

# Sleep Eazzzy with HIF



2023 HIF Sleep Index

# What if...

## we invested in sleep?

Sleep is one of the three key pillars of health along with diet and exercise.

But not enough of us are making it a priority – and it's costing not just our health but the Australian economy \$14.4 billion a year.

At HIF we believe the importance of sleep is too often overlooked, which is why we're investing in it through our Sleep Eazzzy with HIF program.

And what better way to kick things off than a survey to gauge how Australians, and our members are sleeping ... the results of which will direct what we do to help.



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# Executive Summary

## The 2023 HIF Sleep Index reveals a need to better educate Australians about good sleep behaviours

Australians' sleep patterns and routines are impacting our ability to consistently get the quality and quantity of sleep we need.

The less consistent we become, the more our sleep outcomes are impacted. When these patterns and routines are variable or random, the outcomes are even poorer.

Why is this important? Because when our sleep is less than ideal, our lives suffer. Most often, the impact is personal. To our health, coping abilities, self-care, finances and relationships. But it can also extend more broadly into our communities, as work performance, attendance and social lives are negatively impacted. Poor sleep is clearly having a sizeable economic impact.

To create the HIF Sleep Index we surveyed over 2,000 Australians, half of them HIF members.

**In its inaugural year, the Index returned a score of 61.6 out of a possible 100, a neutral result.**

Across the board, the individual pillars and subcomponents returned neutral scores. With one notable exception. Most Aussies are sleeping primarily in their own beds in private homes, so the index sleep 'place' measure returned a positive rating of 74.5.

Given almost all Aussies value sleep and give it high priority, change should be possible. Many of us just lack a good understanding of sleep, or struggle to balance the demands of daily life with the need to unwind and relax before bed.

It can be hard, if not impossible for some to maintain very consistent patterns (sleep and waking times) due to irregular work schedules or other responsibilities. But changes to how we spend the hour before bed are a bit easier to make.

And we do desire change. Almost three quarters of us want to learn more about sleep, particularly how to improve ours, but also about good sleep habits and routines. This is one of the key reasons we undertook this research. So we can begin to understand how HIF can best take the lead in helping more Australians enjoy better sleep, and as a result better health.

Index measures are based on individuals' self-ratings of their own experiences and, attitudes and behaviours. Rating scales run from 0 (lowest or worst) to 10 (highest or best).

Each of the three Index pillars is comprised of two subcomponents. The average of these subcomponents provides the overall pillar score. The average of the three pillars then provides the overall Index score. Score range is 0 to 100. Scores of 0 – 49 indicate a negative result. Scores from 50 – 69 indicate a neutral result and from 70 – 100 a positive result.



**Environment:** the places people sleep and their sleep practices



**Priority:** sleep knowledge and the value placed on getting good sleep



**Impact:** the personal and community impact of poor sleep

# 2023 HIF Sleep Index

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Index Scores



# 2023 HIF Sleep Index Score is 61.6/100

More than 5.4 million Australians say their sleep quality was either not good or terrible over the last year



**Environment: 66.8**

74.5

## Place

Most Aussies are sleeping in beds, in private residences. There's usually something about the places we sleep that isn't ideal for a great night's rest. Many of us believe our sleep routines, patterns and habits aren't the best for helping us get consistently good sleep.

59.1

## Practice



**Priority: 65.2**

60.6

## Knowledge

Most of us think our understanding of sleep is ok, at best. Even then, it seems some of us are overestimating our knowledge. Aussies typically make sleep a high priority though, and we are keen to learn more about it.

