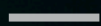


Debunking the myths about sleep Helping Australians to 'check, choose, snooze' for better sleep health



PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2026-2027

SUBMITTED BY

The Sleep Health Foundation (SHF)
and the Australasian Sleep
Association (ASA)





Sleep Health Foundation

ABN 91 138 737 854

www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au

A national organisation devoted to education, advocacy and supporting research into sleep and its disorders.



Australasian Sleep Association

ABN 51 138 032 014

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The peak national association of clinicians and scientists devoted to investigation of sleep and its disorders.

Sleep health in Australia

The need

Sleep needs to be a national health priority. This was the core message of the 2019 [Parliamentary Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia](#), and the need has only grown since then.

Australians are now increasingly exposed to potentially harmful misleading sleep information, unregulated products, and strong commercial determinants that undermine evidence-based approaches to healthy sleep.

Poor sleep [is associated with](#) a range of chronic health conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, obesity, cardiovascular disease, [dementia](#), anxiety, major depression and all-cause mortality. It is also associated with worse academic performance, cognitive and behavioural outcomes in children.

We have known for over a decade that [four in every ten Australians](#) are not getting the sleep they require. The financial cost of inadequate or poor quality sleep in Australia is [AU\\$51 billion annually](#). This includes direct and indirect health costs as well as the costs associated with the loss of productivity. Poor sleep health is a risk factor for accidents and injuries, including an estimated 23% of motor vehicle crashes. Of even greater concern, in 2016-17 inadequate sleep [was estimated](#) to contribute to 3017 deaths in Australia. This is likely to be a significant underestimate as sleep is not always correctly identified as the cause of death.

Significant progress has been made in the past five years to strengthen clinical capability in sleep health, particularly through government-funded [primary care education programs](#), and the development of evidence-based clinical

pathways. However, the public remains concerningly uninformed or misinformed about the importance of sleep, healthy sleep practices, the signs of sleep disorders, and when and where to seek help.

This gap between clinical readiness and public understanding limits the impact of government investment in preventive health and primary care reform. As with other major health issues such as the “Slip Slop Slap” skin cancer campaign, clinical capabilities and public awareness need to be tackled simultaneously.

The solution

The Australasian Sleep Association (ASA) and the Sleep Health Foundation (SHF) seek Australian Government co-investment in a national sleep health awareness campaign to complement the education already delivered to GPs and health practitioners, and to counter the growing volume of misinformation and commercial influence shaping public behaviour around sleep.

We are in a digital era that not only creates potential sleep disruption via digital devices themselves, but it has also created an environment where rapid digital change has blurred the line between evidence-based sleep health information and pervasive and enticing [misinformation about sleep](#). We need Australians to **“Check. Choose. Snooze.”** Check the facts. Choose evidence. Snooze well.

Public confusion is growing. Without a coordinated public campaign, misinformation will continue to drive poor decision-making, delayed help-seeking, and increased health system costs.

Why now?

In recent years the Australian Government has recognised the importance of sleep, as outlined in its response to the 2019 [Parliamentary Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia](#).

Recommendation 8 from that 2019 Inquiry was:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in partnership with the states, territories and key stakeholder groups, work to develop and implement a national sleep health awareness campaign.

The Australian Government gave in-principle support to the recommendation in 2023. Shortly after, the Government-commissioned policy evidence review [Sleep: a core pillar of health and wellbeing](#) was released which outlined the compelling evidence for the central role of sleep in disease prevention and population health.

Recommendation 3 of this review was:

A comprehensive and multi-focal sleep health public awareness campaign should be undertaken in alignment and within the life of the National Preventive Health Strategy. The campaign should be conducted over several years with evidence-based and consumer-informed approaches for both the general public and for priority and high-risk population groups including those affected by irregular work hours and specific industry employment.

Years have now passed since the Inquiry report was tabled, and the need is more urgent than ever to improve access to evidence-based information about healthy sleep and raise awareness about pathways to evidence-based treatments for sleep disorders.

The stage is set like never before – a 4-year education campaign has primed 35,000 healthcare providers to recognise and respond to

sleep health problems, and clinical pathways have been developed to manage increasing demands for evidence-based care. A coordinated, well-funded enduring national sleep health awareness campaign is now needed to address shortfall in public awareness of healthy sleep and the urgent recent increase in misinformation.

Health policy priorities

The national sleep health awareness campaign will directly support other key government work already underway such as:

- **The National Preventive Health Strategy:** Improved sleep can reduce modifiable risk factors for chronic and other diseases. A key prevention goal of the proposed campaign will be to target healthy sleep in children and young people, to improve sleep and mitigate poor sleep effects across the whole lifespan. This focus will align with the National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People.
- **Primary Care Reform:** The campaign will complement and extend the work already underway to improve access to treatment, early intervention and self-management through tackling misinformation as well as improving visibility and access to clinical resources.
- **The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan:** There is clear and strong evidence of the bi-directional relationship between sleep and mental health. Greater awareness of this link will contribute to achieving the objectives of this plan.
- **Closing the Gap:** ASA and SHF already collaborate as partners in First Nations sleep research and are keen to increase awareness of sleep health in this population, support the creation of tailored resources

support the creation of tailored resources and ensure culturally-appropriate sleep health information.

- **The Digital Health Strategy:** Our campaign will provide guidance on consumer sleep technologies as well as the impact digital technologies have on sleep health.

Implementation

What we will do

We will coordinate a 5-year national sleep health awareness campaign with key stakeholders as outlined in Recommendation 8 of the 2019 Parliamentary Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia, and Recommendations 3 and 4 of the policy evidence review [Sleep: a core pillar of health and wellbeing](#).

The aim will be that over a 5-year period the campaign would become a catchy household slogan just like Slip Slop Slap became. The slogan will be **“Check. Choose. Snooze.”** Check the facts. Choose evidence. Snooze well.

