

Australian government lifts standard of food and nutrition in aged care

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For ensuring everyone living in residential aged care receives nutritious meals



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The government in Australia is increasing its commitment to improve food, nutrition and the dining experience in residential aged care by establishing a food unit in the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

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The \$12.9 million funding, part of a historic \$36 billion aged care budget, will deliver a range of meaningful measures to enhance the quality of food for older people.

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A new food 'hotline' for food complaints and advice will be established and staffed by specialists. The support unit will also help providers build capability by linking them with support and education programs, including those delivered by accredited practising dietitians.

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The support unit will: triage food hotline calls based on the nature and level of risk to older people; coordinate up to 720 provider spot checks annually, with 10% of spot checks of the highest risk services to have accompanying dietitians; support providers to build capability by linking them with education programmes; and engage Dementia Australia experts to promote nutrition and food enjoyment for people with dementia.

To further enhance the capability of providers, up to 500 menu and mealtime assessments will be conducted by independent practising dietitians to increase providers' knowledge and capability to deliver nutritionally balanced menus.

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New dietary guidelines and resources for older people will also be developed. These guidelines will support good nutritional intake and reduce malnutrition risk.

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