69.8

## Value



**Impact: 52.9**

51.0

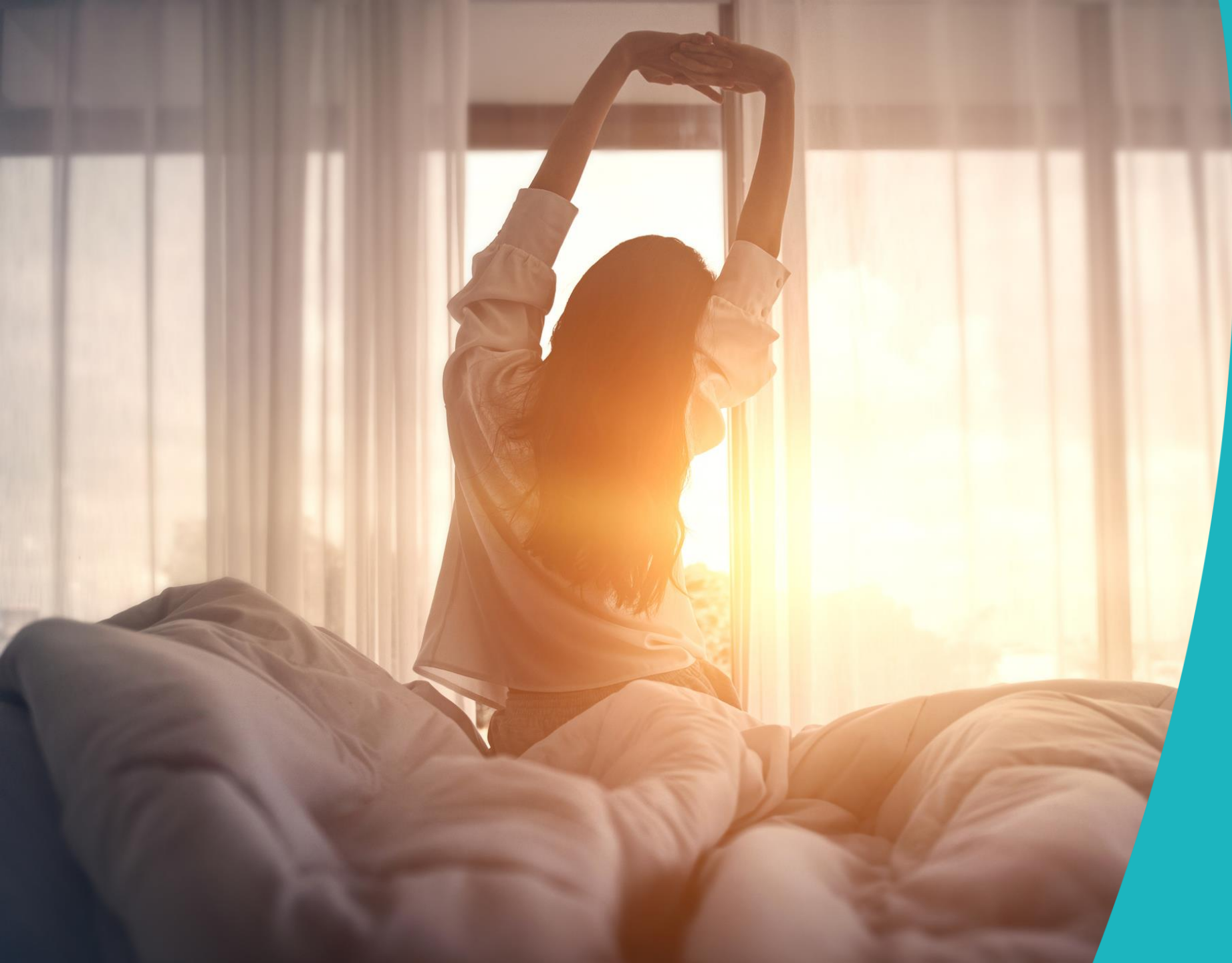
## Personal

Poor sleep is having at least a moderate negative personal impact on most Aussies. Most often on our health. We're also experiencing broader community and economic impacts due to poor sleep. Our work and social lives are suffering most.

54.8

## Community





# The Pillars of Good Sleep

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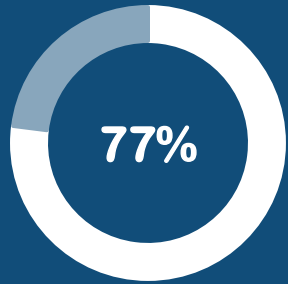
**Sleep Index Insights**



# Environment | 66.8

## Place | 74.5

Primary place of sleep is good or ideal (7+/10)



95% sleep primarily in a private home



98% sleep primarily in their own bed

Almost all of us sleep in our own bed in a private home. 53% share a bed with their partner, 45% sleep alone. Sleep quality doesn't vary much among those who share a bed and those who don't.

Commonly we feel the places we sleep are good (30%) or even ideal (47%) for enabling consistently good sleep. Ideal locations are more often in private homes (30% vs. 10% in share houses).

Characteristics of a location can impact sleep. Temperature (79%), bedding (77%) and noise levels (74%) are most often considered optimal by Australians. But fewer feel their space is the best it could be in terms of security (59%), ventilation/airflow (56%) or privacy (50%).

When the primary place we sleep is not ideal, it is cost that most often (25%) prevents us from making changes. Not knowing how to improve things is a close second (20%).

## Practice | 59.1

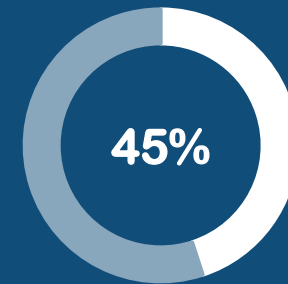
Most Aussies are consistent in their sleep patterns and bedtime routines. However, only a quarter (25%) of us are very consistent with our bedtime routine. Even fewer with our sleep pattern (16%). Less than half of us (45%) rate our sleep patterns, routines and habits as good, or ideal for consistently getting good sleep.

The main thing that prevents us being more consistent is getting distracted and losing track of time (41%). Some of us are trying but just unable to maintain consistency (30%). Often (52%) multiple things get in the way.

Things we do before bed can impact sleep. Almost half of us watch tv or scroll through socials (46% each). Close to a third (30%) do household chores and just less than a quarter (24%) do nothing to relax and wind down before going to sleep. None of these behaviours help us get a good night's sleep.

