

## The Vision

**Establish a National Food and Nutrition Data Hub as a centralised ‘Knowledge Hub’.** This fit for purpose data repository will bring together existing but fragmented data sources to ensure effective synthesis and appraisal so that targets can be established for food production, supply and consumption that will positively impact the food system and health outcomes.

**Establish a National ‘Trusted Voice’ on nutrition issues to provide clear, evidence-based guidance into nutrition-relevant policy at a National and State level and provide clarity and consistency in messaging on food and nutrition matters.** This would combat the substantial negative impacts on diet and health advice propagated via ‘spurious uncertainty’ which intentionally undermines evidence-based dietary advice.

## The Problem

Australia has continuing and pressing issues in nutrition insecurity and food supply chains that are easily broken and particularly impact disadvantaged, Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those who live in rural communities. Thirty eight percent of disease burden (49% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) could be prevented through a reduction in modifiable risk factors such as changing dietary patterns, reducing overweight and obesity, increasing physical activity, and addressing dietary risks, alcohol use and smoking (1).

Diet and health relationships within Australia that are not regularly monitored result in a lack of timely information on how dietary patterns are impacting health outcomes. In addition, data available via Medicare and other health databases are not connected to dietary or food system information sources. This results in a lack of ability to model accurately which is necessary to improve and support the complex food system.

## The Opportunity

The nutrition science community is committed to these visions and ask the Australian government to fund the capacity to achieve these goals. The National Committee for Nutrition has investigated the feasibility of the **National Food and Nutrition Data Hub** and its translation element, the **Trusted Voice**, and the nutrition community is in a high state of readiness for action and change.

To ensure the goals of the National Preventative Health Strategy 2021 -2030 are realised, there is an urgent need to harness digital technologies and apply them to understanding how modern environments and food supply chains influence individuals’ food and diet choices. Doing so will enable more robust food systems that support equitable access to healthy foods and effective population nutrition interventions to be realised and supported by scientifically informed national policy frameworks.

Enhancing the efficiency of nutrition data collection, analysis and linkage would enable new advances in the understanding of systems-level cause-and-effect mechanisms between diet, health and wellness. This requires integrating knowledge from a national nutrition data capability which includes datasets on food intake and health, illness and biomarker outcomes with laboratory and controlled clinical trials.

The National Committee for Nutrition is grateful for the opportunity to make recommendations for consideration in the Commonwealth budget for 2022-23.

This submission is informed by the priorities identified in the 2019 report from the Australian Academy of Science [Nourishing Australia: a decadal plan for the science of nutrition](#), which was formulated after extensive consultation with the Australia nutrition science community and its stakeholders.

For further information please contact the Australian Academy of Science's National Committees for Science office at [nc@science.org.au](mailto:nc@science.org.au) or on 02 6201 9400.

## References

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021. *Australian Burden of Disease Study 2018 – Key findings*. Cat. no. BOD 30. Canberra: AIHW.
2. National Preventative Health Strategy 2021-2030, <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-preventive-health-strategy-2021-2030>
3. Nourishing Australia: A decadal Plan for the science of nutrition <https://www.science.org.au/supporting-science/science-policy-and-analysis/decadal-plans-science/nourishing-australia-decadal-plan>