

MEDIA RELEASE

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BUDGET NEGLECTS TO NOURISH THE NATION'S FUTURE

The Dietitians Association of Australia welcomes the 2019 Federal Budget's focus on mental health, eating disorder care and medical research, but is concerned it fails to plan for the future of the nation's nutritional health.

With over 26 years without a current National Nutrition Policy, DAA CEO Robert Hunt says Australia is now at a critical point when it comes to addressing the impact of diet-related chronic disease.

Poor dietary habits and obesity are now the two leading preventable risk factors contributing to the burden of chronic disease in Australia and internationally¹.

“We need to ensure that all Australian's have the access to safe and affordable food and nutrition care services, and ability to make informed choices for their health when it comes to food and nutrition. While the budget prioritises important health areas, it appears to leave Australia's growing obesity issue unchecked.”

A new National Nutrition Policy, is a small investment for big rewards, and there's still time to put the health of our nation on the table.

“A National Nutrition Policy would ensure Australia takes a co-ordinated and collaborative approach to reduce the impacts of poor diet in Australia.”

DAA welcomes investments in the following areas:

- Prioritisation of Mental Health (\$736.6m), including six eating disorder residential facilities (\$63m)
- Medical Research Future Fund, including an additional \$160m for Indigenous health and medical research.
- Funding for the Health Star Rating System (\$1.1m)
- Support to Aged Care services (\$ 7b)

“Our people are our nation's most valuable asset. Yet we continue to place a band aid on the impacts of lifestyle related chronic disease, rather than addressing the source of the cause,” said Mr Hunt.

“We invest approximately 29 times more in medications than preventable health. Imagine the health, social and economic impacts if we focused on nourishing our nation.”

ENDS

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

¹GBD. Global Burden of Disease data Australia [Internet]. USA: University of Washington; 2017. Available from: <http://www.healthdata.org/australia>