

Reimagining Nutrition and Dietetics for a Better Australia

Enable. Empower. Elevate. Embed.

Towards 2036



Acknowledgement of Country

Dietitians Australia acknowledges all traditional custodians of the lands, waters and seas that we work and live on across Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and thank them for their continuing custodianship.

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A mandate for the future

Australia faces interconnected challenges across health, food and social systems. The rising burden of ill health continues to increase demand for healthcare services, while evolving food environments, sustainability pressures, and shifting social conditions influence how Australians access, experience, and sustain healthy lives. Together, these forces are placing growing pressure on public expenditure and affecting national workforce participation and long-term productivity.

Diet is one of the most significant and modifiable contributors to health and wellbeing. Yet the systems that shape dietary patterns and health outcomes are not always aligned to fully leverage the positive impact of nutrition and dietetic expertise. In an environment of constrained budgets and increasing expectations of measurable impact, ensuring the effective utilisation of Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) across these interconnected systems represents a pragmatic and economically responsible opportunity.

APDs are contributing across health, food and social systems; in clinical care, community settings, private practice, research, education and industry – strengthening prevention, improving outcomes and shaping policy and practice. Their services are recognised by State and Territory Health Services, Medicare, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, and because of robust competency standards, they are trusted by governments, healthcare systems and insurers. Research and education sectors underpin this capability, ensuring a strong evidence base and a workforce that is qualified and, in collaboration

with Dietitians Australia, prepared to meet emerging challenges. Dietitians are advancing sustainability and public health outcomes nationwide and providing nutrition leadership across multiple sectors.

However, the profession’s full potential has not yet been realised. In many settings, APDs remain underutilised or engaged later than optimal in prevention and care pathways, despite clear evidence of their capacity to improve health outcomes and strengthen system performance. As health and social care expenditure rises and broader systems strain under preventable disease burden, integrating nutrition and dietetic expertise earlier and more effectively is a practical and economically responsible response.

This 10-year Strategic Direction defines how the dietetics profession will respond. It has been deliberately developed as a north star for the decade ahead – clear enough to guide decisions, partnerships and investment, and flexible enough to remain relevant in a rapidly evolving environment.

To realise this opportunity, we will:

- ENABLE** dietitians to practise with strong capability, confidence and adaptability.
- EMPOWER** the profession to strengthen its collective voice, leadership and influence.
- ELEVATE** dietetics as essential to health, food and social systems solutions.
- EMBED** nutrition more deeply within society and everyday Australian life.

These priorities are interconnected and interdependent and together, they establish the conditions for sustained systems impact: capable practitioners, a confident and unified profession, strong cross-sector integration and widespread recognition of nutrition’s central role in long-term health, productivity and prosperity. They provide a clear line of sight from long-term intent to practical action, while enabling Dietitians Australia and the dietetics profession to respond dynamically to policy reform, funding shifts, technological change and evolving workforce expectations.

Dietitians Australia’s role is evolving. As the professional peak body, we recognised the need to further strengthen our direct connection to systems impact; not only collaborating within systems, but shaping how nutrition and dietetic expertise is recognised, integrated and valued across them. This Strategic Direction reflects a deliberate and considered step forward in that evolution.

This north star belongs to dietitians, to the systems they serve, and to the Australians whose health, productivity and wellbeing depend on their services and expertise.

The need is urgent. The opportunity is significant. The time to act is now.

This is our Strategic Direction, and we look forward to bringing this to life.



Dr Fiona Willer
AdvAPD, President



Dr Nadine White
Chair



Magriet Raxworthy
Chief Executive Officer

Our identity

Our purpose

Accredited Practising Dietitians are recognised, trusted and empowered to lead – ensuring that nutrition is central to Australia’s health, wellbeing and future prosperity.

Our role

We enable individual dietitians, empower the profession, elevate our role in systems, and embed nutrition in society.

Our values

The 5 values of Dietitians Australia underpin the strategic work that we undertake in line with our vision and mission.

Lead with purpose

We passionately support our profession to be seen as the leaders in nutrition, dietetics and health. We advocate for our members to be recognised as experts.

Act with integrity

We are authentic and act consistently to gain the confidence and trust of everyone.

Be bold

We have the courage to embrace opportunities. We show resilience and adaptability in a changing environment. We explore innovative ideas with creativity, curiosity and positive energy.