We are also a nation that relies on aids to wake us up (65%) and to fall asleep (68%). Tea and coffee are used to feel awake/alert (45%) and bathing (29%) to help us feel sleepy. Almost one in six (16%) have used alcohol to in the last year.

Sleep patterns, routines and habits are good or ideal (7+/10)



67% have consistent or very consistent sleep patterns



79% have consistent or very consistent bedtime routines

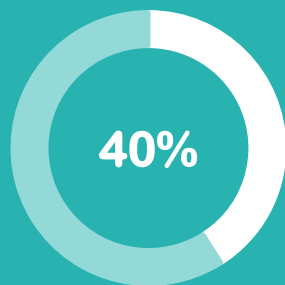




# Priority | 65.2

## Knowledge | 60.6

Say sleep knowledge is good or extremely good (7+/10)



54% scored 8+/10 on our sleep test<sup>1</sup>



74% want to improve their sleep knowledge

Less than one in 10 Aussies (7%) rate their sleep knowledge as extremely good. And just 7% scored 10/10 when we tested them. Scores varied little between those rating their knowledge highly and those rating low. This indicates some of us are over-estimating our understanding. Still, most people (74%) are interested in learning more about sleep. Particularly, how to improve theirs (47%).

Fortunately, some of the most common sleep myths aren't widely believed. Just 11% think alcohol helps us get to sleep and stay asleep. Fewer think we have a sleep chronotype (8%).

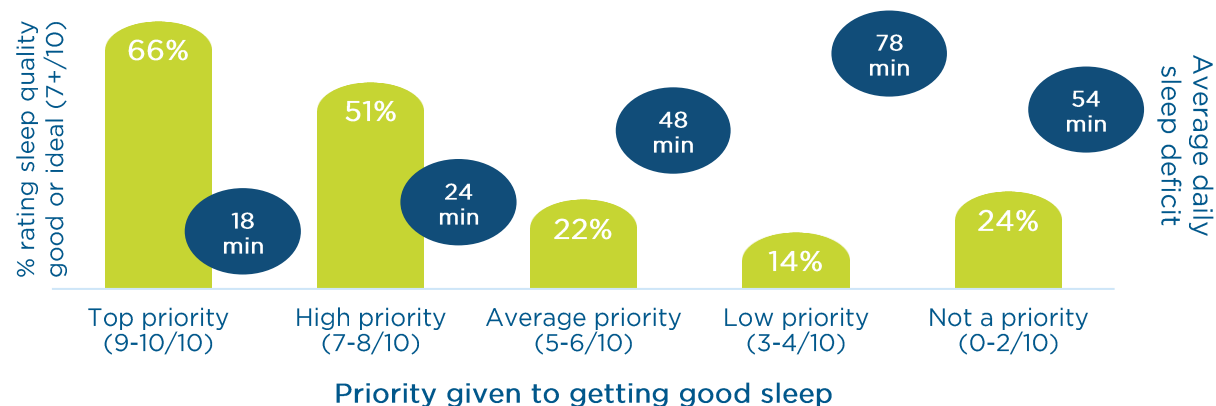
### How many recognised our sleep facts?



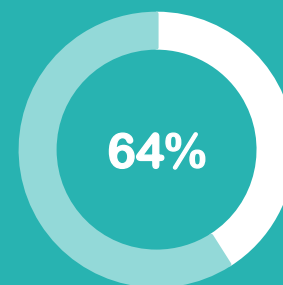
## Value | 69.8

Almost one in five of us (19%) make sleep a top priority. But this doesn't always result in good sleep. Or enough of it. Even people who make sleep a top priority, barely half (53%) wake up feeling like they had an ideal amount of sleep. 40% aren't getting enough sleep and on average, they are in sleep deficit by nearly 20 minutes a day. It only gets worse for those placing less priority on sleep.

### Prioritising helps, but doesn't guarantee sufficient good quality sleep



Say sleep is a high or top priority (8+/10)



36% wake feeling they had ideal amount of sleep

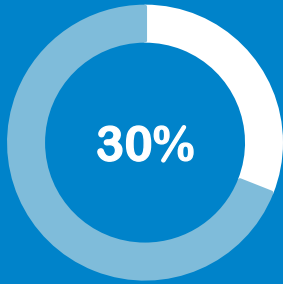


43% rate their sleep quality good or ideal (7+/10)

