



## Department of Health and Human Services

50 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Telephone: 1300 650 172  
GPO Box 4057  
Melbourne Victoria 3001  
[www.dhhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au)  
DX 210081  
e4956359

Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
[Health.Reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:Health.Reps@aph.gov.au)

Dear Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport Secretariat

Thank you for the invitation to provide comment on the Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia, and related Terms of Reference.

The department recognises the serious potential impacts of inadequate sleep and sleep disorders on a range of health and wellbeing issues, and is pleased to hear that an inquiry will be undertaken. We know that getting a good night's sleep makes it easier to live a balanced lifestyle and to achieve healthy eating and physical activity goals.

We also know that there is an important relationship between healthy eating and mental health for both children and adults. For children, lack of sleep can affect their school performance and could be linked to increased risk of emotional problems such as depression. Similarly for adults, lack of sleep can affect how they function at work and their susceptibility to injury and mental ill health.

Healthier eating and active living, and improving mental health are two key priority areas of the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-19*, which sets out how the Victorian Government will achieve its vision to improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians, in the various environments in which people live, work and play.

We are also committed to funding the *Life!* Program, managed by Diabetes Victoria; a free lifestyle modification program that helps people to reduce their risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Since the program began in 2007-08 over 54,000 Victorians have learnt more about the steps they can take to live a healthy life, including the importance of sleep.

The department is supportive of the Terms of Reference outlined, and in acknowledging the role that workplaces can play as a health promoting setting, how important education, training and professional development is for healthcare workers about how to best support individuals experiencing inadequate sleep and sleep disorders. We would welcome any advice and guidance from the Australian Government as to what workforce development currently exists, and look forward to learning the overall outcomes of the inquiry.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input, and please feel free to contact [REDACTED]  
Senior Policy Officer, Prevention and Population Health Branch  
[REDACTED] should you require any additional information.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

**Dr Bruce Bolam**  
Chief Preventive Health Officer  
Community Participation, Health and Wellbeing

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