

Scores on Doors

Pro forma council report & resolution: Adoption of the Scores on Doors program



Department of
Primary Industries
Food Authority

We have developed a pro forma council report and resolution that you can use as a basis to gain approval from your council.

Council motions:

1. That council adopts the 'Scores on Doors' program for its food businesses to promote compliance with hygiene and food safety standards, promote consumer trust in food businesses and to further the reputation and economy of food businesses in the area.
2. That the initiative be included in council's service delivery and activity program.

Report

The role that food businesses play in the local community is becoming more important, as people's lives get busier and they source their food from outside their home. Food businesses also form an important part of the local economy creating economic activity, employment, bringing people into the area and retaining those who live and work in it by providing reliable meal options.

Council and the community benefit from the local food industry and rely on food premises and the part they play in the diverse local economy.

At the same time, consumer expectations are rising, in particular that:

- food premises have the highest levels of compliance with hygiene and food safety standards
- consumers are able to have access to official information so they can make their own decision about where they eat, and
- council activity such as food inspections are not only done, but are seen to be done.

Council's Environmental Health Officers already undertake food inspections to ensure compliance with hygiene and food safety requirements. Where necessary, they undertake compliance action. Food premises issued with on-the-spot Penalty Notices may appear on the NSW Food Authority's high profile Name & Shame register.

However, the opportunity exists for council to be proactive in providing transparency around the inspections as well as an additional incentive for businesses to maintain and increase their inspection results, thereby improving the quality of local food premises. To further support council's significant work in this area, council should also take part in the NSW Scores on Doors program.

Program details

Scores on Doors is the state-wide NSW program to display onsite the results of food premises inspections for hygiene and food safety. The program is focussed on retail food service businesses that process and sell food that is ready-to-eat, intended for immediate consumption, and potentially hazardous if not handled correctly and under the right conditions.

These are the higher risk premises that have the greatest potential to cause foodborne illness if food is not handled correctly.

These businesses include:

- restaurants
- pub bistros
- hotels
- cafés
- bakeries
- clubs, and
- takeaway outlets

Scores on Doors is not intended for:

- supermarkets
- delicatessens or greengrocers
- low risk food premises or businesses that serve pre-packaged food such as service stations and convenience stores
- temporary markets, mobile food vending vehicles, or
- businesses that hold a NSW Food Authority licence and are separately audited such as butchers.



The voluntary program was first piloted in 2010 and was then expanded to a trial in 2011-2012. Following feedback from councils and food industry stakeholders a few elements of the program have been enhanced to reduce perceived barriers to participation in the program (for example, the meaning of the ratings have been made clearer and businesses are no longer asked to sign a legal agreement to participate).

Importantly, the rating certificate and sticker that is displayed carries an explanation of what it represents, a warning about relying solely on the rating and a disclaimer from liability for the council for any acts by the food business or about the condition of the premises.

NSW Food Authority works with councils to provide marketing support and significantly increase the number of councils that have adopted the program. Given the number of food

businesses in the council, the Scores on Doors program would greatly assist promotion of the area as a food destination and reliable place to do business.

How would this work?

- Following council's existing routine inspections, eligible food premises would receive a hygiene and food safety rating based on points allocated under the Scores on Doors guidelines, akin to a demerit system; the standard Food Premises Assessment Report that council inspectors use promotes consistency in points allocation;
- NSW Food Authority provides the certificates and stickers free of charge to councils for each of the three ratings: Good, Very Good or Excellent; businesses assessed with critical breaches or too many lesser breaches are not awarded any grade or certificate/sticker;
- Certificates and stickers can be issued on the spot at the time of the inspection, or sent out shortly afterwards;
- The rating certificate would be displayed on the front window or near the entrance to the premises; and
- There need be no extra work for council staff as a result of participating in the program.

The motions are recommended because:

- the Scores on Doors program rewards food premises that do the right thing by their customers
- the program provides food premises throughout the area with a public incentive to raise standards
- they offer the potential that higher standards in food premises could mean fewer compliance issues requiring follow up and fewer consumer complaints, and
- most importantly, they will help provide our community with clean and healthy value-for-money food products and services, which positively showcase the council's many communities and culinary attractions.

For more information about Scores on Doors

Contact the NSW Food Authority on: 1300 552 406 or contact@foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/scoresondoors