

Employment White Paper

**Response to consultation
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Recipient

The Treasury, Australian Government

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About Dietitians Australia

Dietitians Australia is the national association of the dietetic profession with over 8,500 members, and branches in each state and territory. Dietitians Australia is the leading voice in nutrition and dietetics and advocates for food and nutrition for healthier people and healthier communities.

The Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) program provides an assurance of safety and quality and is the foundation of self-regulation of the dietetic profession in Australia. Accredited Practising Dietitians have a fundamental role as part of the multidisciplinary care workforce in Australia.

Discussion

Dietitians Australia wish to provide comment on the following Terms of Reference:

2: the future of work and labour market implications of structural change, with a focus on:

- 2.1. Building a sustainable care economy in the context of an ageing population and other drivers of demand for care services.

Dietitians Australia recommend that to build a sustainable care economy to meet the future needs of our population, there needs to be a focus on better incorporating allied health, including dietitians within models of care and the multidisciplinary team. Dietitians play a critical role in the prevention of disease and in the treatment and management of ill health. Dietitians Australia have a workforce willing and ready to support improvements in care services in Australia, including aged care.

Dietitians are currently underutilised as a national workforce and have additional capacity that can be utilised quickly. As of November 2022, our profession currently has approximately 340 dietitians working in aged care and a further 250 dietitians unemployed who could be called on to assist in care economy.

To facilitate better inclusion of dietitians and other allied health professionals into the care workforce moving forward, there needs to be quality data collection, a national allied health workforce strategy and improvements in systems such as digital health to enable this. A workforce strategy should include development of career pipelines for allied health professionals including those in rural and remote locations, where local training is essential for effective service delivery and to support workforce retention. It should also encompass development of the capabilities and competency of allied health professionals, to respond to an increasingly ageing and diverse population and the needs of priority population groups including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, older Australians, culturally and linguistically diverse populations, people from the LGBTIQ+ community and people living with mental health issues or disability.

More information on both Allied Health in Aged care and workforce developments can be found on the Allied Health Professions Australia website:

Aged care: [AHPA-Proposed-Allied-Health-Aged-Care-Solutions-for-Jobs-Summit-300822.pdf](https://ahpa.com.au/advocacy-priorities/workforce-development/)

Workforce development: <https://ahpa.com.au/advocacy-priorities/workforce-development/>