

# SLEEP APNOEA & YOUR DRIVING



**“ DROWSINESS  
CAN IMPAIR  
YOUR ABILITY TO  
DRIVE  
AT A RATE  
HIGHER THAN  
THE LEGAL  
ALCOHOL LIMIT ”**



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### THE FACTS:

- Safe driving requires appropriate judgement, concentration, response time and alertness. Sleep apnoea can significantly impair these and it may not even be apparent to the person affected.
- Studies have revealed that sleep apnoea significantly increases the chances (about 5 times) of serious accidents. Impairment has been shown to be similar having blood alcohol levels above legal limits. Those with severe sleep apnoea have an even greater rate of accidents (15 times the average).  
**This puts you, your family and other road users at risk.**
- Treatment with CPAP has been shown to reduce sleeping and reduce the risk of accidents back to normal.

### YOUR RIGHTS:

- The doctor-patient relationship is bound by *confidentiality* and we will strictly protect your information at all times. Access to your records are only to approved medical staff and through state legislation.
- You will be fully informed of *how your medical problem may impact your driving*.
- You will be advised and given access to all *appropriate treatment options* in line with best practice.

### YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Whilst awaiting a sleep study or treatment your doctor may advise you to be aware that you may be at risk of an accident, *adjust your driving habits* and take particular note of any warning signs of drowsiness.
- Once diagnosed with sleep apnoea **you are required by law**

**to notify the Department of Planning and Infrastructure** (ph 13 11 56) within a reasonable time. If you do not do this and have an accident your insurance may be void.

- The Act also requires your doctor to notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles if he or she thinks you are “likely to endanger the public”. Untreated sleep apnea is such a condition. If you hold a commercial licence, other more stringent conditions may be necessary.

- Most patients can continue with an unconditional license. If you are being well treated you will be able to continue to drive even with a conditional license. • If you stop using treatment, even for one night, your sleepiness may return and you will again put yourself at risk of accidents. If you contemplate giving up or changing treatment it is very important that you consult your doctor.