

From: [Jane Mussared](#)
To: s47F
Cc: s47F; [PAUL, Dimity](#); [Lesley Woods](#)
Subject: Re: Canberra 12-13 Sept [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 12 September 2024 11:33:29 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

REMINDER: Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi s47F

I understand! Of course we can do an online meeting. Let me know when suits you.

Cheers

Jane

Sent from my iPhone

On 12 Sep 2024, at 10:31 AM, HAIGH, Anna wrote:

Hi Jane

Think the health system might be sending your emails to quarantine sorry

Unfortunately we can't do today now, are you free next week for something online?

s47F

Sent from [Workspace ONE Boxer](#)

On 11 September 2024 at 1:04:00 PM AEST, s47F wrote:

Thanks Jane!

Know its early, but would 9.30 or 10 tomorrow morning work?

s47F

Adviser- Aged Care

Office of the Hon Anika Wells MP

Minister for Aged Care and Sport

s47F | s47F [@health.gov.au](mailto:s47F@health.gov.au)

From: Jane Mussared

Sent: Wednesday, September 11, 2024 12:36 PM

To: s47F; PAUL, Dimity; s47F

Cc: Lesley Woods

Subject: Re: Canberra 12-13 Sept [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Thanks so much, s47F and welcome, s47F Look forward to seeing you – I know such a busy time with an Act to negotiate...

Cheers

Jane

Jane Mussared
 Chief Executive Officer
 0408 814 483 or 08 8128 4464
 SAHMRI, PO Box 11060, Adelaide
jmussared@maggiebeerfoundation.org.au
www.maggiebeerfoundation.org.au

From: s47F @Health.gov.au>
Date: Wednesday, 11 September 2024 at 11:43 AM
To: Jane Mussared <jmussared@maggiebeerfoundation.org.au>, PAUL, Dimity s47F @Health.gov.au>, s47F s47F @Health.gov.au>
Cc: Lesley Woods s47F @maggiebeerfoundation.org.au>
Subject: RE: Canberra 12-13 Sept [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi Jane,

Sorry for our delay in responding – a little hectic at the moment!

s47F has joined our aged care team and is responsible for food and nutrition in aged care, so I've included s47F in this email to set up a time for us to meet. I fly back to Brisbane tomorrow night so we'll try to make something work before then.

Thanks,

s47F

Adviser – Aged Care and Digital Communications
 Office of the Hon. Anika Wells MP
 Minister for Aged Care | Minister for Sport
 Member for Lilley

M: s47F | E: s47F @health.gov.au

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From: Jane Mussared <jmussared@maggiebeerfoundation.org.au>
Sent: Wednesday, September 11, 2024 10:43 AM
To: PAUL, Dimity s47F @Health.gov.au>, s47F s47F @Health.gov.au>
Cc: Lesley Woods s47F @maggiebeerfoundation.org.au>
Subject: Canberra 12-13 Sept

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Dimity and s47F

I will be in Canberra tomorrow and Friday, and will come to APH tomorrow afternoon and Friday from late morning.

I appreciate that things are hectic at the moment but I'd love to catch up including about the proposal we sent through to you last week at MB's request – attached again FYI.

I've also attached social media which I think indicates just how well the Trainer Mentor Program is going down – we are putting together some testimonials and, as you know, there is an independent evaluation which has completed a Year 1 report.

If you have a moment, I'd love to touch base.

s47F

s47F

She sends her love, s47F

and to the Minister!

Cheers

Jane



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[SEC=OFFICIAL]

From: [Jane Mussared](#)
To: s47F
Cc: [Lesley Woods](#); s47F; [PAUL, Dmitry](#)
Subject: Re: RE: Canberra 12-13 Sept [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Sunday, 22 September 2024 7:42:31 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image001.png](#)

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Hi s47F

I am so sorry that my emails have got caught up with Health's quarantine process! I am getting back to you to close the loop on previous emails and find a time to catch up.

Is there a time that works for you to set up an online meeting?

