



australasian society of clinical immunology and allergy

Pre-Budget Submission 2020-2021

Lodged 24 August 2020 by ASCIA, the peak professional body for clinical immunology/allergy in Australasia. Contact: Jill Smith, ASCIA CEO - email jill@allergy.org.au or phone 0425 216 402.

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this pre-budget submission is to support expansion and further development of allergy and anaphylaxis online resources, education and training provided by the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA). **ASCIA requests a total of \$1.8 million in funding (\$600,000 per year for three years 2020-2023), from the federal government in the 2020-2021 budget.**

This submission was originally lodged in January 2020. We note the subsequent publication of the **Report from the Inquiry into Allergies and Anaphylaxis in Australia**, conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee for Health, Aged Care and Sport, on 15 June 2020.

ASCIA welcomes the recommendations in the Report, including that ASCIA should receive ongoing, long-term funding to continue its work in delivering education and training. ASCIA looks forward to working closely with the Australian Government once decisions are made regarding implementation of the recommendations (see Appendix A). However, this pre-budget submission separately addresses the immediate need to support ongoing delivery of high quality education and training while the Inquiry recommendations are under consideration.

ASCIA online resources, education and training 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.

As we enter a new decade in 2020, significant changes are required to expand allergy and anaphylaxis online resources, 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.

In October 2019 ASCIA made a submission to the Inquiry into Allergies and Anaphylaxis in Australia, which highlighted the importance of quality education and training. This is also reflected in the recommendations from the Inquiry Report.

BUDGET SUMMARY

The total budget for three years (2021-2023) is \$1.8 million, based on the summary below.

The budget from 2024 onwards will depend on the need for further development and expansion.

COST ITEMS FOR YEAR 1 (2021)	ANNUAL COST
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
TOTAL COST FOR YEAR 1 (2021)	\$ 600,000

COST ITEMS FOR YEAR 2 (2022)	ANNUAL COST
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
TOTAL COST FOR YEAR 2 (2022)	\$ 600,000

COST ITEMS FOR YEAR 3 (2023)	ANNUAL COST
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
TOTAL COST FOR YEAR 3 (2023)	\$ 600,000

BENEFITS OF FUNDING ASCIA ONLINE ALLERGY AND ANAPHYLAXIS RESOURCES

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.

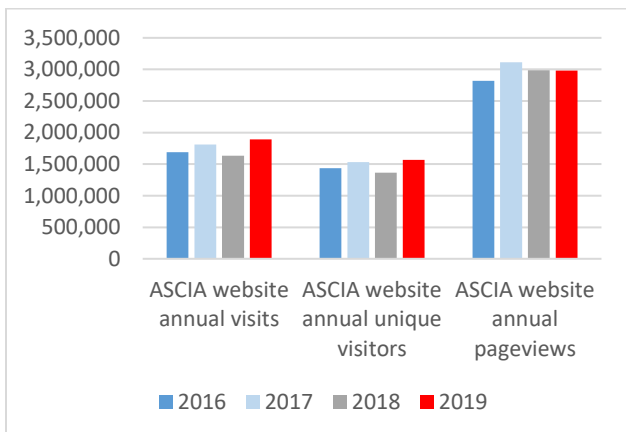


Figure 1: ASCIA website annual visits and views
 More than 80 educational resources were updated on the ASCIA website in 2019, which attracted over 1.8 million visits and approximately 3 million pageviews from 1st July 2018 to 30th June 2019.

