

The History of The New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapists Incorporated

Te Kaituku haumanu a-rēhia o Aotearoa

1989 - 2023

The New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapists Incorporated (NZSDRT Inc.) is the professional body for all Diversional and Recreational Therapists (DRThs) in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Diversional and Recreational Therapy is crucial to holistic healthcare provision in Aotearoa New Zealand. Diversional and Recreational Therapy involves the organisation, design, coordination, and implementation of holistic, person-centred therapeutic recreational programmes to improve the lives of the people we care for and support.

Diversional and Recreational Therapy is a systematic process that utilises recreation, leisure, and other activity-based interventions to address the assessed needs of individuals. Diversional and Recreational Therapists provide services to people of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and different physical and cognitive abilities.

Diversional and Recreational Therapy follows the APIED process, which means the professional Diversional and Recreational Therapist will:

A – Assess. We assess individual needs and strengths

P – Plan. We write a care plan

I – Implement. We put the plan into effect

E – Evaluate – We assess the outcomes

D – Document – We keep clear records

- Our field is Therapeutic Recreation
- Diversional and Recreational Therapy is the practice in Aotearoa New Zealand
- A person who has completed the approved NZQA Diversional and Recreational Therapist Qualifications in Aotearoa New Zealand is a **Qualified Diversional and Recreational Therapist (QDRTh)**
- A person who has completed the approved NZQA Qualification and has attained their National License to practice is a **Registered Diversional and Recreational Therapist (RDRTh)**. This person meets national standards, follows a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, and renews the license every 12 months. The RDRTh is the experienced and preferred provider for Diversional and Recreational Therapy services in Aotearoa New Zealand, and is fully endorsed by NZSDRT Inc.

1989 – 1999

During 1989 and 1990, various Diversional Therapists from Waikato, Rotorua and Tauranga areas met to discuss how Diversional Therapists “Fit” into the system of providing motivational and recreational activities for people (particularly older people) who were in care. This resulted in a special meeting being called in June 1992 at the Waiariki Polytechnic, Rotorua. Thirty-one people attended. Two proposals were presented:

- That an Incorporated Society be formed to work towards promoting the interests of Diversional Therapists.
- That a training course be established to provide a recognised qualification for Diversional Therapists. It was felt that taking such a step was needed because it was apparent that many people were performing the same tasks with and for the clients, but many held different titles, different job descriptions, received different treatment and acknowledgement in their workplaces and generally were uncertain as to how best to direct their efforts.

The proposals were accepted, and this resulted in the **New Zealand Society of Diversional Therapists (NZSDT)** becoming officially registered on the **18th of September 1992** as an Incorporated Society under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908.

Strong support from the Manawatu Polytechnic and tutor Judith Beaver resulted in a forum convened in Palmerston North in late September 1992. From this, a steering committee was formed to develop a National Body with representation in that body being sought from all regions.

The first National Seminar and AGM was held in Hamilton on 27th February 1993. At this seminar, our first Membership Badge was presented.

This badge’s interpretation was:

We Strive...

- For better quality of life for clients.
- For our satisfaction of a job done to the best of our abilities.
- To constantly improve on what we have done.
- Rays of the Sun - We try to spread “sunshine.”
- Tree Branches - We provide an umbrella for all to shelter under.
- The Roots - We are influenced by our roots, where we have come from and what we have done...we also recognise where our clients have come from and what they have done.

An important task for the Executive Committee elected at this seminar was to form an Advisory Group of selected Health Professionals representing all areas of the industry, as required by the NZ Qualifications Authority. The purpose of this group was to lead the development of a National Training Course. This group first met in December 1993.

The Executive Committee also established a National quarterly newsletter for distribution to all members. This newsletter was intended to keep members informed

of developments within the Society as well as news of activities and events from regional support groups.

At this point, a definition of **Diversional Therapy** was written:

“Diversional Therapy is a professional practice which recognises and facilitates purposeful recreational leisure and pleasure activities with individual client choice to increase the physical, intellectual, spiritual and emotional well-being of older people in supportive environments.”

The Philosophy and definition of Diversional Therapy by NZSDT was written, with some updates that included:

“As a professional practice, Diversional Therapy recognises and facilitates purposeful recreational leisure activities with individual client choice to increase the physical, intellectual, psychological, spiritual, and emotional well-being of all people in supportive environments.”

During February and March of 1994 and 1995, seminars were again held in Hamilton. As a result of these seminars and with the continuing work of the Executive members, 1995 brought some significant changes to the Society.

Many issues were finalised, and progress was made towards establishing the professionalism of the Society and increasing awareness of Diversional Therapy.

