



**ARTA response to [2022] FWCFB 200**

**Fair Work Commission**

The Australian Recreational Therapy Association (ARTA) is the peak national body representing those working in the fields of Recreational and Diversional Therapy (Recreation/Lifestyle workers) in Australia. The Association promotes safe, effective and high-quality recreational therapy services and provides leadership, professional support and development, and advocacy for its members in the practice of Recreational Therapy.

In residential aged care, nursing and care staff are responsible for attending to the clinical and personal care of older Australians. ARTA's members work with elders to make those lives worth living. Every photo that depicts an older Australian participating in a recreation activity or group, community outing, or receiving individual social support is the domain of the Recreational Therapy profession and delivered by Recreational Activities Officers/Lifestyle Officers.

As noted in the [2022] FWCFB 200 report (4 November 2022), Recreation/Lifestyle workers interact with the consumers in the same social context as Personal Care Workers (PCWs) and are recognised by the Joint Employers as 'care workers' (para. 936). This exposes them to the same stressors, challenges and risks as PCWs that have been outlined in detail in the report (paras. 225 - 254). Similarly, they endure the same demands imposed by shifting quality standards, family pressure and the broader social stigma.

ARTA's members also carry out their work and live their lives in the broader context of public outrage at the failings highlighted throughout the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. This makes recruiting and retaining staff to oversee the provision of emotional, cultural, social and spiritual support difficult. Even more challenging for our workforce is the low pay for the important and highly valued work they perform every day with an ever-increasing degree of difficulty and intensity.

ARTA's members continue to endure a profound lack of recognition and experience lack of inclusion regarding worker safety, well-being and remuneration. Overlooked by the Aged Care Workforce Retention Bonus, Recreational Activities Officers/Lifestyle workers again need to justify their position for an increase to their wages.

The Australian Recreational Therapy Association and its members call on you to remedy the ongoing lack of recognition afforded to our workforce with an increase to the minimum wage.

Sincerely,

**Renée Smith**  
President  
Australian Recreational Therapy Association