

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 9 August 2019

Connecting to culture through the language of food

As the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples celebrates Indigenous languages, Tracy Hardy, Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) and proud Kamilaroi woman shares how the language of food plays an integral role in both connection to country and health.

Speaking at the [Dietitians Association of Australia 36th National Conference](#) on the Gold Coast next week, Hardy highlights how culture, a source of strength, resilience, identity and confidence, is a protective factor in the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

“Food provides the opportunity for Indigenous peoples to reconnect to country and culture through sharing stories of language, growing and preparation practices, food and cooking knowledge, and enjoying meals together,” said Hardy.

To improve health outcomes for Indigenous Australians, Hardy outlines the importance of understanding and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in health care, to challenge the stereotype of viewing health through a deficit lens, to one of possibility.

“Our nation is home to the oldest, continuous Indigenous culture in the world. Embracing the rich and diverse traits between and within Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, particularly regarding food and nutrition, will provide opportunities to increase health prospects for Indigenous Australians,” said Hardy.

With nearly 80% of Indigenous Australians living in an urban environment¹, understanding the co-existence of traditional and modern food systems is a way of continuing a connection to culture, and encouraging good health and wellbeing.

“Using traditional condiments such as lemon myrtle or salt bush to flavour urban dishes is just one example of this. As Indigenous Australians relocate to urban areas, knowledge of food and shared experiences instils pride and helps to foster a sense of solidarity and belonging within the community,” said Hardy.

In her conference presentation on Monday regarding Indigenous health, Hardy encourages us all to start a conversation about food as a way of increasing an understanding about Australia's Indigenous culture.

“Connecting with your local Indigenous community and exchanging knowledge of food and cooking is an example of how we can work together, to build healthier communities across Australia.”

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**For further information or to organise an interview with Tracy Hardy, APD contact DAA:
Pattie King: 0409 661 920 or Trish Kirkland: 0459 491 545**



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Background:

About the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) National Conference:

The DAA National Conference is being held from 12-14 August 2019 at the Gold Coast Conference and Exhibition Centre. For more information and program details, visit: daa2019.com.au. Follow the conversation via twitter [@DAA_Feed](https://twitter.com/DAA_Feed) and share your interest using #DAA2019.

Press passes can be made available for interested media (including Australian-based journalists) to attend sessions at the conference. To request a press pass, please contact Pattie King 0409 661 920.

¹Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017). Census of Population and Housing: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population, 2016. Available at:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2071.0~2016~Main%20Features~Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20Population%20Article~12>

Note to Editors: The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is the professional body representing dietitians nationally. Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government, Medicare, the Department of Veteran Affairs and most private health funds as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia. For more information visit www.daa.asn.au. Voice of Dietitians section on the DAA website contains DAA's media releases and position on topical nutrition issues in the media.