- Membership forms were formalised.
- A formal letterhead was approved, and stationery was printed.
- The Code of Ethics was approved, written up, printed, and sent out to members.
- Publicity brochures and posters were printed and distributed throughout New Zealand.
- The Standards of Practice for Diversional Therapists were finalised.
- The NZSDT became a member of the “Enhancing Potential” Industry Training Organisation. Judy Cooper, President of NZSDT and members of the Executive continued to meet with representatives of Polytechnics and Education Providers to discuss the NZSDT Qualification for Diversional Therapists and the delivery of the courses.

The Executive Committee decided that the NZSDT should be responsible for an Annual Two-Day Conference, to replace the Forum previously arranged by the Manawatu Polytechnic and the annual one-day AGM / Seminar conducted by the Society.

The first of these two-day conferences was hosted by Upper Hutt in March 1996. Of significance at this Conference was the announcement that Official notice had been received from NZQA that the National Certificate of Diversional Therapy was registered on the Qualifications Framework, 20 August 1996.

Also, of significance at this Conference:

The following Policies and Procedures were approved by the Executive Committee, on 25 August 1996:

- Membership
- National Society's Responsibility to Members
- Regional Group
- Resource Provision
- General
- Fundraising
- National Newsletter
- Policy and Procedure Review

NZSDT Members Handbook printed, available to members April 1997 with contents:

- The Society's Philosophy
- NZSDT Role
- Members Policy
- Members Responsibilities
- Membership Information
- The Code of Ethics
- The Standards of Practice of the New Zealand Society of Diversional Therapists
- The Constitution and Rules (These were amended in June 1998 and again in 1999)

2000 – 2001

By April 2000, the National Certificate of Diversional Therapy had risen from 91 to 121 units at Level Four on the NZQA Framework.

Also at this time, our Patron, Judy Cooper, received the CNZM (Companion of the Order) in the Queen's Birthday honours for her services to the elderly and education.

At the 2001 Conference in Wellington, it was decided that trainees should be members of the Society for two continuous years before accessing the Qualified Badge and Certificate.

A 5 Year Strategic Plan for the Society was formulated and accepted by the Executive, in December 2001.

A Society Website was launched in August 2001, www.diversionaltherapy.org.nz. This was later changed to www.diversionaltherapy.net.nz

2002 – 2004

The conference in Christchurch saw the following changes:

A contract which was signed between CSSITO, Motivational Therapy, and the Society in June 2001 was re-signed in April 2002.

The Society Philosophy was amended to add the words "Cultural," "Psychosocial" and "Sexual." The Society Standards of Practice, Standard One had added: "The

Diversional Therapist is accountable for ensuring that the physical, intellectual, psychosocial, cultural, spiritual, sexual and emotional needs are met.”

The Constitution had a new clause added –

Qualified Badge

1. The Qualified Badge belongs to the Society and shall be issued when all documentation is received and approved. This badge is for people who have completed their Qualification only.
2. A Member may be issued with the Qualified Badge, which does not constitute Registration status.
3. Registration of a Qualified Diversional Therapist will be accepted by the procedure set out in the Registration Handbook which may be subject to change from time to time and will be published.

The Rule Book was numbered accordingly, and a Mission Statement was agreed upon,

“To improve the Quality of Life of the People in our care through Diversional Therapy.”

Liability Insurance was investigated and approved by the executive of the Society. The Society Logo was registered as Copyright for the Society. A Professional Accountability document was drawn up and accepted by the executive and distributed to all members and interested groups.

2005 – 2009

May 2005 Conference – Wellington

At this Conference the following amendment was made to the Constitution:

- a) A new executive shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting of the Society and shall take office after the meeting.
- (b) Nominations for the executive must be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least six weeks before the date of the Annual General Meeting.
- (c) The Secretary shall circulate the list of nominees to the Members four weeks before the Annual General Meeting.
- (d) If insufficient nominations are received in writing 6 weeks before the annual General Meeting and/or if the persons nominated in writing 6 weeks before the meeting do not receive sufficient votes to be elected, nominations may be taken from the floor.

By December 2005, significant changes were being made to our qualifications. A report on that review follows:

NZSDT did their best to work alongside the ITO for the re-writing of the unit standards given the NZQA requirements had changed considerably since the last review. New details of the updated Diversional Therapy Certificate were published in the first newsletter of 2006.

The former “new” qualification gave people more choices and options. During the review process, it became obvious that Diversional Therapists were being asked to work in other areas such as the disability sector and the community and no longer just in residential care facilities.

The increase in people accessing training, the increase in qualified Diversional Therapists applying for national registration, the increase in membership, and the increase in attendees at our National Conference most definitely highlighted industry support of the Diversional Therapist role and this training.

2005 was the beginning of the growth of Diversional Therapists working outside aged care facilities. Diversional Therapists began working in day-cares, working in head injury organisations, working with people with disabilities and mental health.

