Roundtable brings preventive health reform agenda to Parliament House

Dietitians Australia has joined leading medical and public health organisations at a preventive health roundtable at Australian Parliament House, calling for urgent action on a range of nutrition and food policy measures, including a ban on unhealthy food marketing to children and the introduction of a sugar-sweetened beverage tax.

The roundtable, hosted by Dr Sophie Scamps MP, brought together parliamentarians, clinicians, researchers and public health organisations to advance practical next steps for collectively strengthening preventive health and food policy.

Dietitians Australia used the forum to advance its primary call for a significantly more coordinated and ambitious national approach to nutrition governance.

We are united strongly with our public health community, and are proud to be amplifying and endorsing the Food for Health Alliance calls for better protection for children against unhealthy food marketing, policy blueprint on sugar-sweetened beverages, and the Public Health Association's calls for a national taskforce on prevention policies relating to food and nutrition.

Dietitians Australia's key calls to action at the roundtable:

- Establish a clear and robust nutrition governance system, on par with other foundational systems for health, wellbeing and productivity.

- Complete the review of Australia's suite of nutrition-related policies and plans, which have not been comprehensively updated since 1992, to assess whether they are fit for today's food environment.
- Introduce feasible and effective restrictions on unhealthy food marketing to children across broadcast, streaming and digital environments, consistent with findings of the Government's own feasibility study.
- Implement a tiered sugar-sweetened beverage tax as part of a coordinated suite of food environment reforms to reduce chronic disease, drive industry reformulation and enable preventative public health measures for children.

"Australia's food system has evolved faster than our governance systems," Dietitians Australia CEO Magriet Raxworthy said.

"We haven't strategically updated the way we coordinate nutrition nationally since 1992 – Australia's food environment has transformed dramatically since then, and someone in 1992 wouldn't even recognise many of the foods lining supermarket shelves now.

"Together, with coordinated governance, we can implement real solutions and effectively change the health trajectory of Australia.

"This roundtable has demonstrated the breadth of expert and community support for reform, and Dietitians Australia is committed to translating this momentum into practical, system-wide change.

"No single policy will ever be a silver bullet, but coordinated, evidence-based reforms can meaningfully shift the food environment over time, and the time to act is now.

"We must activate a national taskforce on these matters as soon as possible.

"We're grateful to everyone involved – notably Dr Sophie Scamps MP, Dr Monique Ryan MP, Dr Mike Freelander MP and the Hon Rebecca White MP Assistant Minister for Health for ensuring the voices of public health professionals and the communities we serve are heard directly by elected representatives – it's critical in our efforts to transform longstanding evidence on improving Australia's health into action."

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