

CCHQ 2022

STRONG ECONOMY. STRONGER FUTURE.

22 April 2022

Mr Robert Hunt, CEO Dietitians Australia
Ms Tara Diversi, President Dietitians Australia
pas@dietitiansaustralia.org.au

Dear Mr Hunt and Ms Diversi

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your network. A response to Dietitians Australia Scorecard is attached.

The last two years have been tough for our country.

Despite the setbacks, Australia's economic recovery is leading the world.

Unemployment is at 4%, the equal lowest in 48 years. And the recent Budget included the biggest turnaround in our finances in over 70 years.

There's much more to be done. To build a stronger future, our plan will:

1. Deliver more jobs and working towards unemployment below 4%.
2. Deliver tax relief for workers and small businesses.
3. Invest in roads, rail, water infrastructure and renewable energy technology.
4. Make record investments in health and other essential services.
5. Invest in stronger defence, security and borders.

This election provides a clear choice, with real consequences for Australia.

The alternative at this election is Anthony Albanese and Labor. Labor would weaken our economy and put Australia's recovery at risk. Now is not the time to change course.

Thank you for communicating our response to your members.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hirst
Federal Director

MORRISON GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO DIETITIANS AUSTRALIA

Aged Care

Prime Minister Scott Morrison called the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (the Royal Commission) as one of his first acts as Prime Minister.

As the Prime Minister highlighted in his response to the Royal Commission ‘respect for senior Australians is, and must be, a national priority. Out of respect comes all that we value in the care of our ageing loved ones: dignity, quality and safety’.

The Morrison Government has listened to the experiences of Australians who gave evidence to the Royal Commission. Our Government is taking decisive action on the recommendations with reforms to deliver vital services, improved quality, care and viability in aged care.

The Morrison Government’s \$18.8 billion investment towards implementing the Government’s response to the 148 recommendations of the Royal Commission is the biggest-ever response to a Royal Commission and investment in aged care. The Morrison Government has ruled out six recommendations from the Royal Commission suggesting changes to income tax, an aged care levy, changes to consumer contributions and means testing.

In the first year of the Morrison Government’s reform agenda, our Government has improved nutrition through the Basic Daily Fee supplement, expanded the National Aged Care Advocacy Program, improved safety and reporting, provided additional workforce support and improved access to quality aged care services in rural and remote areas. The Morrison Government has addressed serious concerns around the use of restraint practices in aged care homes. New rules came into force on 1 July 2021.

The Royal Commission identified food and nutrition as one of the four areas of concern in aged care quality and safety requiring immediate attention. In response the Morrison Government has taken comprehensive action to improve the quality of life for residents through nutrition.

The Morrison Government has provided a substantial increase in funding to residential aged care providers as part of a \$3.2 billion sector uplift, which included the new Basic Daily Fee (BDF) supplement of \$10 per resident per day from 1 July 2021. As at December 2022, \$350 million was distributed to eligible residential aged care, multi-purpose services and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care (NATSIFAC) services. To receive the BDF supplement, residential aged care providers are required to make an undertaking to deliver and report on food-related expenditure and improvements to daily living services to meet the care needs of residents, with a focus on food and nutrition.

The Morrison Government is undertaking an urgent review of the Aged Care Quality Standards with a focus on key areas including food and nutrition. This review provides an opportunity to enhance the measurability and detail expected of residential aged care

services including in the delivery of food and nutrition and the dining experience to better reflect the expectations of senior Australians.

Our Government has introduced new quality indicators for residential aged care that require residential aged care services to report against critical care areas which food and nutrition can directly impact. These include unplanned weight loss, consecutive unplanned weight loss, falls, major injury and pressure injury through the National Aged Care Mandatory Quality Indicator Program.

The Morrison Government is asking senior Australians in residential aged care if they like the food and publishing this on My Aged Care through the Star Ratings using the results from consumer experience interviews. Interviews will be undertaken by a third-party workforce independent of regulatory processes and published through the Star Ratings for residential aged care on the My Aged Care website by December 2022, enabling consumers and their families to make more informed and confident decisions about aged care services.

Dr Sandra Iuliano, Senior Research Fellow and nutritionist from the University of Melbourne, has been appointed to the National Aged Care Advisory Council. The Council has been established to provide expert advice to Government on key matters relating to the aged care sector including to support implementation of the reforms, ensuring advice reflects the needs and expectations of senior Australians, their families and carers and the diverse needs of these groups.

Earlier this month, the Morrison Government appointed Ms Julie Dundon to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Advisory Council. Ms Dundon brings experience to this important council as an advanced accredited practicing dietitian with expertise in food and nutrition in the aged care sector and is the aged care subject matter lead for Dietitians Australia.