Support workshops were delivered for Diversional Therapists in training with CSSITO and professional development workshops were also delivered to support those already qualified and seeking for registration renewal. Specialist workshops were facilitated nationally. Demand ensured that further workshops covering identified topics were planned for 2006, notification of these were in the newsletter and regional support groups were asked to contribute. Training also included Human Services Workshops. NZSDT had eleven assessors (qualified and registered Diversional Therapists) who have also registered assessors and can mark most of the Support of the Older Person units and the Dementia units.

2010 – 2019

In **2010** a lot of discussions took place around considering Memorandum of Understanding with Australia. The National Conference took place in Auckland at the Rydges Hotel this year and was named, Sailing Together in Friendship.

In **2011** the National Conference was moved to Nelson after the impact of the 2011 Christchurch Earthquake made it impossible to host the National Conference in Christchurch.

Up till **2011** national registration renewals were done annually but was changed in the constitution in 2011 for members to renew their license bi-annually. During an Executive round table meeting in Wellington, it was decided that people must be employed as a Diversional Therapist to retain Registration for a minimum of 20 hours per month.

The new Registered Badge became available to Registered Diversional Therapists. On the **27th of September 2011**, we reached a milestone when we opened our first ever Society Facebook social media public page.

In **2012** the National Conference was hosted on the Kapiti Coast and was held at El Rancho, Waikanae. The first Calendar Planner designed exclusively for Diversional Therapists was designed printed and sold to all society members. These were available for the first time at the 2012 conference.

2013 saw these important happenings, noted in minutes:

- National Conference held at Kingsgate Hotel, Hamilton.
- First correspondence to contact the Australian Secretary of the Diversional Therapy Society, to establish a possible working relationship with them.
- First contact from a UNITEC consultant about a possible Degree in Diversional Therapy, being available through distance learning, in the future.
- First Cultural Advisor for the NZSDT Inc appointed.
- First successful survey to members of the Society sent out

In **2014** a major step was taken in the signing of the first ever Memorandum of Understanding with Diversional Therapy Australia. Society was looking for a closer working relationship with our counterpart to bring better benefits for both societies and allow members to flow freely between countries as the level of education becomes recognised.

A consultant from UNITEC addressed conference attendees about the possibility of a degree in Diversional Therapy in the future.

The Aged Care Association invited NZSDT Inc. to present at their Wellington conference and advertise the Society alongside other national and international exhibitors.

Kauri Academy contacted the Society about a possible Level 7 qualification in Diversional Therapy, thus taking the possibility of the Diversional Therapy qualification to a higher level.

In **2015** the National Conference took place at the Rendezvous Grand Hotel in Auckland. For the first time in the Society's history, we welcomed the Presidents of Diversional Therapy Australia and the President of Diversional Therapy Japan at our National Conference.

Two new brochures printed to go out to all members attending this conference:

- A Support Group Brochure underlining the importance of Support Groups – this brochure helps support groups run their meeting and keep in line with The New Zealand Diversional Therapy Society Inc.
- A NZSDT Inc Brochure that highlights the role of the Society

The process for Executive Board Members' election was changed at this AGM. Up until **2015** the process was that nominated Board Members were present in the room at the time of voting, which took place during the AGM and all members attending could see how people voted. Members proposed that the voting is by way of a ballot or that nominated members leave the room while voting is in progress. Ballot voting was accepted in **2015**.

In **2016** the National Conference was held at the Marlborough Convention Centre in Blenheim. Important developments took place during 2016, such as:

- A consultation with the Career force regarding the new Level 4 qualification to replace the current Diversional Therapy qualification took place.

- The new qualification to be known as Community Facilitation, was ratified by NZQA, and was introduced as part of an apprenticeship scheme and run alongside the current qualification.
- The Executive Board decided that there was no longer the need to do Police Vetting for qualified Diversional Therapists applying for registration from **2016** onwards, as they would have been Police Vetted to get a job as a Diversional Therapist.

During this time there were necessary upgrades to the Society website. The main society website began storing full details of members' forms, details on education and registration, regional events and contacts, conferences, members' handbooks, links to job sites, training providers, policy documents and the society's other websites. The Society's news was updated monthly on the front page of the website.

In **2017** the National Conference was held at the Brentwood Hotel in Wellington. We had strong education developments such as:

- Career force transition from the National Certificate in Diversional Therapy Level 4 to the Career Force Apprenticeship in Health and Wellbeing (Community Facilitation) took place.
- UNITEC – Bachelor in Diversional Therapy consultant work began.
- WINTEC (Waikato Institute of Technology) consulted the Society about a possible level 4 NZ Cert in Health and Wellbeing (Social and Community)

NZSDT Inc. applied for the first time for the Associate membership with Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand which provides the opportunity for a greater collective voice to those Allied Health, Scientific and Technical organisations. The application was denied.