Cheers

Jane



Jane Mussared

Chief Executive Officer

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s47F

Subject: Maggie Beer Foundation- meeting with Wells Office [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting; Video Conf - M1.51 (10)

Start: Fri 27/09/2024 2:00 PM
End: Fri 27/09/2024 2:30 PM

Recurrence: (none)

Meeting Status: Accepted

Organizer: s47F
Required Attendees: s47F Jane Mussared
Optional Attendees: s47F; Lesley Woods
Resources: Video Conf - M1.51 (10)

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 434 325 673 049

Passcode: kEtyLA

Dial in by phone

[+61 2 8318 0010,,568544076#](#) Australia, Sydney

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 568 544 076#

Join on a video conferencing device

Tenant key: health-au@m.webex.com

Video ID: 132 652 887 6

[More info](#)

For organizers: [Meeting options](#) | [Reset dial-in PIN](#)

This meeting may be recorded. If you do not wish to take part in the MS Teams recording, please do not join the meeting. By joining the meeting, you are consenting to being included in the recording. Refer to the published Teams Privacy Notice for further information.

[Privacy and security](#)

From: [Jane Mussared](#)
To: s47F
Subject: Maggie Beer Foundation submission re the Aged Care Bill 2024
Date: Friday, 11 October 2024 11:38:28 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Final Submission Aged Care Bill 2024 Oct 2024.pdf](#)

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Hey s47F s47F s47F and s47F

I sent our submission to the Senate Community Affairs Committee today and have attached a copy for your reference.

Fingers crossed – to have a new Aged Care Act in this session would be an incredible achievement by Ministers Butler and Wells!

s47F

Cheers

Jane



Jane Mussared

Chief Executive Officer

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Submission on the Aged Care Bill 2024

Response by the Maggie Beer Foundation to the Inquiry by the Community Affairs Legislation Committee

About the Maggie Beer Foundation

The Maggie Beer Foundation is determined to improve the food experience and quality of life for current and future generations of older people.

For more than 10 years, the Foundation has been advocating, educating, collaborating, facilitating research and sharing the latest knowledge and skills with cooks and chefs in aged care. We do this through our online education modules, our professional hands-on Trainer Mentor Chef Programs, our moderation of a professional community for aged care cooks and chefs, and our contribution to research and policy development.

We can bring about life-altering change to the well-being of older people through access to food full of flavour and nutrients.

As Maggie says,

“Food is the fuel of life, of great conversation and memorable meals. Its substance is far more than just the nutrients acquired in the act of eating. It’s the knowledge of loving preparation, the anticipation of sharing a meal and the delicious pleasure of engaging all our senses as we eat. Food is nutrition not just for the body, but also for the soul. It’s what fires our appetite for life, no matter what age. Every mouthful counts as we age and the Foundation’s resources and reach aspire to work every day to make good food and good eating the reality for each and every older Australian.”

Maggie Beer Foundation contact –

Jane Mussared, CEO

E - jmussared@maggiebeerfoundation.org.au

T - 0408 814 483



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11 October 2024

Committee Secretary
 Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
 PO Box 6100
 Parliament House
 Canberra ACT 2600
community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

The Secretary

Re - Aged Care Bill 2024 - Submission from the Maggie Beer Foundation

The Maggie Beer Foundation urges the passage of the Aged Care Bill 2024 in this Parliamentary Session.

We support the current drafting and, notwithstanding that there will be pressure to continue to develop it, we believe it provides the required substantial overhaul of the legislative basis for our aged care system in Australia.

We also note the important agreement about funding arrangements reached between the Government and Opposition. This bipartisanship augurs well for the Aged Care Bill 2024 and its capacity for a fundamental reset in the way we frame, fund, deliver and regulate aged care.

The work of the Maggie Beer Foundation is focused on how the food and nutrition needs of older Australians are met.