Commitment to excellence

We strive for excellence in everything that we do and how we do it. We adopt a growth mindset, continuously learning and improving.

Collaborate for impact

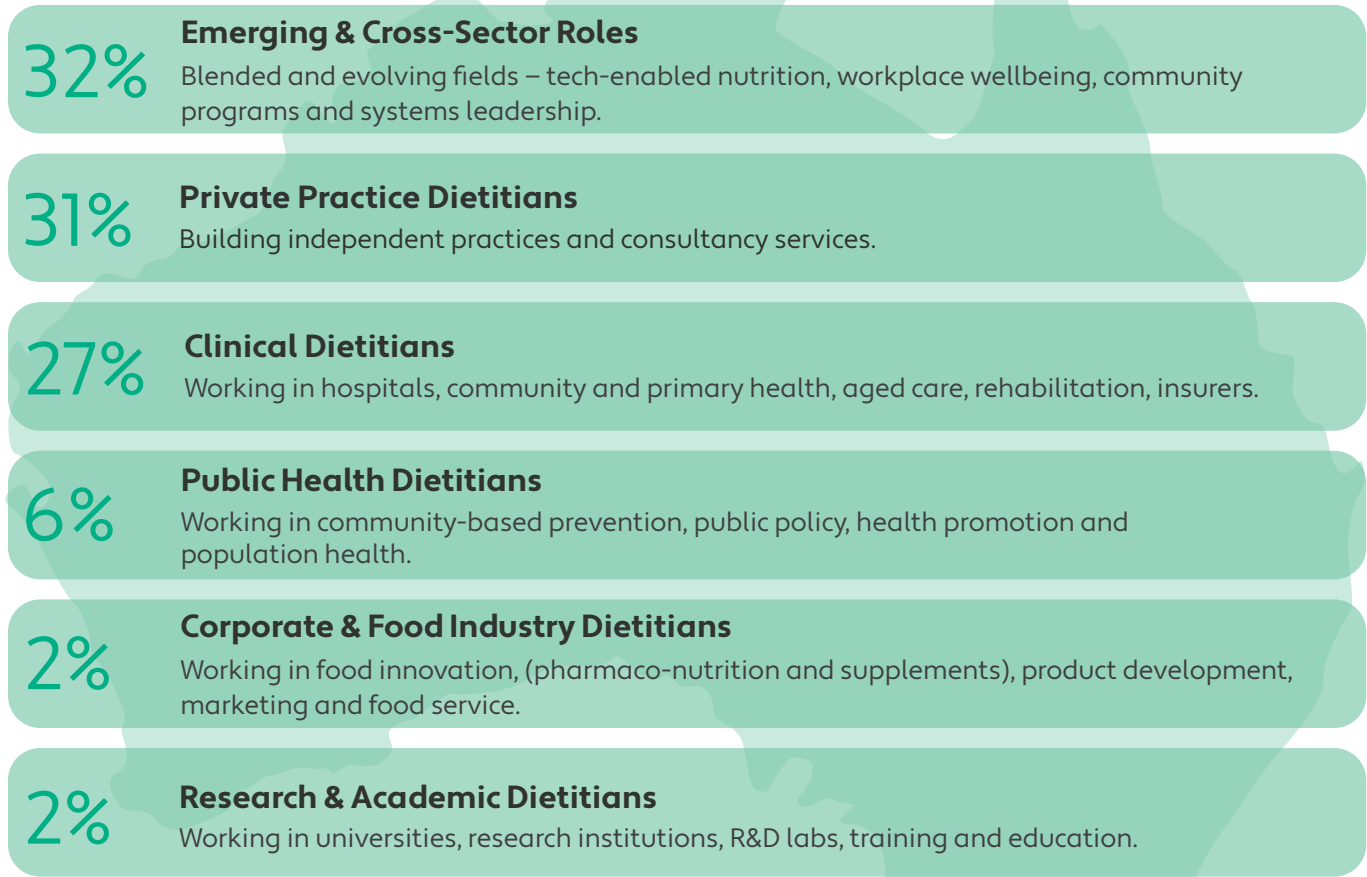
We harness a collaborative spirit to embrace and respect diverse perspectives, as we create a community of impact.

Who we represent

The dietetics landscape

Dietitians Australia represents a diverse profession spanning clinical, community, research, education, corporate and food industry domains. Our membership continues to expand, now surpassing 9,000 individuals, including more than 7,500 Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs).