The equal pay settlement was reached, raising wages for care workers in residential aged care, disability support services and home services. Diversional Therapists are covered by the settlement.

On the 5th of August 2017, the name New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapists Incorporated (NZSDRT Inc.) was adopted by members of the Society members at the AGM.

The name of the therapist was now known as 'Diversional and Recreational Therapist,' and the field 'Diversional and Recreational Therapy.'

It was also decided that the term for sitting on Executive Board be changed from a 1-year term to a two-year term. Therefore, Executive Board members serve a maximum of up to six years continuously instead of the current five years.

In **2018** the National Conference was held at the Rydges Hotel in Christchurch. The NZSDT Inc rebranded itself to NZSDRT Inc officially on the 11th of May 2018. The sole change was the addition of the word **Recreation** making it the **New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapy Incorporated (NZSDRT Inc.)**

NZSDRT Inc. endorsed the new Careerforce qualification, which is now recognised as having specific Diversional and Recreational Therapy modules and meets the

requirements for anyone wanting to become a Registered Diversional and Recreational Therapist.

The new qualification is the Apprenticeship in Health and Well-being (Social and Community Services) Community Facilitation with a strand specialising in Diversional Therapy.

A new member badge was created for new members of the Society and the registration badge was updated with the new Recreation word on it.

The NZSDRT Inc. updated logo was redesigned and fully registered under the Intellectual Property Office New Zealand (IPONZ).

The NZSDRT Inc. name was also updated in Te Reo Māori.

A new lawyer and an accountant were appointed to support NZSDRT Inc.'s interests. At the end of **2018**, an interim National Strategic Advisor was also appointed to help NZSDRT Inc. to review the current status of the Society.

On December **2018** a new NZSDRT Inc. website was created to reflect on changes in the industry. The Facebook page @NZSDT was updated to @NZSDRT.

Judy Cooper retired as the patron of NZSDRT Inc.

One of the most important decisions that was made in **2018** through the Treasury Department, was to stop charging small percentages for members joining before the end of the financial year which was causing a lot of confusion. Members will now just pay each year as per joining day as a member.

At the end of **2018**, NZQA approved the first bachelor's degree in Diversional Therapy through UNITEC. However, due to this institution's financial challenges this degree has not been delivered yet.

The new government announced the creation of a new super Polytechnic, with this lays the opportunity to have a new degree in Diversional Therapy as part of the new vocational education system.

Tauranga was confirmed for the **2019** Conference; however, they ended up withdrawing, and Auckland decided to host this national event.

2019

In 2019 the National Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Auckland. This year brought great and positive changes for NZSDRT Inc. such as:

- The NZSDRT Inc. National Excellence Award was introduced for the first time
- A full review of the Society accounts revealed NZSDRT Inc. had outstanding fees and this was sorted in a very successful way at the end of 2019
- NZSDRT Inc. became GST registered
- The NZSDRT Inc. became a member of Nga Pou Mana – Māori Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand, which will help promote the importance of our profession even more and learn better ways to support Maori clients and

enhance Kaupapa Maori in the DRT approach. The Society appointed a Society Māori Cultural Advisor, who will seek support from local Iwi and Hapu to develop proper guidelines for our practice.

NZSDRT Inc. Executive Board Members were advocating for Diversional and Recreational Therapy across many local and international communities by speaking or doing presentations on international platforms, for example, the International Conference on Wellbeing & Public Policy at the New Zealand Parliament, the New Zealand Association of Gerontology Conference, the Diversional and Recreational Therapy Australia Conference, the Australia Association of Gerontology, and the Aged Care Conference New Zealand among many others.

During **2019** NZSDRT Inc. developed strong relationships with our counterparts in the USA, Canada, Australia, Japan, South Africa, Italy, Spain, China, South Korea, Sweden, and the UK. The NZSDRT Inc. are members of the Recreational Therapy International Coalition where they have been accessing great support from people like the Executive Director for the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification in the USA and Dr Jerome Singleton who specialises in Ageing, Recreation and Leisure Studies and has developed many RT studies across universities overseas.

The NZSDRT Inc. launched a new website and our social media evolved from 500 followers to almost 1500 in less than one year, with people visiting the Facebook page from 70 countries around the globe.

Mailchimp was introduced to keep members in contact instead of sending multiple e-mails and messages.

For the first time, online education was introduced to all our members by offering CEU (Continued Education Units) through webinars for all our members.

Executive Board meetings were moved from Face-to-face meetings to online meetings which helped to bring financial stability to NZSDRT Inc. and the ability to invest in members' education and other important financial aspects.

NZSDRT Inc entered a partnership with Canine Friends.