The risk of malnutrition is very real both for people living in residential aged care and for those receiving aged care at home. While the Royal Commission into Aged Care Safety and Quality nominated food as an urgent priority to “fix” in Australian residential aged care, malnutrition is also a major risk for many older people living in their own homes. It is very often a key trigger behind the need for older people to move to residential aged care.

We acknowledge the work of previous and current Health and Aged Care Ministers and the steps each has taken to prioritise food, dining and nutrition at least in residential aged care. We note for example the explicit inclusion of food in funding accountability, and the ACQSC’s new Food, Nutrition and Dining Hotline.

For the residents of aged care, current federal government funding of the Maggie Beer Foundation Trainer Mentor Program has provided the first ever specialised training for aged care cooks, chefs and kitchen teams.

We look forward to this funding being extended and increased well before its current expiry in 2026 so that the cooks and chefs have access to the training expected of aged care workers who can deliver high quality care under 20(c) (xi) of the draft Bill.



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Clause 15 - Strengthened Standards

The Bill heralds strengthened standards. We are very pleased that Clause 15(1) and (2) enable rules that prescribe standards of aged care including “(e) how registered providers must deliver food and drink to meet the nutritional needs and preferences of individuals”.

The Maggie Beer Foundation has been very involved in the drafting of a new Standard 6 titled *Food and Nutrition* in anticipation of the passage of the Bill ready for operation by July 2025. Educating and monitoring of this new, significantly better and much more comprehensive Standard (notwithstanding that it applies only to residential aged care at this stage) is awaiting passage of the Bill.

Clause 20 - Meaning of high quality care

Clause 20 provides definition to high quality care. Given the risk of malnutrition for people receiving aged care both in their own home and in residential care, we think that adding “enabling access to tasty and nutritious food where the person relies on their aged care provider for this” would ensure that food is seen as an integral part of aged care for many people.

Clause 601 - Review

We support the opportunity to review the Act in 5 years provided for in Clause 601. The new Act will not be perfect and it is inevitable that opportunities to improve its provisions and implementation will emerge over time.

We flag for example that this review will need to consider reform in two areas in particular –

1. Food for people living at home

Malnutrition is a major risk for frail older people living in their own homes, very often triggering their move to residential aged care. The draft *Standard 6 Food and Nutrition* applies only to residential aged care and it is well and truly time for us to turn our attention to older people getting aged care in their homes.

While nothing in the Bill stops this focus in the future, we will be urging the new Support at Home program, along with arrangements made for Commonwealth Home Support Program services, to make a much more comprehensive contribution to reducing the risk of malnutrition for older people living at home, including and especially those living alone.

2. Minimum qualifications for cooks and chefs in residential aged care

Food is not incidental to the lives, wellbeing and happiness of older Australians. We do not currently have a sufficient workforce of trained cooks and chefs with specialist knowledge of aged care. There is no formal qualification available.

We need cooks and chefs who are able to combine knowledge of food science, skills in kitchen management and food preparation, an ability to present food and a talent for flavour to also be able to meet the diverse tastes, needs and preferences of older Australians on a 24/7 basis.

An important part of closing this training gap will be to address the education needs and the career opportunities for the people who take responsibility every day for the food and dining experience in aged care.



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Despite residential aged care homes offering the most complex cooking and hospitality roles for cooks and chefs anywhere in Australia, there is no relevant accredited tertiary qualification on offer.

The Maggie Beer Foundation has been working to address this gap both through our Trainer Mentor Program and our other bespoke training and through our advocacy work with the vocational education and skills sector to identify and develop future accredited qualifications.

We would like to see the introduction of mandatory minimum qualifications for our residential aged care cooks and chefs right now. However we are very aware that there is not yet a relevant vocational qualification that combines commercial cooking with the unique needs of aged care residents. The Maggie Beer Foundation Trainer Mentor Program, as the only specialised training available currently, will require an extension to its funding beyond 2026 to reach our 2700 Australian aged care homes.

We therefore give notice that it is our expectation that a mandatory minimum training/qualification for cooks and chefs in aged care will be considered in the 5 year review of the Act.