Where dietitians work



Our impact and reach

Dietitians Australia unites clinicians, educators, researchers, system experts and innovators to place nutrition at the heart of Australia’s health and prosperity. We ensure the following for Accredited Practising Dietitians and the Australian community:

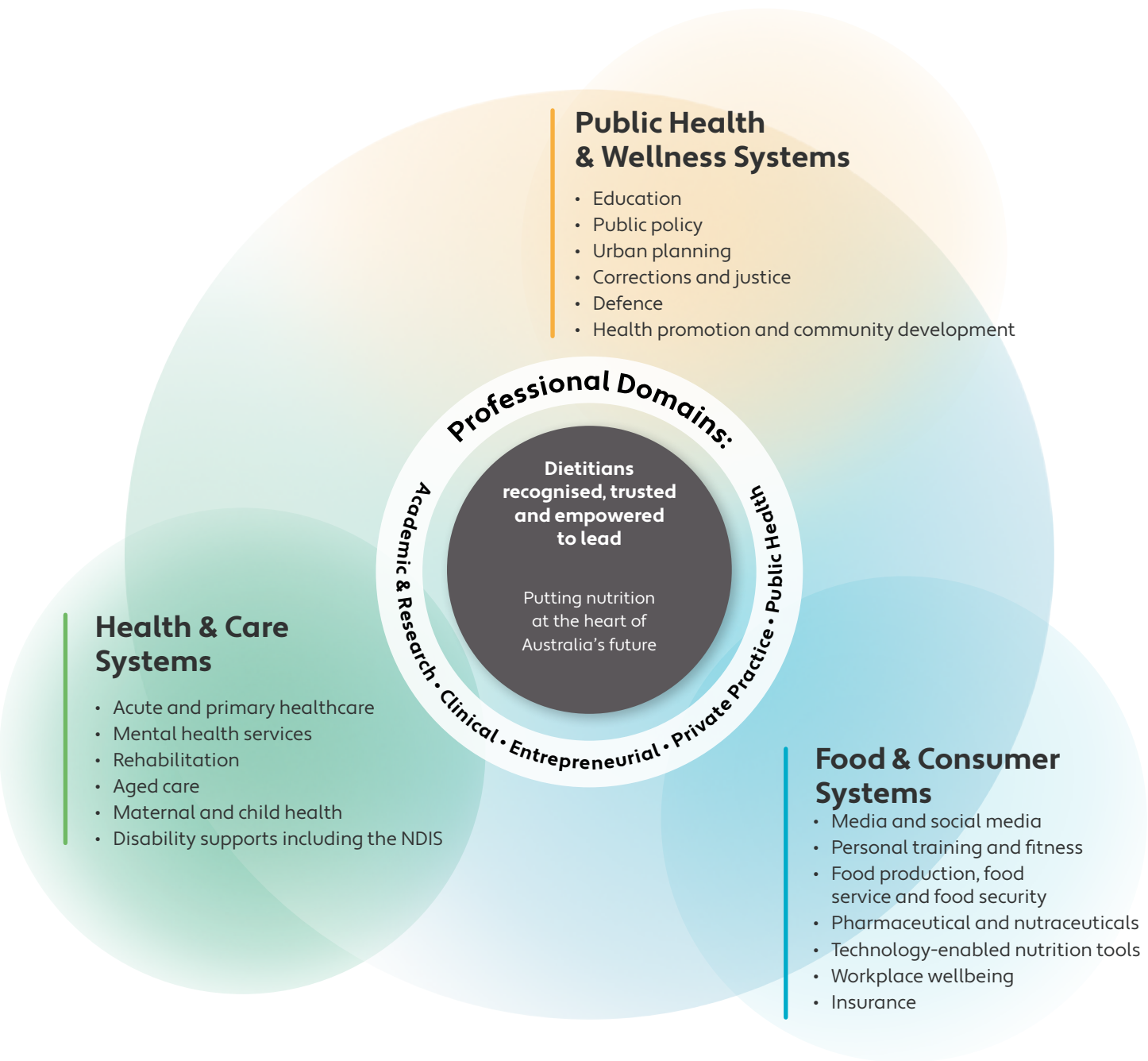
- Recognition and funding for dietetic services by **Medicare**, the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**, **Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)** and **private health insurers**.
- **Nutrition leadership** across hospitals, care, education and food systems.
- Advancing **sustainability and public health outcomes** nationwide.
- Upholding the **professional standard** recognised by healthcare systems, government and insurers.

