Oral health and nutrition: collaboration supports better health - Media release

To achieve better outcomes for Australia's nutrition and oral health, it's vital Accredited Practising Dietitians and oral health professionals work together.

That's one of the key messages shared in the Oral Health and Nutrition Joint Position Statement by Dietitians Australia and Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV), released today.

"Teeth and mouths have an important function, ensuring people are able to eat food and meet their nutrient requirements across the lifespan," said DHSV Chief Executive Officer Sue McKee.

"But too much or not enough of certain foods can increase the risk of gum disease and tooth decay and this is where support from both nutrition and oral health professionals can be beneficial."

Oral health and nutrition have a bidirectional relationship, and this statement identifies key markers across the different stages of life where collaboration and cross-referral need to take place.

The statement also identifies areas where the disciplines can collaborate to enhance their research, knowledge and practice, as well as advocate for joint public health initiatives.

"Malnutrition is one example of a condition that is both a consequence and cause of poor oral health," said Dietitians Australia Chief Executive Officer Robert Hunt.

“Collaboration between dietitians and oral health professionals means we can more effectively stop malnutrition in its tracks – and improve the quality of life for those most effected.”

The position statement has been endorsed by the Australia Dental and Oral Health Therapists’ Association, Oral Health Services Tasmania, Dental Hygienists Association of Australia and Deakin University. These agencies, as well as the Department of Health Victoria and the Australian Dental Association contributed to the development of this resource.

To highlight real-world examples of the positive outcomes of this collaboration, Dietitians Australia is hosting a complimentary webinar on Wednesday 1 December 2021.

A range of speakers will share their experiences to demonstrate how collaboration between dietitians, nutrition and oral health professionals can help support the health of Australians.

Register for this upcoming webinar via the Dietitians Australia ‘Oral Health and Nutrition’ events webpage. Registrations close Monday 29 November 2021.

Read the Joint Position Statement via Dietitians Australia’s website and the Dental Health Services Victoria website.

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Media enquiries

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Note to editors: Dietitians Australia is the leading voice of nutrition in Australia, representing dietitians nationally and advocating for healthier communities. Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia.