



australasian society of clinical immunology and allergy

## Pre-Budget Submission 2020-2021

ASCIA is the peak professional body of clinical immunology and allergy in Australia and New Zealand.  
Contact: Jill Smith, ASCIA CEO

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### Introduction

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In October 2019 the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) made a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Allergies and Anaphylaxis in Australia, conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee for Health, Aged Care and Sport.

The critical need to focus on education and training was identified by the Terms of Reference and this was supported by a large number of submissions from consumers and health professionals.

At the Parliamentary hearing in Sydney (which included a presentation by the ASCIA President), approximately 90% of the submissions presented focussed on the importance of accessible high quality education and training for health professionals, patients, carers, consumers and community.

Since 2010 ASCIA has developed and provided world leading allergy and anaphylaxis educational resources and online training courses, which are:

- Accessible - online, modular and free for all users.
- Consistent – accurate, up to date, and used throughout Australia since 2010.
- Evidence based - developed, reviewed and updated by clinical immunology/allergy specialists, based on published studies, reviews and expert consensus.

However, as we enter a new decade in 2020, significant changes are required to expand allergy and anaphylaxis education and training of health professionals, school staff, early childhood education/care (ECEC) staff, first aid providers, patients, consumers and carers. This is particularly important for those in regional, rural and remote locations, to ensure equitable access across Australia.

**The aim of this pre-budget submission is to support expansion and further development of ASCIA allergy and anaphylaxis online educational resources and e-training courses through a request for funding of \$600,000 per year for three years (2020-2023) from the federal government in the 2020-2021 budget.**

## ASCIA Pre-budget Submission 2020-2021

### Budget summary

The total budget for three years (2020-2023) is \$1.8 million and this is based on the summary below. The annual cost to maintain ASCIA educational resources and training courses from 2023 onwards is expected to be \$300,000 per year, unless expansion and further development are required.

<b>COST ITEMS FOR YEAR 1 (2020-2021)</b>	<b>ANNUAL COST</b>
Project Manager - planning, program coordination and evaluation - 16 hours/week (0.4 FTE)	\$ 90,000
Project Officer - writing and editing - 16 hours/week (0.4 FTE)	\$ 50,000
Administration - finances, accreditation applications and reporting - 8 hours/week (0.2 FTE)	\$ 25,000
Development work - 24 hours/week (a new 0.6 FTE staff member is required for this role)	\$ 65,000
Website and course management (this will involve two providers)	\$ 60,000
Reformatting of course platforms (4 courses)	\$ 40,000
Consultation with stakeholders including government - 4 workshops, 6 tele/videoconferences	\$ 120,000
Multimedia resources (videos, podcasts, animations and infographics)	\$ 80,000
Promotion (online and print campaigns)	\$ 70,000
<b>TOTAL COST FOR YEAR 1 (2020-2021)</b>	<b>\$ 600,000</b>
<b>COST ITEMS FOR YEAR 2 (2021-2022)</b>	<b>ANNUAL COST</b>
Project Manager - planning, program coordination and evaluation - 16 hours/week (0.4 FTE)	\$ 90,000
Project Officer - writing and editing - 16 hours/week (0.4 FTE)	\$ 50,000
Administration - finances, accreditation applications and reporting - 8 hours/week (0.2 FTE)	\$ 25,000
Development work - 24 hours/week (a new (0.6 FTE) staff member is required for this role)	\$ 65,000
Website and course management (this will involve two providers)	\$ 60,000
Reformatting of course platforms (2 courses)	\$ 20,000
Consultation with stakeholders including government - 4 workshops, 6 tele/videoconferences	\$ 120,000
Multimedia resources (videos, podcasts, animations and infographics)	\$ 80,000
Promotion (online, print and publicity campaigns)	\$ 80,000
Provision for CPI increases	\$ 10,000
<b>TOTAL COST FOR YEAR 2 (2021-2022)</b>	<b>\$ 600,000</b>
<b>COST ITEMS FOR YEAR 3 (2022-2023)</b>	<b>ANNUAL COST</b>
Project Manager - planning, program coordination and evaluation - 16 hours/week (0.4 FTE)	\$ 90,000
Project Officer - writing and editing - 16 hours/week (0.4 FTE)	\$ 50,000
Administration - finances, accreditation applications and reporting - 8 hours/week (0.2 FTE)	\$ 25,000
Development work - 24 hours/week (a new (0.6 FTE) staff member is required for this role)	\$ 65,000
Website and course management (this will involve two providers)	\$ 60,000
Reformatting of course platforms (2 courses)	\$ 20,000
Consultation with stakeholders including government - 4 workshops, 6 tele/videoconferences	\$ 120,000
Multimedia resources (videos, podcasts, animations and infographics)	\$ 80,000
Promotion (online, print and publicity campaigns)	\$ 80,000
Provision for CPI increases	\$ 10,000
<b>TOTAL COST FOR YEAR 3 (2022-2023)</b>	<b>\$ 600,000</b>

