Australia eating its way to a sick planet - Media release

Six and a half planet Earths would be needed to produce food by 2050 if the world were to adopt Australia's eating habits.

A recently published position statement by Dietitians Australia revealed that as the planet's health continues to decline, so too does the health of Australians, as our country favours quantity over quality when it comes to food.

Dietitians Australia is calling on the government for urgent intervention by strategically planning the nation's food systems in favour of a sustainable, affordable and nutritious way forward.

"Australia's diet causes the highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions of all G20 countries and many of these foods are energy dense and nutrient poor, which are not needed for health," said Robert Hunt, CEO of Dietitians Australia.

"We need to shift away from just focusing on producing more food, and instead concentrate on

how we can sustainably produce nutritious food that's affordable."

Dietitians Australia believes that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge is key to sustainability into the future, and that this should be captured in a National Nutrition Strategy that supports a healthy planet.

"As a nation we must work in partnership with First Nations Peoples and respect their knowledge of caring for the land, waters and ecosystems.

"Capturing this within a National Nutrition Strategy would help lead the way for healthy and sustainable eating patterns to flow through our communities.

"The strategy could see sustainability incorporated into the Australian Dietary Guidelines and be accounted for in the meals served at hospitals, aged care homes, education centres and correctional facilities.

"It would also support the evolution of food on our supermarket shelves to meet consumer demand for healthy and sustainable options."

The report, published in *Nutrition & Dietetics*, explained how Australia and New Zealand are among the highest in rates of overweight children at 16.9%, compared to a global average of 5.7%. Obesity in adults is also extraordinarily high at 30.7%, compared to a global average of 13.2%.

Despite being considered ‘the lucky country’, 12.3% of Australians have trouble affording or accessing food, compared to a 7.6% average amongst other high-income countries. When comparing Australia's food system scorecard to those in the global arena, the report found that urgent action is required to contribute to global transformative efforts.

ENDS

For further background see PDF attachment.

Media enquiries

For further information contact Dietitians Australia media team on 0409 661 920 | media@dietitiansaustralia.org.au

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.