We thank the Committee for its scrutiny of such an important Bill. The Foundation believes that it will uplift aged care. While there are no doubt improvements that could be made, it is a very good Bill making important progress in the shortcomings of aged care laid bare by the Royal Commission.

We urge the Committee to recommend the passage of the Aged Care Bill 2024 by this parliament.

Yours sincerely

s47F

Maggie Beer AO
 Founder and Director

s47F

Jane Mussared
 Chief Executive Officer

From: [Jane Mussared](#)
To: s47F; [PAUL, Dimity](#)
Cc: [Lesley Woods](#)
Subject: Re: Trainer Mentor Program Proposal
Date: Friday, 6 December 2024 2:09:43 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

s47F Dimity and s47F

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-12-06/maggie-beer-cooking-training-aged-care-homes-better-meals/104682524>

How good is this story! It shows what happens when we work together and just how precious the program is – for aged care homes and their teams, for the cooks and chefs working in aged care, for residents.

Cheers

Jane



Jane Mussared

Chief Executive Officer

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From: Jane Mussared

Date: Thursday, 21 November 2024 at 7:20 PM

To: s47F

Cc: s47F, PAUL, Dimity

Subject: Trainer Mentor Program Proposal

Hi s47F

Nice to see you at ACCPA – and so happy that the Aged Care Act has been passed by the Senate! Great work!

Now just needs to be ticked off in the House next week and your work – at least this bit – is done. Love the Transition Task Force and s47F is an inspired choice for the chair.

I wanted to loop back to you about our proposal to extend the Trainer Mentor Program past March 2026 when funding for it ends. This was an Albanese Government initiative and has been huge especially in preparation for the new Standard 6 about food and nutrition.

The program continues to be the only training available for cooks, chefs and kitchen teams in aged care and has been so welcomed by aged care. It is in full flight now – we have 11+ of our Trainer Chefs zigzagging Australia, embedded in kitchens addressing things like kitchen workflow, involving residents in food choices and tastings, improving nutrition and fortification, increasing use of fresh ingredients,

working on the dining experience, optimising flavour etc etc.

We'd love to be part of an announcement about refunding it ahead of the election.

The reality is that, because it is a twelve month program including an embedding component with each aged care home, in the absence of an extension/expansion, we are assessing our last intake of applicants right now. Our team of Trainer Cooks are so fired up about what they are finding and what they are fixing. It's worth having a look on Facebook (and not just our posts!) to see how well its being received.

We'd love a conversation about what you need from us and would value any advice you can give us.

Just BTW, Ms Chesters did a great shout out about it in parliament this week – notwithstanding that 78% should have been 68%.

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (16:31): The Maggie Beer Foundation has partnered with the Australian government's Department of Health and Aged Care to provide training and mentorship for those working in kitchens in residential aged-care homes. In Australia, sadly, it's estimated that 78 per cent of residents in aged care are malnourished or at risk of malnourishment. This is an appalling statistic that our government is working with the sector to reverse. That is where the Maggie Beer Foundation steps in.

The Maggie Beer Foundation is battling this alarming statistic by running face-to-face training courses for cooks and chefs. Since 2014, it has been providing hands-on experience and peer-to-peer networking, and it now offers an online training module to help those in regional areas like my electorate access the training.

I'm proud to say that, in my own electorate, Heathcote Health has signed up for this program. The program is open to up to 120 aged-care homes and runs until 2025.

Jenny from my electorate is one of the head chefs. I met her during my recent visit to the Heathcote Health aged-care facility, and she said that her team has benefited from the program. The new menu has been welcomed by residents and is inspiring others to think about food. The Maggie Beer Foundation is an amazing success, and I encourage other aged-care homes to tap into the program.

<https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;db=CHAMBER;id=chamber%2Fhansardr%2F28037%2F0396;query=id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansardr%2F28037%2F0000%22>

Look forward to hearing when you come up for air.

