

Allergy rates climb, costing Australians \$18.9 billion in financial losses

One in three Australians now live with allergic disease, costing \$18.9b in financial losses and \$44.6b in non-financial impacts each year, according to a new Deloitte Access Economics report.

More than eight million Australians are estimated to live with allergic disease – leading to mounting costs and unprecedented demand for allergy services.

A new Deloitte Access Economics report, [*Costly Reactions: The economic and social cost of allergic disease in Australia*](#), revealed the annual financial burden had reached \$18.9 billion, up from [\\$7.8 billion in financial burden reported in 2007](#).

The report was developed for the [Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy \(ASCIA\)](#) and the [National Allergy Council \(NAC\)](#).

“For too long, the everyday impact of allergic disease has been invisible. Allergies don’t just disrupt health – they reshape lives. Millions of families are living with constant vigilance and fear,” said Maria Said AM, Co-chair of the NAC and CEO of [Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia \(A&AA\)](#). “This report gives us the clearest evidence yet of how allergic disease affects Australians – clinically, socially and economically.”

Allergic disease is one of Australia’s fastest growing chronic conditions with hay fever (~24%), food allergy (7%) and drug allergy (5%) among the most common, according to [new research by the National Allergy Centre of Excellence \(NACE\)](#), which helped underpin *The Costly Reactions* report.

Professor Kirsten Perrett, Director of the NACE and Murdoch Children’s Research Institute (MCRI) Population Allergy Group Leader, said possible drivers of the increase in allergic disease were environmental changes such as urbanisation and air pollution; modern lifestyle factors like sanitisation; and increased awareness.

“Australia has some of the highest allergy rates globally, including the world’s highest reported rate of infant food allergy, affecting [one in 10 babies](#). The burden isn’t just physical; for many families allergic disease disrupts daily life and brings financial and emotional strain,” said Professor Perrett, a paediatric allergist. “Through national research collaboration, we’re now better placed than ever to understand these complex conditions and deliver more targeted, effective responses.”

Key findings of the report include:

- An estimated 8.2 million Australians (30%) live with allergic disease, up from [4.1 million \(19.6%\) reported in 2007](#)
- Many people – and households – manage at least two allergic conditions at the same time
- The estimated annual financial cost of allergic disease is \$18.9 billion, and a further \$44.6 billion in wellbeing losses
- There is an average financial cost of \$2,318 and a further \$5,470 of non-financial costs per person living with allergic disease

- Living with the risk of anaphylaxis has a significant impact on health and wellbeing of both the individuals and their families due to anxiety, isolation, and poor mental health.
- 68.9% of those affected are of working age, with 80% of financial costs linked to lost productivity
- Food allergy peaks in childhood, hay fever in teens and young adults, and drug allergy in older adults
- Ongoing investment in the NAC and NACE programs is essential to reduce the burden of allergic disease for millions of Australians.

A coordinated national response

Australia's coordinated national response to allergic disease is led by two peak bodies established in 2022 following a bipartisan parliamentary inquiry and subsequent [*Walking the Allergy Tightrope*](#) report:

- **The National Allergy Council (NAC)**, a partnership between ASCIA and A&AA, which delivers evidence-based public health programs, education, training and consumer support.
- **The National Allergy Centre of Excellence (NACE)**, hosted at MCRI, is Australia's peak allergy research body building critical research infrastructure and collaboration to transform allergy care.

"The strength of this work lies in collaboration," said Dr Michael O'Sullivan, ASCIA President and clinical immunology/allergy specialist. "We've made progress, but more work is needed to make sure Australians can access the quality, research-driven, allergy care they desperately need now, and in the future."

The Australian Capital Territory recorded some of the highest rates of allergic disease, according to the NACE research, which analysed data from 17,093 households.

For ACT mum Bek Gillespie, those numbers are more than statistics. One of her identical three-year-old twins lives with life-threatening egg anaphylaxis. "When Abigail had her first serious reaction as a baby, we didn't know where to turn. Getting answers took time and came at a cost - financially and in missed opportunities for earlier help. We needed timely, consistent advice, backed by the latest research, to keep our daughter safe, especially with plans to move to the country. I just wish I'd known about these resources from the very beginning".

The *Costly Reactions* report confirmed allergic disease is "a significant public health burden" in Australia and future work should focus on clinical and public health programs that reduce the cost of allergies, upskilling health professionals, identifying ways to address allergy data gaps and accelerating allergy prevention and management research.