# Impact | 52.9

## Personal | 51.0

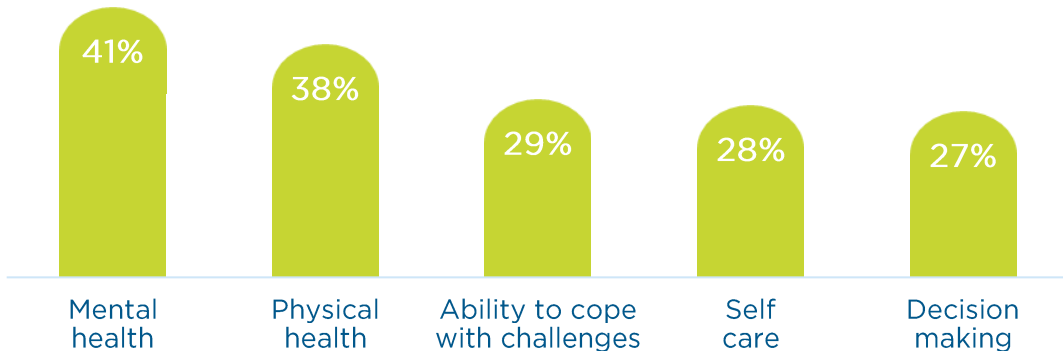
Poor sleep has a high or very high personal impact (7+/10)



75% say their sleep is impacted by stress

30% or over 6 million adult Aussies<sup>2</sup> experience high or very high personal impact due to poor sleep. Almost as many (30%) say it is having a moderate impact on them. High impact is especially common among night shift workers (49%) and those with multiple jobs (45%). This is also true for those with no disposable income (48%) or a disability or health condition (43%). First Nations<sup>3</sup> people (44%) are also more likely to be impacted. It is our health that most often suffers as a result.

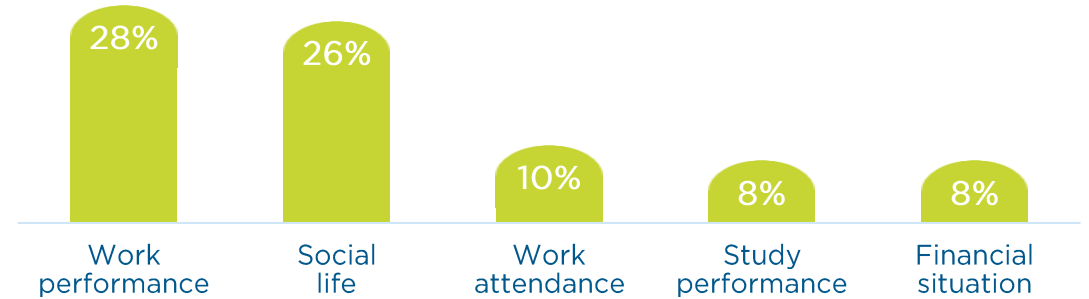
### The most common personal impacts of poor sleep



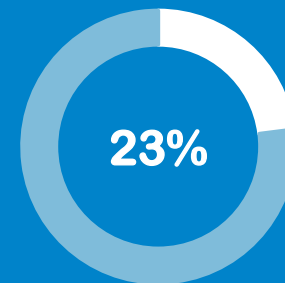
## Community | 54.8

High or very high community, or economic impact due to poor sleep is a little less common. Even so, 23% or 4.6 million Australians are affected. This jumps to more than 10 million when we include those moderately impacted. And it's many of the same Australians most likely to be impacted – night shift (46%), and long shift workers (36%), those with no disposable income (41%), or a disability or health condition (35%), as well as First Nations peoples (48%). Work and social lives suffer most as a result.

### The most common community impacts of poor sleep



Poor sleep has a high or very high community impact (7+/10)