Cheers

Jane

PS Maggie ^{s47F} but is back at work well and truly and sends her regards to Anika. Our Project Lead, ^{s47F}, did a great presentation, including before and after stories, to our Board last week which we'd love to walk you through.

Jane Mussared

Chief Executive Officer

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jmussared@maggiebeerfoundation.org.au
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From: [Jane Mussared](#)
To: s47F ; [PAUL, Dimity](#)
Cc: [Lesley Woods](#)
Subject: Re: Trainer Mentor Program Proposal [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Friday, 6 December 2024 2:40:56 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Does 2.30 your time work for you?



Jane Mussared

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From: s47F
Date: Friday, 6 December 2024 at 1:51 PM
To: Jane Mussared , s47F , PAUL, Dimity
Cc: Lesley Woods
Subject: RE: Trainer Mentor Program Proposal [SEC=OFFICIAL]

How is Wednesday afternoon? Maybe after 2?

From: Jane Mussared
Sent: Friday, 6 December 2024 2:14 PM
To: s47F ; PAUL, Dimity
Cc: Lesley Woods
Subject: Re: Trainer Mentor Program Proposal [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Absolutely! Let me know when suits you.



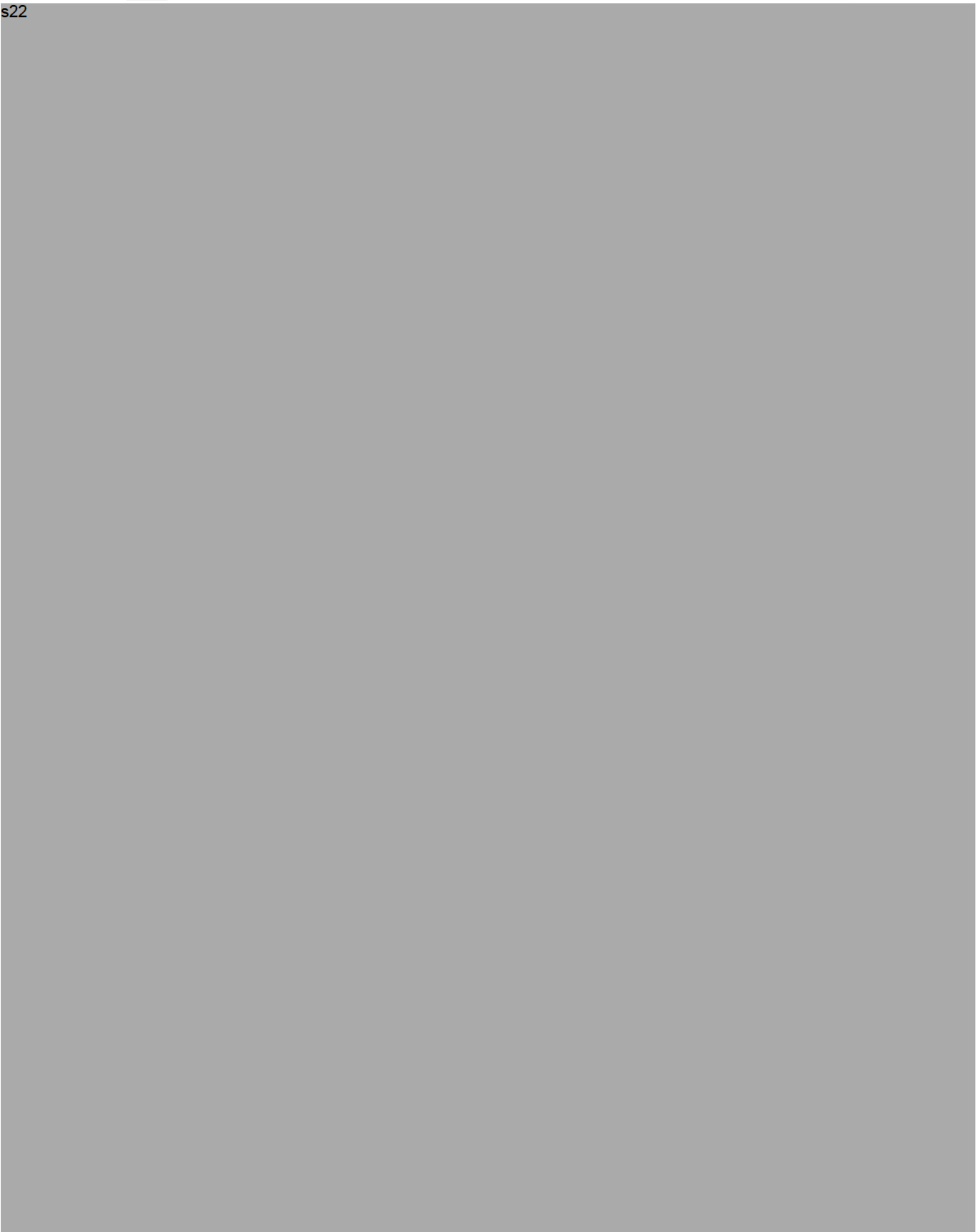
Jane Mussared

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From: s47F <s47F@Health.gov.au>
Date: Friday, 6 December 2024 at 1:41 PM
To: Jane Mussared <jmussared@maggiebeerfoundation.org.au>, s47F <s47F@Health.gov.au>, PAUL, Dimity <s47F@Health.gov.au>
Cc: Lesley Woods <s47F@maggiebeerfoundation.org.au>
Subject: RE: Trainer Mentor Program Proposal [SEC=OFFICIAL]

This is great!

Thanks for sharing. Good timing too- I was planning on reaching out, I was wondering if you have time for a catch up next week?



From: [Jane Mussared](#)
To: s47F; [PAUL, Dimity](#)
Cc: [Lesley Woods](#)
Subject: Our 2025-26 Budget submission
Date: Monday, 27 January 2025 12:35:21 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Submission to 2025-26 Federal Budget Maggie Beer Foundation 2025.pdf](#)

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Dimity, s47F and s47F

A busy year ahead for you all! We are thrilled to bits that Minister Wells has been promoted to Cabinet. It is richly deserved including for all of you in your support for her.

Please find attached our pre-budget submission to the Treasurer for the 2025-26 Budget.

