

Dietitians can do more for your health: Enable their full scope of practice

Accredited Practising Dietitians play a vital role in helping Australians manage health conditions, improve their well-being, and make informed choices about what they eat. But there are limits on what they're allowed to do – and that's holding people back from getting the full benefit of their care.

Let dietitians do what they are trained to do

Even though dietitians are highly trained, current rules and systems prevent how much of their expertise they can use. These limitations – known as their *scope of practice* – are policies, funding arrangements, and healthcare structures that don't always reflect what dietitians are capable of doing.

For example, dietitians can't refer patients directly to specialists or request basic medical tests, even when it's within their knowledge and training. Instead, patients must go through extra steps – usually involving a GP – just to access services the dietitian could have provided. This creates delays, adds pressure to doctors, and makes it harder for people to get timely, effective care.

Why it matters

When dietitians can use all their skills, healthcare becomes simpler, faster and more effective. People can get the right advice and support without unnecessary delays or extra appointments.

It also means nutrition becomes a bigger part of everyday healthcare – not just something you think about after a diagnosis. Dietitians can play a stronger role in prevention, early intervention and long-term health planning.

By making better use of dietitians, we ease pressure on GPs, reduce system bottlenecks, and help more Australians stay healthy and out of hospital.

The leading voice in nutrition and dietetics

A PO Box 2087 Woden ACT 2606 | **T** 02 6189 1200

E info@dietitiansaustralia.org.au | **W** dietitiansaustralia.org.au

Dietitians Association of Australia | **ABN** 34 008 521 480

Dietitians Australia and the associated logo is a trademark of the Dietitians Association of Australia.



What's getting in the way?

Dietitians are well-trained and ready to do more to support people's health – but certain barriers are holding them back. These barriers aren't about their skills or expertise. They're about the systems and policies that haven't evolved with the changing needs of healthcare.

Here are 5 key barriers preventing dietitians from working to their full potential:



Restrictive regulations

Right now, dietitians often need extra approvals or referrals to provide certain services, even though they're fully qualified to do them on their own.



Inadequate funding

Medicare doesn't cover enough dietetic care, making it hard for people to get follow-up appointments. There's also very little support for preventive care, which could help people stay healthier in the long run.



Lack of professional recognition

Many people don't realise just how much dietitians can do, so their skills are often overlooked. This means missed chances to prevent illness and improve care through better nutrition.



Unclear career pathways

Dietitians don't always have clear pathways to move into advanced or specialised roles. Without these opportunities, it's harder for them to build on their skills and take on leadership or expert positions in healthcare.