33% say stress impacts sleep often or almost every day

# The Big Three

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## Key Findings



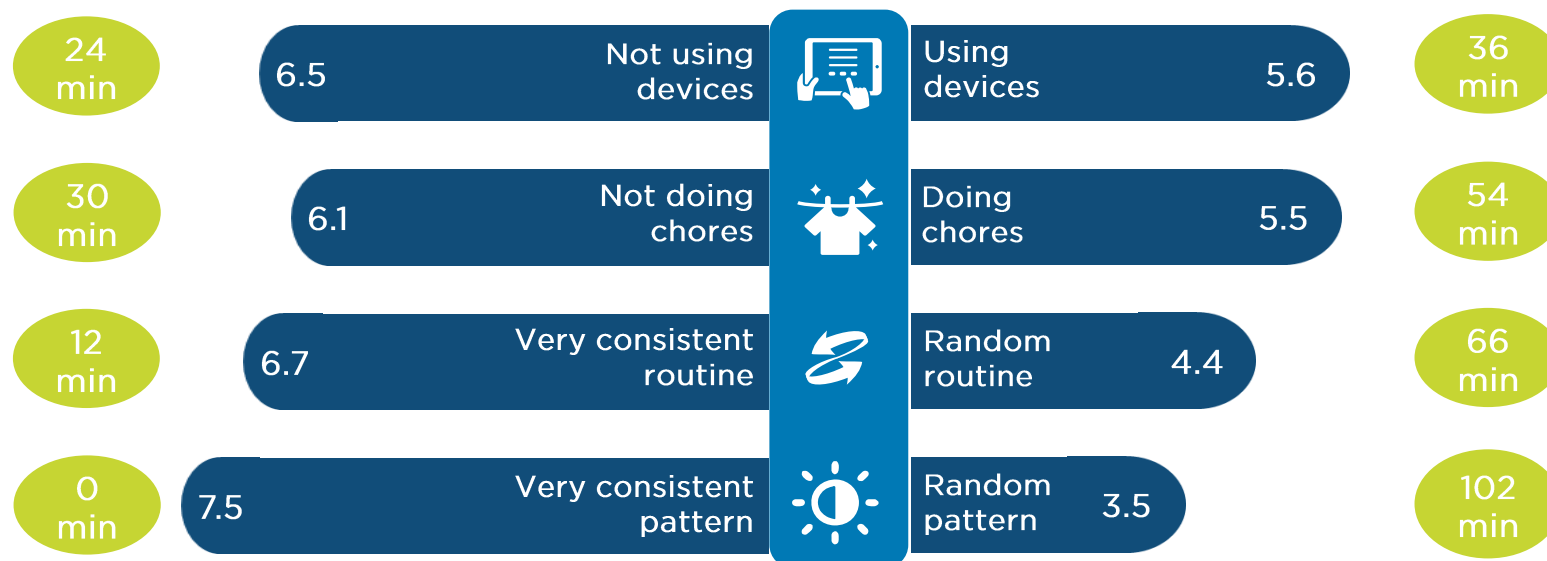
# Sleep behaviours matter

## Good sleep patterns and routines result in better sleep

What do you do in the hour before you go to sleep? If you're like most Aussies (84%), you unwind using electronics – watching tv, scrolling socials, reading on a device or gaming. For many of us, chores (48%) are also normal part of our before-bed routine. Both have a negative impact on our sleep, and the more we do of each, the greater the impact. And while most of us do something to relax before bed (76%), a lot of the time, this involves devices too.

What counts more is how consistent we are. Almost two in three of us with very consistent bedtime routines get good quality sleep (64%). Even more (80%) of those with very consistent sleep patterns (sleep and waking time) get good quality sleep. Good sleep is rare though when our routine (24%) or sleep patterns (12%) are random.

Average sleep ratings (/10) and daily deficits<sup>4</sup>



## What about sleep aids?

Average sleep quality is reduced among those of us using things to combat tiredness (5.6) compared to those who don't (6.3). Just 38% of people using something to feel more awake are getting good sleep, compared to 51% of those who don't.

The same is true when we use alcohol, illicit drugs or cigarettes/vapes (5.2). Those using sleep aids like this are less likely to be getting good sleep (16%) than those who don't use anything (37%).

There are cases where we need prescribed medications to help improve our sleep. But when we rely on other sleep aids, it's likely we are just managing the consequences of poor sleep, not fixing the cause.

# Stress, health and income

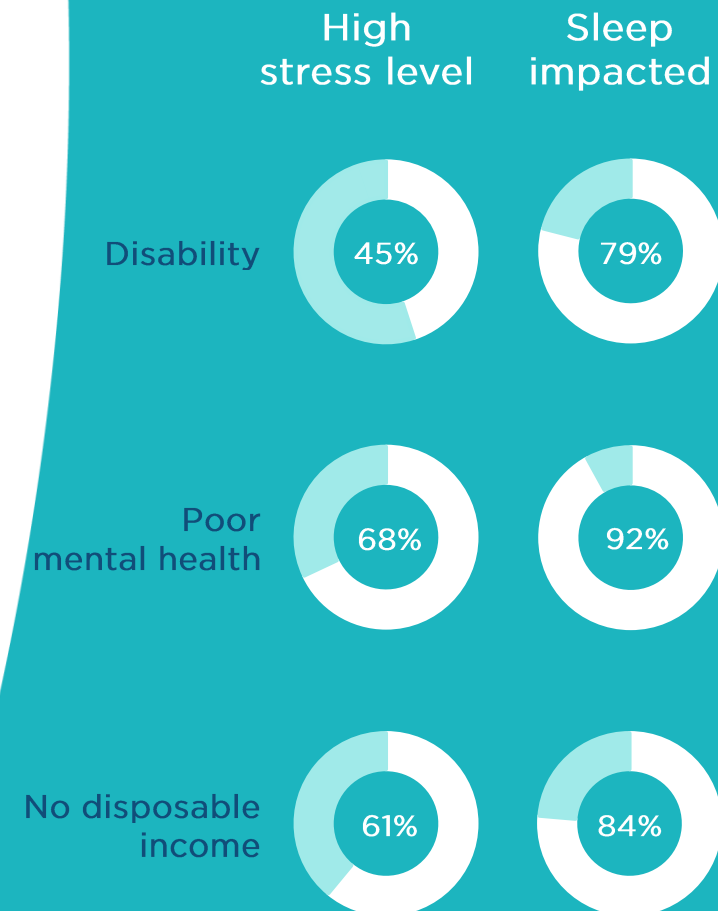
## Our lives and circumstances really impact sleep

Last year, stress, distress or anxiety impacted the sleep of 75% of Aussies. Most often, our employment situations (35%), income/finances (29%), family relationships (24%) and health (24%) were the cause. And this means the sleep of those of us in poorer health, or with less financial security, is suffering the most. Both in quality and quantity. Women (85%) are more affected than men (68%). In fact, 40% of women say stress impacts their sleep often, or almost every day. For men it's just 26%. For those with poor mental health, this jumps to 64%, with no disposable income 56% and 46% among those with a disability.