We have been working with the Department to roll out the \$1.7m allocated through 2024 MYEFO. It is very very welcome.

We note however that this funding is within the current grant and does not extend our program funding past 2026 and so new funding to maintain our impact and scale will be required. We are also asking for support to lead work around food services and models to support older people getting aged care at home.

We'd love to talk to you more about both proposals.

Cheers

Jane

JANE MUSSARED

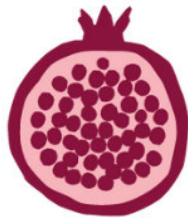
Chief Executive Officer

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**MAGGIE BEER
FOUNDATION**
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10 *years*
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Pre-Budget Submission 2025-26

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ABN: 15 168 279 865



The Problem

There remains a high and unacceptable risk of malnutrition among older Australians both for those living in aged care homes and for those living at home.

The issue for those living in aged care homes was recognised and flagged as a priority by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. While Government, with the cooking, catering and nutrition community, aged care providers, vocational education sector, aged care staff and the Maggie Beer Foundation, are working to change this, systemic, sustainable change is far from embedded. Two of the most urgent issues are –

- The absence of any accredited practical training available anywhere in Australia for aged care cooks and chefs. Cooks and chefs, in undertaking one of the most difficult roles in aged care, desperately need on the ground support and training to meet the complex needs of frail older Australians.
- Major industry gaps in knowledge and skills about flavour, nutrition, food and dining needs, food preparation techniques, workflow and kitchen requirements to adequately support residents of aged care.

For older people living in their own home, particularly as they rely more on others for support, there is an increased likelihood of poor access to good food (including to meet altered nutritional needs generated by the burden of disease) and consequent risks of malnutrition. While there has been increasing focus on food in aged care homes, the issues and solutions for food at home are relatively unexplored.

