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LEAD ENGINEER: Vera Townsend with the latest sleep gadget. Picture: MATT TURNER

EARLY investors have voted with their dollars to back a new South Australian spin-out that promises to take the guesswork out of a good night's sleep and power naps.

Thim, a new sleep training device for insomniacs backed by smartphone technology, was launched last week with a Kickstarter campaign to raise \$120,000 to commercialise the technology by May 2017.

Thim chief executive and co-founder Ben Olsen, who is co-developing the technology with Flinders University Professor Leon Lack, a sleep psychologist,

had already raised more than \$56,000 through the campaign at the time of publishing.

Techniques previously used in laboratory sleep retraining have been replicated in Thim, helping people learn to fall into a longer, deeper sleep pattern.

The small, lightweight device is worn on a person's finger and connects wirelessly to a smart phone app to determine when the person is awake or asleep.

Thim also features a powernap module to help achieve optimum benefit from having a daytime exact 10-minute nap.

Mr Olsen, currently located in the company's Austin, US office, said the group hoped to start production of the device, expected to cost \$199, within six months.

Prof Lack will also be presenting at the SLEEP 2017 conference in Boston, US, on October 1.

The duo are used to early success, with the global commercialisation of the light therapy Re-Timer glasses a few years ago, which has gained popularity with athletes and jet-setters for its ability to help regulate sleep, especially on long-haul flights.

"Prof Lack has been a friend and collaborator for a long time," Mr Olsen said.

"In 2012, we worked together in designing the Re-Timer light therapy glasses and that received worldwide acclaim."

More than 30,000 Re-Timer glasses have been sold worldwide and trials are now under way to explore their use as part of therapy for cancer patients. "With Thim, what better place to finance it than through a community-based platform," Mr Olsen said.

"We don't want this breakthrough to remain in scientific journals. We want to get it out there."

Thim lead engineer Vera Townsend urged the community to get behind the campaign, which can be supported via www.kickstarter.com and searching for "Thim".

"All too often advancements in science are left in the lab, but this time there is a chance for pioneering research to make its way into the community," she said.

