Dietitians Australia

We can’t afford another budget cycle without strong investment in nutrition

Dietitians Australia is urging the Federal Government to provide financial subsidies for those who need nutrition and dietetic support to manage and treat their chronic conditions as a priority ahead of tonight’s 2025-2026 Federal Budget announcement.

The peak body for dietetic and nutrition professionals is calling for an urgent expansion of the Medicare Chronic Disease Management program to enable Australians who need it most to have affordable access to accredited practising dietitians for a minimum of 12 dedicated sessions a year.

The Government spends $1.18 billion annually to treat and manage chronic diseases. These chronic diseases could have been avoided or minimised through more robust nutrition investment and action.

“It makes both health and fiscal sense to start immediately investing in nutrition action,” Dietitians Australia President Dr Fiona Willer said.

“We’re calling for just a quarter of this, as an annual investment to expand Medicare access for Australians in critical need of dietetic and nutrition care under the Chronic Disease Management Program *(estimated to be $310 million per annum).

“We know Australians are making difficult decisions about the services they can afford for themselves and their families, and the Government must ensure Australians with chronic

conditions aren't forced to delay or forgo essential nutrition care due to out-of-pocket costs.

"People who live with a chronic disease and need nutrition therapy must be guaranteed affordable access to dietitians, to avoid complications and unnecessary hospitalisations.

"Investing in critical allied healthcare services that keep people out of hospitals and empower Australians to lead healthier lives cannot wait another budget cycle and must be included in this year's budget.

"We're also calling on the government to prioritise investing in the nutrition future of Australian children and ensuring their nutrition rights are protected when in early childhood education and care centres.

"Australian families need the Government to provide certainty that children in early childhood education and care settings are being provided food that is safe to consume, is socially and culturally appropriate and meets their nutritional needs in these critical years of their development.

"Daycare centres are the places where Australian children eat most of their daily meals - the Government has a responsibility to urgently strengthen food and nutrition regulation, standards and practical guidance for these centres to protect children from nutrition neglect.

"We're advocating for on-the-ground funding for accredited practising dietitians to be accessible to ensure the early childhood education sector thrives in each State and Territory, to provide support to centres to bolster food safety and nutritious menus, prioritising centres in areas of disadvantage first.

Dietitians Australia's budget calls also include guaranteeing critical dietetic and nutrition support for National Disability Insurance Scheme participants and investing in food systems action that enables Australians to eat and live well.

For more, read our full pre-budget submission.

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.