Where dietitians influence the health and wellbeing of Australians

Dietetics in systems

Dietitians influence the health, wellbeing and prosperity of Australians through interconnected systems that extend beyond healthcare alone. Their contribution spans clinical care, food environments, and the broader social conditions that shape nutrition and health outcomes.

Across these systems, dietitians work in diverse roles – from delivering direct care and prevention to shaping research, workforce capability, service design and policy – contributing across organisations, sectors and the systems that shape nutrition outcomes. Through this breadth of contribution, dietitians influence outcomes not only for individuals, but for organisations, communities and society as a whole.



Nutrition conversations in society

Nutrition conversations happen every day across many settings – from healthcare, education and workplaces to media, consumer environments and digital platforms. These conversations involve a wide range of contributors and shape how Australians understand food, health and wellbeing. They also influence individual choices, community norms and system-level decisions.

Within this landscape, dietitians provide a distinct, evidence-based voice grounded in professional standards and practical expertise. Dietitians Australia supports the strength and credibility of this contribution by setting professional standards, supporting capability development, and promoting awareness of the profession's role in improving health outcomes.

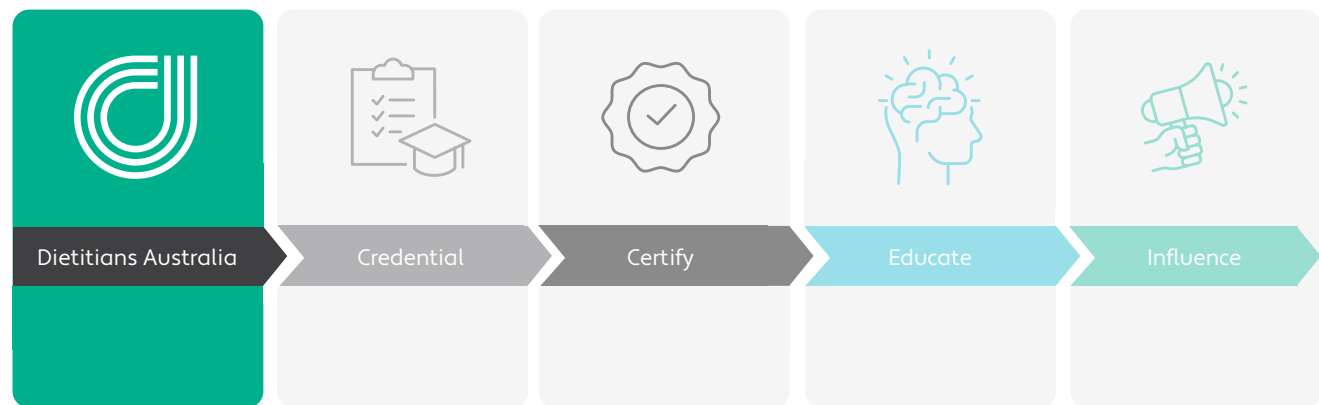
DA's contribution spans a continuum:

Credential: recognising APDs and setting the professional standards that underpin consistent quality and public trust.

Educate and support capability: strengthening dietitians and the broader health and public health workforce through education, professional development, guidance and resources.

Build awareness and influence: elevating the visibility of dietitians and shaping nutrition understanding across consumer sectors, policy environments and the broader public.

Through this continuum, Dietitians Australia helps ensure nutrition conversations across Australia are informed by evidence, supported by professional expertise, and capable of improving health outcomes.



Dietitians Australia as a leading voice in Nutrition and Dietetics, can shape nutrition conversations by setting professional standards, contributing to the certification of high quality nutrition-related education, building understanding and capability of sectors through education and training and influencing systems and public understanding.

Our environment – What is going on around us?

As dietitians influence health, food and social systems, the environment in which they operate is rapidly evolving. Changes in technology, public expectations, workforce dynamics and funding models are reshaping how nutrition expertise is accessed, trusted and applied across Australia.

Nutrition information is now widely available through digital platforms, media, commercial sectors and emerging technologies. While this expands access, it also increases complexity, misinformation and competition for trusted guidance. At the same time, Government funding decisions are increasingly focused on measurable outcomes within complex regulatory environments.

