7 May 2024

**ADA welcomes call for sugar tax as sickly sweet**

Australian Dental Association (ADA) President Dr Scott Davis welcomes the Grattan Institute’s report, *Sickly sweet*, which **reiterates the ADA’s call** for the introduction of a levy on sugary drinks.

“Australia must implement a tax on sugary drinks to not only curb the country’s obesity crisis but importantly to slow down the rate of tooth decay,” said Dr Davis, a NSW prosthodontist.

“As we know from numerous research studies and as made clear by this Grattan report, sugary drink taxes have led to improvements in oral health in several countries around the globe which have already instituted a levy on sugary drinks.”

The ADA has been calling on the Australian Government for many years to introduce a levy on sugary drinks that would then provide funding for targeted oral health programs, as outlined in the ADA’s Dental Health Plan. The nation’s oral health has been declining – the ADA’s Adult Oral Health Tracker[[1]](#footnote-1) demonstrates that almost one-third of Australian adults have tooth decay with an almost 7% increase between 2004-06 and 2017-18.

Also just this year, the ADA highlighted in the ADA’s Children and Young People Oral Health Tracker[[2]](#footnote-2), the number of Australian children captured in data for potentially preventable hospitalisations due to dental disease has also continued to rise. As of 2021-22, 10.8 per 1,000 children aged 5-9 years were hospitalised due to potentially preventable dental disease. This is a problem which was directly addressed by the introduction of a levy in the UK, which led to a 12 per cent reduction in hospital admissions for removal of decayed teeth in children.

“As long as our government drags its feet, Australia will remain behind the 100 plus countries around the world which have taken the step to combat sugar consumption via sugar-sweetened beverages,” said Dr Davis.

**Ends.**

**To interview Dr Davis, contact ADA Media Advisor Jenny Barlass on 0497 748 331.**

1. Australian Dental Association 2024. Australia’s Adult Oral Health Tracker 2024, Mitchell Institute, Victoria University, Melbourne. ada.org.au/oralhealthtracker. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Australian Dental Association 2024. Australia’s Children and Young People Oral Health Tracker 2024, Mitchell Institute, Victoria University, Melbourne. ada.org.au/oralhealthtracker. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)