**What are the benefits of funding ASCIA allergy and anaphylaxis education and training?**

There are currently no cures for allergies and anaphylaxis, which affect around one in five Australians. This high prevalence and lack of a cure makes allergies and anaphylaxis major public health issues.

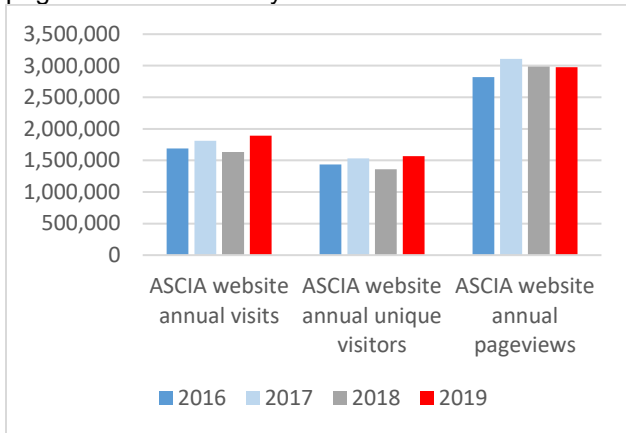
Therefore, significant health and economic gains can be made by providing accessible, consistent and evidence-based education and training, to improve prevention, recognition, diagnosis, treatment and management of allergies and anaphylaxis.

Educational resources on the ASCIA website attract approximately three million pageviews each year, without any specific funding or promotion except for notifications in ASCIA newsletters and on social media. These resources include ASCIA Guidelines, ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis (red), ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (green), ASCIA First Aid Plan for Anaphylaxis (translated into 25 languages), and more than 80 recently updated articles for patients, consumers and carers.

ASCIA anaphylaxis online training courses lead the world in providing high quality accessible training for health professionals, school teachers, early childhood education/care (ECEC) workers, first aid providers, patients, consumers and carers.

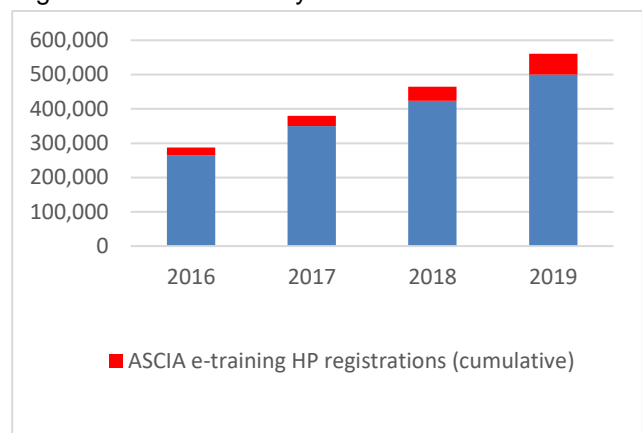
**Figure 1: ASCIA website annual visits and views**

More than 80 educational resources were updated on the ASCIA website in 2019, which attracted over 1.8 million visits and approximately 3 million pageviews from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019.



