

Thursday 13 June 2019

Dietitians welcome commitment to a National Preventive Health Strategy

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) welcomes yesterday's announcement by the Health Minister Greg Hunt to develop a National Preventive Health Strategy.

A federal focus on prevention has been long advocated by DAA. This has been amplified by new data released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare which outlines 38% of disease burden in 2015 was preventable¹.

In his address at the Public Health Association of Australia's Conference in Melbourne, Mr Hunt urged public health professionals to think big, and share their ideas to inform a long-term health strategy to keep Australians well.

As the leading voice in nutrition and dietetics, DAA looks forward to the opportunity to collaborate and contribute to the development of a new world class strategy which supports better health for all Australians.

"What we eat plays a key role in disease prevention, and it can be a catalyst for positive health changes," said DAA CEO Robert Hunt.

"Developing a strategy that prioritises the importance of addressing food accessibility, affordability and equipping all Australians with the ability to make informed food choices, is crucial for the future of our nation's health."

For more than two decades, the health of Australians has continued to deteriorate, due to lifestyle-related impacts such as poor diet driven by unhealthy food environments. Planning a National Preventive Health Strategy is the first step to rewriting the future of health, economic and social outcomes for Australia.

While development of a strategy is the all-important starting point, ensuring it is implemented with a sustainable funding source is vital.

"Without action, we will never see the increased quality of life, longevity and reduced burden of disease that initiatives such as a National Preventive Health Strategy can provide," said Mr Hunt.

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¹Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Australian Burden of Disease Study: impact and causes of illness and death in Australia 2015. Canberra. AIHW; 2019.

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