

MEDIA RELEASE



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SLEEP DISORDERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT FOR TRUCKWEEK 2012

As part of its program for TruckWeek 2012, the ATA hosted a breakfast for politicians at Parliament House this morning, highlighting the dangers and prevalence of sleep disorders in Australia's truck drivers.

TruckWeek is a week-long national celebration highlighting the achievements of the trucking industry, and runs until this Saturday.

At the breakfast, Australian researcher Lisa Sharwood revealed that over 40 per cent of Australian long distance truck drivers suffer from Obstructive Sleep Apnoea. However, the Epworth sleepiness scale currently used in driver medicals only picks up 12.2 per cent, leaving the majority of these apnoea sufferers undiagnosed and untreated.

Sleep apnoea is a condition where the soft tissues of the throat close or partially obstruct the airway whilst a person is asleep, preventing them from getting proper rest. This can then lead to daytime sleepiness, fatigue and poor reaction times, and can more than double their accident risk.

ATA Chairman David Simon said TruckWeek was an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of this issue both within the trucking industry and with the policy makers in Parliament House.

"Sleep apnoea is a treatable condition, and many drivers wouldn't even be aware they suffer from it," David said.

"A sensible approach to sleep apnoea testing, treatment, and management will benefit businesses by creating safer drivers.

"Drivers will benefit too, with healthier, less fatigued lives, extended driving careers, and a greater life expectancy."

The Australasian Sleep Association and the Sleep Health Foundation are also urging drivers to make sleep a priority during TruckWeek, with fact sheets about common sleep conditions available from <http://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/library.html>.

For more information on TruckWeek 2012 and other events taking place during the week, go to www.truckweek.com.au.

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About the ATA: The Australian Trucking Association (www.truck.net.au) is the peak body that represents the trucking industry. Its members include state and sector trucking associations, major logistics companies and operators and suppliers with leading expertise in truck technology.

A safe, professional and viable trucking industry