



## **MEDIA RELEASE 22 MAY 2007**

### **FIRST EVER AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS WILL IMPROVE WELLBEING AND SAFETY OF AUSTRALIANS WITH SWALLOWING PROBLEMS**

The Dietitians Association of Australia and Speech Pathology Australia are proud to announce the launch of the first ever consensus standards for texture modified foods and thickened fluids in the Australian context. Launched at both the Dietitians Association of Australia National Conference in Hobart and the Speech Pathology Australia National Conference in Sydney this week, the 'National Australian Standards, Terminology and Definitions of Texture Modified Foods and Fluids' mean that for the first time health professionals and health care facilities in Australia will be speaking the same language when it comes to texture modified foods and fluids.

Texture modified foods and fluids are routinely recommended in the management of swallowing difficulties (dysphagia). Speech Pathology Australia National President, Dr Cori Williams, said, "Swallowing problems affect Australians of all ages, including over 80% of individuals with developmental delay, up to 70% of premature infants and up to 60% of nursing home residents. The assessment and management of dysphagia is best achieved in a multidisciplinary context, with speech pathologists and dietitians as key professionals. These standards will improve safety for people with swallowing problems, whether they be in nursing homes, hospitals or at home".

The Dietitians Association of Australia President, Julie Hulcombe, said, "Having agreed standards for modified food and fluids is a real achievement. The new standards specify names for three levels of modified food textures and three levels with colour coding for modified fluids. These names and levels will replace the 125 labels currently being used in Australia. What we need now is for health professionals and health care facilities to adopt these standards nationally and for those with swallowing problems to be educated on choosing products that are right for them. The Dietitians Association of Australia and Speech Pathology Australia are looking forward to working together to achieve this".

Speech Pathology Australia and the Dietitians Association of Australia would like to acknowledge the generous support of Novartis Medical Nutrition in the development and launch of these standards. Novartis Medical Nutrition is a Dietitians Association of Australia Corporate Partner and Speech Pathology Australia Major Sponsor.

Information on the standards is available on the Speech Pathology Australia website [www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au) or the Dietitians Association of Australia website [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au). Full details of the standards will be published in *Nutrition & Dietetics* as a joint supplement from the Dietitians Association of Australia and Speech Pathology Australia.

**For further information or to organise an interview contact:**  
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