

Dr Fiona Willer, AdvAPD, PhD

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Skills and Values Statement

As an established national leader in dietetics, I am guided by my central values of curiosity, compassion, ethics and integrity. My core skills include advanced dietetics practice, organisational governance, tertiary learning design, teaching and assessment, and Health at Every Size (HAES) academia, practice and advocacy. Following the recent completion of my PhD, I am seeking opportunities to strengthen my research capabilities and impact, particularly in areas relating to the influence of body stigmatising versus body affirming healthcare on the mental health and eating behaviours of people across the BMI spectrum.

Qualifications

- 2021 Board Directors Course for **GAICD accreditation** (expected completion December 2021)
Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)
- 2021 **PhD 'A Good Fit: Health-Oriented Size Acceptance in Australian Dietetic Practice'**
Supervised across the School of Psychology and Counselling and the School of Exercise and Nutrition Science, Queensland University of Technology (QUT) [ePrints](#)
- 2020 **Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA)**
Advance HE (equivalent to Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education)
- 2007 **Bachelor of Health Science (Nutrition and Dietetics)(Hons 2A)**
Queensland University of Technology, G.P.A: 5.958
- 1998 **Bachelor of Arts (Anthropology and English)**
University of Queensland, G.P.A: 5.5

Research Experience

2012 – 2021 **PhD 'A Good Fit: Health-Oriented Size Acceptance in Australian Dietetic Practice'**

- Supervised across the School of Psychology and Counselling and the School of Exercise and Nutrition Science, my PhD research explored the suitability of health-oriented, size-accepting approaches for use in Australian dietetics counselling with weight-concerned adults. Across three studies, this work established that such an approach has an acceptable evidence base to drive Australian dietetics practice and may be a superior method to support higher dietary quality and lower eating disorder risk when compared with weight-centric approaches.
- The research methods employed included design and analysis of cross-sectional surveys using quantitative psychometric and behavioural measurement instruments, as well as thematic analysis of qualitative data. The constructs I have a high degree of confidence in working with include dietary quality, dietary restraint, body self-appraisal (including body dissatisfaction, internalised weight stigma and body appreciation), self-compassion, and health versus weight centric behavioural motivation. I have high level expertise in Health at Every Size, weight-neutral lifestyle interventions and human weight regulation, particularly in adults.
- During my candidature I shared my findings with the publication of one journal article, five conference presentations and a full-length thesis manuscript, [available on ePrints](#) (nominated for an Outstanding Thesis Award, results pending). I also published two practice manuals for weight-neutral practice based on my initial findings (one for dietetics and one for psychology and counselling). Academic publication of my PhD work continues.
- As a result of my expertise in health-focussed size accepting approaches in healthcare practice I have been called upon to share my work at many conferences and professional events, including (this year) the ANZMOSS (Australia and New Zealand Metabolic Obesity Surgery Society) national conference and the Australasian Diabetes Congress, among others.

2016-present **Academic Reviews, Consultation and Grant involvement**

- Full length article reviews conducted for *Appetite, Nutrition & Dietetics* and *Fat Studies Journal* in relation to Health at Every Size, Intuitive Eating and weight-neutral approaches in primary care.
- Invited expert to review the Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Eating Disorders for People Living in Larger Bodies (2021, National Eating Disorder Collaboration, NEDC).
- Reviewer for Practice Evidence in Nutrition (PEN) *Weight Inclusive / HAES Approach* Background document (2021)
- Externally reviewed the proposed 'Healthy and Sustainable Diets' Position Paper for Dietitians Australia and National Obesity Prevention Strategy' responses for Dietitians Australia and HAES Australia.
- Abstracts scored for Dietitians Australia national conference 2021 as part of conference scientific committee.
- Grant applications: active contribution to Outer East Partnership Grant (2021-2022) for Yarra Valley Body Image Group ('*Body inclusivity audit tool*') and Bupa Health Foundation (2013-2014 funding round) for Market Solutions ('*Intuitive eating to improve young people's BMI and mental health*')
- Professional weight inclusive project coaching of health professionals on consultancy basis

2012-present **Research Supervision and Mentorship**

- 2014: QUT Honours student project supervisor: comparing the case-mix patterns of QUT Clinics versus local private practice dietitians.
- Consultant/volunteer advisor for various weight-inclusive research projects at honours and masters levels
- Abstract mentor for Dietitians Australia 2022 National Conference (volunteer)
- Coaching and assessment of academic writing and research reports for final year dietetics students at Queensland University of Technology
- APD program mentor for many years

2014 **Queensland University of Technology (QUT)– Unit Coordinator – Embedded Research**

- Designed and conducted original research in collaboration with Dr Mary Hannan-Jones examining and establishing private practice benchmarking standards. We embedded the data collection, analysis and reporting activities into a final year dietetics business practice unit and were very pleased to secure 50+ participating dietetics practices across Queensland and New South Wales who provided invaluable information about their case-mix, funding streams, expenses, financial position and quality improvement activities. This research was presented at the 2015 Dietitians Association of Australia national conference with two oral presentations, one relating to pedagogical outcomes of unit-embedded research and the other for the private practice benchmarking outcomes.

