



MEDIA RELEASE

August 2010

Nutrition - key priority to close the gap in Indigenous health

Australia's peak nutrition body, the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is calling on both election parties to place greater priority on nutrition to close the gap in Indigenous health. This comes after alarming reports that Indigenous children in remote areas of Australia are 'starving'.

Claire Hewat, DAA Chief Executive Officer, stated that 'these reports of food insecurity are not surprising and DAA has long been advocating for improvements to the health services in Australian Indigenous communities'.

'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,' said Ms Hewat.

One of the targets for the Closing the Gap strategy endorsed by the Australian Government in 2008, was to halve the mortality gap between Indigenous children and other children under the age of five within a decade.

Claire Hewat said, 'Nutrition needs priority in the Close the Gap initiative if we want sustainable improvement to the health outcomes of Indigenous Australian adults and children'.

One in three Indigenous Australians over 15 worries about going without food¹. DAA have long been calling for the Government to provide 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.

'This issue of food insecurity amongst Indigenous adults and children goes beyond politics. Access to adequate food for a nutritious diet is a basic human right,' said Ms Hewat.

ENDS

**For further information or to organise an interview contact Holly Smith,
Dietitians Association of Australia on 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 Veterans 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

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002. *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey*, ABS Cat No. 4714.0: Canberra