



1<sup>st</sup> November 2006.

## **The need for information on Severe Allergy Management reaches crisis point in Queensland**

### **Is the government hearing the plea of parents, teachers, childcare workers and health professionals throughout the state?**

The lack of access to accurate and helpful information, education and training in QLD remains clearly apparent. Anaphylaxis Australia Inc (AAI), the only national support organisation for those at risk of severe allergic reactions, have organised a seminar at the The Wesley Hospital on Sat 4<sup>th</sup> Nov, which has been booked out for more than two weeks. As the waiting list of those pleading for much needed critical information continues to grow so does the wait for a government announcement required to help ease the crisis in Queensland.

Eight foods including peanuts, tree nuts, egg, milk, soy, fish, shellfish and sesame seeds account for 90% of food anaphylactic reactions in Australia. Insect sting, medication and latex are included in the list of other causes of severe allergic shock. Numbers of children diagnosed with severe allergy in school and childcare facilities have increased dramatically in the last 10-year period. We need to have a structured system in place to help reduce risk.

Despite years of lobbying QLD still does not have a single public paediatric allergy clinic or skilled, dedicated anaphylaxis educators visiting schools and childcare facilities. Whilst Premier Bracks has promised legislation surrounding education and training of teachers and childcare workers in Victoria, and NSW has Anaphylaxis Educators training staff in schools and childcare facilities, children in QLD still have to wait up to 18months for private consultations with the two existing paediatric allergists.

Maria Said, President of AAI stated, "There has been no communication with AAI regarding the establishment of a much needed paediatric public allergy clinic. Parents and first aid providers continue to educate school staff in an ad hoc manner sharing whatever information they have. This information can be inaccurate and is sometimes even incorrect therefore leaving teachers and childcare staff with little support and children at greater risk. School and childcare staff must be properly educated in daily management of those at risk of anaphylaxis and emergency treatment which includes administration of the EpiPen® - an auto injector containing a single pre measured dose of adrenaline."

Anaphylaxis and its management across the nation was discussed in Federal Parliament on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2006. The Federal Parliament discussion supported a national policy for children's services and schools, which includes anaphylaxis education on recognition, management and emergency treatment. Whilst the discussion is to continue in parliament what is clear to AAI is that QLD government has communicated very little about its plan

to educate the school and childcare community on anaphylaxis and its management.

Up to 10 Australians die each year from anaphylaxis and thousands more require urgent medical attention including prompt administration of adrenaline. Strict avoidance of the food trigger is the only way of preventing a food allergic reaction.

Maria Said concluded saying, "It is crucial that parents have prompt access to a public allergy clinic and experts in the field of allergy for proper diagnosis and education."

Children spend half their waking hours in the care of others. School and childcare communities do play an important role in helping keep children and young people with allergies safe. AAI pleads with the QLD government to take the issue of safety of children with severe allergy and their carers seriously and make access to expert help through paediatric allergy clinics a priority.

Both QLD Health and Department of Education have declined an invitation to present at the seminar in an effort to inform the community what progress has been made on this issue.

Information for schools and parents is available from Anaphylaxis Australia [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au), as well as organisations such as Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) at [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au)  
For more information on

**Allergies and Anaphylaxis see**

- Anaphylaxis Australia Inc  
[www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)  
or call 1 300 728 000.
  
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) at  
[www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au)

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***Anaphylaxis Australia Inc (Formerly FACTS)** 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 organization 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 consumers nationally. For more information visit the AAI website: [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au) or call 1300 728 000*