Systemic healthcare barriers

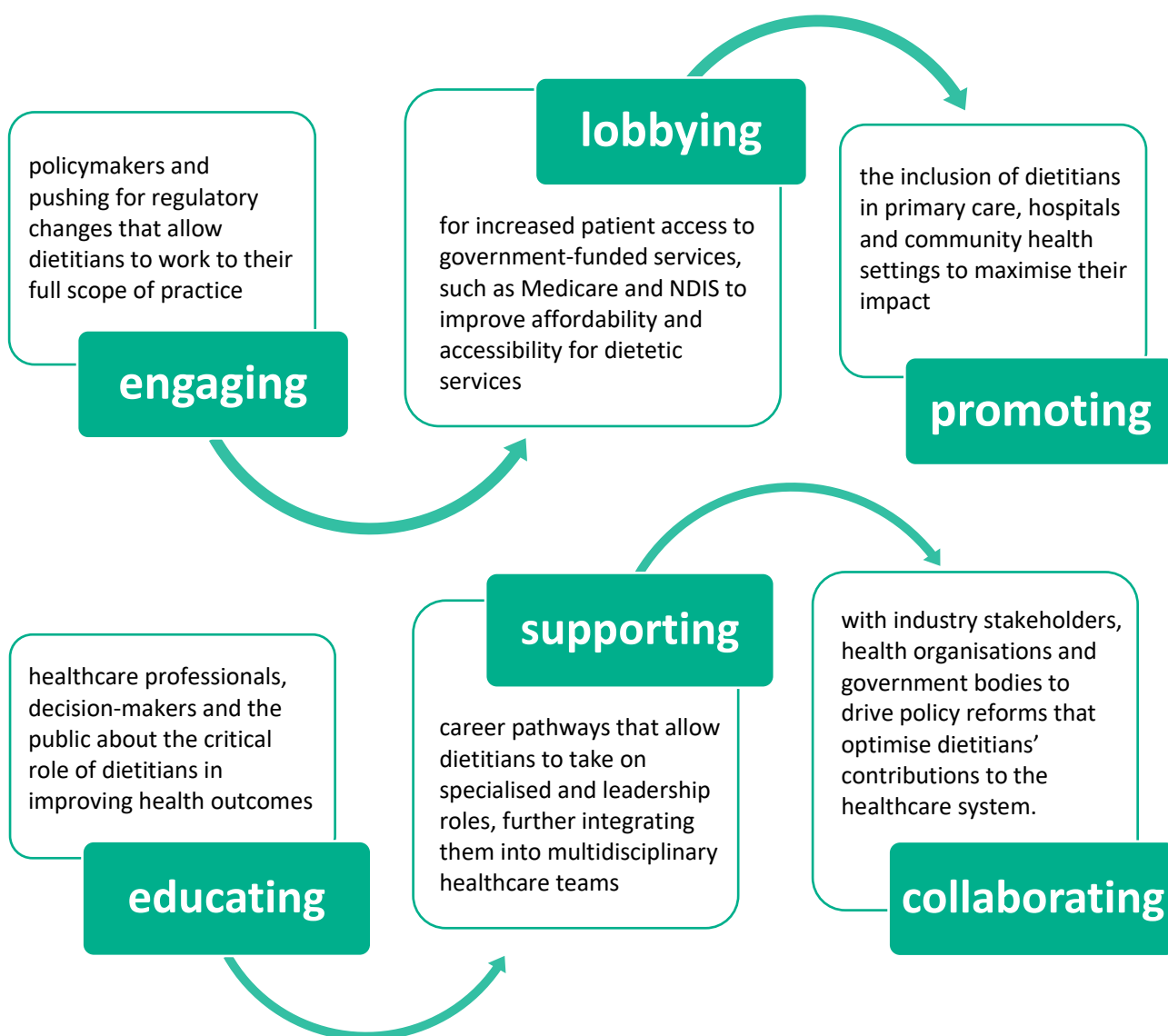
In many places, dietitians aren't fully included in GP clinics, hospitals, or community health services. This makes it harder for people to get timely nutrition support—and can lead to higher healthcare costs in the long run.

Supporting better nutrition care

At Dietitians Australia, we're working to clear the path so dietitians can use all their skill to help people live healthier lives. Through advocacy, smart policy work, and support for the profession, we're helping to raise the profile of dietitians and strengthen their role in healthcare.

Because when dietitians can do more, everyone benefits.

Some of our key actions are:



Take action to empower dietitians

Right now, 95% of Australian adults aren't getting the nutrition they need.ⁱ That's a serious public health issue – and dietitians are a key part of the solution.

If you believe Australians deserve better access to expert nutrition care, and you see the value of making dietitians a stronger part of our health system, now's the time to act.

Stronger support for dietetic care means healthier families, stronger communities, and a better future for all Australians.

Please get involved and show your support by:



taking charge of your health and talking to a dietitian for nutrition and health support



raising awareness and sharing stories with friends, family members and colleagues about the value of visiting a dietitian



collaborating with us by writing to representatives and supporting initiatives that push for better funding models and expanded dietitian roles



adding your voice by signing and sharing our petition calling for better access to nutrition and dietetic services at change.orgⁱⁱ



supporting Dietitians Australia, other health advocacy groups and community efforts that are focused on improving recognition, funding and policy change

Enabling dietitians to work to their full scope means more than just removing barriers – it's about unlocking better nutrition care, strengthening our health system, and improving outcomes for individuals, families and communities across Australia. Join us in supporting a healthier future.

NOTES

ⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics. Dietary Behaviour. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022 [cited 9 May 2025]. Available from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/health-conditions-and-risks/dietary-behaviour/latest-release>

ⁱⁱ Dietitians Australia. Better Access to Nutrition and Dietetic Services. Canberra: Dietitians Australia, 2025 [cited 9 May 2025]. Available from: <https://www.change.org/p/better-access-to-nutrition-and-dietetic-services>