**Figure 2: ASCIA e-training registrations**

ASCIA has provided world leading online training since 2010, with a cumulative total of more than 560,000 registrations to date, and over 100,000 registrations from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019.



As the leading authority for allergy and clinical immunology in Australia, ASCIA is a trusted source of information. It is therefore vital that ASCIA resources are kept up to date, particularly when ASCIA needs to provide urgent information. For example, ASCIA was able to provide urgent and accurate information to health professionals and consumers during the recent EpiPen® Jr shortage and contamination crisis, due to ASCIA anaphylaxis educational resources having been recently updated.

However, without significant funding it is becoming increasingly challenging to keep all ASCIA online educational resources and online training courses up to date. It is also no longer sustainable for ASCIA to continue to subsidise ASCIA online training courses, without fees being introduced, which are expected to dramatically reduce the number of people who register for ASCIA training courses.

Federal government funding of ASCIA education and training in the 2020-2021 federal budget would provide ASCIA with the resourcing needed to significantly expand the reach ASCIA education and training, to benefit the 20% of Australians with allergy, their carers (parents, school teachers and early childhood education/care workers) and the health professionals who care for patients with allergies.

## **Why is funding required for ASCIA allergy and anaphylaxis education and training?**

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Whilst ASCIA allergy and anaphylaxis educational resources and online e-training courses currently lead the world, significant funding is urgently required to expand and further develop the programs.

For the schools, ECEC and community versions of ASCIA anaphylaxis e-training, funding is required to:

- Review and update six courses and resources that are referenced throughout the courses, including ASCIA action plans and infographics.
- Enable accreditation of courses with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), New South Wales (NSW) Education Standards Authority (NESA) and other relevant authorities.
- Promote courses to target audiences including education and health departments.
- Develop face-to-face modules to complement the updated online courses.
- Develop multimedia resources including videos, podcasts, animations and infographics.
- Facilitate presentations of face-to-face modules by education and health departments and other reputable training organisations in New South Wales, and possible extension to other states.

For the health professional (HP) versions of ASCIA allergy and anaphylaxis e-training, funding is required to:

- Review, consolidate and update eight HP courses (anaphylaxis, food allergy, allergic rhinitis, allergen immunotherapy, penicillin allergy, allergy prevention, atopic dermatitis and primary immunodeficiencies).
- Make ASCIA HP courses suitable for accreditation by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACCRM), Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA), and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA).
- Promote ASCIA HP courses by RACGP, ACCRM, APNA, and PSA.
- Reconfigure ASCIA HP courses to allow hosting on the Australian Medical Association (AMA) Doctor Portal learning website.
- Promote ASCIA HP courses through AMA and other reputable professional organisations.
- Develop face-to-face training modules to complement updated online ASCIA HP courses.
- Develop multimedia resources including videos, podcasts, animations and infographics.
- Facilitate presentations of face-to-face modules by health professionals at reputable primary care conferences and as part of outreach (shared care) programs.

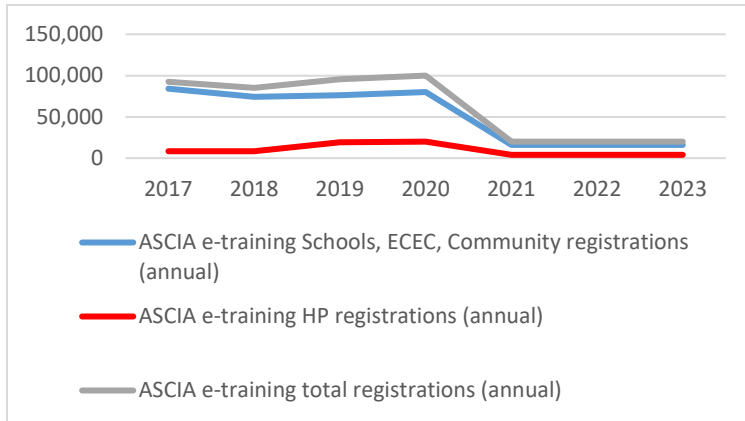
## **What are the possible outcomes if ASCIA education and training doesn't receive funding?**

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ASCIA allergy and anaphylaxis educational resources and online e-training courses lead the world in providing accessible, consistent and evidence-based education and training about prevention, recognition, diagnosis, treatment and management of allergies and anaphylaxis.