Broader structural shifts are also influencing the profession's future. These include demographic change, rising chronic disease burden, pressures on health and social systems, evolving food environments, and the growing importance of sustainability and planetary health. Together, these forces are reshaping expectations of how nutrition expertise contributes to health, wellbeing and prosperity.

These shifts are playing out across society, the health and care sectors, and within the profession itself.

In society:

- **Food is now a defining national issue**, but affordability pressures are deepening a “nutritional divide”.
- **People seek autonomy** and personalisation, yet sustained health behaviour change remains elusive.
- **Societal polarisation** is growing, amplifying misinformation and undermining trust in expertise.
- **Planetary health concerns** – including sustainability, food systems, water, and immune resilience – are rising on public and policy agendas.
- **Technology** (AI, digital media, robotics) is reshaping life in unpredictable ways – including parts of our own professional practice.
- **Political and economic instability** continues to disrupt the structures that support public health.
- **Persistent health inequities** including those experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and **culturally and linguistically diverse communities** contribute to unequal access to culturally appropriate nutrition care and health outcomes.

In the health and care sectors:

- **Effective medications** are reframing the management of chronic diet-related disease – dietitians must redefine their unique role alongside pharma.
- **Government spending** will prioritise high-impact, measurable outcomes – often via partnerships and privatisation.
- **Regulatory environments** will be inconsistent – both overreaching and insufficient in different areas.
- **Scientific authority** is under strain – nutrition advice is crowded, contested, and commercialised.
- **Allied health** is sometimes viewed as discretionary – dietitians must differentiate and assert distinct value.

In our profession:

- **AI, health coaches and digital platforms** are encroaching on traditional practice territory – new models must emerge.
- **Self-described, unaccredited and unregistered nutrition ‘practitioners’, including unqualified social media nutrition influencers**, continue to undermine public trust and blur professional boundaries – a clearer interface and stronger standards are essential.
- **Opportunities exist to extend scope** (e.g. prescribing rights, ordering tests), especially in emerging domains like mental health and neurodiversity.
- **The profession must embrace its ‘three voices’** – clinical, public health, and industry-facing – not in competition, but in concert.
- **Intergenerational engagement** is critical – test assumptions and innovations with younger members to ensure relevance.

In order to transform and shift in this environment, Dietitians Australia and its members must:

1. Define and assert the profession's distinct value:

Position APDs as the irreplaceable standard in a health and information landscape shaped by medications, automation, and commercialised advice. This means articulating not just what dietitians do – but what only APDs can do, and why it matters to outcomes. And it means building trust and influence across clinical, public health, digital, industry and social platforms.

2. Reimagine practice models to stay ahead of disruption:

Support innovation in how dietitians work – including blended roles, new scopes (e.g. prescribing, diagnostics), and digital-first care models. This is not about protecting territory; it's about evolving faster than the alternatives.

3. Invest in cross-generational and cross-sector engagement

Actively engage younger members and diverse career pathways to challenge orthodoxy and renew relevance. Create platforms where public health, clinical and industry voices shape a shared future, not compete for dominance.

4. Strengthen public credibility and political positioning

Bridge gaps between science, anti-science, and areas of limited evidence. Reclaim the nutrition narrative through trusted campaigns, powerful spokespeople, and policy advocacy that's grounded, not defensive.

5. Mobilise members as agents of change

Go beyond engagement. Activate dietitians as leaders, collaborators, and entrepreneurs – in local communities, health systems, and national conversations.

6. Influence the system around the profession

Ensure that DA's role is not just to represent members to the system, but to reshape the system with members – in regulation, funding, education, and workforce design.

