Dietitians welcome in-principle support for expanded Medicare access

Dietitians Australia welcomes the Australian Government's response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Diabetes, which has offered in-principle support for expanded allied health access in Medicare – an encouraging signal for Australians living with diabetes.

The Government's in principle-support for Recommendation 12 of the Inquiry, which includes increasing the number of Medicare sessions for dietitians and allied health providers for diabetes aligns with our longstanding advocacy for reform of Australia's Chronic Disease Management program.

"This is a promising milestone for the millions of Australians whose health depends on being able to access evidence-based nutrition care," Dietitians Australia Chief Executive Officer Magriet Raxworthy said.

"We know that type 2 diabetes can be prevented, managed – and, in many cases, reversed – through dietary intervention.

"Consistent access to dietetics and nutrition support is a cost-effective way to keep Australians healthier for longer, reducing pressure on hospitals, cutting the long-term costs of diabetes, and giving people the tools they need to live well."

Almost 1.9 million Australians live with diabetes, with First Nations, regional and remote communities disproportionately affected.

Poor diet remains the third-leading risk factor for preventable illness in Australia, and

nutrition-related chronic disease is estimated to cost the health system up to $21 billion annually.

Dietitians Australia would like to thank Dr Mike Freelander MP and the members of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport for the rigour and courage of the inquiry process and its 23 recommendations.

“This inquiry has built a formidable evidence base for reform,” Ms Raxworthy said.

“The Committee did its job, now it’s time for government to match that ambition with implementation.

“We hope to work hand-in-hand with government to not only enact this key recommendation, but to make ground on the Inquiry’s other substantive recommendations.

“This includes measures on sugar-sweetened beverage levies, front-of-pack labelling reform, and restrictions on junk food marketing to children.

“We encourage the Government to continue building its policy response in these areas, as there’s clear momentum for reform.

“Dietitians Australia stands ready to help translate that momentum into outcomes, and we extend an open invitation to Minister Butler and Assistant Minister White to work collaboratively with the profession on implementation.”

For interviews please contact Media Manager Amy Phillips on 0409 661 920.