



For Immediate Release

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Eager patients visit QLD's First Public Paediatric Allergy Clinic:

a huge step forward in light of QLD allergy crisis

Following several years of campaigning Anaphylaxis Australia Inc (AAI) commends the Queensland Government on the opening of the Queensland Paediatric Allergy and Immunology service at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane on March 3rd, 2008. Minister of Health, Stephen Robertson MP announced the opening of the clinic in 2007 stating, " the need for such a service has been impressed upon me and I have taken steps to progressively address the [allergy] situation."

Maria Said, president of Anaphylaxis Australia Inc says, "The launch of the clinic is acknowledgement of the fact that severe allergy and the risk of anaphylaxis is a public health issue which needs to be better managed in the state of QLD. A multi pronged approach to care and continued education of a wide number of health professionals is critical. The clinic will have the ability to train and upskill doctors and other health professionals including a nurse and dietician with a focus on allergy. The team of experts will review children who have been referred by general practitioners."

Said applauded the Bligh Government and stressed that; "The new allergy clinic is a platform from which allergy services need to grow in Queensland". A long-term effort by many will eventually see the current 18-month waiting lists to see an allergy specialist in QLD decrease. AAI congratulates Doctor Jane Peake, one of only two paediatric allergy specialists in QLD, who has taken on the position of Head of Department of Allergy at the RCH, Brisbane.

All Australian children who have severe allergy and may be at risk of anaphylaxis deserve to have prompt access to trained professionals who can diagnose and then educate parents on the myriad of 'do-able' strategies which need to be implemented to reduce the risk of allergic reactions and therefore improve quality of life. Staff at the clinic will have the capacity and expertise to care for the physical, social and psychological well being of children and teens at risk of anaphylaxis who live daily life with a potentially life threatening condition.

An estimated 6 percent of pre-school aged children are allergic to one or more of the common food allergens and numbers are on the rise. Australian research has shown evidence of an increased incidence of anaphylaxis, with a doubling in admissions to Australian hospitals with this diagnosis over the last 12 years. The study also revealed an even more dramatic 5-fold increase in anaphylaxis Emergency Department admissions of those aged 0-4years (Mullins, 2007).

Maria Said reiterated that even though deaths are rare, food induced anaphylaxis is not uncommon. "The incidence of children at risk of anaphylaxis is increasing and the government must support the professionals who diagnose, manage, teach and care for them on a daily basis," she said. Access to experts in the field of allergy, accurate information and ongoing support and management is critical for those who live with the risk of anaphylaxis.

AAI acknowledges the ongoing efforts of ASCIA and the AMA who continue to keep allergy management issues in Queensland at the forefront of communications.

Reference: Mullins RJ (2007) "Paediatric food allergy trends in a community-based specialist allergy practice, 1995-2006" *Med J Aust* 186(12):618-21.

For more information on allergies and anaphylaxis visit Anaphylaxis Australia at www.allergyfacts.org.au or the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy at www.allergy.org.au

Media contact:

Maria Said
President
Anaphylaxis Australia Inc
Mobile: 0409 609 831

Anaphylaxis Australia Inc is a non-profit Australian charity, which was formed in 1993. AAI's mission is to increase awareness of anaphylaxis through education, research and support. The organisation works with health and teaching professionals, members of the food industry and all who are touched by life-threatening allergy so that, together, we can improve the quality of life of allergic Australians nationally. For more information visit the AAI website: www.allergyfacts.org.au or call 1300 728 000.