However, if federal government funding of ASCIA education and training isn't obtained in the 2020-2021 federal budget, ASCIA will need to start charging registration fees for online courses from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, as it is no longer sustainable for ASCIA to continue to subsidise these courses that have been provided free of charge since 2010.

Whilst ASCIA received limited one-off funding via unrestricted educational grants from some state governments and industry to develop education and training programs in 2010, ongoing funding requests have been unsuccessful in generating sufficient funding to provide online courses. Expansion and further development of ASCIA courses have been placed on hold until funding is sourced.



**Figure 3: ASCIA e-training annual registrations**

There are currently over 100,000 registrations for ASCIA e-training courses each year. ASCIA is concerned that this will decrease dramatically (for example 20% of current registrations, as shown in this graph), if fees are introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

Therefore, ASCIA has been reluctant to charge fees in the past as this is likely to be a barrier for many users, resulting in a significant reduction in anaphylaxis education and training.

Charging fees is expected to have significant negative outcomes for allergy and anaphylaxis education and training throughout Australia, including:

- Reduced registrations (refer to figure above), and therefore a reduced number of people trained in the prevention and treatment of allergies and anaphylaxis.
- Increased costs of essential anaphylaxis training for low to medium wage earners, including school teachers, early childhood education/care (ECEC) workers, student teachers and nurses.
- Use of non evidence-based, inconsistent training and therefore an increased number of inappropriately trained people, which could lead to poor health outcomes for people with allergy.

### Concluding comments

Federal government funding of ASCIA education and training in the 2020-2021 budget would significantly benefit the 20% of Australians with allergy, their carers (parents, school teachers and early childhood education/care workers), and the health professionals who care for patients with allergies.

Together Australia's Federal Government and ASCIA, with its extensive expertise, experience, resources and networks, can lead the world in allergy education and training, in an equitable, cost effective and efficient way. We believe that this will lead to improved care for all Australians with allergy.

We trust that the ASCIA pre-budget submission will be given due consideration and we look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Brynn Wainstein  
ASCIA President

Clinical Professor Michaela Lucas  
ASCIA President Elect

Dr Michael O'Sullivan  
ASCIA Director

Associate Professor Jane Peake  
ASCIA Director

Ms Jill Smith  
ASCIA CEO

**Appendix A: About allergy and anaphylaxis**

There are currently no cures for allergies and anaphylaxis, which affect around one in five Australians. This high prevalence and lack of a cure makes allergies and anaphylaxis major public health issues.

Significant health and economic gains can therefore be made by providing accessible, consistent and evidence-based education and training, to improve prevention, recognition, diagnosis, treatment and management of allergies and anaphylaxis.

People with allergies have an abnormal response to usually harmless substances (allergens).

This immune system response is damaging to the body and can be life threatening. They can have an allergic reaction every time they are exposed to the allergen/s, which are common in our environment.

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www.allergy.org.au

**ACTION PLAN FOR Anaphylaxis**

For use with adrenaline (epinephrine) autoinjectors

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmed allergens: \_\_\_\_\_

Family/emergency contact name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Work Ph: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Ph: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mobile Ph: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan prepared by doctor or nurse practitioner (np): \_\_\_\_\_

The treating doctor or np hereby authorises:  
 Medications specified on this plan to be administered according to the plan.  
 Prescription of 2 adrenaline autoinjectors.  
 Review of this plan is due by the date below.  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Refer to the device label for instructions on how to give an adrenaline (epinephrine) autoinjector.**

Instructions are also on the ASCIA website  
[www.allergy.org.au/anaphylaxis](http://www.allergy.org.au/anaphylaxis)

Adrenaline autoinjectors (300 mcg) are prescribed for children over 20kg and adults. Adrenaline autoinjectors (150 mcg) are prescribed for children 7.5-20kg.

