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MEDIA RELEASE

World health experts agree - problem is too big to sleep on

Dick Adams MP, Federal Member for Lyons, Tasmania is one of hundreds of thousands of Australians suffering a combination of deadly health disorders which is sounding alarm bells for health specialists around the world. Dick is a type 2 diabetic who has also been identified as suffering from Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA).

A link between OSA and type 2 Diabetes was confirmed today by the *International Diabetes Federation (IDF)* at the American Diabetes Association (ADA) 68th Annual Scientific Session in San Francisco. Estimates suggest that up to 40% of people with OSA will have diabetes. Conversely it is likely that more than half of the people with type 2 diabetes suffer some form of sleep disorder.

Both conditions are associated with serious health problems including high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. "The IDF announcement will help change lives" according to Dr Carmel Harrington, a leading sleep research scientist with ResMed, a developer of devices treating sleep-disordered breathing and other respiratory disorders. "It's important to be aware that type 2 diabetes and Obstructive Sleep Apnea commonly occur together because in many people with one, the other is often undiagnosed."

The economic cost of sleep disorders is alarming with estimates suggesting more than 6% of the Australian population has a chronic sleep disorder, at a total cost of \$7.5 billion. Over 80% of patients with moderate to severe OSA are thought to be undiagnosed and contributing to significant usage of medical services.

"This significant discovery, and IDF announcement, will help raise awareness of what Obstructive Sleep Apnea is and why symptoms such as snoring and dozing off during the day should be taken very seriously," said Dr Harrington.

The IDF announcement encourages further research into the links between the two conditions and urges healthcare professionals to adopt new ways of testing patients who are at risk.

'Currently, we're only treating the tip of the ice-berg when it comes to sleep disorders, as public awareness remains pitifully low,' said Dr Harrington, who recommends a simple test developed by Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital as one of the best indicators available to identify those at risk. The YAWN test is available at www.healthysleepanddiabetes.com.

Dick Adams suffered many of the classic symptoms of Obstructive Sleep Apnea "I felt poor after years of interrupted sleep due to episodes where I stopped breathing. I was lethargic and was unable to do much; even taking the dogs for a walk was really difficult". A diagnosis of OSA nine months ago and treatment with



Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) has improved his quality of life. “My energy levels are up, I can do more exercise and most importantly I sleep soundly”. Dick has recently established a Parliamentary Working Group to raise awareness of this growing health epidemic. “I want to make people aware of the problem, that there is a simple remedy and have informed debate in Parliament on CPAP and its linkages. Also, I would like to highlight the dangers faced by people at work, particularly in the transport industry or those working with machines if there is no diagnosis. The cost of not being diagnosed results in accidents and lack of productivity which can be avoided”.

For more information on sleep and diabetes, visit www.healthysleepanddiabetes.com