



## PRESIDENT'S PIECE

As we approach the end of the year, this is often one of the busiest times for many of us - professionally and personally. I want to take a moment to remind you to prioritise your own wellbeing amidst the deadlines, celebrations, and demands

that inevitably come with this season. Self-care is not a luxury; it is essential to sustaining the important work you do every day.

November has brought significant change across our sector. With the introduction of the **new Aged Care Act and Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards**, we know many of you are experiencing uncertainty about how these reforms will impact your roles, your organisations, and the people you support. As a Board, we are monitoring these developments closely and are deeply mindful of the implications for recreational therapy practice. We welcome and encourage your feedback. Your insights will guide us as we **collate key issues** and explore several pathways to **advocate and lobby for meaningful change** within the aged care space.

In the background, we are close to finalising the **Strategic Plan and Business Plan 2025-2030**. These guiding documents will provide a clear roadmap for the association's priorities, growth, and long-term direction.

We also want to be transparent about the challenges ahead. Like many not-for-profit associations, we are currently facing a difficult financial position. The Board is actively exploring **cost-saving measures** as well as **new revenue streams** to ensure we can continue to champion the profession and provide value to our members. To this end the office will be closed for most of December and January.

In brighter news, we are finetuning our offerings and making some updates to the **ARTA website**, with a focus on offering more resources, support, and value to our membership. You will start to see these improvements roll out over the coming



**Australian  
Recreational  
Therapy  
Association**

months.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to recreational therapy and for being part of our community during a time of both challenge and transformation. Together, we will continue to strengthen our profession and the people we serve.

Warm Regards,

*Charlise Bennett*

**ARTA President**

The change of the board has seen the folding of portfolio area and there will be more to come next year for what is next.

## **CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

We have heard from a couple of members who have reached out to the association about being expected to do more with less staffing to support the role, especially in residential aged care. This month we have raised the issue with both unions and state government officials identifying both the issues and potential solutions.

## **DISABILITY**

The NDIS has started to roll out a new assessment tool in the disability space with more of a focus on functional needs. The assessment tool is called the I\_CAN tool. Before using the tool, health care professionals are required to pay a one-off course fee to undergo an online training to ensure competence in using it. There is also an annual fee required for ongoing accreditation.

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

Terms of reference have been established for a Psychosocial project group. The group has been established by the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Senior Officials Group (MHSPSO) to progress commitments under the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement (National Agreement) in relation to future arrangements for providing psychosocial supports outside the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The PPG will report to MHSPSO in accordance with the National Agreement governance structure and continue for the duration of the National Agreement, which is due to expire on 30 June 2026. The report estimates, in 2022-23, around 230,500 people with a severe mental health challenge (aged 12 to 64 years) were unable to access psychosocial supports.

# MEANINGFUL AUSTRALIA

ARTA Secretary Kayla Garside attended two Stakeholder Co-Design Workshops to contribute thoughts and ideas to the Enhancing Well-being in Aged Care through Holistic, Person-Centred Spiritual Care project is a national research initiative led by Charles Sturt University in collaboration with Meaningful Ageing Australia and sector partners. The project aims to develop a Model, Framework and Guidelines (MFG) to help Australian aged care providers embed holistic, person-centred spiritual care within everyday practice, directly aligned with the Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards (effective November 2025). Using a participatory action research and co-design approach, the project draws on evidence from residents, families, staff, leaders, and sector stakeholders to identify what truly enhances meaning, connection, and well-being in residential aged care.

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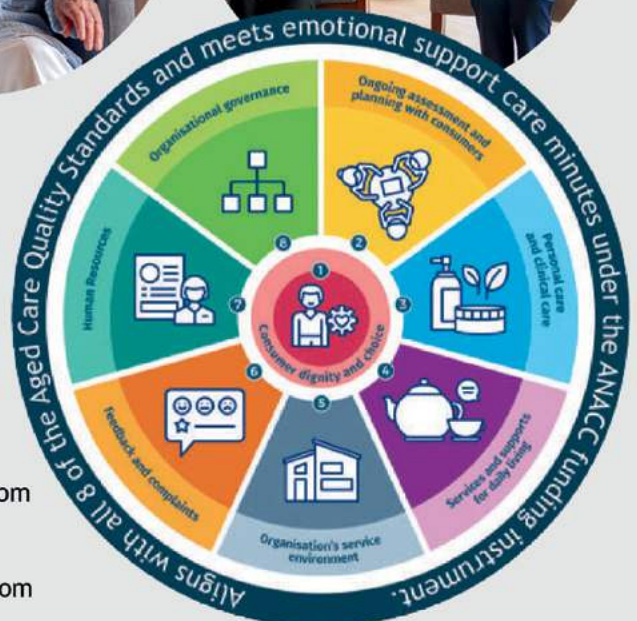
info@neuronsvr.com



1300 70 99 29



www.neuronsvr.com



STATE	GROUP NAME	GROUP LEADER	PHONE	EMAIL	FREQUENCY
NSW	Hospital Interest	Renee Rizzo	02 8738 5557	<a href="mailto:Renee.rizzo@health.nsw.gov.au">Renee.rizzo@health.nsw.gov.au</a>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month; 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 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
TAS	Tasmania Network Group	Emma Preston	0452 070 875	<a href="mailto:epreston18@hotmail.com">epreston18@hotmail.com</a>	Online Group
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> 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	<a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82336918415?pwd=r6bBs0S9RgDOjMULbn6uLbk4WRcBng.1">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82336918415?pwd=r6bBs0S9RgDOjMULbn6uLbk4WRcBng.1</a> Meeting ID: 823 3691 8415 Passcode: 267385	Zoom meeting  1 <sup>st</sup> 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!)

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The board and office would like to wish you a safe and happy Christmas period and enjoy welcoming in 2026.



# Christmas

## EMOJI Pictionary

CAN YOU GUESS THESE CHRISTMAS THEMED WORDS AND PHRASES BY THEIR EMOJIS?



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