**SIGNS OF MILD TO MODERATE ALLERGIC REACTION**

- Swelling of lips, face, eyes
- Hives or welts
- Tingling mouth
- Abdominal pain, vomiting (these are signs of anaphylaxis for insect allergy)

**ACTION FOR MILD TO MODERATE ALLERGIC REACTION**

- For insect allergy - flick out sting if visible
- For tick allergy  seek medical help or  freeze tick and let it drop off
- Stay with person and call for help
- Locate adrenaline autoinjector
- Give other medications (if prescribed).....
- Phone family/emergency contact

**Mild to moderate allergic reactions (such as hives or swelling) may not always occur before anaphylaxis**

**WATCH FOR ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SIGNS OF ANAPHYLAXIS (SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTION)**

- Difficult/noisy breathing
- Swelling of tongue
- Swelling/tightness in throat
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Difficulty talking and/or hoarse voice
- Persistent dizziness or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children)

**ACTION FOR ANAPHYLAXIS**

- Lay person flat - do NOT allow them to stand or walk**  
- If unconscious, place in recovery position  
- If breathing is difficult allow them to sit
- Give adrenaline autoinjector**
- Phone ambulance - 000 (AU) or 111 (NZ)**
- Phone family/emergency contact**
- Further adrenaline doses may be given if no response after 5 minutes**
- Transfer person to hospital for at least 4 hours of observation**

**If in doubt give adrenaline autoinjector**  
Commence CPR at any time if person is unresponsive and not breathing normally

**ALWAYS give adrenaline autoinjector FIRST, and then asthma reliever puffer** if someone with known asthma and allergy to food, insects or medication has **SUDDEN BREATHING DIFFICULTY** (including wheeze, persistent cough or hoarse voice) even if there are no skin symptoms

Asthma reliever medication prescribed:  Y  N

\* If adrenaline is accidentally injected (e.g. into a thumb) phone your local poisons information centre.  
\* Continue to follow this action plan for the person with the allergic reaction.

Many people with allergies have more than one of the allergic diseases listed below, which are chronic conditions that significantly affect quality of life:

- Food allergy
- Drug allergy
- Allergic rhinitis (hayfever)
- Eczema (atopic dermatitis)
- Insect and tick allergy.

Allergic diseases can be challenging for health professionals to diagnose and treat, and often require management by clinical immunology/allergy specialists.

People with allergies to foods, drugs or insect venom may be at risk of having a severe allergic reaction, known as anaphylaxis, which is potentially life threatening.

**Figure 4: ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis**

Anaphylaxis is a medical emergency and treatment should include the steps that are outlined on the red ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis, shown on this page and on the ASCIA website [www.allergy.org.au/anaphylaxis](http://www.allergy.org.au/anaphylaxis)

## Appendix B: About ASCIA

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The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) is the peak professional body of clinical immunology and allergy in Australia and New Zealand. Established in 1990, ASCIA is a world leading, innovative and active professional society with strong leadership and sustainable operations.

ASCIA's mission is to advance the science and practice of allergy and clinical immunology, by promoting the highest standard of medical practice, training, education and research, to improve the health and quality of life of people with allergies and other immune system disorders.

