Dietitians Australia welcomes national spotlight on improving support for eating disorders

Dietitians Australia welcomes the national spotlight on improving access to eating disorders support and treatment nationwide, brought to light by a Four Corners investigation this week.

It comes as both the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler and Assistant Minister for Mental Health Emma McBride acknowledged the urgent need to "do better" to ensure all Australians who may be at risk of or living with an eating disorder have access to the support they need.

"Every Australian deserves fair and equitable access to the support and treatment they may need for eating disorders, regardless of their postcodes," Dietitians Australia President Tara Diversi said.

"Australians with eating disorders have many different faces, anyone can experience an eating disorder or disordered eating - all genders, ages, races, ethnicities, body shapes and sizes, sexual orientations and socioeconomic statuses," Ms Diversi said.

"It's of huge concern to Dietitians Australia that as many as a fifth of Australian children are experiencing disordered eating,"

“The earlier someone with an eating disorder has access to the supports and treatment they need, including ongoing access to an accredited practising dietitian – the better,” Ms Diversi said.

“We know navigating the road to eating disorder recovery is a different experience for everyone.

“It’s important for people on this journey to be empowered and able to access a professional support network they can trust, including a GP, psychologist and dietitian who can provide the individualised approach for their unique needs.

“Recovery from an eating disorder is possible, and dietitians are a crucial part of the support network to help people rebuild a positive relationship with food.”

“Children must have access to the experts in food, accredited practising dietitians, right from their developmental years.

“We must be educating our younger Australians earlier, on how to nourish their bodies and foster them to make food choices that support their health and wellbeing.

“We would love to see more Dietitians in early childhood centres and Australian classrooms.”

“One of the major changes we’ve noticed as dietitians over the generations is the increased public awareness of the disruptive effect of disorder eating on people’s health and well-being.

“The spectrum of eating disorders now recognises binge eating disorder, making up nearly 50 per cent of eating disorder cases in Australia.

“There is also increased recognition that weight stigma is one of the central drivers of body dissatisfaction.

“We want all Australians to have a positive relationship with food and be enabled to eat in a way that allows them to live a healthy and happy life.

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For media enquiries and interviews, contact our Media Manager on 0409 661 920.

Note to Editors: Dietitians Australia is the leading voice in nutrition and dietetics 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.