Our 10-Year Strategic Direction

Why we exist

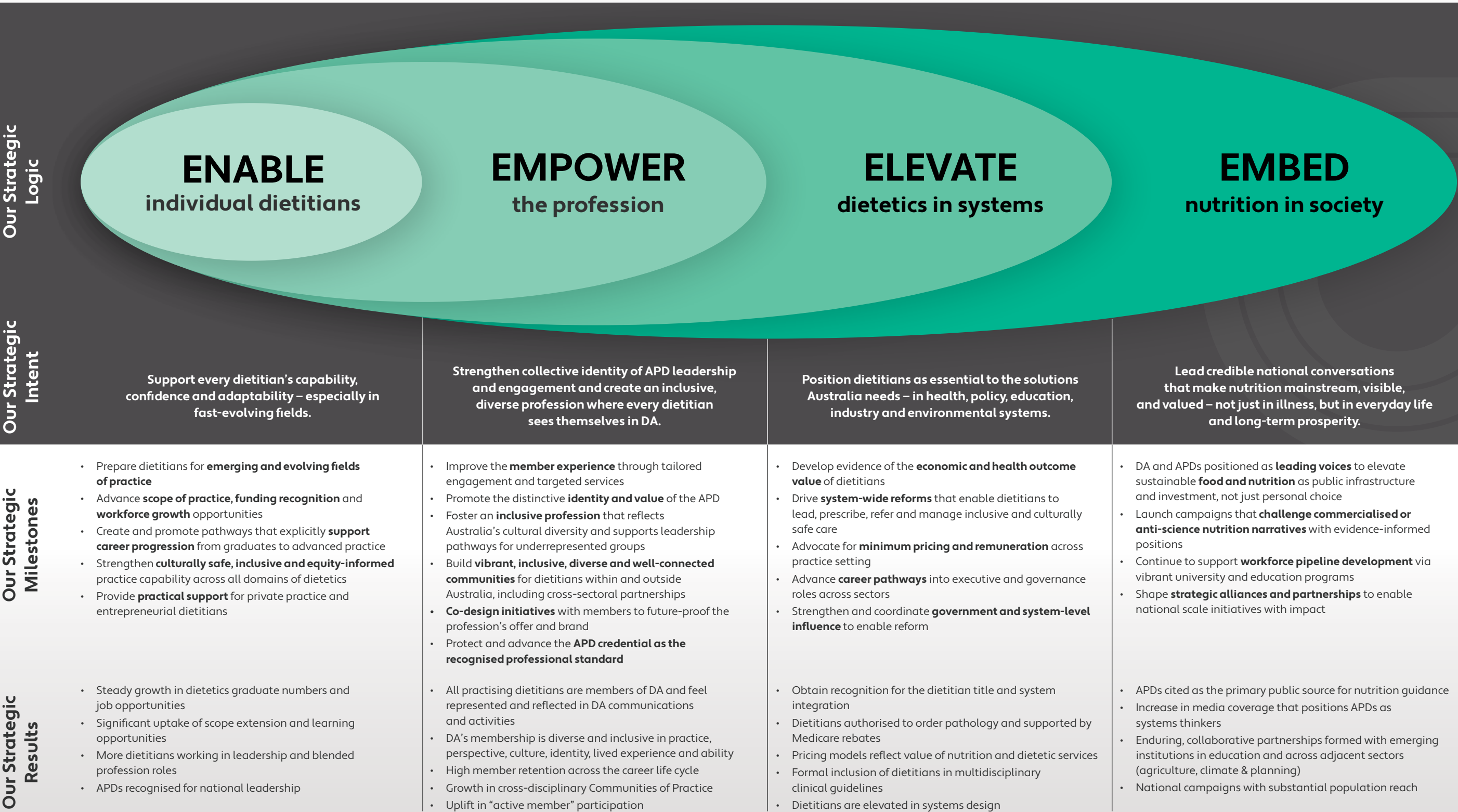
Accredited Practising Dietitians are recognised, trusted and empowered to lead – ensuring that nutrition is central to Australia’s health, wellbeing and future prosperity.

What we do

We enable individual dietitians, empower the profession, elevate our role in systems, and embed nutrition in society.

Who we represent

We represent a diverse dietetics profession in its entirety, at all career stages.



Focus of effort in the first five years

This 10-year direction sets the mandate. The next five years define our focus. These priorities translate long-term intent into practical, measurable progress – laying the foundations required to realise the full ambition of the decade.

Our focus will be guided by our values: leading with purpose, being bold in response to emerging challenges, committing to excellence in execution, acting with integrity, and collaborating for impact. Together, these principles will shape how we prioritise, invest and deliver.

ENABLE individual dietitians

Intent: Support every dietitian’s capability, confidence and adaptability – especially in fast-evolving fields.

