



# Asthma costs Australia almost \$28b every year, report finds

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**A report into the hidden costs of asthma in Australia has found the disease is costing the community almost \$28 billion per annum.**

Asthma is a chronic respiratory disease that affects approximately one in 10 Australians, or 2.4 million people

Commissioned by Asthma Australia and the National Asthma Council Australia, the report by Deloitte highlights the growing economic impact of the condition on the government, families and carers.

The report estimated the total cost of asthma in Australia in 2015 was \$27.9 billion, comprised of \$3.3 billion in economic costs and \$24.7 billion in "burden of disease" costs.

It defines "burden of disease" costs as those that flow from suffering and premature deaths experienced by people with asthma.

Such costs are calculated using a complex formula, developed by the World Health Organisation, the World Bank and Harvard University.

The \$3.3 billion in economic costs included annual health system costs of \$1.2 billion and productivity losses of \$1.1 billion.

Other financial costs included about \$246.4 million for government programs, formal care, and travel costs, and another \$635.9 million in other efficiency losses.

The report found that on average people with asthma were absent from work about two days per year more than non-sufferers.

It also estimated carers in Australia lost a total of \$72.9 million in wages in 2015.

## '\$11,740 per person with asthma'

Asthma Australia chief Mark Brooke said the condition had a "profound hidden cost on the community".

"The cost of asthma is substantial, substantially more than we have previously thought," he said.

"Asthma is estimated to cost Australia \$27.9 per annum or nearly \$11,740 per person with asthma."

He said the study was the first real attempt to define the indirect costs to the broader asthma community.

"We have long known that the economic effects of asthma go beyond the direct cost to government," he said.

"This report quantifies how asthma impacts more widely; on the community and throughout the lives of people with asthma and their carers."



**PHOTO:** Asthma is costing the community almost \$28 billion per annum, according to a new report. (ABC News)

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## What is asthma?



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