Our Proposals

We offer two proposals for consideration.

	Per annum	Over 3 years
Proposal 1 - Extend the Improving Food in Aged Care through Education and Training program	\$4,000,000	\$12,000,000
Proposal 2 - Project focused on solutions for older people receiving aged care at home	\$1,100,000	\$3,300,000
Total	\$5,100,000	\$15,300,000

PROPOSAL 1 - Extend the *Improving Food in Aged Care through Education and Training* program

The Maggie Beer Foundation, with funding from the Federal Government, rolled out its Trainer Mentor Program (TMP) to provide comprehensive, sustainable and hands-on training and capacity building on a national basis for cooks, chefs, catering teams and others responsible for the food and dining experience in aged care homes.

The 2024 MYEFO statement included an additional \$1.7m to supplement existing funding for the program which, without new funding, will finish in mid 2026. While the 2024 MYEFO funding is critical to the momentum of the program, our experience and the independent evaluation being undertaken by HealthConsult suggest that funding must be increased and our ambitions for the reach of the program extended if we are to create significant improvement at scale.

We therefore urge that \$4 million per annum is allocated on a longer term basis, and for a minimum of three years.

The TMP is delivered by our unique Foundation Trainer Chefs who are supported by the Foundation to keep up to date with emerging knowledge and expertise in aged care food and dining, and who have advanced skills and knowledge in cooking and dining, aged care and training and mentoring processes.

This extension would enable the successful features of the current program to continue with TMP as the key deliverable, supported by the Professional Community, Online Learning Modules and State and Territory Hubs (virtual short courses). Specifically, \$12m over 3 years would -

- Extend the TMP program and Hubs to run until mid-2029 in the first instance to more than 200 additional homes over the period and achieving a total reach of more than 350 of the almost 2,700 aged care homes across Australia.
- Research, scope and produce new Online Learning Modules with appropriate experts and based on learning needs identified through the current program and stakeholder engagement.
- Support the growing online Professional Community of Aged Care Cooks and Chefs to receive curated access to a moderated online forum, current topic updates, access to recipes and resources, discussion groups and timely, expert responses to member inquiries.
- Produce resources for a broader stakeholder group (such as carers, community members, clinicians and aged care managers) including tools, 'small bite' information sessions with subject experts, webinars, resources and Fact Sheets addressing common issues.
- Continue the development of a library of scalable recipes, developed and trialled especially for aged care, including the process for texture modification and nutrition information.

The TMP is largely offered onsite, where a Maggie Beer Foundation Chef Trainer works beside staff for a total of 16 days over a 12-month period. It includes consideration of factors such as:

- Developing flavour through key cooking skills and techniques, combining a variety of complementary flavours, sourcing seasonal produce and creating balance between the 5 flavour profiles including across texture modified meals
- Meeting the nutritional needs of older people (particularly protein) to prevent malnutrition and fortification using a food first approach
- Running an efficient kitchen with adequate resourcing and rostering, efficient workflow, accessing and creating standard recipes suitable for aged care, staff training on existing kitchen equipment and strategies to get ahead (e.g. cooking in bulk)
- Dining experience by creating welcoming spaces to dine, bringing aroma into the dining room to stimulate appetite, supporting independence and involving residents through regular and ongoing feedback mechanisms.

Funding required \$12,000,000 over 3 years.

PROPOSAL 2 - Project focused on solutions for older people receiving aged care at home

We propose funding for a collaborative project focused on older people receiving aged care in their own homes, examining and making recommendations about the range of options and models that will support improved nutrition, food and social dining for frail older people living at home including those living alone.

The Foundation believes, through the formation of an ‘alliance group’ of community organisations including those delivering meals, there is an opportunity to research the needs and options for frail older people receiving meals as part of aged care in their own home.

Most older people, including frail older people needing aged care, do not live in aged care homes. Too often a factor prompting the need for residential aged care is the risk of malnutrition where older people are simply not eating well enough to maintain good condition. This has often followed months (and years) of inadequate nutrition, loneliness and not being able, motivated or interested in enjoying food.

