Minister Colbeck opens #DA2021: Dietitians vital to transform aged care - Media release

Senator the Honourable Richard Colbeck, Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services, today shared how dietitians are a key part in creating generational change in aged care to ensure older Australians are adequately nourished.

In his opening address to Dietitians Australia National Conference delegates, Minister Colbeck highlighted how dietitians had stepped forward, and shown 'What's Possible?' for the future of nutrition in aged care.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care identified food and nutrition as a key area requiring immediate attention. Minister Colbeck noted that Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) are vital in supporting residential aged care homes to report on how the new Basic Daily Fee Supplement ($10 per resident per day) is being used to improve the quality of their dining experience.

Robert Hunt, CEO of Dietitians Australia, says good food is a key part of ensuring respect, care and dignity is provided to those in aged care.

"We're committed to working with the Federal Government to ensure every older Australian has access to, and is able to enjoy nutritious, tasty food that is suitable for their needs," said Robert.

“There’s a real need to reinvent the food served in aged care homes, so we can transform both the physical and mental health of older people.”

“Dietitians already work with chefs, care staff, and the whole aged care team to help achieve this, but there’s plenty more work to be done.”

To help guide change, Dietitians Australia has been actively advocating on aged care issues.

“Over the past six months, we’ve developed eight position papers on key nutrition issues in aged care and represented dietitians at the Department of Health’s Congress on Food, Nutrition and the Dining Experience,” said Robert.

“We’ve also created the Menu and Mealtime Quality Assessment Tool, to support APDs to provide aged care homes with an expert analysis of their nutrition care, menu and mealtime experience, in line with quality standards.”

Today marks the opening of the largest virtual gathering of dietitians in Australia, as nutrition professionals from across the globe connect to talk about the latest in dietetics.

Aged care is one of the many areas of practice being discussed at the conference.

“Dietitians have the skills to make an impact across the aged care sector. This is clear from the range of research presented today, covering topics like community-based meal deliveries, and developing innovative ways to approach nutrition management of older Australians,” said Robert.

This is just one example of how the conference program addresses the theme ‘What’s Possible?’. Over the next two days a range of local and international keynote speakers and researchers will inspire delegates to transform, reinvent and diversify their practice.

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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.