



**AIA Australia**

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## Media Release

### ***AIA launches first-ever pan Asia-Pacific Healthy Living Index***

- ***AIA Australia's leading medical professional sounds alarm bell on spiraling obesity crisis***
  - ***WeCare product launched for AIA Australia's policyholders***

**Sydney, 2 November 2011** - Australian adults view their health as highly important but have some way to go to reach the ultimate in healthy living according to new research launched today by leading life insurance organisation AIA. The first ever pan Asia-Pacific health survey of 15 markets ranks Australia's index score as 59 out of a possible 100, below the regional average of 61.

The inaugural AIA Healthy Living Index Monitor covers 15 Asia Pacific markets with 10,200 interviews and was conducted by global consumer research company TNS. The interviews covered the general population in each market aged 18-65 years old, across all income and education groups. The index will be conducted annually and reflects respondents' participation in four key behaviours: getting the desired amount of sleep, regular exercise, regular medical check-ups and putting into practice healthy habits related to eating and drinking. It is then correlated with self-ratings of satisfaction in achieving these behaviours and with respondents' overall health.

The research found, in general, adults in the more established markets of Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, Australia and New Zealand acknowledge they need to do more to achieve healthy living and are not particularly satisfied with their health. On the other hand, adults in Indonesia, India and the Philippines seem more satisfied with their health in spite of not adopting all the healthy habits, perhaps an indication of lower levels of health education available in those countries.

Damien Mu, Chief Distribution and Marketing Officer at AIA Australia, said the aim of the survey was to get a clearer picture of the health of the region and to work towards improving index scores in future.

"When it comes to healthy living we firmly believe prevention is the best cure. In analysing these 15 markets it has become obvious we all need to take responsibility as individuals, family members, partners and employers to help break the cycle and consider the emotional and financial impact of unhealthy living on our families and loved ones," he said.

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## **Australian obesity crisis: expanding waist lines a growing problem**

One of the most critical health concerns across the Asia Pacific region centres around obesity and weight issues. Nearly 80% of Australians want to lose weight and over 90% of Australians are concerned about obesity in young people. While 'not exercising enough' (46%) and 'weight being too high' (36%) top the list for our greatest health-related concerns, 55% of Australian adults admit they don't exercise regularly, with tiredness (59%) and being time-poor (53%) cited as the main barriers to the treadmill. Although Australians metaphorically have a lot on their plates, not much of it is healthy food, and the survey found barriers being the perceived expense (34%) and difficulty in preparing (39%). Encouragingly, around half of Australian adults are consciously drinking more water and eating more vegetables and fruits.

While these are steps in the right direction, AIA Australia's Chief Medical Officer Dr Pramodh Nathaniel said obesity as a health threat looked likely to continue if more action is not taken.

"Being obese can not only predispose you to a range of serious diseases such as diabetes, which is currently the fastest growing chronic disease in Australia, it can also reduce your life expectancy," he said.

## **A balance of the mental and physical essential for healthy living**

When it comes to healthy living our psychological wellbeing is just as important as the more obvious physical attributes. According to the survey, the top drivers of healthy living for Australian adults include eating healthier food (64%), getting sufficient sleep (63%), having a good work life balance (63%), enjoying good family relationships (61%) and a happy frame of mind (60%).

"Modern day life is undeniably stressful. We work hard at work, we work hard at home and we also need to work hard to be healthy and well. More often than not, this means assessing our mental as well as physical health both at home and in the workplace," Dr Nathaniel added.

A high percentage (68%) of Australians believe companies should do more to help them live healthier lives, especially in terms of ensuring workloads are not excessive and stressful (74%), providing assistance in terms of medical checkups – free or subsidised (51%) and offering healthier food choices in the canteen/ office.

## **AIA Australia offers consumer direct access to WeCare service**

AIA Australia has also launched the WeCare service to consumers which includes a new range of free support and counselling services for AIA Australia Priority Protection policyholders.

The service covers areas such as personal, legal, and/or tax issues, assistance with arranging a funeral, right down to helping out with sourcing providers of emergency accommodation in the event of a disaster.

“No one can predict the future but being prepared by having adequate insurance is one of the best defences you can have to help guard against life’s uncertainties. As passionate advocates of healthy living, we want to help people across the region achieve their lifestyle goals and empower them to start taking positive action towards living longer and healthier lives,” concluded Mr Mu.

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### **About AIA Australia**

AIA Australia Limited is an independent life insurance specialist which has been operating in Australia for over 40 years. We offer a range of life insurance products which protect the financial health and welfare of Australians.

In addition to being the country's biggest group life insurer by market share, we also offer retail insurance products through independent financial advisers and through a valued network of affinity partners.

We are one of Australia's leading life insurers, providing solutions to some of Australia's major financial institutions and corporate partners. In recent years we've been repeatedly recognised by a number of industry awards including winner of outstanding value for Income Protection and Business Expenses Insurance as well as best Term Life and TPD Risk insurance.

### **About the AIA Group**

AIA Group Limited ("AIA") is the largest listed pan-Asian life insurance organisation, with an unparalleled footprint spanning 15 markets in Asia Pacific. The Group has total assets of approximately US\$90 billion and traces its roots in the region back more than 90 years.

AIA meets the savings and protection needs of individuals and businesses by offering a comprehensive suite of products and services covering life insurance, retirement planning, accident and health insurance, as well as wealth management solutions. Through an extensive network of more than 300,000 agents and over 24,000 employees across Asia Pacific, AIA serves the holders of over 23 million individual policies and over 10 million participating members of group policies.

AIA has branch offices, subsidiaries and affiliates located in jurisdictions across the region including Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, China, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand, Macau and Brunei.

AIA is listed on the Main Board of The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited under the stock code '1299'.

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