

# national allergy strategy



## Media Release

### **The Australian Greens support major funding for the National Allergy Strategy**

The one in five Australians<sup>1</sup> who live with chronic and potentially life-threatening allergic diseases will have access to vital resources thanks to today's announcement that the Australian Greens are pledging \$20 million funding to the National Allergy Strategy.

The National Allergy Strategy exists to improve the health and quality of life of Australians with allergic diseases and minimise the burden of allergic diseases on individuals, their carers, healthcare services and the community.

"We welcome this funding pledge from the Australian Greens, in response to our call for action. This funding is needed to ensure that the National Allergy Strategy can implement a wide range of initiatives to improve allergy management at every level, including prevention, diagnosis, ongoing management and emergency care", said A/Prof Richard Loh, Co-chair of the National Allergy Strategy.

"Allergic disease once developed, for the most part can be managed, but not cured. This funding will allow the National Allergy Strategy to undertake major projects to help change cultural attitudes towards food allergies of health professionals, food service providers, regulators and the broader community", commented Maria Said, Co-chair of the National Allergy Strategy and CEO of Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia.

The National Allergy Strategy has made good progress over the past few years engaging with the food service sector and teens and young adults. These projects continue to have a positive impact increasing awareness and safety for all. The National Allergy Strategy has demonstrated its ability to engage with key stakeholders to achieve positive outcomes and meet contractual agreements.

"This funding will allow the expansion of existing projects and implementation of new projects focussed on ensuring people with allergic conditions receive timely access to best-practice and evidence-based advice and therapy, together with effectively coordinated healthcare and support, as close as possible to where they live", said A/Prof Richard Loh.

We also need to address drug allergy and implement strategies to ensure that people who are allergic to a medicine are never given those medicines", said Leader of the Australian Greens Dr Richard Di Natale. "We also need to ensure that people who are no longer allergic

to a medicine are given appropriate medicines, which will support antimicrobial stewardship strategies”, he added.

“This announcement will make a difference to the lives of all Australians living with allergic conditions and we are grateful for the support of Senator Richard Di Natale and the Australian Greens”, commented Maria Said.

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## **Background**

The National Allergy Strategy is a partnership between the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCI) and Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA), as the leading medical and patient organisations for allergy in Australia. The **National Allergy Strategy** aims to address public health issues relating to the rapid and continuing rise of allergy in Australia and improve the health and quality of life of people with allergic diseases, their families and carers, and the community

### **Allergy facts**

- Allergic diseases are among the fastest growing chronic conditions in Australia, affecting approximately 1 in 5 Australians<sup>1</sup>.
- Hospital admissions for anaphylaxis (severe, life threatening allergic reactions) have increased 5-fold in the last 20 years<sup>2</sup>.
- Deaths from anaphylaxis have increased by 7% per year for the last 7 years<sup>3</sup>
- Food allergy induced anaphylaxis has doubled in the last 10 years. One in 10 infants now have a food allergy<sup>4</sup>.
- Introducing peanut between 4-11 months of age can reduce peanut allergy in high risk infants by 80%<sup>5</sup>.
- Up to 1 in 10 adults with suspected but unconfirmed drug allergy are often unnecessarily treated with more expensive drugs<sup>6</sup>.
- Although 5% of adults may be allergic to one or more drugs, up to 15% believe that they have drug allergy, and therefore are frequently unnecessarily denied treatment with an indicated drug<sup>6</sup>.
- Delayed access to medical care and long waiting times for management of allergic diseases in all areas (rural, remote and metropolitan) is a major problem, due to the high number of diagnosed patients, newly diagnosed patients and low number of appropriately trained health care professionals<sup>1</sup>.

- A US study reported that childhood food allergy results in significant direct medical costs for the healthcare system and even larger costs for families with a food-allergic child<sup>7</sup>.

Further information is available at: [www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au](http://www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au)

Lead organisations:

***Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA)***

The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) was established in 1990 as a not for profit, peak professional medical organisation for allergy and clinical immunology in Australia and New Zealand. ASCIA members include clinical immunology/allergy specialists, other medical practitioners, scientists and allied health professionals who work in the areas of allergy and immunology.

The mission of ASCIA is to advance the science and practice of allergy and clinical immunology, by promoting the highest standard of medical practice, education and research, to improve the health and quality of life of people with allergic diseases, immunodeficiencies and other immune diseases.

For further information go to: [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au)

***Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA)***

Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA) was established in 1993 as a charitable, not for profit organisation, to improve awareness of allergy and anaphylaxis in the Australian community, by sharing current information, education, advocacy, research, guidance and support.

A&AA is primarily a volunteer based organisation that is supported by Department of Health and Ageing funding, sale of resources, sponsorship and donations. Their outreach extends to individuals, families, school, workplaces, health professionals, government, food industry and all Australians.

A&AA is part of an international alliance of similar organisations and works closely with peak medical bodies, including ASCIA. Their medical advisory board comprises ASCIA members who are specialist immunology and allergy physicians from across Australia.

For further information go to: [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)

**References**

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7. Gupta R, Holdford D, Bilaver L, Dyer A, Holl JL, Meltzer D. The Economic Impact of Childhood Food Allergy in the United States. *JAMA Pediatrics*. 2013; 167 (11): 1026-31.