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Food allergy test launched

THE Victorian Government has committed \$50,000 to a test program 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.

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, the Ilhan Food Allergy Foundation, set up by late Crazy John's mobile phone entrepreneur John Ilhan, yesterday

released the results of a nationwide survey that found one-third of households have a person who suffers from a food allergy.

The research, which surveyed 1386 people across Australia, found that about 29 per cent of households had at least one person with a food allergy.

The most common allergy was to cow's milk, with 8.3% of households surveyed having someone suffering this allergy, followed by peanuts, at 6.9%.

Most people had been diagnosed by a doctor, but a large proportion of people — 26.8% — had diagnosed themselves, the research showed.

Ten per cent of households with food allergies had used an auto-injector that contains an antidote to treat anaphylaxis.