



25 February 2020

Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety
GPO Box 1151
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Counsel Assisting the Commissioners of the Royal Commission,

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) was pleased to appear as a witness before the Royal Commission hearing on Tuesday, 16 July 2019 to give evidence on alarming rates of malnutrition and other food and nutrition issues affecting elderly people in residential and community aged care. As highlighted in DAA's submission and hearing, there is a failure in safety and quality systems for the prevention and management of malnutrition among older Australians, with research undertaken in residential aged care homes indicating that malnutrition (or risk of malnutrition) is present in 50% of residents.


The World Health Organization (WHO) recognises malnutrition as one of six contributing factors to the declining physical and mental capacity of older people. Malnutrition increases the risk of falls, osteoporosis and fractures, slow wound healing, morbidity, mortality and contributes to poor quality of life. Malnutrition is an accelerator to entry to residential aged care.

Given the significant impact of malnutrition on the health and wellbeing of Australia's most vulnerable people, DAA strongly encourages the Royal Commission to test propositions for **'best practice nutrition care in residential and community aged care'** in the form of a **Royal Commission Workshop**. DAA welcomes an invitation to such a workshop to discuss nutrition care propositions including policies, multidisciplinary governance structures and frameworks for:

- auditing of food and nutrition systems
- malnutrition screening
- nutrition assessment
- nutrition care planning
- menu planning
- meal reviews
- national nutrition guidelines for home delivered meals
- choice and dignity of risk in relation to food and meals
- the mealtime environment
- assistance with eating and drinking
- staff nutrition education and ongoing training

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 6189 1201 to discuss this workshop proposal in greater detail.

Yours sincerely,


Robert Hunt
Chief Executive Officer