A stronger dose of dietitians is needed to reduce Australia's burden of chronic disease

Dietitians Australia is strengthening its push to the Government to prioritise investment in comprehensive multidisciplinary healthcare, including nutrition care, to better support Australians living with and at risk of chronic disease.

The peak body for dietetic and nutrition professionals released its call to action to the Government as part of its ***Parliamentary Friends of Nutrition: The Power of Nutrition: The Injection Chronic Disease Needs*** event at Parliament House in Canberra this morning.

"On average, Australians live almost 11 years of their life in poor health. We aren't investing enough upstream when it comes to the prevention of chronic disease, including diet-related disease," Dietitians Australia President Tara Diversi said.

"Cardiovascular disease, diabetes, mental health and substance disorders are among the leading contributors to Australia's healthcare burden, conditions that can often be improved or even prevented with effective nutrition therapy.

"The health of Australians can benefit enormously from the support of accredited practising dietitians, through expert medical nutrition therapy, an evidence-based approach essential for managing chronic and complex conditions.

"Dietitians are skilled at empowering people, enabling long-term behaviour changes, and managing their health through nutrition, diet, and lifestyle modifications to prevent and treat

disease.

“The State of Diabetes Mellitus in Australia in 2024 Inquiry has clearly recommended that the Government fund more Medicare subsidised appointments and longer appointments for people diagnosed with diabetes to access dietitians, diabetes educators and the allied health team.

“We are calling on the Government to expedite putting this recommendation in place and expand the chronic disease management program for people diagnosed with diabetes.

“Five Medicare visits as allowed under the current program across 13 different health professions is grossly inadequate and must be urgently increased at a minimum to 12 subsidised visits.

“In 2022- 2023, the Government spent an estimated 20 billion dollars of health spending on type 2 diabetes and less than 200 million dollars on allied health.

“Even a moderate shift in investment at the prevention end of the health spectrum, including in dietetic care, has the potential to generate major shifts in the health trajectory of Australians.

“Nutrition care can reduce the need for hospital visits and helps people to recover from illness more quickly.

“We will continue to keep the pressure across Governments to ensure Australians can access the fair dosage of dietitians they need to live longer, healthier and happier lives.

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, 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.