It recommended ongoing investment in the NAC and NACE programs was essential to improve the lives of millions of Australians living with allergic disease.

From August 27, the full report will be available at <https://www.allergy.org.au/ascia-reports-economic>.

The National Allergy Council and the National Allergy Centre of Excellence will present the report findings to federal MPs and senators at a national showcase in Canberra today, August 27, alongside families, clinicians and researchers.

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FURTHER BACKGROUND

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ALLERGY COUNCIL (NAC)

The National Allergy Council is a partnership between the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) and Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA), Australia's peak medical and patient support organisations for allergic disease. The National Allergy Council delivers evidence-based public health initiatives, education, training and support in consultation with key stakeholders, to improve the health and wellbeing of people with allergic disease.

nationalallergycouncil.org.au.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ALLERGY CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (NACE)

The National Allergy Centre of Excellence, hosted at Murdoch Children's Research Institute, is Australia's peak allergy research body. Backed by a national network of almost 500 experts in drug, food, insect, and respiratory allergies, it is recognised as a European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) Advanced Research Centre. The NACE builds critical national research infrastructure and collaboration that transforms consumer-centred allergy care.

nace.org.au

Together, since July 1 2022, these organisations have:

- Trained 233,000 school, children's education and care, and healthcare professionals in life-saving anaphylaxis skills
- Trained 207,982 food service staff to provide safe food for people with food allergies
- Supported 4407 people through the National Allergy Helpline
- Provided 166,000 parents and healthcare professionals with evidence-based resources and advice through the Nip allergies in the Bub program each year
- Developed the NAC allergy assist[®] education and specialist advice platform to support rural doctors to improve access to allergy care
- Enrolled 1571 people with allergies in five NACE embedded research programs, including the in the world-first, national, standardised peanut oral immunotherapy program (ADAPT)
- Analysed 768,118 people's data from existing research to generate new knowledge, including the latest allergy prevalence rates
- Synthesised 3001 academic articles in Australia's first drug and food allergy living evidence collection, underpinning clinical guidelines and public health programs
- Designed the NACE Allergy BioRepository (ALBI) to accelerate discovery and improve health
- Trained the next generation of allergy experts to drive critical research forward.

ALLERGY FACTS

- An estimated 8.2 million Australians (30%) live with allergic disease (Deloitte, ASCIA, NAC 2025), [up from 4.1 million \(19.6%\) reported in 2007](#).
- The annual cost of allergic disease has reached \$18.9 billion in financial costs and a further \$44.6 billion in wellbeing losses (Deloitte, ASCIA, NAC 2025), [up from \\$30 billion in 2007](#).
- [One in 10 babies](#) have a confirmed food allergy. [One in 20 adults](#) report a medication allergy. [One in 4](#) Australians have hay fever – up from one in 7 in 2008. [Twelve people](#) die from bee or wasp stings each year.
- First Nations people are twice as likely to present at hospital with asthma and other allergy related illnesses, with [emergency department presentations significantly increasing between 2018 to 2023](#).
- The [Australian Capital Territory](#) has some of the highest rates of allergic disease.
- Food allergy peaks in childhood, hay fever in teens and young adults, and drug allergy in older adults.
- Conditions often co-occur, meaning many people – and households – manage more than one allergic disease at the same time.
- Each year, [more than 2400 people are hospitalised with anaphylaxis \(a severe allergic reaction\)](#), and [20 Australians lose their lives](#).
- [Anaphylaxis deaths increased by 7%](#) annually in Australia between 1997 and 2013 – mostly triggered by foods, insect stings or medications.

- Living with the risk of anaphylaxis has a [significant impact on health and wellbeing](#) of both the individuals and their families due to anxiety, isolation, and poor mental health.
- Allergic disease is complex, often people have more than one type, and multiple family members can be affected, requiring support and a coordinated approach to care, evidence-based education and research into prevention, diagnosis and management.

Publications:

Deloitte Access Economics, ASCIA, NAC. *Costly Reactions: The economic and social cost of allergic disease in Australia* (2025) <https://www.allergy.org.au/ascia-reports-economic>

Wang, Yichao; Koplin, Jennifer; Davies, Janet; Katelaris, Constance; Palmer, Debra; Trubiano, Jason; et al. (2025). *Prevalence and sociodemographic variation of allergic diseases in Australia: findings from the Australian National Health Survey*. Murdoch Children's Research Institute. Preprint. <https://doi.org/10.25374/MCRI.29662310>

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