

# OUR STORY



**NACi**

## **The Nutrition and Catering Institute Leading chronic disease prevention through foodservice**

A not-for-profit charity focused on  
Research, Innovation, Skills, and Opportunity in  
foodservices for vulnerable people

### **Our beginning**

The NACi is the vision of its CEO, Karen Abbey. She long held the dream of raising the role of foodservices and developing an institute which focussed on developing and interpreting the science of foodservices for vulnerable populations. The Institute became a reality in 2018 and achieved charity status in July 2020.

Our vision is to be recognised as a credible source of information and research to develop a quality foodservices practice, workforce and systems which will lead to better health and wellbeing. We undertake original research and translate the science of foodservice into practice, showcasing and promoting industry-led solutions and innovations.

# Why

The role of the food and foodservice industries has long been identified as key to the improvement of food and nutrition in the Australian population. As far back as the early 1990's these sectors have been recognised by the federal government as important for the nutritional health of special groups.

As the population has aged and changed, these roles have strengthened, and the meaning of "healthy diet" has changed to match needs of specific populations. While there has continued to be a strong public and government focus on the food industry, especially the processed food industry, the foodservices industry has been less well supported.

Changes which are critical to foodservices include the increase in fly-in-fly-out workers and the increasing age and frailty of the elderly population both in the home based and residential based sectors. The workforce within foodservices for these sectors can be challenged with language and educational issues, and high turnover.

Meanwhile, capacity building within the foodservice workforce has been acknowledged as one of the keys to eating well, despite efforts being inconsistent and uncoordinated.

There is a real need for entities whose primary purpose is to support and develop the foodservice sector in terms of research and capacity building, to develop better practice models and systems. NACi is the first entity in Australia whose primary purpose is to address nutrition and nutrition-related disease through foodservices.

## How

We use research and research strategies to develop and interpret the science of foodservices to help those in the sector do their work more effectively. As a charity we seek donations to support this important and overlooked work. We publish information for those working in foodservices and we support professional development for people through scholarships to attend events. We provide an open and free platform to disseminate the results of projects undertaken within the sector. We write submissions to government promoting the sector, using science and evidence, not opinion.

## Our People

We are governed by a board of experts from a diverse range of backgrounds who volunteer their time ([www.nacinstitute.com.au](http://www.nacinstitute.com.au)). Our CEO has qualifications in science, nutrition and dietetics, health service management, research, and training, and who is also a qualified chef. She has more than 25 years in the industry. She is supported by experts in foodservices, finance, marketing, policy development, nutrition and research. Together the teams brings a wealth of experience and expertise, as well as the passion to make a difference.