The NZSDRT Inc. developed stronger relationships with institutions interested in developing micro-credentials for DT studies as well as the possibility of another Level 4 that anyone in NZ will be able to access. The Society has been looking into the possibility of reactivating the NZQA degree that has been approved through Unitec, which is currently on hold. At the same time, some discussions have taken place with Academics from the UOA and AUT around the importance of more Diversional and Recreational Therapy studies in Aotearoa.

For the first time in the history of the Society, we welcomed a representative from the United States (NAAP – International Director), Australia (DRTA – President) and Japan (DTAJ – President) at our National Conference. We signed two new MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the National Association for Activity Professionals (NAAP) in the USA and the Diversional Therapy Association of Japan (DTAJ).

Members called for a Special General Meeting (SGM) during the annual AGM, as time did not allow us to go over all the Remits, that were proposed for 2019. The SGM was held on the 6th of December 2019 at the Archer Leisure Centre in Christchurch.

A full review of the 26 submitted Remits to update the constitution and make more changes was taken, resulting in remits 1 – 25 passed and remit 26 did not pass. These remits revamped the NZSDRT Inc. Constitution and were the new foundation for all NZSDRT Inc. policies and procedures.

Life member numbers were increased from 5 – 10. It was also agreed that the Society is to develop clear guidelines for nominating life members.

It was also agreed that Support Groups are welcome to have their Logo branched with the main NZSDRT Inc Logo should they wish to do so.

Sharon Kelly was appointed the new Patron of NZSDRT Inc.

2020 - 2023

National Conference due to be hosted on the West Coast was cancelled by the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic.

NZQA approached the Society to do a full review of the current five specific DT Unit Standards.

This was the first time in the history of NZSDRT Inc. that an AGM and election for the Registration Board and the Executive Board were hosted online.

Near to 100 online educational sessions such as online training and webinars were offered to members of the Society during this year as a response to keep members engage, connected and learning new ways to deliver programs during the national lockdown.

NZSDRT Inc. entered two new MOU (Memorandum of Understandings) with the Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association (CTRA) and the National Association of Activity Professionals in the UK (NAPA).

Internationally, NZSDRT Inc. now holds a Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) with similar peak bodies in different countries in which the role of the Diversional and Recreational Therapist or equivalent exists. Only New Zealand Registered Diversional and Recreational Therapists who hold a current licence to practice are recognised under current MoUs in the United States with the National Association of Activity Professionals (NAAP), in the United Kingdom with the National Activities Provider Association (NAPA), in Canada with the Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association (CTRA), in Japan with the Diversional Therapy Association of Japan (DTAJ) and the newly renamed Australian Therapeutic Recreation Association (ARTA).

NZSDRT Inc. continues an active member of the Recreational Therapy International Coalition, where we were able to access great support from people like the Executive Director for the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification in the USA.

On 7 November 2020, the first A-rehia Rangatira Hui (The Global Recreational Therapy) leaders meeting took place via Zoom. This is the first time that leaders from

all the known current and well-established therapy peak bodies met. Representatives from CTRA, NAPA, NAAP, DTAJ, DRTA, NZSDRT Inc. and the ATRA met for the first time to discuss global collaboration.

In 2020 after many failed attempts, NZSDRT Inc. finally became a full member of Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand (AHANZ). This milestone brought national recognition to our profession and particularly to Registered Diversional and Recreational Therapists as Allied Health Professionals.

During the pandemic, there was a growth of Registered Diversional and Recreational Therapists moving into private practice or private consultancy. NZSDRT Inc. reminded members that the society only endorses those with a licence to practice.

To mark 28 years of the Society and to lift members' spirits during the global pandemic and lockdowns executive decided to gift a voucher worth \$300 to a Registered member raising great awareness about the importance of therapeutic recreation in the community.

At the **2020** Annual General Meeting, it was announced that the society was now fully adopting a **Virtual Registration and Renewal process**, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Registration changed from bi-annual to annual requirements to meet Allied Health requirements. It was confirmed that from the 1st of September **2020**, anyone applying for Registration will be granted a 12-month practising License (National Registration). The renewal system points were updated from 20 – only 10 to reflect the appropriate changes.

Registration dates were merged with membership joining dates to have a more efficient and sustainable system in place for all members.

New Conference planners were designed, and it was decided that only Registered Diversional and Recreational Therapists will get a free copy if attending the annual conference. The history booklet is given for free to all financial members attending the conference.

Elections took place online for the first time in the history of the society, with 122 members voting to elect a new Registration Board and Executive Board. New board members can be re-elected every two years, and there is not a specific term in which they must finish now.

The new Constitution with all the amendments was passed and was fully ratified.

A letter to all members of parliament was sent during National Diversional Therapy Week to raise awareness of the importance of Diversional and Recreational Therapy in Aotearoa.

