



MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR ENERGY  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Allergy awareness program to prevent fatal food reactions** *World Allergy Day*

Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald launched a world first government-industry-consumer food allergy awareness training program, designed to help businesses better cater to the needs of people with allergies.

The pilot training program, launched on World Allergy Day, is a joint initiative between the NSW Food Authority and Food Regulation Partnership and the City of Canada Bay Council.

Minister Macdonald said Anaphylaxis Australia Inc. and Restaurant & Catering NSW/ACT are also supportive of the program.

“This is the first program of its kind in the world to give food service operators the knowledge and tools they need to give allergy sufferers correct advice about the food they order,” he said.

“Over 160,000 people in NSW alone suffer food allergies and their ability to dine out is severely restricted because of uncertainty about the foods they are served.

“Statistics reveal most fatal food allergy reactions occur outside the home – so this program could help save lives.

“Allergic reactions can range from mild to extreme, so it’s vital for people living with food allergies to be able to accurately assess the risk of eating any food.

“The program is a win-win for the food service industry and patrons because it gives restaurants the opportunity to better meet customers’ needs and create an environment that is safer for those with allergies.”

The program includes a half-day workshop covering labelling and traceability of ingredients, avoiding cross contamination during handling and preparation of food and methods for dealing with specific dietary allergens of customers.

Food businesses will also be given materials designed to reinforce allergy aware procedures among food service managers, kitchen and front-of-house staff.

Once program requirements have been met, all businesses will be able to display an Allergy Aware logo.

Local councils will play a vital role in helping businesses implement the program and maintain their Allergy Aware status.

Around 30 businesses in the Canada Bay Council area volunteered to participate in the pilot program, which began in October.

Over 21 people completed the training and are now implementing allergy aware systems into their businesses. It is anticipated that businesses will be able to start promoting their Allergy Aware status early in the new year, once council has confirmed those systems are operating correctly.

“I would like to congratulate Canada Bay Council and the businesses that have participated in this innovative program,” Mr Macdonald said.

“Their actions today are not only smart business practice, but most importantly, might actually save someone’s life in the future.”

Plans are underway to extend the program to food businesses across NSW.

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