We know much less about this as a problem – and the potential solutions - than we should.

There are few Australian studies of the prevalence of undernourishment among those living in the community and sample sizes are small.¹ However, according to a study undertaken by Access Economics for Meals on Wheels in 2011, inadequate nutrition is potentially common among older people living in the community — ranging between 30 and 47%. The reasons for poor nutrition included –

- poor health causing reduced mobility, fatigue, and frailty
- polypharmacy leading to decreased appetite
- dentition, chewing and swallowing disorders
- lack of social support
- reduced ability to shop
- low income
- poor food and nutrition knowledge; and
- lack of interest and motivation, particularly when alone

More recently cost of living pressures have prompted some older households to put a low priority on fresh, good food.

While older people (and those who care for them) increasingly understand that exercise is an essential part of ageing well and avoiding falls, the place of good food and proper nutrition is not nearly as well understood. We can counter the “anorexia of ageing”² with a better understanding of the importance of food as we age, including the need to pivot narratives away from a fear of obesity to preventing malnutrition.

But our experience tells us that we will not succeed in addressing nutrition if the process is medicalised or food turned into nutrition doses or transactions. Food which stimulates the senses, is flavourful and which can be enjoyed in the company of others is much more likely to support required nutrition levels.

This project will be led by the Foundation, and feature collaboration across existing and emerging stakeholders, adopting the approach the Foundation used to host the first National Congress on Food and Dining in Aged Care in 2021. It will provide an analysis of –

- the gaps, issues and opportunities through a literature search, surveys and workshops
- an examination of the products, options and solutions
- a blueprint for next steps.

Funding required \$3,300,000 over 3 years.

¹ p9, *Cost benefit analysis of an intervention to improve the nutritional status of community dwelling older Australians, for MOWA by Access Economics, 2011*

² For example, https://researchnow-admin.flinders.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/76540712/Han_Individualized_P2023.pdf

About the Maggie Beer Foundation

The Maggie Beer Foundation is determined to improve the food experience and quality of life for current and future generations of older people.

For more than 10 years, the Foundation has been advocating, educating, collaborating, facilitating research and sharing the latest knowledge and skills with cooks and chefs in aged care. We do this through our online education modules, our professional hands-on Trainer Mentor Chef Programs, our Learning Hubs, our moderation of a professional community for aged care cooks and chefs, and our contribution to research and policy development.

We are committed to working with others to better understand and address the very real risk of malnutrition among older people living in their own homes, including those who live alone, and who, for a range of reasons, face barriers to enjoying healthy, delicious food.

We can bring about life-altering change to the well-being of older people through access to food full of flavour and nutrients.

As Maggie says,

“Food is the fuel of life, of great conversation and memorable meals. Its substance is far more than just the nutrients acquired in the act of eating. It’s the knowledge of loving preparation, the anticipation of sharing a meal and the delicious pleasure of engaging all our senses as we eat. Food is nutrition not just for the body, but also for the soul. It’s what fires our appetite for life, no matter what age. Every mouthful counts as we age and the Foundation’s resources and reach aspire to work every day to make good food and good eating the reality for each and every older Australian.”

Our approach is focused on supporting staff to understand the importance of food, and their own role in its production and delivery. This leads to improved retention in the aged care industry of cooks and chefs who are otherwise at risk of being lost to hospitality roles.

Beyond our direct training role, the Maggie Beer Foundation has, for more than a decade, been the leading advocate for improved vocational training and for research that improves the understanding of the relationship between food and emotional and physical wellbeing.

A current project, funded by Skills SA and undertaken by the Foundation in partnership with TAFE SA, has begun a serious analysis of the training needs of cooks, chefs and kitchen hands in aged care. While this will take some time, we very much hope that the next step will be vocational training gap analysis, the development of new vocational training programs and then national take up.

Jane Mussared, CEO

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