

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA & DIETITIANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA JOINT MEDIA RELEASE



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Leading health organisations tackle food insecurity in Indigenous Australians

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) and the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) are today launching a new policy to help ensure access to safe and healthy food for Indigenous Australians.

Lack of access to a nutritious diet (or 'food insecurity') contributes to poorer health and a shorter life expectancy among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, according to the leading health bodies.

Claire Hewat, Executive Director of DAA, said: "We want all Australians to eat better and be healthier. A co-ordinated and comprehensive Government-led action plan is needed so that all Australians have access to primary health care and health infrastructure – which includes access to a safe and healthy food supply."

She said the new joint policy by DAA and PHAA would guide action in this area.

Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer of the PHAA, said: "Going without food is a concern for almost one in three Aboriginal people over the age of 15 years. The health status of Indigenous Australians is poor, compared with non-Indigenous Australians and food insecurity is a huge factor in these health inequalities.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have a 17 year shorter life expectancy and an earlier onset of most diet-related diseases, like type 2 diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure.

"Access to adequate food for a nutritious diet is a basic human right, but many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not have the same access to safe and healthy food as non-Indigenous people."

The organisations are calling for better support for Australia's Indigenous nutrition workforce, ongoing monitoring of the diet intake of Indigenous Australians, and improvements in housing for this population group.

"The joint policy statement is a good example of health organisations working hand-in-hand, rather than in isolation, and this will help ensure we are more effective," said Ms Hewat.

Michael Moore, CEO of the PHAA, and Claire Hewat, Executive Director of the DAA, will be available from 11.30am – 12.30pm today at the Press Boxes in the Press Gallery at Parliament House in Canberra to provide interviews and further comment on the new shared policy.

For further information/comment:

Michael Moore, CEO, Public Health Association of Australia
Claire Hewat, Executive Director, Dietitians Association of Australia

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