



\$50,000 food allergy campaign

THE Lane family was eating out at a pancake restaurant when their 11-month-old daughter Belle's face started to swell and turn a deep shade of red.

The family had specifically ordered egg-free hash browns, as Belle was still under 12 months old, but her reaction was fast and fierce.

"Basically, within minutes her face had swelled up into very swollen, very red rashes and she was clearly very distressed, crying inconsolably," her mother, Erica, said on Saturday.

Belle was rushed to the emergency department and diagnosed with an allergy to egg.

At the age of three, she was also found to be allergic to nuts

and sesame seeds.

Belle, now eight, still suffers from the allergies although she has escaped any further allergy-related emergencies.

But Ms Lane admits it has changed the family's life.

"Basically our life has been turned totally upside down."

The Victorian government yesterday committed \$50,000 to a test program involving several local councils, to educate hospitality staff about allergies and food handling.

If successful, the pilot will be rolled out across the state as a multilingual allergy and anaphylaxis education and awareness campaign.

Anaphylaxis is the most seri-

ous form of food allergy reaction and can be life threatening.

Announcing the funding, Victorian Health Minister Daniel Andrews said local government did most of the legwork in terms of food handling.

"We will support them to educate, to train, to raise a proper level of ongoing awareness of these matters with those who actually handle food," he said.

The charity set up by late Crazy John's mobile phone entrepreneur John Ilhan, Ilhan Food Allergy Foundation, yesterday released the results of a nationwide survey which found one third of households have a person who suffers from a food allergy.