A mother daughter story on this significant day

A mother's day story: Carmel and Jayne Curlewis and their life in dietetics.

For Carmel and Jayne Curlewis, dietetics is more than a profession - it's part of a shared legacy shaped by family, regional life and nearly four decades of experience.

Living and working on their farm outside Yass, New South Wales, Carmel and Jayne balance life as Accredited Practising Dietitians with their work as commercial Hereford cattle breeders - combining science, care and resilience across both professions.

For Carmel, what was meant to be an 18-month role as the first full-time dietitian at the local hospital turned into a life she never expected.

Carmel came to the farm about 37 years ago – she was only supposed to stay 18 months as the first full-time dietitian at the local hospital and somehow never left. Nearly 40 years later, here she is.

Jayne's path may have looked different at first, but it ultimately led her back to both dietetics and the country life she loved.

Jayne grew up in a small country town, headed off to university, and found herself drawn right back to the country life she loved.

Together, they now run both their property and their parallel dietetics careers - a unique mother-daughter story built on shared values, practical knowledge and deep respect for each other's strengths.



A profession shared across generations

For Carmel, seeing Jayne step into dietetics was not exactly the original plan.

Honestly, Carmel's first reaction was ‘no, keep going with medicine!’

But after Jayne spent three months working with clients, the shift became undeniable.

The patients loved her – they wanted Jayne instead of Carmel. 'It was wonderful', Carmel says, to think she'd finally managed to clone herself.

For Jayne, growing up with a mother in dietetics opened her eyes to the profession’s depth and possibility.

The way genetics and nutrition could intersect with the real person sitting in front of you – that was what really hooked her.

Now, after more than a decade of working together through Advantage Nutrition, their professional relationship continues to evolve.

After 12 years of working closely together through Advantage Nutrition, they've more than made up for it.

Science, systems and real-life care

Their shared philosophy is grounded in science-first, person-centred care.

Their approach is probably a little different to most dietitians – they come from a very science-heavy and medical focus. Etiology planning and understanding the disease comes first, then they layer in everything else.

That combination of Carmel's decades of experience and Jayne's strengths in technology, genetics and physiology has strengthened both their practice and their impact - particularly through their work in disability and the NDIS.

Life on the land

Outside of dietetics, farm life offers perspective, grounding and a direct connection to food systems.

As a farmer, you see firsthand how hard Australian farmers work – without subsidy – to produce some of the highest quality food in the world.

For Jayne, farming and dietetics are deeply complementary.

'No one loves their animals more than a farmer does.'

Balancing clinical work with life on the farm can be challenging, but both say it provides a powerful sense of balance.

When you're farming, you're out in the fresh air, moving at the cow's pace.

'The farm is the antidote.'



Regional practice, real impact

Both Carmel and Jayne are passionate about the opportunities - and challenges - of regional health.

The hole in service provision for regional communities is still enormous.

Carmel's career began in rural New South Wales, where she was the first full-time dietitian at her hospital, eventually building teams and services across the region. Her journey reflects the

adaptability often required in regional practice.

'Working regionally, you mend and make do.'

Their story is also a reminder that successful, meaningful careers in dietetics are not limited by geography.

Motherhood, mentorship and moving forward

For Carmel, one of life's greatest joys has been watching Jayne grow - personally and professionally.

For Jayne, Carmel's example has shaped not only her career, but her understanding of what's possible.

As the saying goes, you can't be what you can't see.

Now, with Jayne launching Advantage Dietetics alongside Carmel's Advantage Nutrition, the pair are entering a new chapter - still connected, but each building their own future.

A message for future dietitians

Their hope is that future generations see dietetics not as a narrow pathway, but as a profession full of possibility.

They hope it inspires dietitians to enjoy their careers and understand just how many different ways there are to be a dietitian.

And while the profession continues to evolve, Carmel remains certain of one thing:

'AI will not be doing the jobs that genuinely skilled dietitians do in pulling together person-centred health and wellbeing recommendations for real people.'

This Mother's Day, Carmel and Jayne's story is a celebration of shared purpose - of family, farming, regional resilience and two women proving that dietetics can shape not only careers, but generations.



Read there full Q&A here.