

Indicators of poor quality: Unplanned weight loss increases in aged care despite \$350m government supplement - Media statement

Dietitians Australia is demanding more accountability from the aged care sector following the release of last week's [Residential Aged Care Quality Indicators - October to December 2021](#).

With malnutrition affecting up to 50% of people in aged care, the report shows significant unplanned weight loss has risen from 13 173 people in the quarter to June 2021, to 13 586 people in the quarter to December 2021. This is despite [\\$350 million in Government Basic Daily Fee Supplements](#) disbursed to residential aged care homes through this period.

“Last week’s report is an indicator of the poor quality of care that our older Australians continue to receive,” said Chief Executive Officer of Dietitians Australia, Robert Hunt.

“It’s evidence that the government’s money will continue to be absorbed in supplementing profits by residential aged care homes unless urgent accountability measures are put in place.”

Dietitians Australia welcomed Albanese’s \$2.5 billion aged care plan announcement last week but warns that this latest result is indication of how money will not fix the problem. The organisation believes that mandatory malnutrition screening and annual menu and mealtime audits are key to ensuring the individual health needs of older Australians are being supported.

“Malnutrition is the silent killer attacking our parents and grandparents, and it’s our duty to ensure everything is being done to prevent the suffering of our older Australians,” Robert said.

“Mandatory malnutrition screening and measures to improve the quality of meals served to people in aged care should be basic requirements throughout the sector. There should be accountability through an annual menu and mealtime audit performed by a dietitian, not the current self-evaluation.”

In response to Albanese’s pledge to ensure 24/7 nursing care is mandated in the sector, Dietitians Australia also stands by the [Australian College of Nursing](#) who is advocating for the government to support workforce solutions.

“Malnutrition increases the risk of falls, pressure injuries, hospital admissions and COVID-19 infections among other health risks and that burden currently falls on nursing staff,” Robert said.

“Dietitians can play a critical role in the aged care workforce through preventive measures by ensuring the nutritional needs of people in aged care are met.”

ENDS

Robert Hunt is available for interview.

Tally of unplanned weight loss:

Weight loss – number of care recipients	Oct – Dec 2019	Jan – March 2020	April – June 2020	July – Sept 2020	Oct – Dec 2020	Jan- March 2021	April – June 2021	July – Sept 2021	Oct- Dec 2021
Significant unplanned weight loss	14 733	16 463	13 161	13 836	14 985	14 429	13 173	12 512	13 586

Weight loss – number of care recipients	Oct – Dec 2019	Jan – March 2020	April – June 2020	July – Sept 2020	Oct – Dec 2020	Jan- March 2021	April – June 2021	July – Sept 2021	Oct- Dec 2021
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Consecutive

unplanned weight loss	15 398	14 580	12 738	13 338	15 274	14 391	12 770	13 780	14 803
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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.