Submission: Department of Veterans' Affairs funded health treatment

Dietitians Australia advocates for better DVA-funded dietetic care

Dietitians Australia has made a submission to the Senate inquiry into Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)-funded health treatment, calling for reforms to improve veterans' access to ongoing dietetic care and reduce unnecessary administrative requirements for Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs).

What are the key issues?

Under current DVA arrangements, a dietetic referral generally lasts for 12 sessions or one year, whichever comes first. When ongoing treatment is needed, APDs must provide an end-of-cycle report and veterans require another GP referral. Each new treatment cycle must also begin with an initial consultation, normally conducted in person.

Although veterans can receive further treatment cycles when clinically necessary, these repeated requirements can create unnecessary administration, costs and delays, particularly for veterans with chronic or complex conditions.

What is Dietitians Australia recommending?

- **Needs-based funding:** Clinical need, rather than fixed monetary or numerical limits, should determine treatment.
- **Remove treatment cycles:** Eliminate unnecessary reporting, repeat referrals and initial consultations when care is continuing.
- **Improve rural access:** Allow initial consultations by telehealth without having to seek approval and improve travel payments and remoteness loadings.

- **Strengthen consultation:** Involve veterans, APDs and Dietitians Australia before introducing or changing rules.
- **Ensure sustainable fees:** Finalise and publish the new dietetic fees for July 2027 as soon as possible, reflecting the full cost of care, with at least annual indexation.

Our message is clear: veterans' access to ongoing dietetic care should be guided by clinical need, without unnecessary administrative barriers.

Read Dietitians Australia's full submission.