



Bendigo Advertiser

19/11/2007

Page: 10

Editorials

Region: Bendigo VIC Circulation: 14582

Type: Regional

Size: 117.98 sq.cms

MTWTFSS-

The Advertiser Allergies are too deadly to be ignored

IN terms of children, health and allergies, one wonders whether our ancestors just handled things better, whether food was simpler, cleaner and greener, whether people didn't eat out as much or all of the above.

The incidence of allergies just doesn't seem to have figured much, or at all, in past documents or chronicles of history, and yet today, it is rare to find someone who is free of allergies.

Research conducted by the Ilhan Food Allergy Foundation — set up by the late John Ilhan of Crazy John fame — surveyed 1386 people throughout Australia and revealed 29 per cent of households had at least one person with a food allergy.

Hence, yesterday's funding commitment of \$50,000 by the State Government is to be applauded.

It will be used to establish a test program involving several councils aimed at educating hospitality staff about allergies and food handling.

If successful, the pilot will be rolled out across the state.

The horror stories about children dying after exposure to even the slightest amount of such foodstuffs as peanuts, seafood and eggs, are terrifying to say the least.

In many cases it has been a case of ignorance or inadequate training and while schools are ahead in terms of awareness and proactive measures to safeguard students, the hospitality sector has lagged.

While it may be a case of transient staff, inconvenience or ignorance of the consequences, respect for food allergies is something that can no longer be ignored or blithely dismissed in by those in hospitality and retail circles.