

Health Minister Mark Butler MP officially opens #DA2022 - Media release

Health Minister Mark Butler MP officially opened #DA2022, the largest annual gathering of professionals in nutrition and dietetics in Australia this morning in Adelaide.

Minister Butler addressed a crowd of almost 700 delegates at the Adelaide Convention Centre virtually, following a moving Welcome to Country performed by Senior Kaurna Man, Uncle Mickey Kumatpi O'Brien.

The Minister acknowledged in his opening address the appalling state of nutrition in our aged care facilities.

Dietitians Australia has been calling on the Morrison and now Albanese government to mandate malnutrition screening in aged care and for Accredited Practising Dietitians to conduct mandatory annual mealtime audits.

Minister Butler acknowledged the role of Accredited Practising Dietitians to solve the crisis in aged care.

“The Australian community was deeply shocked by the findings of the Royal Commission into aged care, that highlighted just how many of our most vulnerable Australians in aged care facilities were going without good nutrition - literally starving in their facilities,” Minister Butler said.

“There has been some work undertaken by the former government and I applaud that, but there is more to do.

“We're not going to be able to do that work without your (Dietitians Australia) support, your experience, your expertise, and your passion for this area,” The Minister affirmed.

Dietitians Australia President Tara Diversi says it was an honour to have the Minister welcome delegates and provide his sincere thanks to the profession.

“The theme of this year’s conference is Be Bold, and certainly Minister Butler’s speech covered topics that require Dietitians to stand up, be bold and take a leadership role in solving many of the Nation’s most pressing preventative health issues,” Ms Diversi said.

“We have a nutrition crisis in our aged care homes and Accredited Practising Dietitians are at the forefront of fighting for reform for our elderly loved ones.

“But our profession is at the heart of many of the other issues facing our nation – whether it be food security for First Australians who have been living with the high cost of fruit and vegetables for decades in remote Australia and a widening health gap.

“Uncle Michael O’Brien acknowledged the importance of nutritious foods for First Australians in our efforts to "close the gap" while further inspiring our delegates to consider how Indigenous principles of sustainability could be embraced.

“It was great that Minister Butler understood and acknowledged the role of Dietitians in partnering with the Government to solve the health issues facing so many Australians.

“We are looking forward to working with Minister Butler further on these issues and thank him once again for addressing our conference.

Also in attendance at the conference was Shadow Health Minister Senator Anne Ruston, who affirmed her commitment to the role of Accredited Practising Dietitians in preventative health at a Welcome Reception on Sunday.

“To ensure the sustainability of our health system (sic), it is an absolute no brainer that one place we need to be investing is (a place that makes) sure nutrition is front and foremost in the daily lives of all Australians,” Senator Ruston said.

Dietitians Australia is the leading voice in nutrition and dietetics and advocates for food and nutrition for healthier people and healthier communities; we are the national association of the dietetic profession with over 8,500 members across Australia.

Media enquiries

Adelaide Media is welcome to attend #DA2022 in person at no cost and media parking can be facilitated. Contact Media Manager Amy Phillips on 0409 661 920 to arrange.