 526 909                 | <a href="mailto:artaagedcaresyd@gmail.com">artaagedcaresyd@gmail.com</a>                                                                                                                                             | 1st Wednesday of the Month<br>Hurlstone-Canterbury RSL club         |
| NSW   | The Hills                      | Mary Morris       | 0404 170 860                 | <a href="mailto:hillsdiversionaltherapygroup@gmail.com">hillsdiversionaltherapygroup@gmail.com</a>                                                                                                                   | 2nd Tuesday of the Month                                            |
| NSW   | Penrith & surrounds            | Danielle Anderson | 0421 915 208                 | <a href="mailto:daniellea2288@gmail.com">daniellea2288@gmail.com</a>                                                                                                                                                 | TBC                                                                 |
| SA    | Adelaide                       | Sallie Shippies   | 08 8389 5030<br>0419 933 203 | <a href="mailto:marsal03@bigpond.com">marsal03@bigpond.com</a>                                                                                                                                                       | TBC                                                                 |
| SA    | Lower North                    | Lisa Anders       | 0439 852 523                 | <a href="mailto:lisa.anders@sa.gov.au">lisa.anders@sa.gov.au</a>                                                                                                                                                     | TBC                                                                 |
| TAS   | Tasmania Network Group         | Emma Preston      | 0452 070 875                 | <a href="mailto:epreston18@hotmail.com">epreston18@hotmail.com</a>                                                                                                                                                   | Online Group                                                        |
| VIC   | East Gippsland Remote          | Dawn Sulley       | 0438 560 253                 | <a href="mailto:dawn.h.sulley@gmail.com">dawn.h.sulley@gmail.com</a>                                                                                                                                                 | 3rd Wednesday Tri-Monthly<br>(Feb - Nov)                            |
| ALL   | Online Dementia Specific Group | Eira Steane       | Zoom meeting                 | <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85447858183?pwd=zwFXGkziPEYQE9Ez1dQZx5xVuB2EQ1.1">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85447858183?pwd=zwFXGkziPEYQE9Ez1dQZx5xVuB2EQ1.1</a><br>Meeting ID: 854 4785 8183<br>Passcode: 851827 | Zoom Meeting<br>Second Wed of every month<br>6.30pm EST             |
| ALL   | Associate Member NG            | Kim Bromley       | Zoom Meeting                 | <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82336918415?pwd=r6bBs0S9RgDOjMULbn6uLbk4WRcBng.1">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82336918415?pwd=r6bBs0S9RgDOjMULbn6uLbk4WRcBng.1</a><br>Meeting ID: 823 3691 8415<br>Passcode: 267385 | Zoom meeting<br>1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday every month<br>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!)