



BETTER SLEEP, BETTER HEALTH *and a* **BETTER LIFE**

Media release

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Snorers higher risk of traffic accidents

The daily commute from Geelong to Melbourne just got a little more perilous with a new study warning one fifth of Australian adults have fallen asleep while driving.

Research from the Sleep Health Foundation also shows nearly a third of Australians drive while drowsy at least once a month.

They're figures Geelong dentist Dr Joseph Juric said are only scratching the surface.

Dr Juric, of Myers Street Dental in Geelong, said he would see patients every day who complain of being tired.

When investigated further, many also had a variety of other symptoms from tooth wear, to cracked teeth and toughened skin on their inner cheek – all classic signs of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA).

“Sleep apnoea is really an epidemic,” he said. “I have these conversations with patients on a daily basis and it may start from someone saying they feel a bit tired and then on examining them, seeing the warning signs.”

Snoring is one of the main symptoms OSA. Sufferers have been found to have a higher risk of falling asleep while driving and be three times more likely to cause accidents.

Dr Juric said many of his patients did the daily commute from Geelong to Melbourne's CBD, which typically takes 1.5 hours.

“We tend to associate fatigue with long trips, or for groups such as shift workers but people also are at risk even on shorter journeys,” he said.

His concerns are backed up by other research, which found driver fatigue is responsible for 17% of all accidents in Australia, 30% of which resulted in deaths.¹

Dr Juric also suffers from sleep apnoea. He became interested in physiological-based dentistry and how the jaw position affects health about ten years ago.

“The ramifications of un-diagnosing and not treating OSA from a health perspective are huge and many people are just not aware there are options,” he said.

Dr Juric said many of his patients used a mandibular device from Oventus Medical, the O₂Vent™ T.

With its unique, patented airway that acts like a second nose, the O₂Vent™ T is changing the way the disease is treated, both in Australia and internationally.

Dr Juric said he had fitted many patients with these oral devices in the last 18 months.

“The vast majority of patients I see come back delighted,” he said. “It’s like as you get older and your vision starts going, you make allowances and then when you get glasses, suddenly, you can see.”

OSA can lead to stroke, diabetes and heart disease.

-ENDS-

1. Tregear S, Reston J, Schoelles K, Phillips B. Obstructive sleep apnea and risk of motor vehicle crash: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Clin Sleep Med.* 2009;5:573–81.

Media and interview opportunities:

Dr Juric, Myers Street Dental Geelong

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About Oventus

Oventus is a Brisbane based medical device company that is commercialising a suite of oral appliances for the treatment of sleep apnoea and snoring. Unlike other oral appliances, the Oventus devices have a unique and patented airway within the device that delivers air to the back of the mouth whilst alleviating multiple sites of obstruction including the nose, soft palate and tongue. They are particularly designed for the many people that have nasal obstructions and consequently tend to mainly breathe through their mouth. While it may seem counterintuitive, the device actually prevents oral breathing. The O₂Vent™ T is designed to allow nasal breathing when the nose is unobstructed, but when obstruction is present; breathing is supplemented via the airways in the appliance. According to a report published by the Sleep Health Foundation Australia, an estimated 1.5 million Australians suffer with sleep disorders and more than half of these suffer with obstructive sleep apnea.¹ Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) is the most definitive medical therapy for obstructive sleep apnoea, OSA, however many patients have difficulty tolerating CPAP². Oral appliances have emerged as an alternative to CPAP for obstructive sleep apnoea treatment.³

1. Deloitte Access Economics. *Reawakening Australia: the economic cost of sleep disorders in Australia, 2010*. Canberra, Australia.
2. Beecroft, et al. Oral continuous positive airway pressure for sleep apnoea; effectiveness, patient preference, and adherence. *Chest* 124:2200–2208, 2003
3. Sutherland et al. Oral appliance treatment for obstructive sleep apnoea: An updated *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*. February 2014.