Dietitians welcome new national eating disorder strategy

Dietitians Australia welcomes the government's commitment to supporting Australians experiencing eating disorders and disordered eating.

Launched yesterday by the Federal Government, the Australian Eating Disorder Research and Translation Strategy 2021–2031 will guide research to transform clinical care for those experiencing eating disorders.

Robert Hunt, CEO of Dietitians Australia, says this 10-year strategy will provide much needed support to address an illness that has only worsened with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Since the start of the pandemic, we've seen a 300% increase in Australians seeking dietetic eating disorder services through Medicare. This number alone is enough to highlight just how necessary a national focus towards this complex psychiatric illness, is," said Robert.

"With more than 4 million Australians experiencing an eating disorder or disordered eating, greater research and translation of findings into practice will drive an increased understanding of the illness and innovations in care."

Eating disorders and disordered eating are multifaceted illnesses that can affect anyone across their lifespan. The Strategy identified 10 priority areas for further research to ensure best practice. These included areas such as prevention, early intervention and health promotion.

"Dietitians have the unique skills to support Australians in eating disorders prevention, early intervention and to provide evidence-informed treatment at all stages of the illness within a

multidisciplinary team," said Robert.

"Challenging restrictive eating practices, exploring food beliefs and dispelling nutrition misinformation are just a few examples of how dietitians support Australians to develop a positive relationship with eating and food."

The 10-year strategy was developed by the InsideOut Institute, and included a national consultation process where Dietitians Australia provided comment.

"We look forward to being involved in this strategy to help improve the lives of Australians experiencing eating disorders and support the prevention of this mental health illness," said Robert.

ENDS

Media enquiries

For media enquiries and interviews, contact our Media Officer on 0409 661 920.

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.