



AUSTRALIAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION INC.

MEDIA RELEASE

Dr Neil Hewson, Federal President

1 October 2009

Magistrate Rules against Beauty Therapist in Tooth Whitening Case

The ADA believes that the outcome of a court proceeding that convicted a beauty therapist for harm caused as a result of tooth whitening is a victory for patient safety. A Magistrate in Heidelberg, Victoria today found a beauty therapist guilty of a charge under the Health Professions Registration Act 2005 (Vic), of practicing dentistry while not being registered as a dental care provider.

A charge was brought against the beauty therapist after a customer who received tooth whitening in August 2007 complained of severe teeth mottling, a marbled colouration of her teeth, ulcerations to her gums, and chemical burns. This trial was the first time that the legality of tooth whitening was considered by an Australian court.

The ADA strongly believes that bleaching should only been done after patients have been fully assessed and warns the public that if you go to a non-dental practitioner to have your teeth whitened, then you do so at your own risk. "You have to ask yourself. What is their infection control protocol? Are the bleaches safe - is the strength of the bleach going to permanently impair my teeth? What training do the operators have? Am I suitable for whitening? For the user of the service it's really a step into the unknown as they and the provider just do not have an appreciation of what they are doing," said Dr. Hewson, ADA Federal President.

The ADA has actively tried to educate the public that tooth whitening should be performed only by those that: have the skills, knowledge, and training to understand the anatomy and physiology of teeth and gums, can accurately diagnose the causes of dental discolouration, can diagnose oral health problems and who comply with infection control-dentists. Dental professional whitening treatments when performed by a dental practitioner (from professionally supplied gels through to in dental clinic treatments) are an effective and safe form of dental treatment.

This court ruling will better protect the public by ensuring that tooth whitening is performed only by those that have dental training and are registered to practice tooth whitening.

Media contacts: Dr Neil Hewson – President – 03 9455 0111/0419 344 587

For more information please see

http://www.ada.org.au/Australian_Dentist/September_2009/ndu_tooth_bleaching.aspx

The Australian Dental Association Inc. (ADA) is the peak national professional body representing about 10,000 registered dentists, who are the vast majority of dental care providers. ADA members work in both the public and private sectors. The primary objectives of the ADA are to encourage the improvement of the oral and general health of the public and to promote the ethics, art and science of dentistry and to support members of the Association in enhancing their ability to provide safe, high quality professional oral care.