Dietitians Australia

If not now - then when? Government must make nutrition care more affordable

Government must make nutrition care more affordable and accessible for Australians to relieve pressure on the health system.

Dietitians Australia has announced its key Federal Election ask, pushing the next Government to guarantee essential nutrition care for Australians most in need to manage their chronic conditions, maintain their health and independence, and avoid unnecessary trips to the hospital.

The peak body is calling on the Government to urgently provide more affordable access to dietitians for people living with chronic diseases such as diabetes, including specific Medicare-funded services for people with these conditions to see a dietitian as needed.

It comes as new ABS data shows 1 in 15 Australian adults are now living with diabetes, and new research shows over 45 per cent of Australian adolescents are reporting a chronic health condition.

“We’re calling on all major parties to commit to reducing out-of-pocket costs for Australians with chronic conditions to access the dedicated nutrition and dietetic support they need, depending on the severity of their condition,” Dietitians Australia President Dr Fiona Willer said.

“Under our current Medicare Chronic Disease Management scheme, we know most people are only accessing around 1 session a year with a dietitian, but many chronic conditions require a minimum of 12 sessions annually.

“This should be the absolute minimum for high-quality healthcare in Australia; poor nutrition undermines even world-class medical care,” Dietitians Australia President Dr Fiona Willer said.

“It is clear - the power of nutrition is incredibly underutilised in the Australian healthcare system.

“We have millions of Australians, of all ages, who are needlessly struggling without the support of a dietitian to manage their individualised nutrition needs, which can be very complex.

“When people living with chronic conditions receive the nutrition support they need, before their conditions worsen, they are less likely to require emergency care and prolonged hospital stays.

“Whether it’s to reduce a person’s need for medications, or to deal with the side effects of a procedure on their hunger and ability to eat, to optimise their ability to absorb vital nutrients – there is a myriad of ways nutrition can and should complement medical therapy.

“Dietitians Australia welcomes the election commitments made by the major parties and independents to date to improve bulk billed access to General Practitioners to support people to get the frontline healthcare they need.

“But when Australians present to their GP at risk of or living with a range of diet-related chronic conditions, including diabetes, they deserve to also be given affordable access to an accredited practising dietitian through Medicare.

“The time has well and truly come to elevate the role of allied health professionals, including dietitians, to reduce pressure on GPs and nurses, while improving equitable and streamlined access to comprehensive care for all Australians.

"Nutrition care for chronic disease management –cannot be achieved in a few sessions, it requires sustained support.

“Ongoing nutrition care led by dietitians as part of a multidisciplinary team, is absolutely critical to bolster the health and quality of life for so many Australians.

“Dietitians Australia represents over 9000 dietitians and nutrition professionals in Australia, and we stand ready to support all political leaders to advance nutrition care in this country,”

Dr Fiona Willer said.

Read our full election priorities for the 2025 Federal Election.

For media enquiries and interviews, please contact Media Manager Amy Phillips 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.