2013 -2014 **Queensland University of Technology (QUT) – Research Assistant**

- 2013 Teaching and Learning grant investigating readiness for inter-professional learning between QUT students in the School of Nutrition and Exercise Science and School of Dance. Conducted data collection, data analysis and write up phases independently. Outputs: Conference presentation at 2015 Dietitians Association of Australia national conference in Perth, one paper published. Principal researcher and supervisor: Dr Katherine Hanna.

2013 – 2014 **PEACH Program (QUT) – Parent Facilitator and Project Officer**

- Facilitator for two groups in the first wave: QUT Kelvin Grove and QUT Caboolture. Produced literature review and recommendations for feasibility of use of automated text messaging to increase parent engagement in the program.

Professional Employment

2019-2025 **Dietitians Australia** (Non-Executive Board Director, elected, paid)

As part of this nine-member board, I have been involved with long term strategic planning, risk identification, the companywide re-branding from Dietitians Association of Australia to Dietitians Australia (brand transitioned in 2020), the adoption of a new information management system for the whole organisation which brought data storage back to Australian shores and rationalised a multitude of separate systems, adapting the services to the changing needs of members as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, procurement of new commercial premises for Head Office and development and endorsement of the significantly improved Code of Professional Conduct. My approach as a board director has been to ensure that the organisation and members are acting with integrity and transparency, making evidence-informed decisions and advocating for those most vulnerable, both in the membership (eg new graduates, private practitioners, those returning to work) and in the communities that dietitians serve (Indigenous Australians, older Australians, stigmatised groups, people with chronic and life limiting conditions etc). I currently chair the *Members and the Profession* Board Committee am subsidiary chair for the *Research and Journal Management Committee*.

2021-present **Dietitians Australia** (Overseas-trained dietitian (DSR) assessor)

Assessor for overseas-trained dietitians seeking accreditation as an Accredited Practising Dietitian with Dietitians Australia. Standardised oral clinical tasks use case simulations and actors and applicant performance is assessed against a multitude of criteria. Phases assessed include Nutritional Assessment and Diagnosis, Education and Counselling and Interprofessional Practice.

2008 – present **Teaching Academic, various Universities**

Over the past 13 years I have worked on a sessional and contract basis as a teaching and learning design academic in Nutrition and Dietetics. My most longstanding relationship is with Queensland University of Technology (QUT), where I continue to Unit Coordinate and lecture. This year I have taught *Food and Nutrition*, a large first year unit that I redesigned and also taught twice in 2020, and a final year dietetics capstone unit, *Leadership in Nutrition and Dietetics*. Across many years I have been able to apply my skills in learning design (including face-to-face, blended and online formats, synchronous and asynchronous delivery), curriculum design, lecturing, assessment design, marking and moderation. My strong pedagogical skills were acknowledged with the attainment of the credential of Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) in 2020. Teaching content has included human nutrition in health and disease, food science (introductory and advanced), culinary skills, medical nutrition therapy, dietetics practice and dietetics-related entrepreneurship and leadership. I have also held teaching roles in Nutrition at Central Queensland University (CQU) and have completed marking for the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC). A full list of academic activities and units taught is available on request.

2019-2021 **The Butterfly Foundation** (National Primary School Body Image Project)

In addition to being an invited expert committee member, I developed and produced audio-visual learning materials for the Body Kind Schools resource suite (parent/teacher focussed) and the Body Kind Families resource suite (Body Positive Eating for Teens, parent focussed).

2013 – present **Health, Not Diets** (own business)

Development and facilitation of continuing professional development resources for health professionals in the application of health-focussed weight inclusive approaches in clinical practice and research. Professional development resources include self-paced, assessed, online courses aimed at updating and extending practice knowledge for different levels of professional competence (introductory to advanced), face-to-face workshops around Australia and in New Zealand, practice guidebooks for dietitians and psychologists (global distribution), and an innovative subscriber model professional development podcast, 'Unpacking Weight Science' (each episode includes learning outcomes, supporting materials and quiz). Resources include understanding Medical Nutrition Therapy through weight-neutral lens and the effect of dieting on health markers and outcomes. I provide mentorship, supervision and advisory services on a consultancy basis. I've provided multiple commissioned workshops and presentations for health professionals organisations and guest lectures for undergraduate and masters-level dietetics students for many Australian universities, and worked with media, in print, television, radio and online.