The appointments of two experienced clinicians will ensure appropriate guidance is provided to enhance the Quality Standards in relation to food and nutrition.

Our Government has engaged the Maggie Beer Foundation to assist in enhancing food and nutrition in aged care, through the National Congress on food, nutrition and the dining experience in aged care, which brought together experts to help inform policy and the development of a food provision training program approach for the cooks, chefs and managers.

The Morrison Government has also made improving reporting requirements a key priority. From October 2022, new food and nutrition reporting requirements are being enhanced as part of strengthened obligations under the quarterly financial report. All questions will be mandatory unlike the current food and nutrition reporting requirements, thereby providing better transparency of provider expenditure across fresh versus processed food and internal versus external contract catering costs.

Mental Health

Under the Morrison Government, mental health and suicide prevention is a national priority. Our Government wants all Australians to have access to the support they need, when and where they need it.

The Morrison Government's \$3 billion National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan is the largest ever Federal Government investment in mental health and suicide prevention. The 2022-23 Budget included Stage 2 commitments worth \$648.6 million.

Mental health and suicide prevention funding in the health portfolio alone will increase to a record of around \$6.8 billion in 2022-23. That's more than double the \$3.3 billion when Labor was last in government.

Our Government has delivered Mental Health and Suicide Prevention funding agreements with the states and territories, and are establishing a national network of up to 70 Head to Health adult mental health services and at least 15 Head to Health Kids centres. These will provide greater access to affordable, high quality, person-centred mental health care across the country.

The Morrison Government follows the expert medical advice on the addition of new Medicare Benefits Schedule items and would invite an application to the Medical Services Advisory Committee regarding the items raised, so that they can be properly assessed.

The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement also provides an additional framework for engagement on the intersection between diet and good mental health and the respective responsibilities of jurisdictions.

Disability

The NDIS was established to provide eligible Australians with significant and permanent disability with their reasonable and necessary disability related supports.

Dietician support, if funded by NDIS, is to meet the disability specific support needs where it relates to nutritional needs of the participant. It may be provided to assist the participant and their support network to understand the impact the disability has on their daily management and maintenance of nutritional needs. These supports are funded on a case by case basis and are for the supports beyond what is expected to be provided by health to the mainstream community.

Dieticians do play a role within teams gathered to assess complex nutritional, behavioural and sensory needs of some participants. NDIS does not stipulate who provides these supports or services, and those funded by NDIS are only provided where the person's support needs are beyond what can be met by mainstream health support interventions (for example, feeding programs specific to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder).

National Nutrition Policy

In the March Budget, the Morrison Government announced an investment of \$30.1 million in implementation activities for the National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030. The Strategy, which will assist in creating long-term improvements in the health and wellbeing of all Australians through more physical activity, better nutrition and reducing the use of alcohol and other harmful drugs, included \$700,000 over four years to go towards developing a National Nutrition Policy Framework. The Framework will take a multi-sector, 'whole-of-government' approach to identify, prioritise, drive and monitor healthy eating in Australia.

Dietitians Australia, the Public Health Association of Australia, Nutrition Australia and the Heart Foundation have advocated for such a commitment and the Morrison Government has responded. The Morrison Government has also developed The National Obesity Strategy, a 10-year framework for action to prevent, reduce, and treat, overweight and obesity in Australia. It focuses on prevention, but also includes actions to better support Australians who are living with overweight or obesity, to live their healthiest lives.

Our Government has pursued complementary strategies designed to promote healthy eating and improved nutrition. This includes the Health Star Rating front-of-pack labelling system that rates the overall nutritional profile of packaged food to provide consumers with a quick, easy, standard way to compare similar packaged foods. The Healthy Food Partnership (HFP) was launched by our Government in 2017. The voluntary HFP brings together government, the public health sector and the food industry to encourage healthy eating, promote appropriate portion sizes and enable food manufacturers to provide healthier choices. An important initiative under the HFP is the Reformulation Programme to reduce the amount of saturated fat, sodium and sugar in processed foods.

The Morrison Government has also announced it will provide \$2.5 million to the NHMRC for a Review of the 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines. The NHMRC has incorporated steps in the review process to ensure transparency. All stakeholders, including Dietitians Australia, the Public Health Association of Australia, Nutrition Australia and the Heart Foundation are invited to participate in the formal consultation processes under the Review.

Finally, the Morrison Government's commitment to a Modern Manufacturing Strategy includes a Food & Beverage focus, which is aimed at harnessing the sector's strengths to grow an innovative, high-value, reputable and dynamic food and beverage industry. This includes innovations that promote a clean, green and safe food and beverage sector that benefits from cutting-edge research and expertise.