



DIETITIANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
Department of the Senate
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Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Committee Secretary

Dietitians Association of Australia submission to the Senate Committee Inquiry into the National Health and Hospitals Network Bill 2010

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the National Health and Hospitals Network Bill 2010. The DAA is the leading professional organisation for dietitians, with over 4300 members across Australia.

The DAA welcomes the overall intent of the Bill to provide for the establishment of the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) as a permanent, independent statutory authority, with an expanded role in setting national clinical standards and standards under the new Performance and Accountability Framework. We consider that establishing the Commission as a permanent and independent authority with clear responsibility for developing, promoting and monitoring the impact of health care standards, guidelines and indicators will contribute to improvements in health care safety and quality.

The DAA notes the Commission's role in not just developing, but also facilitating and monitoring the uptake of guidelines, standards and indicators. While awareness-raising and education strategies will assist in the uptake of guidelines any real impact on quality and safety in health services will only occur if adequate resources, such as clinical management information systems, are also in place.

The DAA agrees with the Bill's emphasis on the role of consultation in the process of formulating standards, guidelines and indicators. Part 10 (2) (a) of the Bill requires the Commission to consult prior to the development of standards, guidelines and indicators with clinicians or lead clinical groups. While no definition of the term 'clinician' is provided in the context of the Bill, it is important that this term is recognised as applying to allied health professionals such as dietitians, as well as medical doctors, and that these professionals are consulted in the development of standards, guidelines and indicators relevant to their scope of practice.

Yours sincerely

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