

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 9.00 am AEDT, Monday 12 October 2026

8 October 2026

Australia urged to turn nutrition commitments into action.

With National Nutrition Week beginning on 12 October, the National Nutrition Foundation is calling for coordinated action to improve nutrition with its new report highlighting that only 4.3% of Australians aged two years and over are consuming enough vegetables, legumes and beans.

National Nutrition Foundation's new report, *Nutrition in Australia: The challenges, evidence and opportunities ahead*, highlights the significant health and economic impacts of Australia's current dietary patterns. Discretionary foods account for almost one-third of average daily energy intake, while in 2024 overweight, including obesity, contributed 8.3% of Australia's total disease burden and dietary risks contributed 4.8%. Together, these risk factors were attributable to an estimated \$9.2 billion in health expenditure in 2023-24.

Despite these challenges, the report highlights opportunities to strengthen food literacy, improve supportive food environments and build on existing policy commitments to achieve lasting improvements in nutrition and health outcomes.

National Nutrition Foundation Chief Executive Officer Fiona Kalaf said improving nutrition requires more than providing information about what people should eat.

"Australians make food choices within the realities of their everyday lives. Affordability, access, practical food skills and the environments where people live, learn and work all shape those choices."

"We already have important national policy foundations in place. The opportunity now is to translate these commitments into coordinated, practical and measurable action."

"That means building food literacy across the life course, creating environments that support nutritious choices and investing in the practical implementation support needed to make policies work."

Food insecurity also remains a significant challenge. The report cites findings that approximately 3.5 million Australian households experienced moderate or severe food insecurity during the preceding 12 months, with single parent households, renters and households including someone with a disability or health issue disproportionately affected.

Drawing on more than 45 years of experience delivering evidence-based nutrition programs across Australia, National Nutrition Foundation believes existing policy commitments provide a strong platform for action. The report highlights evidence showing that practical food literacy programs, supportive nutrition policies and tailored implementation support can improve nutrition behaviours

and food environments, alongside National Nutrition Foundation's experience delivering government-funded initiatives including freshSNAP, the Healthy Eating Advisory Service and FoodChecker.

"Nutrition is not only a health issue. It influences learning, workforce participation, community wellbeing, health equity and pressure on our health system," Fiona Kalaf said.

"This National Nutrition Week, we invite governments, researchers, public health organisations and sector partners to work with us to turn Australia's existing nutrition commitments into measurable improvements in health outcomes through greater investment in food literacy, stronger support for healthy food environments and practical implementation assistance that helps policies deliver lasting change."

While this report highlights the importance of improving nutrition outcomes, National Nutrition Week, running from 12 to 18 October 2026, celebrates the many ways food enriches our lives. Through the National Nutrition Foundation's *Love what you eat* campaign, we recognise how food supports wellbeing, strengthens connections to culture and community, and brings people together.

ENDS

Media enquiries

Jana Mather
Head of Marketing and Communications
National Nutrition Foundation
Phone: 03 8341 5800
Mobile: 0401 341 078
Email: hello@nnf.org.au

Available for interview

Fiona Kalaf
Chief Executive Officer
National Nutrition Foundation

Media assets

The report, spokesperson interviews and images are available on request.
Report available on 12 October 2026: <https://nationalnutritionfoundation.org.au/advocacy/>

About the National Nutrition Foundation

The National Nutrition Foundation is an independent Australian not-for-profit organisation with more than 45 years of experience translating nutrition evidence into practical action. Through government-funded programs, advocacy, services and resources, we support healthier food environments across schools, early childhood services, health services, workplaces and communities. We work with governments, researchers and sector partners to strengthen food literacy, support healthier food environments and improve nutrition outcomes for Australians.

nationalnutritionfoundation.org.au