

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 12 August 2019

Providing cultural care: meeting the nutrition needs of Indigenous Elders

Dietitians highlight the importance of communication to provide nourishing and culturally appropriate foods in residential aged care. New research presented today at the [Dietitians Association of Australia 36th National Conference](#) uncovers how engaging both staff and Elders was key to optimising the food served to Indigenous Elders, living at a residential aged care home.

Final year Latrobe University dietetic students undertook a review of the food service system. From this, Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) Rebecca Monk supported changes to be made to the food service, to better meet the needs to the Elders. Consulting all involved helped to uncover Indigenous Elder food preferences, increasing satisfaction towards meals.

“As many Indigenous Elders had an urban upbringing, meals including fish, pasta bolognaise, and barbeques were rated highly. This underlined the importance of tailoring the menu to the needs of the Elders, rather than assuming traditional foods would be preferred,” said Monk.

Monk emphasises how environmental factors contribute to promoting a safe and enjoyable setting for Elders and highlights the important role of food in continuing connection to country.

“Community days and involvement in food preparation is highly regarded by the Elders and incorporating these into mealtimes, through family barbeques and damper making has been integral in fostering a sense of belonging,” said Monk.

With the risk of malnutrition increasing with age, Indigenous Elders are also predisposed to developing chronic diseases such as obesity and type 2 diabetes. This draws further attention to the importance of providing nourishing food and the need to support Elders with a better understanding of nutrition.

“Regularly communicating with Elders about the food served, increased their expectation and understanding of their meals. This knowledge is then passed on to the younger generation, helping promote healthy habits for all.”

ENDS

For further information or to organise an interview with Rebecca Monk, contact DAA:

Pattie King: 0409 661 920 or Trish Kirkland: 0459 491 545



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Background:

About the Dietitians Association of Australia 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.

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. The 'Voice of Dietitians' section on the DAA website contains DAA's media releases and position on topical nutrition issues in the media.