

Wednesday 2 February 2022

Prime Minister: Come on Down, the price is (not quite) right

After being unsure of the prices at the National Press Club address yesterday, Dietitians Australia is pleased to advise the Prime Minister that a 1L bottle of milk and standard loaf of bread currently costs around \$5.75¹. This is on par with the average spend on food per resident in aged care which is \$6 per day².

CEO of Dietitians Australia, Robert Hunt, explains how this compares to other institutions.

“The average spend on prisoner’s meals in Australia is \$10 per day which could explain why 50% of Australians in residential aged care are malnourished³,” Robert said.

For the broader population, the cost of fruit and vegetables in Australia continues to rise since the COVID-19 pandemic and Australia’s rising inequity in accessing nutritious food saw one in six adults experiencing food insecurity in 2021, affecting 1.2 million children⁴.

Beyond the social justice of accessibility to nutrition, Robert explains how the nation’s failure to take a strategic approach to nutrition could trigger major downstream affects in preventable chronic illness and further economic burden.

“Eating patterns are influenced by factors including affordability and how the food supply chain is designed which vary greatly across Australia leading to issues of food inequality,” Robert said.

“If it was easier for Australians to afford healthy foods and drinks consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines, the disease burden amongst the community would be majorly reduced.

“In 2015 it was estimated that unhealthy eating patterns cost the nation \$1.4 billion in health spend – a figure that was attributed to insufficient vegetable intake.

“It’s been thirty years since our government properly planned for our nation’s nutrition, and hearing that the Prime Minister doesn’t know the cost of staple food items may explain why.”

“We extend an open offer to the Prime Minister to come shopping with one of our dietitians and show how a family of four can eat cheaply and nutritiously for a week.”

ENDS

Robert Hunt is available for interview.

For further information:

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¹ Woolworths.com.au

² [Aged care royal commission: Meal budget of \\$6 a day causing ‘staggering’ aged care malnutrition \(smh.com.au\)](https://www.smh.com.au)

³ Dietitians Australia. Malnutrition in Aged Care. Dietitians Australia; 2020 Available from: <https://dietitiansaustralia.org.au/voice-of-daa/advocacy/position-statements/>.

⁴ Foodbank. Foodbank hunger report 2021: The reality of the food crisis in Australia. 2021 Available from: <https://www.foodbank.org.au/research-reports/>.