Funding for National Nutrition Policy one small step for government, one giant leap for Australia's health and wellbeing - Media release

Health and wellbeing advocates from around the nation are applauding the Federal Government's acknowledgement of the need for a National Nutrition Policy framework to strategically address the ailing health of Australians.

Last night's federal budget announced $700k over four years towards the development of a National Nutrition Policy, a much-welcomed step in the right direction that President of Dietitians Australia, Tara Diversi commends.

"This is one small step for the government, and one giant leap for the health and wellbeing of Australians," Tara said.

“Australia last updated its national nutrition policy in 1992 – which was thirty years ago.

“Since that time, the diet-related health of Australians has become worse, with statistics showing that 27 500 Australians die a preventable death each year due to eating a poor diet.

“Food insecurity is also on the rise in Australia, affecting 1 in 6 adults and 1.2 million children in 2021.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated food access issues for many Australians. Demand for emergency food relief has risen as people experience reduced income from loss of work and our supermarket shelves are going bare due to supply issues.

“And sustainable food production must be addressed with Australia’s diet causing the highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions of all G20 countries.

“These are all issues that can be tackled within the National Nutrition Policy Framework.”

Chief Executive Officer of Dietitians Australia, Robert Hunt explains how such a small investment could return dividends to the Australian economy.

“Healthcare expenditure related to unhealthy eating patterns is estimated at $1.4 billion, attributable to insufficient vegetable intake alone,” Robert said.

“Healthcare costs and lost productivity attributable to overweight and obesity is also estimated to be $8.6 billion per annum.

“While $700k is a relatively small investment into such a major issue, we’re grateful to see that the government has finally heard our calls after many years.”

Dietitians Australia along with the Public Health Association of Australia, Nutrition Australia and the Heart Foundation have long been calling on such a policy to be supported.

This funding falls as part of the implementation activities of the National Preventive Health Strategy.

ENDS

See Dietitians Australia’s Federal Budget 2022-23 submission.

See Dietitians Australia’s Position joint position statement on a National Nutrition Policy.

Robert Hunt and Tara Diversi area available for interview on request.

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.