ASCIA is committed to providing high quality training, education and research to improve health outcomes for all Australians with allergies and anaphylaxis. This commitment is demonstrated by:

- Hosting of **ASCIA Annual Conferences** for the past 30 years, which provide an international standard of education for ASCIA members and other health professionals. The announcement of a national Parliamentary Inquiry into Allergies and Anaphylaxis at the ASCIA 2019 Conference was welcomed by ASCIA members [www.allergy.org.au/conferences/ascia-annual-conference](http://www.allergy.org.au/conferences/ascia-annual-conference)
- Continued development and updating of **ASCIA educational resources** over the past 20 years, which provide quality online educational resources for health professionals and the community. All of these resources are available on the **ASCIA website**, which is a trusted and extremely well utilised source of information, with more than three million pageviews each year [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au)
- Development of **ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis** since 2003, which are now recognised as world leading resources and used throughout Australia and New Zealand, along with other ASCIA allergy and anaphylaxis resources [www.allergy.org.au/anaphylaxis](http://www.allergy.org.au/anaphylaxis)
- Development of world renowned **ASCIA allergy and anaphylaxis e-training courses** since 2010, for schools and early childhood education/care <https://etraining.allergy.org.au/>, health professionals <https://etraininghp.ascia.org.au/> and community <https://anaphylaxis.ascia.org.au/>
- Establishment of **AIFA (Allergy and Immunology Foundation of Australasia)** in 2013, to fund allergy and immunology research project grants [www.allergyimmunology.org.au/projects](http://www.allergyimmunology.org.au/projects)
- Development of the first **National Allergy Strategy** for Australia in 2015, in partnership with Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia and stakeholders [www.allergy.org.au/national-allergy-strategy](http://www.allergy.org.au/national-allergy-strategy)
- Implementation of the National Allergy Strategy, including the **250K Youth Project** (for the 250,000 young people with severe allergies), **All About Allergens training for food service** and **Nip allergies in the Bub** food allergy prevention project, which implements ASCIA Guidelines for infant feeding and allergy prevention.

The aim of this pre-budget submission is to request funding that will be used to expand and further develop ASCIA educational resources and online training courses (as listed above), and develop new resources and courses as required.

## **Appendix C: ASCIA Parliamentary Inquiry issues relating to education and training**

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In October 2019 the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) made a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Allergies and Anaphylaxis in Australia, conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee for Health, Aged Care and Sport.

The two issues that ASCIA submitted, which are directly related to education and training are listed below.

### **Issue 1: Support is required for quality allergy and anaphylaxis education and training resources for patients, carers and health professionals**

Widespread, accessible, reliable and consistent evidence-based educational and training resources developed by experts, are required to improve the quality of care of people with allergies and the management of anaphylaxis. ASCIA has developed a range of reliable evidence-based allergy and anaphylaxis educational resources for patients, carers, consumers, school staff, early childhood education/care staff, first aid providers and health professionals. These resources include action plans, e-training courses and documents that are accessible online, that can be downloaded and printed. Ongoing funding is required for ASCIA to continue providing, updating and promoting these resources.

#### **Suggested solution:**

- **Federal government funding support of ASCIA's evidence-based online allergy and anaphylaxis educational resources is essential to provide sustainability.**

### **Issue 2: Support is required for quality, evidence-based allergy and anaphylaxis education and training for all health professionals**

Medical education in the area of allergies and anaphylaxis, both undergraduate and postgraduate, has been inconsistent and inadequate in Australia. This has resulted in the majority of general practitioners, paediatricians, other medical specialists and other health professionals having inadequate training or experience in the management of allergic disease.

Inadequate training has a flow on effect to patient care, when advice given to patients may be incorrect, inappropriate, limited and at times dangerous. Even in 2019, most general paediatrician trainees will qualify with no exposure or training in allergic diseases and will therefore be ill equipped to manage children with allergies.

#### **Suggested solutions:**

- **Federal government funding support of ASCIA to develop minimum standards of allergy training for health professionals.**
- **Federal government endorsement of minimum standards of allergy training in the curriculum for all university medical schools and training of general practitioners, physicians and paediatricians.**
- **Federal government funding support of ASCIA to provide face-to-face training for upskilling of health professionals.**

**This pre-budget submission was developed by ASCIA, the peak professional body of clinical immunology and allergy specialists in Australia and New Zealand.**

**Submitted 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020**