A communications and behaviour change consultant as well as research and data experts will be employed to help design, implement and evaluate the collaborative campaign between the government, ASA and SHF.

It will require a multi-channelled, multi-pronged approach and would include using mass media, social media, outdoor advertising, podcasts, webinars, tele-conferences for workplaces talks, and an annual sleep survey. Specific targeted periods such as World Sleep Day and an annual Sleep Health Week will be utilised to increase visibility and reach.

A key focus will be to expand existing channels to track the sleep health of Australians over time.

This will provide data for future population health activities in sleep and also evaluate the impact of the campaign.

A core goal will be to create tailored and appropriate messaging for priority populations, workplace and school resources, and integration with existing GP pathways for sleep disorders treatment. Whatever the setting, the context and key messages will remain consistent:

- To optimise daily function and productivity, healthy sleep is essential
- The best path to healthy sleep is to seek out and follow evidence-based advice.

Objectives

- 1** Raise awareness of the importance of sleep in all Australians across the lifespan.
- 2** Raise awareness of evidence-based healthy sleep habits and how to improve poor sleep.
- 3** Help the public to recognise sleep disorders and know when and how to seek help.
- 4** Position sleep as a *preventable risk factor*, like nutrition, physical activity, and alcohol but highlight the need for earlier intervention, referral and available treatment services for sleep disorders.
- 5** Correct and dispel misinformation about sleep.

- 6 Work closely with existing programs educating primary care health professionals.
- 7 Increase sleep health literacy.
- 8 Raise awareness of the importance of healthy sleep especially for children and young people, and help parents to understand how to support sleep in their children.
- 9 Ensure co-designed, tailored sleep health information and resources reach priority population groups - shift workers, women during pregnancy and menopause, First Nations Australians, older adults, and people with disability and their carers.
- 10 Monitor and measure impact of the **“Check. Choose. Snooze.”** campaign.

Outcomes

- Increased public awareness of sleep health
- Healthier sleep behaviours
- Increased recognition of sleep disorders
- Increased knowledge of when and how to seek help
- Earlier help-seeking for sleep disorders - to the best available evidence-based pathways
- Less reliance on unregulated or ineffective sleep products
- Improved mental health and wellbeing through improved sleep

- Improved family and early childhood outcomes through improved sleep
- Better sleep outcomes in priority populations
- Long-term reduction in chronic disease burden through improved sleep
- Reduced long-term health system costs and improved productivity.

Evaluation

A research company will be engaged to help track impact and guide the indicators needed to monitor success.

The Sleep Health Foundation’s annual sleep survey will be expanded to accurately track attitudes, behaviours and knowledge of the Australian community over time.

Additional data sources will help target key issues for inclusion in the awareness campaign and to track the campaign’s success in achieving its objectives and outcomes:

- GP and primary-care data
- Digital analytics (reach, engagement, completion of tools)
- Targeted qualitative evaluation in priority populations
- Health systems data and sleep data on national population surveillance such as ABS census instruments

Investment

To achieve the ambitious objectives and outcomes of the proposed program, a government investment of **\$20 million over five years** is consistent with comparable national health campaigns funded in the past.

Campaign budget

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY	BUDGET ALLOCATION OVER 5 YEARS
National media and digital campaign	\$5 million
Community and priority-population engagement	\$3 million
Workplace and school resource development and dissemination	\$2.5 million
Website maintenance and development	\$1.5 million
Primary care integration – clinical resource development and education activities	\$3 million
Annual household sleep survey	\$1 million
Marketing costs for Sleep Health Week and World Sleep Day	\$1 million
Project management and staff resources	\$2 million
Evaluation, research and reporting	\$1 million
TOTAL	\$20 million

Recommendation

We commit this proposal to the Government for consideration in the 2025-2026 Budget with a sense of urgency. We have the framework and expertise to make a five-year National Sleep Health Awareness Campaign a reality.

It is essential that the Australian public receives clear, evidence-based information that complements existing clinical education and counters the growing influence of misinformation and commercial determinants of sleep health.

This proposal will help to address the recommendations of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia, and support important health policy priorities such as the National Preventive Health Strategy.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Low'.

Ms Jennifer Low
Chair,
Sleep Health Foundation



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JK Chawla'.

A/Prof Jasneek Chawla
President,
Australasian Sleep Association

About Us



The Sleep Health Foundation

The Sleep Health Foundation is Australia's leading advocate for healthy sleep in the community. It is guided by Lived Experience experts. It aims to improve people's lives by promoting sleep health, raising awareness of sleep disorders and building partnerships with organisations with complementary objectives. It includes a research and industry collaboration committee which is a continuation of the legacy structure from the Alertness Cooperative Research Centre (2013-2020), comprised of stakeholders involved in the development and deployment of innovative solutions to improve workplace productivity and safety. The Foundation collaborates with a range of health information stakeholders such as Health Direct to amplify their messages.



The Australasian Sleep Association

The Australasian Sleep Association is the peak scientific body in Australia and New Zealand representing clinicians, scientists and researchers working in sleep health and sleep medicine. It is experienced in developing clinical guidelines, professional education and other services aimed at improving the quality of sleep health. The association is a current recipient of Commonwealth grant funding under the Health Peak and Advisory Bodies program to provide evidence-based sleep health and sleep medicine information to assist with informing Australian Government policy. This program and another grant under the Quality Use of Medicines, Diagnostics and Therapeutics Program have a focus on supporting the goals of the National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030, particularly in relation to education and training of primary health care practitioners in sleep health.

The Foundation and the Association are long-time collaborators, having worked together on the Parliamentary Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia and other communication and advocacy work to improve the sleep health of all Australians.