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## NEW NATIONAL NUTRITION POLICY IS THE KEY FOR FUTURE HEALTH

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) calls for a New National Nutrition Policy, to unlock practical solutions to many of the 22 recommendations handed down by the Select Committee into the Obesity Epidemic in Australia.

Robert Hunt, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of DAA said, “dietitians across the country applaud the committee’s recommendations. As the only professional body with skills in both nutrition and dietetics, DAA looks forward to being an essential member of the National Obesity Taskforce.”

Written over 26 years ago, the National Nutrition Policy addresses the contribution of food and nutrition in reducing the rates of diet-related chronic disease, such as heart disease, obesity, Type 2 diabetes and cancer. Importantly, it integrates the impact food security has on nutrition, which considers food access and supply for our most vulnerable populations. This policy provides the framework to design national healthy living initiatives and ensures these are conducted in a co-ordinated way, that is relevant and culturally appropriate for both the current and future population.

DAA welcomes the recommendation to review the Australian Dietary Guidelines every five years, as a key element of the National Nutrition Policy, ensuring the dietary guidelines regularly evolve and provide public confidence in ways to undertake healthy eating.

Hunt also highlights the solution lies in empowering personal behaviour change. However, investing in programs such as the Medicare Chronic Disease Management scheme is imperative to ensure Australians are able to access adequate individualised support from Accredited Practising Dietitians.

“The recommendation for obesity to be included as a medical condition under the Medicare Chronic Disease Management Scheme is promising. However, within this scheme, Australian’s are only provided five services per year to access 13 different allied health practitioners. Increasing the number of dietetics services that Australians can access under this scheme, including an option for telehealth services to boost access for rural and remote Australians, would be a step in the right direction,” said Mr Hunt.

“The committee’s recommendations are the first step to tackling the obesity epidemic and provide the practical solutions to future proof the health of all Australians. Having a current National Nutrition Policy and investing in strategies that support lifestyle change will further strengthen the impact of these recommendations,” Mr Hunt said.

Dietary interventions make a real difference, and Accredited Practising Dietitians are here to support Australians to live healthier lives.

**ENDS**

**For further information or to organise an interview with Robert Hunt, contact Pattie King, Dietitians Association of Australia, on 0409 661 920.**