Average sleep ratings (/10) and daily deficits<sup>5</sup>



Aussies in good mental health are far less likely to experience high stress levels (31%). The same is true when we have a lot of disposable income (32%). These two things are also related. When you have a lot of disposable income to spend on the things you enjoy, you are more likely to experience good mental health (71% vs. 42% when you have none).



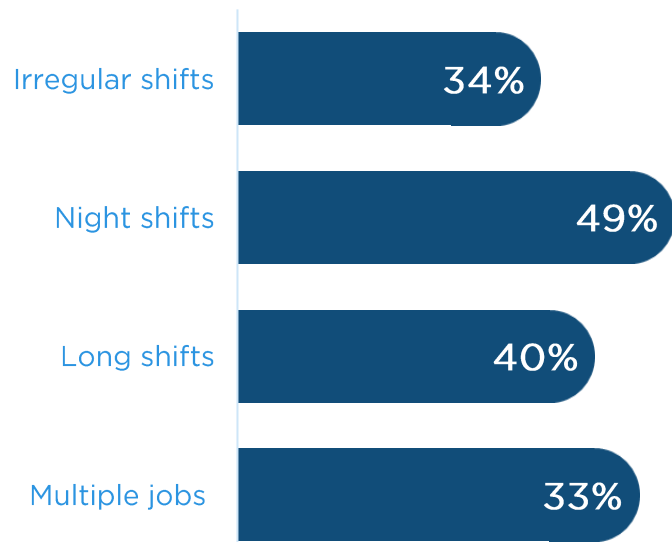
# Work-sleep balance?

## It can be harder for working Australians to get good sleep

On average, Aussies would like to get eight hours sleep each day. On a typical work day, two thirds of workers (67%) sleep less than this. Around a quarter (24%) get six hours or less. We do better on our days off, but less than half (44%) of us get eight hours. Sleep deficit is especially common among workers with multiple jobs (84%), working partially from home (73%) or who do irregular shifts (72%). We see evidence too that FIFO workers are often in sleep deficit (57%)<sup>6</sup>.

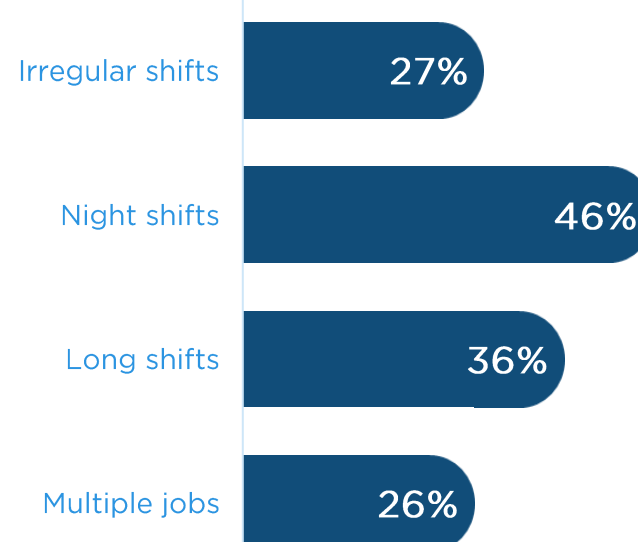
Quality of sleep is not much different to other Aussies (unless you work and have young children or an infant at home too!). Workers just aren't getting enough of it, and it's having a real impact, both personally and more broadly. More than 40% of those working multiple jobs or night shifts say their work performance is directly impacted. More than a quarter (26%) working multiple jobs and almost one in five (18%) working long shifts say poor sleep has affected their work attendance. Night shift workers are much more likely to find their social lives (51%) and community involvement (20%) impacted. Between 40% and 60% of shift or multiple job workers say their mental and/or physical health is suffering. FIFO workers too seem to be particularly impacted. Half (50%) say their work performance and 46% their social life are affected by poor sleep.

Poor sleep causing high personal impact



**Self-care,  
physical and  
mental health are  
most commonly  
affected**

Poor sleep causing high community impact



**Work  
performance,  
attendance, and  
social lives are  
most commonly  
affected**



# The Sleep Personas

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Four Australian  
Sleep Types

# The Sleep Personas

## Understanding how sleep differs for different groups of Australians

Most of us want to know more about sleep, and how to improve ours. But what we need to know, and what will best help won't be the same for everyone. Our research found four distinct groups, or personas, that Australians typically fall into when it comes to sleep. We're using these to create tools to help support Australians to get better sleep.



### Bedtime Battler

My sleep quality is the worst. And my sleep behaviours are nowhere near ideal. Poor sleep causes more negative impact in my life than it does for others.

**I represent 17%, or around one in six Australians.**



### Super Sleeper

I have the best sleep quality of all Australians. My sleep behaviours are also better. So, poor sleep causes very little, if any personal impact in my life.

