Food security through nutrition policy should be main course for new Health Minister - Media statement

Australia's new Minister for Health and Aged Care, Hon. Mark Butler MP must tackle food affordability and the nation's alarming rise in diet-related illnesses through reviving the Labor government's 1992 National Nutrition Policy.

Chief Executive Officer of Dietitians Australia, Robert Hunt explained why more than 8,000 dietitians from around the nation are raising their hand to help rebuild the policy that acknowledged how sound nutrition is a vital component of health.

"27,500 Australians die a preventable death each year from an unhealthy diet," Robert said.

"And with rising costs of fresh food pushing people further toward cheaper unhealthy alternatives, we can expect diet-related risk factor health system spending to soar above the current $16.2 billion a year.

"We know Minister Butler will have a lot on his plate stepping into the job but developing a new National Nutrition Policy should be the main course to help tackle diet-related illness in Australia."

"Labor's 1992 nutrition policy was considered ahead of its time for bringing together all spheres of government to provide food and nutrition security for all Australians. Reviving that policy could be a great catalyst for change."

Dietitians Australia was pleased to see the Morrison government support the development of a National Nutrition Policy in its 2022-23 federal budget.

With the Labor government due to review the Federal Budget in October this year, Dietitians Australia is urging the new government to elevate the priority of this policy which could save billions in downstream healthcare costs.

“If it was easier for Australians to enjoy healthy foods and drinks consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines, the disease burden would be reduced by 62% for coronary heart disease, 34-38% for stroke, and 41% for type 2 diabetes,” Robert said.

Read Dietitians Australia’s position statement in support of a National Nutrition Strategy.

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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.