A letter to all Aged Care employers was sent to explain the importance of having fully Qualified and Registered practitioners in their workplaces.

For the first time, NZSDRT Inc. hosted a meeting with the Correction System Leaders to discuss the importance of having Diversional and Recreational Therapists working in this area as part of their new Human Rights approach.

A letter regarding the importance of delivering the Diversional Therapy Degree through the new Vocational reform of the “Super Polytechnic” or Te Pūkenga was sent to the Minister of Education.

Only 20 Diversional and Recreational Therapists retire in **2020** and although they are no longer Registered or eligible to be full or associate members, they continued as friend members of NZSDRT Inc.

According to the Census, the number of Diversional Therapists in New Zealand rose from 1008 in 2013 to 1608 in 2018. By **2020** this figure was expected to increase dramatically due to the Government Apprenticeship scheme in which people working in the industry were now eligible to access the DT qualification for free.

The demand for more Diversional and Recreational Therapists working in Mental Health, DHB, private practice and the disability sector keeps growing.

The Careers Government website has not updated the information regarding Diversional and Recreational Therapy Jobs and members can refer to the website to assess current DRT salary levels in the country.

The NZSDRT Inc. became a member of the End Loneliness Coalition and attended the first Strategic meeting in Wellington in November.

As a full member of AHANZ, the Executive decided to participate in research conducted by NZIER, which will generate a foundation document about the status of Allied Health in the country.

We engaged with a new Web Developer and Designer to revamp the NZSDRT Inc. website.

NZSDRT Inc. entered agreements or approved different educational providers in New Zealand and Internationally in the delivery of Recreational Therapy degrees or training to enhance DRT's skills. Some of them include:

- The International Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners – USA
- Active Care Coaching – UK
- Chair One Fitness – USA
- The Grief Centre – NZ
- Silver Rainbow – NZ
- Engaged Lifestyle Solutions – Canada
- Diversity Institute – NZ
- Evolve Online Learning – USA
- Linked Senior Webinars – USA
- Bachelor of Health Science – Recreational Therapy – Australia
- Bachelor of Science – Recreational Therapy – USA
- Centre for Applied Dementia Research – USA
- Mobile Health – NZ
- Stronger U Senior Fitness – USA

By the end of **2020**, NZSDRT Inc. kept growing to almost 700 members and close to 200 Diversional and Recreational Therapists with a National License to practice DRT.

Social media grow to 2800 followers all over the globe, highlighting how powerful social media is as a tool to market the importance of our Profession.

2021

In March 2021 Linked Senior (USA based) became a NZSDRT Inc. education provider. At the same time, Mobile Health NZ has become another education provider for Diversional and Recreational Therapists working in Aged Care across Aotearoa Julie Bakjic Smith who is based in Australia became another NZSDRT Inc. approved provider in 2021.

NZSDRT Inc. attended the first Strategic Hui facilitated by the National End Loneliness Coalition (Aged Care New Zealand) in Wellington in 2021.

NZSDRT Inc attended their first Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand (AHANZ) meeting and discussed a proposal for a review of funding and ownership options in integrated care by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER).

NZSDRT Inc. continued to work hard at establishing pathways to favour a bachelor's degree in Diversional and Recreational Therapy and finally in 2021 NZSDRT Inc. received a positive response from TePūkenga regarding our suggestion of offering a Bachelor's in Diversional and Recreational Therapy. They continue to provide updates on their work and how they are merging in 2022, NZSDRT Inc. is continuing to have discussions around the establishment of a degree study pathway in the future.

It was decided that the 2021 NZSDRT Inc. National Conference will be hosted in Taranaki and the theme for the conference will be "One Heart Taranaki".

In 2021 NZSDRT Inc. was also been able to participate (either attending or presenting) across many national and international virtual events such as; the Age Concern Conference (NZ), Alzheimer's Conference (NZ), the DRTA Conference (AU), the NAAP (UK) online symposium, NAPA (USA) webinars, DTAJ (Japan) yearly forum, ATRA (USA) Conference, CTRA (Canada) Conference, AAG (Australia) Conference, AFI (Canada) Conference, ICAA (Canada) Conference, ALSA (South Africa) Congress, University of Auckland (NZ) Presentation, Spanish Universities (Mexico/Spain), Career force (NZ) online workshops for DT Students, Kauri Academy (NZ) online lectures, Dance Symposium (NZ), The Hope Foundation (NZ) Symposium, Sporting Memories Foundation (UK) Conference, NZAPS (NZ) Forum.