2008 – 2014 **NutritionSense Dietitians and Allied Health** (private practice - owner and founder)

Managed successful dietetics private practice business with multiple employees. Conducted individual consultations with main practice areas of Irritable Bowel Syndrome, non-diet approach, disordered eating, diabetes, heart disease, pregnancy nutrition.

2007 – 2010 **The Wesley Hospital**, Auchenflower, Brisbane

Clinical Dietitian. Substantial practice in the areas of: Respiratory, Cardiac Rehab, Orthopaedics, Stroke Unit, General Surgery. Co-ordinated and practiced in Wesley Hospital dietetic outpatient service, 'Dietitians Wesley'.

Awards

- 2021 Nominated for **University Outstanding Doctoral Thesis Award** (QUT)
- 2020 Awarded post-nominal of **Fellow of the Higher Education Academy** (FHEA)
- 2020 International Conference of Eating Disorders (ICED), combined Australia and New Zealand Academy of Eating Disorder (ANZAED) and Dietitians Australia (DA) **Research Prize** for oral research presentation based on quality, relevance and contribution to the field of eating disorder research and dietetics
- 2019 Finalist for '**2019 Dietitian of the Year**', '**Allied Health Education Excellence**' and '**Allied Health Impact Achievement**' awards at the 2019 Australian Allied Health Awards
- 2017 **DAA Research Prize** recipient for best workshop at the Australia and New Zealand Academy of Eating Disorders (ANZAED) national conference
- 2015 Recipient of an **Australian Postgraduate Award** (APA) PhD Scholarship (2015-2020)
- 2007 **Meals on Wheels Nutrition Award** recipient

Education - Short Courses

Governance	Company Directors Course (by Dec 2021) Ethics in the Boardroom Director Financial Literacy Workshop	Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Corporate Information Management Services
Health Law	Health Care Law and Ethics LWN164 (2021)	QUTeX Professional Development
Human Rights	Discrimination Awareness in Queensland Public Entities and the QLD Human Rights Act Diversity Awareness	Queensland Human Rights Commission Queensland Human Rights Commission Queensland Human Rights Commission
Mentoring/ Coaching	Workplace Learning with Coaching and Mentoring How to Mentor in the Workplace	The Open University (UK) TAFE Queensland
Business	Project Management Entrepreneurship	e-Grad School (Australia) e-Grad School (Australia)
Professional academia	Digital Competencies for Researchers Public Policy	e-Grad School (Australia) e-Grad School (Australia)

Volunteer Positions

2019-2024	Dietitians Australia (DA) non-executive Board Director , elected role
2019-2021	Butterfly Foundation, National Primary School Body Image Project , invited expert committee member
2021-2022	HAES Australia Governance Committee Co-Chair
2017-2020	DAA Membership Engagement Advisory Committee (MEAC) position conferred by DAA Board of Directors
2017-2019	QUT Nutrition and Dietetics Curriculum Advisory Group
2017-2018	DAA Corporate Sponsorship Survey Working Group
2016-2018	Elected Vice President International of the Association for Size Diversity and Health (ASDAH), serving on Leadership Committee and Membership Committee
2016-present	Administrator of the Society for Australian independent Dietitian-Nutritionists (AIDNSoc)
2018-2019	Treasurer and expert advisory committee member of HAES Australia Inc
2017-2018	Secretary and expert advisory committee member of HAES Australia Inc
2016-2017	President and expert advisory committee member of HAES Australia Inc
2016	Invited reviewer for Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition (PEN) 'Mindful Eating' knowledge pathway
2016	Invited reviewer for the 'Fat Studies Journal' and 'Appetite' scientific journals
2013 – 2016	President of the Association for Non-Diet Approach Research Inc.
2013 – 2015	Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local working party for the adaptation of Map of Medicine™ pathways for 'Obesity', 'Dyspepsia and GORD' and 'Irritable Bowel Syndrome'
2011	Co-supervision of QUT dietetics research stream student. Project: Case-mix of private practice dietitians in Australia to allow comparison with case-mix at QUT Health Clinics Nutrition and Dietetics Clinic.
2011-present	Mentoring of various Provisional APDs in the APD Program
2009-2010	Executive member Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) QLD Branch
2004-2007	Executive member QUT Nutrition and Dietetics Students' Association

