

Tuesday 18 June 2019

## NDIS Tribunal decision a step forward for nutrition

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) calls on the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Mr Stuart Robert, to assure NDIS participants of their access to nutrition support, following a recent Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) ruling.

The appeal considered a decision by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) not to fund fluid thickeners and nutrition support products for a 34-year-old man with severe dysphagia and cerebral palsy. The AAT ruled that access to these products was reasonable and necessary for everyday living and should be funded by the NDIS, rather than under healthcare.

This ruling acknowledged the ongoing need for nutrition support, particularly as funded access to these supports are unable to be accessed anywhere else. The prescription of these supports by an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) is vital to ensure the continuity of care.

DAA recognises this as an important win for NDIS participants with eating or swallowing difficulties. Thickened fluids aid safe swallowing and assist in maintaining independence and confidence in drinking safely to meet the basic human need for nutrition and hydration.

“Access to food and fluids is a basic human right, and it is crucial for NDIS participants recipients to receive adequate nutrition to support their growth and development, promote muscle strength for independence, provide energy for daily activities and social engagement” said Annette Byron, DAA Policy and Professional Services Executive Manager.

“Without funding for these products, risk of food insecurity can increase, placing NDIS participants at risk of increased disability. This case makes it clear that access to nutrition support products, is reasonable and necessary for NDIS recipients to maintain quality of life, independence and realisation of their goals in the community.”

“For participants prescribed nutrition support products by an APD, access to these nutrition support products is critical for daily living. The NDIA needs to recognise the risk of harm to NDIS participants if this is ruling is overturned,” said Ms Byron.

### ENDS

Read DAA’s statement on [NDIS participant access to Accredited Practising Dietitian services and nutrition support products](#).

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