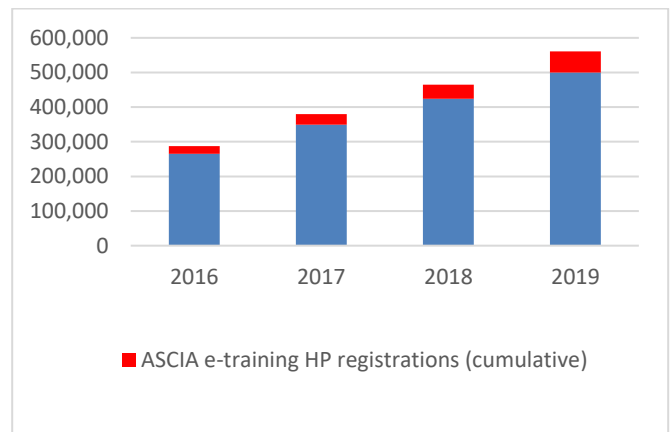


Figure 2: ASCIA e-training registrations
 ASCIA has provided world leading online training since 2010, with a cumulative total of more than 560,000 registrations to date, and over 100,000 registrations from 1st July 2018 to 30th June 2019.

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 EpiPen® shortages, due to ASCIA anaphylaxis online resources, education and training being kept up to date.

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 of 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 RESOURCES?

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).
- Improve interactive online learning to 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 DOESN'T RECEIVE FUNDING?

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 consider charging registration fees for online courses in 2021, 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.

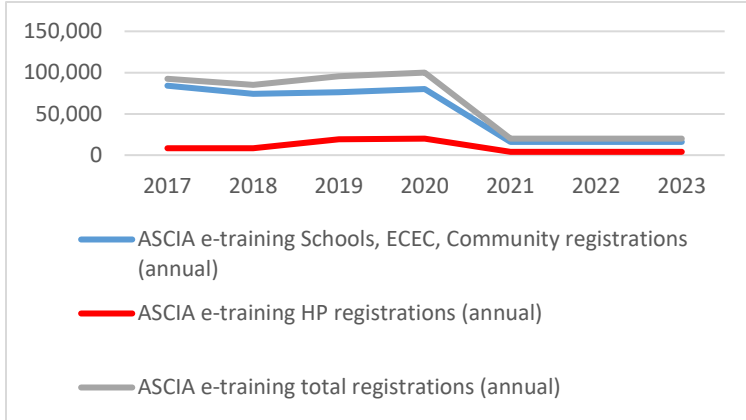


Figure 3: ASCIA e-training annual registrations

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 in 2021.

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: ASCIA CORRESPONDENCE WITH MINISTER FOR HEALTH

On 14 July 2020 ASCIA sent a letter and summary of ASCIA feedback on recommendations in the Allergies and Anaphylaxis Inquiry Report, to the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP.

These documents are on the ASCIA website www.allergy.org.au/ascia-reports#s1

 [ASCIA Letter re Feedback on Recommendations in the Allergies and Anaphylaxis Inquiry Report155.79 KB](#)

 [Feedback on Recommendations in the Report from the Allergies and Anaphylaxis Parliamentary Inquiry230.05 KB](#)

In response to this correspondence ASCIA received the following letter from the Minister for Health (Hon Greg Hunt MP) on 31 July 2020.

Dear Dr Wainstein



I refer to your letter of 19 June 2020 co-signed by Clinical Professor Michaela Lucas, Associate Professor Jane Peake, Dr Michael O'Sullivan and Ms Jill Smith concerning the release of the report on the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport (Committee) Inquiry into Allergies and Anaphylaxis (Inquiry).

I would like to thank the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) for its involvement with the Inquiry, including a written submission and attendance at multiple hearings. ASCIA members' generous contribution of their time, knowledge and expertise no doubt greatly helped the Committee understand the issues and form its recommendations.

I welcome the Committee's findings and will carefully consider its report prior to making any decisions on the recommendations. I appreciate ASCIA's offer of support to work with the Australian Government to implement the Inquiry's recommendations.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Greg Hunt

APPENDIX B: 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.

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

APPENDIX C: ABOUT ASCIA

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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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 D: ASCIA SUBMISSION ISSUES RELATING TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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 and lodged on 24 August 2020 by ASCIA, the peak professional body for clinical immunology/allergy in Australasia.