In 2021 NZSDRT Inc. concentrated their time on offering support to various organisations with private education consultancy or during their local events either in person (Nelson) or virtually (Wellington), CHT, Bupa, Oceania, Ryman, Selwyn, Summerset. NZSDRT Inc. Executive Board members have also attended different meetings and forums and given NZSDRT Inc. a voice at the End Loneliness Coalition meetings, Com Voices, Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand, and Ngā Pou Mana to name but a few.

In 2021 NZSDRT Inc. established a new way of payment for their members via their website. Online credit card payment is now up and running, and the applications and payments for membership, registration and renewals can be fully done online.

NZSDRT Inc. officially entered a partnership with Florida International University in the delivery of specific Recreational Therapy CEU Courses. Conversations have been taking place for the last 12 months on how a new training modality will work for New

Zealand students and after months of discussions NZSDRT Inc. confirmed that Florida International University will launch the first online course exclusively for New Zealand Diversional and Recreational Therapists.

2022

Post Nominal Letter - It was decided in 2022 that the New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Registered Diversional and Recreational Therapists' credentials can now be placed after their name to indicate that they hold the specific accreditation as a professional Diversional and Recreational Therapy in New Zealand. Anyone who holds National DRT Registration (an annual License to practice DRT in Aotearoa) is officially recognised as an RDRTh (Registered Diversional and Recreational Therapist).

NZSDRT Inc. only approves its use for those who meet the criteria. The National Registrar is now ensuring that any Registration and Renewal includes the new Post-Nominal Letter in the official documentation.

NZSDRT Inc. Executive decided to move the 2022 conference to a virtual platform, due to the Covid-19 pandemic stopping big gatherings. NZSDRT Inc. hosted a 1.5-day online event on the 12th and 13th of August 2022. This first-ever online conference was a great success.

Wellington Support Group and the Auckland Support Group hosted virtual regional events. These online Professional Development Days were a great success. Due to the Covid-19 virus still being a threat to people's health and well-being, NZSDRT encouraged Support Groups to host their monthly support group meetings online.

In 2022 due to the Covid pandemic, NZSDRT Inc continued to support organisations by delivering Free Education for their teams and offered virtual online workshops to highlight the importance of meaningful activities to the likes of the National Bupa Team.

In 2022 NZSDRT Inc. lead the organisation of the first-ever Global International Knowledge Exchange, in which colleagues from ATRA, CTRA, NAPA, NAAP, DRTA and DTAJ delivered daily presentations to celebrate International Recreational Therapy Month (February).

International Knowledge Exchange (2022 IKE)

In **2022** the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA), Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association (CTRA), National Association of Activity Professionals (NAAP), National Association of Activity Professionals (NAPA), Diversional and Recreational Therapy Australia (DRTA) and Diversional Therapy Association of Japan (DTAJ) came together for the first time in history to highlight the importance of recreation in the global stage.

The leaders of the main organisations in Japan, Australia, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom in charge of driving change in the culture of care using Recreational Therapy, Diversional Therapy or Activity provision decided to come together for the first time in history, to share their journey and their knowledge, and to continue to raise awareness about the importance of the work they do.

The event took place from the 21st – the 27th of February 2022 to close International Recreational Therapy Month Celebrations. These leaders hosted daily 1 Hr presentations and discussed topics that included the history of their organisations, their definition of recreation, their current priorities, education, job titles, programs or activities they use, sectors they are involved with, and much more.

As there was no actual graduation ceremony in 2022, all Diversional Therapists who have become Registered from August 2021 until 30th May 2023 will be eligible to graduate during the 2023 National Conference.

In 2022 NZSDRT Inc. Executive Board made the decision that moving forward, no conference bids will be accepted. From 2022 onwards, NZSDRT Inc. Executive Board will oversee selecting the venue for all the upcoming National Conferences. NZSDRT Inc. will open the opportunity to any Regional Support Group or individual interested in supporting the event, and Diversional and Recreational Therapists across the country will be welcome to be part of the organising committee.

NZSDRT Inc. President Orquidea Tamayo Mortera became elected to the Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand Executive Board, allowing for the first time in history to have Diversional and Recreational Therapists at the national level discussions regarding Allied Health.

The first ever New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Executive Board Strategic Planning Session took place in October 2022.

In 2022 the Kalandra Education Group announced that in partnership with the New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapists Inc., they will offer the New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Social and Community Services) (Level 4) strand in Diversional Therapy and continue to develop further qualifications at level 5 and above. Fantastic news to respond directly to industry needs and to offer programmes that reflect the professionalism, complexity, and breadth of this role. Working together also assists the Society to become more aligned to international standards, providing their members with increased knowledge, skills and working opportunities.

NZSDRT Inc. was a sponsor for the Kaumātua Service Providers Conference, and we got to deliver two presentations regarding the use of therapeutic recreation.

Pasifika Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand extended an invitation to NZSDRT Inc. to attend their Auckland symposium for the first time.

