



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maggie Beer Foundation Secures Funding to Continue Vital Aged Care Food Improvement Program

The Maggie Beer Foundation ("The Foundation") is very pleased to announce that it has secured funding of \$7.2million over the next 4 years from the Australian Government to continue its impactful national workforce capability program, "Improving food in aged care through education and training." This investment, announced in the 2026-27 Federal Budget, provides critical support to sustain the program's core initiatives and ensure older people in aged care continue to benefit from improved food.

"We acknowledge and appreciate the Australian Government's continued commitment to improving the lives of older people through better food," said Jane Mussared, CEO of the Maggie Beer Foundation. "While we had hoped to scale our efforts with an increase in funding, we appreciate that this is a very difficult funding environment. We thank the Government for its ongoing support. We are determined to maximise the impact of this funding and continue to drive positive change across the aged care sector. We will continue to work closely with aged care providers to ensure that our unique training and mentoring approaches deliver real value and real impact."

The "Improving food in aged care through education and training" program has demonstrably improved food quality, workforce capability, and resident wellbeing across aged care homes. An external evaluation of the program, conducted by HealthConsult, found the program to be effective, well-utilised, and aligned with expectations, highlighting:

- Demand for all program components exceeds available capacity
- Participant satisfaction is over 90 per cent
- Participants reporting increased staff skills and confidence, with:
 - 92% reporting improved ability to prepare nutritious, flavourful food.
 - 91% able to apply new skills in their kitchen.
 - 89% reporting increased confidence to overcome barriers to change.
- Measurable improvements in staff confidence, skills, and kitchen workflow
- Reported enhancements in food quality, dining experience and resident well-being
- Reduced reliance on nutritional supplements in participating homes.

"These findings underscore the program's vital role and the tangible benefits it delivers to older people," said Ms Mussared. "With this renewed funding, we will focus our efforts to address the most pressing needs within the sector, despite the challenges posed by rising costs and inflation."

The funding will enable the Foundation to continue delivering its core program streams, which includes:

- **Trainer Mentor Program (TMP):** Targeted, in-home mentoring program delivered by Foundation Chef Trainers to support practice change in key areas, carefully selected to ensure optimal value.
- **State and Territory Training Hubs:** Delivery of essential short-course training, prioritising accessibility for regional, rural, and remote providers.
- **Online Learning Modules (OLMs):** Online learning modules for cooks, chefs, kitchen, and food service staff, ensuring accessibility and affordability.
- **Professional Community:** Building the national community of practice to facilitate peer support, resource sharing, and ongoing learning, promoting cost-effective knowledge dissemination.

"These funds will enable our expert team of Chef Trainers across Australia to continue to stand side-by-side with aged care providers and their care and kitchen teams," Ms Mussared explained. "Their on-the-ground expertise bridges the gap between eating well and ageing well for older people."

"We are also committed to supporting aged care leaders in championing food and dining excellence, and we will seek innovative ways both to integrate leadership development into our core training programs and to find new ways to fund food leadership programs," Ms Mussared concluded. "We are dedicated to working collaboratively with the sector to ensure that all older people can look forward to good food wherever they live."

About The Maggie Beer Foundation

The Maggie Beer Foundation was established in 2014. Access to good, nutritious, enjoyable food that supports health, dignity, connection and wellbeing is fundamental to ageing well. In collaboration with older people, carers, researchers, foodies, aged care teams and clinicians, we work to improve the food experience and, with it, the quality of life for current and future generations of older people wherever they live.

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For media enquiries, please contact: Melinda Durston, Melting Pot Communications.

M: 0431 934 271 E: melinda@meltingpotcommunications.com.au