Food and Nutrition Policy

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Type of policy: Comprehensive national nutrition policy, strategy or plan

Food and Nutrition Policy

Goals

Goals, objectives or targets related to nutrition:

Goal
The goal of the food and nutrition policy is to improve health and reduce the preventable burden of diet-related early death, illness and disability among Australians. The policy will be implemented through strategies which support the Australian dietary guidelines, involve key sectors in the food system, and foster community participation.

The Policy requires coordinated effort between

- health, education, transport, primary industry, and manufacturing industry sectors;
- public, private and non-government agencies including community welfare agencies;
- different spheres of government; and
- the Australian consumer.

It is essential that strategies to improve health through improved nutrition are based on accurate data and research.

Priority Implementation Objectives

The Policy aims to:

- to improve the knowledge and skills necessary for Australians to choose a healthy diet;
- to incorporate food and nutrition objectives into a broad range of policy areas and sectors;
- to support community based initiatives towards improving the diet of people with special needs; and
- to regularly monitor the food and nutrition system.

Goals and Targets

As part of the implementation of the policy, diet and nutrition goals and targets will be defined. These will relate to the overall National Health Goals and Targets at present under development.

A draft set of diet and nutrition goals and targets are being released with the policy statement.

Strategies
Strategies and activities related to nutrition:

Objective 1
Improvements in the knowledge and skills necessary for Australians to choose a healthy diet.

Strategies:
(a) National food and nutrition education curriculum material for schools will be developed and supported through program development and teacher training.
(b) Programs to upgrade the nutrition skills of primary health care workers will be developed.
(c) Communication strategies to make the dietary guidelines much better known to present and future consumers will be implemented. Such strategies may include:
   - education programs in schools, adult education authorities, community health centers and energy utilities to increase consumer knowledge and skills in purchasing, preparation, and storage of foods;
   - public and private health organizations to provide consistent nutrition messages;
   - the food processing industry, governments and retailers to provide point-of-sale information relevant to diet;
   - the food industry and governments to promote generic foods supported in the dietary guidelines (for example bread and cereals, fruit and vegetables).
(d) The NHMRC is to develop and promote dietary guidelines for children, with the issue of advertising directed at children to be further researched as part of their development.
(e) The NFA in its review of food standards is to consider the need to optimize accurate and meaningful consumer information.

Objective 2
Incorporation of food and nutrition objectives into a broad range of policy areas and sectors.

Strategies:
(a) Demonstration projects will be supported to improve signals between customers and producers and encourage the production and marketing of food in a range of settings which is consistent with the dietary guidelines.
(b) Public and private sector food services (including school canteens), food manufacturing companies and at all levels of government will be encouraged to adopt nutrition policies; health services and the food industry should lead by example in this area.
(c) Recognizing the need for ecologically sustainable development (ESD), food production, processing and distribution reforms will be supported which improve the competitiveness of the Australian food industry in a manner consistent with ESD.
(d) Local government authorities will be encouraged to take food issues into account. Such issues would include access to supermarkets, land use, food availability and local food and nutrition needs.

Objective 3
Support for community based initiatives to improve the diet of people with special needs.

Strategies:
(a) Support will be provided for research and development projects on barriers to the availability, accessibility and cost of nutritious food for communities which have either socioeconomic and/or geographic disadvantage, with a view to action to overcome these barriers. The needs of lower socioeconomic groups and older people need to be particularly considered.
(b) In line with recommendations contained in the report from the National Conference on Aboriginal Nutrition in Remote and Rural Communities (1991):
   - models for community based food and nutrition programs for Aboriginal and Islander people will be developed; and
- appropriate curriculum material will be made available for nutrition components in Aboriginal Health Worker (and other professional) education, training and employment programs.

(c) Support appropriate and ongoing training for nutrition advisors for special needs groups.

**Objective 4**

Ongoing monitoring and surveillance of the food system.

**Strategies:**

(a) The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), in collaboration with other relevant agencies, will report publicly on a biennial basis (initially), and assess against the national food and nutrition goals and targets:

- changes in the food supply;
- information on food sold;
- national dietary survey analyses which show food and nutrient intakes of individuals; and
- changes in the nutritional status of the community and subgroups;

(b) Key sectors in the food system are to support the continuation of regular monitoring and wide dissemination of the information on:

- food borne and food related illness;
- pesticides and chemicals residues in the food supply; and
- the composition of the food supply.

(c) The AIHW is to continue monitoring health morbidity/mortality data in relation to food and nutrition at the whole community level and for subgroups in the population.

(d) NHMRC is to:

- develop research strategies to characterize food consumption patterns and increase understanding of determinants of dietary change,
- evaluate current literature on the links between diet and disease and recommend dietary change to the community, and
- define costs and benefits of different components of implementation strategies.

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**File upload:**

- AUS 1992 Food and nutrition policy .pdf

**Reference:**

WHO Global Database on National Nutrition Policies and Programmes
### Policy topics:
- Diet-related NCDs
- Food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG)
- Food safety
- Food labelling
- Provision of school meals / School feeding programme
- Regulating marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children
- School-based health and nutrition programmes
- Vulnerable groups

### Partners in policy implementation
- Government
  - Health
  - Nutrition council
  - Other
  - Details: more
    - Australian Health Ministers' Conference,
      Commonwealth Department of Health, Housing, and Community Services,
      National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), NFA,
      Publish Health Committee (PHC)