

What can a dietitian do within their role?

The key purpose of the profession of dietetics is to contribute to the promotion of health and the prevention and treatment of illness by optimising the nutrition of communities and individuals (Dietitians Association of Australia, Scope of Framework 2014). Dietitians graduate from universities accredited by the Dietitians Association of Australia. An Accredited Practising Dietitian is the specialist service for referral regarding nutrition advice.

Through HACC-PYP and CHSP in the Grampians Region, there are a number of Dietitians to assist consumers to improve their nutritional status and maximising their health and wellbeing.

An essential good practice in supporting people through a Wellness Approach is to look for the reasons behind changing abilities and seek assistance for the person to overcome them, instead of introducing/increasing services without review. Many people will find that as more is done for them they will lose the advantage of independence and control.

“Dietitians graduate from universities accredited by the Dietitians Association of Australia.”



Key roles that the dietitian can play include:

Dietitians have a vital role to play in helping people stay independent and active. They will be able to assist in a number of ways:

- Assess nutritional status and provide evidence-based nutrition care plans for individual consumers – assist consumers and community staff to implement these plans as appropriate.
- Conduct assessment, management and treatment of a wide variety of chronic diseases such as malnutrition, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal conditions and overweight and obesity.
- Ensure group-based and delivered meal services meets the relevant guidelines – contact the dietitian for advice and assistance.
- Assist HACC-PYP and CHSP service providers to support the delivery of quality nutrition and food.
- Provide education and support to community support workers/support staff and food service workers.
- Advocate for good nutrition by attending community events, health promotion activities, conferences and meetings.
- Provide dietetic services directly to HACC-PYP and CHSP eligible consumers in clinic, outreach services and home visits.



Some creative suggestions for engaging a dietitian in your workplace include:

- Group supermarket tours to provide education about food packaging and nutrition information panels.
- Group cooking sessions as part of social events and respite options.
- Cooking groups for people living alone and/or people caring for a family member with specific dietary needs.
- Education and training for Community Support Workers, Support Staff and Volunteers.
- Nutritional analysis of meals and snacks in everyday life and at community centres where HACC-PYP and/or consumers attend.
- For HACC-PYP, undertaking joint assessment with Living at Home Assessment Officers.

Dietitians are experts in providing evidence-based consumer-centred care which incorporates the consumer's family and carers to ensure the best consumer outcomes. They can work with consumers with unintentional weight loss, excessive weight gain, gastrointestinal issues such as celiac disease or IBS, diabetes, heart disease and many other issues. Engaging a Dietitian in your practice could broaden your service delivery models and assist in the enhancement of consumer independence and quality of life. There may be a number of other ways a Dietitian could be of assistance. Please contact the HACC-PYP/CHSP Dietitian to discuss opportunities for their involvement.

Dietitians are also there to assist organisations and their consumers through secondary consultation (advice and suggestions) or by providing the types of assessment listed above to assist in the enhancement of consumer independence and quality of life.

Engaging dietitians in your practice can broaden your horizons in relation to consumer choice and service delivery techniques. They can provide training for family members/friends and Community Care Workers/Support Workers in how best to work with and support the consumer. They can assist you to help put Wellness Principles into practice and build them into your care planning and service delivery models.

First developed April 2015. Revised October 2019.