**I represent 28%, or more than one in four Australians**



### Doona Dodger

My sleep quality is pretty good, and so are my sleep behaviours. Despite that, I experience quite a high personal impact in my life due to poor sleep.

**I represent 34%, or more than one in three Australians**



### Rest Rebel

My sleep quality is ok, at best. My sleep behaviours are also not great. This is causing me a moderate amount of negative personal impact.

**I represent 20%, or one in five Australians**





# Profile of the Bedtime Battlers

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I'm typically Gen Y or Gen X and more often than not, I'm female. My sleep quality is terrible and I am just not getting enough of it. My sleep patterns, routines and habits are not ones that help me consistently get good sleep. On top of this, I often have a sleep disorder, usually insomnia.

My health is typically average, often poor. Exercise is not part of my regular routine. I'm more likely than other Aussies to be living with a disability or health condition.

There are many causes for my high stress levels, including my relationships, employment situation, health and finances. My bills chew up most, if not all my income, so I have little to spend on the things I enjoy, or that help improve my sleep.

I am a before-bed-device user and sometimes I turn to less than ideal methods to combat tiredness, and sometimes to alcohol or sleeping tablets to get to sleep. I am more likely to have adult family members and children (often very young) living with me than other Aussies. But I'm a bit less likely to have the support of a live-in partner, so I can have a lot of responsibility on my shoulders. If I'm working, it's often full-time and I'm more likely than others to work irregular shifts. If I'm not working, it may be because I'm unable to.

**I'm not sleeping well at all and it's really impacting my life. High stress levels, not being in the best health or having a great understanding of how to get good sleep are all contributing to this.**

## I need:



Information on healthy sleep routines and habits and how to create and maintain them



Support to help me get more regular exercise



Simple ways I can introduce self-care and manage my stress



Tools that are:

- easy to understand for people with little sleep knowledge
- realistic for people with hectic, stressful lives
- low, or no cost
- accessible for people with disability or health conditions



# Profile of the Super Sleepers

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I'm typically a Baby Boomer, or older. This likely explains a lot about my circumstances and, as a result, my sleep. Which is ideal, or pretty close to it, and usually the right amount for me. I'm a little more likely to be male than female.

Overall, I'm in pretty good physical health, even better mental health. I don't usually have any sleep disorders, or live with any disability or health conditions. I'm more likely to be a regular exerciser than other Aussies. And my life is less likely to be causing me stress, anxiousness or distress. Of all Australians, I rate my sleep routines, patterns and habits the highest. I'm pretty consistent and really prioritise good sleep. If I do use anything to wake me up or help me feel sleepy, its only occasionally.

My financial position is typically pretty good. I own my home (often outright) and have disposable income to enjoy. I typically live with my partner, and it is less common I have children living with me. When I do, they tend to be teens or adults. It's unusual for me to have other family, or anyone else living with me.

If I'm not working, it's because I am retired in most cases. If I do work, it's usually full-time, but it's rare I'm working long, irregular or night shifts.

**I'm a great sleeper, with consistent and healthy routines and sleep habits. This is a bit easier for me perhaps, as life isn't causing me too much stress.**

## I need:



Information that is short, sharp and to the point, but not overly simplistic, because I have the basics down already



Support targeted at retirees, empty-nesters or those preparing for these life stages



Tools that aren't just about sleep, but wellness and healthy ageing too



# Profile of the Doona Dodgers

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I'm the most common persona among Gen Ys and Gen Zs. I think my sleep quality and habits are pretty good. Despite this, I'm really feeling the impact of poor sleep on my life. I don't feel I get enough, even though on paper, I do. There are two likely culprits: my much higher reliance on naps to get my daily sleep and my inconsistent daily routine.

My sleep is likely impacted by where I'm sleeping too. I am more likely than other Aussies to spend some time sleeping in share houses or work accommodation, in my child's bed or on a couch or inflatable mattress.

It's possible I have a health condition, but no more so than anyone. And my health is typically fair to good. I am an exerciser, and this is often part of my regular routine. Sleep is also something I prioritise.

I'm employed and am more likely to work long/irregular or night shifts, or FIFO than most others. These work rosters make it harder to be consistent in my sleep routines, patterns and behaviours. Also my napping.  
If unemployed, it's likely I'm job searching.

I am more often a primary carer or support person, or working multiple jobs than other Aussies. This means I usually have a little disposable income, but very rarely a lot. It also means I am generally juggling quite a lot and this creates moderate to high levels of stress in my life.

**I think I'm sleeping pretty well, yet I find my life impacted a lot by poor sleep. This may be because I'm juggling a lot and getting more of my daily sleep from naps.**

## I need:



Information on napping and how to maximise the quality of naps, because often I need to rely on these to get enough sleep each day



Support to help me identify and implement positive before-bed routines, given it may be hard for me to be very consistent in my sleep patterns



Tools that are realistic for people with hectic lives, that either lack routine, or have a routine that is out-of-the-ordinary and not great for good sleep



# Profile of the Rest Rebels

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You can't pick me out by my age or gender. There is nothing about my home life or employment that makes me stand out either. I could be almost anyone. My sleep quality is ok, at best and I'm not getting enough of it.

