Dietitians Australia

Indigenous nutrition role statement

This role statement was developed by members of the Indigenous Nutrition Interest Group.

It lists the knowledge and skills of an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) working in the area of Indigenous nutrition.

Knowledge

- Awareness of deficit discourse and how this can influence health, wellbeing, educational attainment, identify formation and forms of external and internal racism
- Recognising impact of common issues faced in remote Indigenous communities (such as domestic violence, trauma, loss of identity) on health and wellbeing and the value of strengths-based approaches and the benefit of its application
- Community-specific knowledge including but not limited to family groups, local history, facilities, traditional foods, cultural food practices, resources available and major community barriers and enablers

Skills

- Ability to value and embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge and work with clients and community and colleagues to jointly identify opportunities and initiate solutions to improve health outcomes as part of culturally responsive practice
- Ability to be inclusive, effective, sensitive and responsive to the cultural, linguistic and spiritual needs of clients and communities
- Ability to work in collaboration with local organisations including working with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health staff and cultural liaison officers to ensure cultural safety and awareness for local communities
- Advocate for the community including engaging local stores, schools, non-government organisations, stakeholders and policy makers to encourage provision of nutritious food

and create environments conducive to healthy living
- Ability to practice across a number of different settings including remote communities (clinics, aged care, HD satellite units) in a multi-disciplinary team (GPs, nurses, specialist, optometrists, podiatrists, mental health, health workers) and manage complex conditions in isolated and resource poor environments
- Undertake ongoing reflection of one's own culture, values, attitudes and biases and how these contribute to professional practice in the Indigenous nutrition setting with both clients and colleagues.

Activities entry level APDs would conduct

- Provide individualised medical nutrition therapy for low complexity cases within skill and experience level and consult with an APD experienced in Indigenous nutrition until further training/upskilling has been undertaken. For example, may require assistant with complex Indigenous patients on dialysis, patients with diabetes requiring insulin or patients with GDM.

Activities APDs working at a higher level would conduct

- Provide individualised medical nutrition therapy for complex cases (for example, difficult to engage clients with mental health issues, social issues and multiple comorbidities)
- Manage multi-strategy nutrition projects and programs, that may include supervising staff, liaising with funding bodies and key stakeholders, developing journal articles and presenting at conferences
- Contribute to building workforce capacity by supervising university students in Indigenous nutrition and mentoring students and staff in strengths-based approaches with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, upskilling non-nutrition positions in providing training or strengthening nutrition knowledge and application
- Contribute to building workforce capacity by participating in peer mentoring with colleagues of similar level of experience and utilising mentorship to continue learning in nutrition, research, cultural knowledge, management in the Indigenous nutrition context.

For more, download the full role statement. The full statement includes a list of document references.

Get in touch

If you have questions about this role statement, contact us at policy@dietitiansaustralia.org.au

The role of an Accredited Practising Dietitian

Our role statements describe the skills and knowledge of an APD working in an area of practice.

Seeing a dietitian in Australia

Dietitians treat a range of health conditions. They understand how nutrition affects the body and will give you expert nutrition and dietary advice.