

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [REDACTED] Submission for the inquiry into the sourcing and supply of dental appliances and prostheses used by the dental profession in the ACT  
**Date:** Thursday, 18 September 2014 3:49:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [Dental Aware "Home".docx](#)  
[Dental Aware "About".docx](#)  
[Dr Athanassiadis Letter.docx](#)  
[President of ADAQ Letter.pdf](#)  
[Response to President of ADAQ letter.docx](#)  
[Dental Board letter.docx](#)

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**From:** John Clark [mailto:[REDACTED]]  
**Sent:** Monday, 8 September 2014 3:44 PM  
**To:** Committees  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Submission for the inquiry into the sourcing and supply of dental appliances and prostheses used by the dental profession in the ACT

Chris Bourke MLA, C of the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community and Social Services

Dear Dr Bourke

My name is John Clark I am a dentist employed in both the public and private sectors and though I reside and work in Queensland, my machinations on the subject of this inquiry, apply equally to the ACT. Up until July just past I was a member of the ADA, but I have not renewed my membership as I feel the ADA has lost its' moral compass and serves only the best interests of its' dentist members - not the unknowing patient. Certainly, the ADAs understanding of what constitutes ethical behaviour is not the same as mine.

As far as I am aware, I and another dentist, Dr Matthew Athanassiadis are the only dentists in Australia that have made any effort to bring to the public eye, the existence of dental outsourcing to Asia, which has been a secret of the Australian Dental Industry for over 20 years.

In 2012 I started the website dentalaware.com.au in an endeavour to expose the largely hidden (to the patient) practice of outsourcing. I have attached three areas from the site: Home, About and a letter penned by Dr Athanassiadis that he sent to the ADA in 2013. Please read the attachments in the order given.

You should understand that any input to this inquiry from the Australian Dental Association (ADA) should be viewed as biased as the ADA acts to represent its' dentist membership base, not the Australian Dental Tech Industry (which is being destroyed by outsourcing). For example, all correspondence I forwarded to ADA Queensland (ADAQ) to rebut a series of letters penned by the then President and published in the 'ADAQ News' magazine, were refused publication and the ADAQ Executive even went to the trouble of creating a by-law to prevent publication of letters from 'non-dentists', just so they had a basis for refusing to publish a letter from my dental technician! The President's first letter (which arose in response to a television article in which both Dr Athanassiadis and I featured) and my unpublished letter of response are also attached as background. The federal ADA has also been obstructive to the giving of visibility to this issue and any letter I have forwarded has either been refused or significantly edited down from the original. Lastly, I have attached a letter I sent to the Dental Board in 2012, which included a number of recommendations not taken up by the Board .

I'll leave you with this...

Following NIB's Oct 2013 announcement to offshore some of their dental care requirements to Thailand, the ADA's Federal President at the time (Dr Karin Alexander) was reported by the media as saying...

*"While prices for offshore treatment seemed cheaper, there was no way that the quality of work performed overseas could be guaranteed, and I question NIB's claim that it could "quality-assure"*

*work done in Asia. We have a very high level of regulation in Australia to ensure safety and we also have rules about security of the workforce and those elements aren't there in most Asian countries".*

*"What worries me about having health funds try to provide some sort of quality assurance measures is just how independent they would be. If they employ someone to check out Asian dentists, would that person be fully independent or would they be paid for by the health fund?"*

I found Dr Alexander's statement staggering considering she was bagging the overseas industry, whilst keeping mum about the fact that 70% of Australia's dentists are using Asian labs!! Further, though there is a degree of regulation in Australia considering materials used and infection control standards, there is no mechanism in place for assessing the quality of any clinician and Dr Alexander could no more guarantee the quality of an Australian dentist than she could of a Thai or Chinese dentist. The only, I repeat, only way a consumer can have some assessment of a general dentists' clinical skills (who has not previously been brought to task to the Dental Board) is to ask a lab tech as to who they would recommend in their area.

Scarey stuff.

Anyway, I and my dental tech would very much love to appear before the committee if you so desire (would appreciate the air fares down though!). Also, is it possible that you forward detail on the circumstances which led to the establishment of this inquiry?? Am really flabbergasted that the inquiry is happening and would love to know how it came to pass..

John

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