Strategic Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare dietitians for emerging and evolving fields of practice
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advance scope of practice, funding recognition and workforce growth opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create and promote pathways that explicitly support career progression from graduates to advanced practice
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen culturally safe, inclusive and equity-informed practice capability across all domains of dietetics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide practical support for private practice and entrepreneurial dietitians
Strategic Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Steady growth in dietetics graduate numbers and job opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25% uptake of new scope-extension lifelong learning opportunities (e.g. prescribing, direct referrals, digital practice tools)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20% increase in dietitians working in leadership and blended profession roles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 APDs nominated annually for national leadership awards

EMPOWER the profession

Intent: Strengthen collective identity of APD leadership and engagement and create an inclusive, diverse profession where every dietitian sees themselves in Dietitians Australia (DA).

Strategic Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve the member experience through tailored engagement and targeted services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the distinctive identity and value of the APD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foster an inclusive profession that reflects Australia’s cultural diversity and supports leadership pathways for underrepresented groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build vibrant, inclusive, diverse and well-connected communities for dietitians within and outside Australia, including cross-sectoral partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-design initiatives with members to future-proof the profession’s offer and brand
Strategic Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect and advance the APD credential as the recognised professional standard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All practising dietitians are members of DA and feel represented and reflected in DA communications and activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DA’s membership is diverse and inclusive – in practice, perspective, culture, identity, lived experience and ability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 85% member retention across the career life cycle
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20% uplift in ‘active members’ participation (events, policy, volunteering)

Focus of effort in the first five years

ELEVATE dietetics in systems

Intent: Position dietitians as essential to the solutions Australia needs – in health, policy, education, industry and environmental systems.

Strategic Milestones	• Develop evidence of the economic and health outcome value of dietitians
	• Drive system-wide reforms that enable dietitians to lead, prescribe, refer and manage inclusive and culturally safe care
	• Advocate for minimum pricing and remuneration across practice setting
	• Advance career pathways into executive and governance roles across sectors
	• Strengthen and coordinate government and system-level influence to enable reform

Strategic Results	• Obtain recognition for the dietitian title and ensure system integration
	• Dietitians are authorised to order pathology and supported by Medicare rebates
	• Pricing models reflect the value of nutrition and dietetic services
	• Formal inclusion of dietitians in multidisciplinary clinical guidelines
	• Dietitians are elevated and participate in systems design

EMBED nutrition in society

Intent: Lead credible national conversations that make nutrition mainstream, visible, and valued – not just in illness, but in everyday life and long-term prosperity.

Strategic Milestones	• DA and APDs positioned as leading voices to elevate sustainable food and nutrition as public infrastructure and investment, not just personal choice
	• Launch campaigns that challenge commercialised or anti-science nutrition narratives with evidence-informed positions
	• Continue to support workforce pipeline development via vibrant university and education programs
	• Shape strategic alliances and partnerships to enable national scale initiatives with impact

Strategic Results	• APDs cited as the primary public source for nutrition guidance
	• 50% increase in media coverage that positions APDs as systems thinkers
	• Societal partnerships created with 10+ new institutions (education, climate, planning)
	• National campaign reaches >2 million Australians and is adopted by schools or local councils

Delivering on this mandate for our future – together

The mandate articulated in this Strategic Direction is ambitious and it cannot be achieved by Dietitians Australia alone.

It empowers dietitians across every sector to lead with confidence, practise at full scope and contribute meaningfully to the health, food and social systems that shape Australia's future.

It calls on partners in government, health, food, social and care sectors, research and education, industry and broader communities to work collaboratively with us in strengthening how nutrition and dietetic expertise is recognised, integrated and valued.

Dietitians Australia will continue to evolve as a strong and strategic peak body with a direct connection to systems impact. In doing so, we will be guided by our values.

We will Lead with Purpose, championing the profession and advocating for nutrition and dietetic expertise to be recognised as essential.

We will Be Bold in responding to emerging challenges and opportunities, embracing innovation and contemporary thinking. We will uphold our Commitment to Excellence, striving for high performance, continuous improvement and evidence-informed leadership. We will Act with Integrity, maintaining trust, accountability and authenticity in all that we do. And we will Collaborate for Impact, recognising that sustainable progress depends on strong partnerships and shared responsibility across sectors. Partnership will be fundamental to delivery. Achieving this mandate will require coordinated effort across disciplines, institutions and systems underpinned by mutual respect, clear accountability and a shared commitment to outcomes.

The challenges ahead: rising chronic disease, pressures within the food system, and fiscal constraints, are significant. But so is the opportunity. With clarity of direction, principled leadership and collective action, meaningful change is achievable.

This is our mandate. And together, we will deliver it.





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