Professional Memberships

- Advanced Accredited Practising Dietitian (AdvAPD, conferred 2017) with **Dietitians Australia**
- HAES Expert member with the **Association for Size Diversity and Health (ASDAH)**
- Verified Provider with **HAES Australia**
- Professional member of the **Australian and New Zealand Academy of Eating Disorders (ANZAED)**
- Professional member (MAICD) of the **Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)**
- Professional member (MAITD) of the **Australian Institute of Teaching and Development (AITD)**
- Professional member of the **Public Health Association of Australia**
- Professional member of the **Team-Based Learning Collaborative (TBLC)**
- Australian Independent Dietitian-Nutritionist (AIDN) **Society for Australian Independent Dietitian-Nutritionists (AIDNSoc)**
- Professional member of **The Ethics Centre**

Referees

Associate Professor Mary Hannan-Jones

Relationship: PhD Supervisor and current employer
Discipline Lead, Nutrition and Dietetics
School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences (SENS)
Queensland University of Technology
0419 120 794 m.hannan-jones@qut.edu.au

Associate Professor Esben Strodl

Relationship: Primary PhD Supervisor
Director of Psychology Services at QUT Clinics
School of Psychology and Counselling
Queensland University of Technology (QUT)
0421 970 409 e.strodl@qut.edu.au

Relevant Publications and Conference Presentations

- 2020 Willer, F 'Health at Every Size (HAES) for People with Diabetes.' *Australian Diabetes Educator*. 2020 23(1).
- 2019 Willer F, Hannan-Jones M, Strodl E. Australian dietitians' beliefs and attitudes towards weight loss counselling and health at every size counselling for larger-bodied clients. *Nutrition & Dietetics*. 2019 Sep;76(4):407-13.
- Willer, F (2019) 'Core food variety, body appreciation, intuitive eating and self-compassion in dieting and nondieting Australian adults.' (original research oral presentation) DAA National Conference
- Willer, F (2019) 'Is healthier eating associated with weight-neutral or weight-centric use of dietetics strategies?' (original research poster presentation) DAA National Conference
- Willer, F (2019) 'How closely do weight-centric and weight-neutral dietetic strategies used in the community mirror those recommended by dietitians?' (original research poster presentation) DAA National Conference
- 2017 Hanna K, Hanley A, Huddy A, McDonald M, Willer F. Physical activity participation and nutrition and physical activity knowledge in university dance students. *Medical problems of performing artists*. 2017 Mar 1;32(1):1-7.
- Willer, F (2017) 'Dietitians have a positive attitude towards weight-neutral non-diet approaches' (original research oral presentation) DAA national conference
- Willer, F (2017) 'Preferred weight management approach is strongly related to individual dietitian characteristics' (poster presentation) DAA national conference
- 2015 Willer, F and K Hanna (2015) 'Readiness for Interprofessional Learning in QUT students of Nutrition Science, Nutrition & Dietetics, Exercise Science & Exercise Physiology' (oral presentation) DAA national conference
- Hannan Jones, M and F Willer (2015) 'Connecting learning and teaching with giving back to the dietetic community: a win-win situation' (original research oral presentation) DAA national conference
- 2014 Willer, F and L Adams (2014) *The Non-Diet Approach Guidebook for Psychologists and Counsellors* (book), 181 pages, ISBN 9781291840063
- 2013 Willer, F (2013) *The Non-Diet Approach Guidebook: a how-to guide for applying the non-diet approach in individual dietetic counselling* (book), 127 pages, ISBN 5800094961523

Invited Presentations (2021)

- Invited speaker at the Australia and New Zealand Metabolic and Obesity Surgery Society (ANZMOSS) Conference, Cairns, 27th-29th October 2021. Session title: '*Approaches to Improving Quality of Life*'
- Invited speaker at the Dietitians Australia Qld Branch Symposium, 1 October 2021 Presentation title: '*The history and future of HAES in dietetics*'
- Invited speaker at the Australasian Diabetes Congress, Brisbane, 11th August 2021. Presentation title: '*Weight neutral approach in diabetes management*'
- Invited speaker at the Yarra Ranges Body Image Group via the Yarra Ranges Council, 10th June 2021. Presentation title: '*Unpacking Weight Science*'
- Invited speaker at Dietitians Unite 2021 event hosted by Dietitian Connection, 21st May 2021. Panel Discussion: '*Weight Management*'
- Invited presenter for the Eating Disorders Interest Group of the Singapore Dietitians Association, 17th May 2021, 4-hour online workshop, '*Health at Every Size and the Non-Diet Approach in Dietetics*'
- Invited speaker at the Diabetes Online Expo 2021, 27th March 2021. Presentation title: '*Health at Every Size*'