

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 13 &15 February 2013

Question: E13-177

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: Dietary Guidelines – Australian Health Survey

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Senator Fierravanti-Wells

Question:

In relation to the response to my previous question E12-240 on the timing of the release of the dietary guidelines, why does the NHMRC Dietary Guidelines Committee consider that the forthcoming Australian Health Survey which will report 'detailed information on dietary intake' is not relevant to the development of evidence based dietary guidelines which report 'what should Australians eat'? For instance, if added sugars or total sugars intake of the Australian population has declined or moderated since the last national survey 17 years ago, is it valid to change a guideline from "Moderate" to "Limit"?

Answer:

The primary role of the National Health and Medical Research Council's Australian Dietary Guidelines (2013) is to provide information and dietary advice based on the best available scientific evidence.

Information on Australian consumption patterns in the forthcoming Australian Health Survey will not tell us what is healthy, but will allow health professionals and policy areas to tailor their messages and advice about nutrition and healthy eating based on the most up to date science presented in the Australian Dietary Guidelines.