



Parliamentary report hailed as defining moment on issue of sleep health

11 April 2019 – Australian Dental Association website

Australia's two peak bodies on the critical subject of sleep, the Sleep Health Foundation and the Australasian Sleep Association, have welcomed the findings of the Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia, conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport.

The Inquiry, **at which the ADA appeared** to reinforce some of the issues relating to oral health and sleep, made 11 practical recommendations about the way Australia can improve its sleep health, which include a campaign on sleep health awareness.

The importance of the report is that it places sleep as a key third pillar of health alongside good diet and regular exercise, the result of 138 submissions from a range of patient groups, medical organisations and health experts, **including the ADA**.

The ADA's submission, and subsequent appearance at one of the Inquiry's hearings, represented by Dr Andrew Gikas, Past President of the ADA Victorian branch and recently appointed Dental Board of Australia member and Conference Chair of the Australasian Sleep Association and Eithne Irving our Deputy CEO/General Manager of Policy, stressed that dentists are in a perfect position to ask their patients about their sleep as 55.5% of the population has seen a dentist in the last 12 months.

The ADA recommended that referrals of patients by a dentist to a sleep physician should attract a Medicare rebate which is not currently the case, something the peak dental body describes as "not good medicine".

The submission also highlighted the issues of managing snoring, obstructive sleep apnoea and bruxism in which dentists often play a key role.