My physical health is less than ideal, and my mental health is often not the best either. However, it's rare I live with a disability or health condition. I may have a sleep condition though. I do exercise, but not with any regularity.

It's very rare for me to be experiencing high levels of stress. And my stress is usually caused by just one or two things. Maybe this is because I'm ok financially - I'm often a home owner and I have a little disposable income to enjoy. The fact I typically don't have other obligations outside of work (like caring, a side-hustle, etc.) likely contributes to my relatively low stress levels. As does the fact that my children, if I have them, are a bit older and either already in school, or finished.

So, rather than the stresses of life or my health negatively influencing my sleep, it's my inconsistent routines and sleep patterns. The place I sleep is also contributing - it's rarely ideal even though it's usually my bed, in a private home. I just don't prioritise sleep much as other Aussies. In fact, I'm the most likely to give it very little priority at all. Perhaps my lack of sleep knowledge is partly to blame.

**My sleep quality is often very poor and this is having a bit of an impact on me. My life offers no stand-out cause for this, however, and I look like a pretty average Aussie.**

## I need:



Information that educates me about exactly why sleep is important, and the types of impacts poor sleep can have



Support and suggestions for how I can make the place I sleep more conducive to consistently good sleep



Tools that are:

- focussed on the broader wellness benefits good sleep can provide
- practical, so I can implement changes at a relatively low stress time in my life

# Our Methodology

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And definitions used





## Methodology

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The inaugural HIF Sleep Index sets a benchmark for how well Australians are sleeping, what influences their sleep and the prevalence and nature of the impact we experience due to poor sleep.

HIF commissioned independent market research consultancy CoreData WA to design and conduct this research. We wanted to start a conversation and inform Australians about how to get better sleep. This is important, because if we can help people get better sleep, we know that by extension they'll enjoy better health and quality of life.

To ensure we asked the right questions, we worked closely with our 'Dream Team' of sleep experts:

Dr Jennifer Walsh, Dr Kathleen Maddison, Michael Gradisar and David Beard.

Quantitative data was captured via an online survey of 1,000 Australians (representative of the general population), as well as 1,007 HIF members. Responses to the survey were captured between 13 and 30 April 2023. Index scores and the Sleep Personas were calculated based on the responses from the Australian population sample. We used a quantitative, cluster analysis approach to derive our four sleep personas.

# Glossary and References

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## Definition of key terms

**Disability and health conditions:** self-reported presence of disability, or for health conditions chronic or acute mental health condition, some other chronic or acute illness, disorder or similar. Though all may come under the definition of disability, this range of options was provided in recognition that some may not self-identify as having a disability.

**Disposable income:** the amount of money left over after all bills and routine expenses have been paid. As such it is not a measure of income or wealth per se, but rather an indicator of financial comfort or stress.

**Sleep condition:** conditions that impact sleep, including loud or heavy snoring, insomnia, teeth grinding, sleep apnoea, Restless Leg Syndrome, sleep walking, talking and/or night terrors, repeated, regular or frequent nightmares, another sleep disorder or condition, whether respondent had been diagnosed with, told by someone they have, or are likely to have.

**Sleep deficit:** the difference between actual and ideal sleep, derived from responses to: How many hours sleep (including naps) do you typically get on (a work/study day and non-work day for those studying or in employment, or a typical day for those not studying or in employment) and: And how much sleep each day/night is ideal for you (including your main sleep and any naps you take)?

## In text references and definitions

1. The sleep test was administered as an in-survey multiple choice question, posed to respondents as: Here are some statements about sleep. Which do you agree with? A set of 10 statements were provided – 5 being sleep facts, and 5 sleep myths. Respondents also had the option to say they did not agree with any of the statements.
2. The number of adult Australians experiencing or impacted by something are calculated in all cases using Census 2021, Australian Population, by Service Age Groups (excluding minors aged less than 18 years).
3. Interpret with caution, due to small First Nations sample – insights have been drawn from total sample for this cohort.
4. Average sleep rating is based on self-ratings provided in response to the question: Overall, how would you rate your sleep this year (in terms of consistently getting enough, good quality sleep)? Not using devices = 0 devices used in the hour before bed, using devices = more than 1 device used. Not doing chores = 0 chores done in the hour before bed, doing chores = more than 1 chore done.
5. Disability refers to those who have a disability (excluding other health conditions), no disability refers to those with no disability or other health conditions. Poor mental health = a self-rating of 0 – 4 inclusive out of 10, good mental health a self-rating of 7 – 10 inclusive. Low stress = a self-rating of 0 – 4 inclusive out of 10, high stress a rating of 7 – 10 inclusive.
6. Interpret with caution, due to small FIFO sample – insights have been drawn from total sample for this cohort.

# Want to know more?

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