Patron, Sharon Kelly stepped down, and to date, this role has not been filled again. Discussions will be taken place in 2023 about the Patron role moving forward.

It was announced by the government that a new Incorporated Societies Act 2022 will enter fully into force in October 2023. Consequently, NZSDRT Inc. will be working in partnership with the lawyer to ensure we review our Constitution which must be compliant with new requirements under the 2022 Act, and get ready for re-registration of our society on time.

In December 2022 NZSDRT Inc. attended a hui with Minister Little at Parliament. The theme of the hui was focused on the Health Workforce Dialogue. The hui aimed to address workforce pressures in health.

2023

In 2023 NZSDRT Inc. became a partner to Project Village and hosted a trade table during their opening day in Porirua. Project Village is a community project supporting the ageing community. This is a new initiative to encourage and support primary caregivers and families caring for their loved ones to use recreation to connect in a meaningful way. Through the project, families receive a Wellbeing Activity Bag with fun activities to bring families together through recreation and reduce depression and loneliness. This organisation is looking for to officially develop the role of the Community Diversional and Recreational Therapist in New Zealand.

NZSDRT Inc. has been actively participating in the bi-monthly Allied Health workshops led by Dr Martin Chadwick (he/him). Te Āpiha Hauora Haumi (Chief Allied Health Professions Officer) from Ngā Āpiha Hauora (Chief Clinical Officer).

This year we are working to develop a new NZSDRT Inc. National Strategy Plan.

NZSDRT Inc. is one of the sponsors for the New Zealand Gerontology Conference.

This year we attended the Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association (CTRA) Virtual Conference to support our Canadian friends and to share ideas.

NZSDRT Inc. attended the American Therapeutic Recreational Association (ATRA) Virtual Interprofessional Brain Injury Summit to support our American friends.

NZSDRT Inc. attended the in-person National Association of Activity (NAAP) Professionals in Reno Nevada, USA. We were able to share knowledge during this event with many people.

NZSDRT Inc. President was elected as the Co-Chair of Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand Executive Board, a very proud achievement for all Diversional and Recreational Therapists in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

We participated in a Podcast with Engaged in Rec in Canada and discussed our position from the therapeutic recreation point of view. An episode that was well-received internationally.

Extensive upgrades to the NZSDRT Inc. website are being incorporated and put in place. The website is now easier for members and others to navigate their enquiries around. Maintenance and upgrade to the website will be an ongoing project for 2023.

NZSDRT Inc. attended the Strategy Consultation Session AHANZ, Ngā Pou Mana and PAHANZ in May 2023.

We attended the Launch of World Leisure Day 2023 online.

Education sessions have been delivered for Diversional and Recreational Therapy students from Careerforce and Kalandra Academy.

NZSDRT Inc. Board members continue to support and encourage in-person support group meetings across the country. Board members have been delivering education for support groups.

Webinars regarding the National Registration, Renewals and Regional Support Groups have been taking place during this year.

The careers.govt.nz website updated details regarding the name Diversional and Recreational Therapist.

We participated in the Ministry of Health consultation for the Health of Disabled People Strategy, and the Health and Quality Commission's diverse focus groups on Health and Wellbeing.

We have supported Te Pou to develop one of their new Wellbeing videos, which is available on their website.

We have been supporting different companies by presenting during their internal professional development days across the country.

We have continued to attend the Mate wareware advisory board meetings each month online, and our contributions are focused on therapeutic recreation.

We have continued to support the University of Auckland professors to spread the delivery of the Ronnie Gardiner Method and Cognitive Stimulation Therapy training among Diversional and Recreational Therapists.

Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice are currently under review and the new documents are expected to be presented at the 2023 AGM.

New Virtual Logo for Licensed DRThs was launched.

We continue to build stronger relationships with our friends from NAPA, ATRA, CTRA, DTAJ, ARTA and NAAP, with the International Knowledge Exchange taking place this year in October; more details will come at the end of August 2023.

We are seeking to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the American Therapeutic Recreation (ATRA) Association this year.

The updated Constitution will be released during the 2023 AGM, which covers all the necessary items for re-registration under the NZ Society Act 2022.

NZSDRT Inc National Conference – In August 2023 the 27th Conference is taking place in Wellington. The conference theme is: 'Wānanga ki te manawa o Aotearoa- te tangata, te tikanga, te wawata' - Meeting at the heart of New Zealand: People, Purpose, and Passion.

Footnote: Discussions will continue with the aim of ensuring the retention and creation of meaningful qualifications for Diversional and Recreational Therapists. Those people presently undertaking a study to become a Diversional and Recreational Therapist should understand that qualifications exist in their present form due to the commitment and dedication of Diversional and Recreational Therapists who are truly committed to our cause.