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## Media Release

### **AIA REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING EDUCATION DURING SCHOOL YEARS**

**Melbourne, 18 November 2022.** Children are at risk of creating unhealthy habits that could lead to chronic diseases later in life, according to a new report released by AIA Australia.

In *Kids' Health and Wellbeing in Australia*, the insurer has revealed some concerning children's health statistics, which if they accumulate throughout life, could lead to the diseases responsible for more than 90 per cent of deaths in Australia – cancer, diabetes, respiratory disease, heart disease and mental health conditions and disorders.

The report focuses on four areas that correlate with the prevention of disease – nutrition, physical activity, mental wellbeing, and interactions with the environment – and finds that Australian children are vulnerable to forming poor behaviours across each of these:

- Children are exposed to 17.4 food and drink promotions during each hour they spend on the internet, the majority of which are for unhealthy foods and drinks
- Only 12 per cent of children aged 5-12 and 1.9 per cent of young people aged 13-17 meet both the physical activity and sedentary screen-based behaviour guidelines
- 43 per cent of young people said that they felt stress either all of the time or most of the time in 2020, with females twice as likely as males to feel this way
- The number of days that physical and sporting activities would have been suspended due to extreme heat risk in Australia in 2019 was more than twice that of the five-year average from 2001-2005.

These findings form the foundation for AIA's newest wellbeing program, AIA Healthiest Schools, which seeks to educate and inspire children across the four pillars of nutrition, physical activity, mental wellbeing, and environmental sustainability.

CEO and Managing Director of AIA Australia, Damien Mu, said the report's findings reflect the importance of instilling positive health habits and behaviours from a young age.

"We are seeing some concerning trends in the health and wellbeing of our youngest Aussies, is why we want to get more involved in health education. We believe it's crucial that we focus on health promotion and prevention to change the narrative.

"While children can't control all their choices, what they do can be influenced by their environment. We want to boost health and wellbeing education for children, schools and parents so that we can set up our young people to lead healthy, happy and fulfilling lives."

The AIA Healthiest Schools Program will provide teachers with free, downloadable, curriculum-linked resources for students aged 5-16. These resources will include a variety of engaging lessons, videos, presentations, films and activity sheets.

AIA Vitality Ambassadors have filmed educational content to accompany the lessons, representing the four pillars of the program:

- Nutrition – Marika Day, registered dietician and nutritionist
- Physical activity – Annabelle Smith, Olympic diver and Commonwealth gold medalist
- Mental wellbeing – Dr Preeya Alexander, GP
- Environmental sustainability – Chris Humfrey, zoologist.

The program also includes a Healthiest Schools Challenge in Term One 2023 (entries closing 10 May 2023), with schools able to showcase their healthy initiatives, and win experiences and resources totaling more than \$100,000.

More details and registration for AIA Healthiest Schools can be found at [ahs.aia.com/au](https://ahs.aia.com/au).

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### **About AIA Australia**

AIA Australia is a leading life insurance specialist with 50 years' experience and purpose to make a difference in people's lives. In 2014 the company launched AIA Vitality, a world leading, science-based health and wellbeing program, to the Australian market. In July 2017, AIA and its partners launched AIA's health insurance business, now known as AIA Health Insurance.

In 2021, ComInsure Life was integrated into AIA Australia. The lives of more than 3.7 million Australians are protected and enhanced through AIA Australia's unique value proposition of life, health and wellbeing. Our vision is to embrace shared value in championing Australia to be the healthiest and best protected nation in the world.

In pursuit of this, AIA Australia has developed AIA Embrace- a comprehensive wellbeing ecosystem of world-class products, programs and partnerships. These are designed to help customers, partners and the broader community to embrace better health and wellbeing.

In offering a broad range of health and wellbeing services to its customers, partners and broader community, AIA is proudly helping people lead healthier, longer, better lives.

AIA Australia has been recognised with multiple awards, including the ANZIIF Life Insurance Company of the Year (2022), Women in Finance Employer of the Year Award (2018 2019), Super Review's Best Insurer of the Year (2018, 2019), FSC Life Insurance Industry Awards Innovation in Group Life Insurance (2021), Shared Value Awards Corporate Organisation Leading Through Shared Value (2019), Shared Value Awards Organisation of the Year (2020) and Shared Value Project of the Year (2021).

Further information at [www.aia.com.au](https://www.aia.com.au).

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