

Summary report of NSW enforcement agencies' activities in the food retail and food service sector

Background

The retail food services sector includes supermarkets, cafes, restaurants, market stalls and food vans, and is a vital part of the NSW economy, accounting for over 50,000 food premises, with a value of \$29.4 billion¹ and employing 224,000 people².

The retail food services premises are inspected by authorised council officers. As of 1 July 2008 all 152 councils were appointed by the NSW Food Authority (the Authority) as enforcement agencies under the *NSW Food Act 2003* (the Act). Enforcement agencies are responsible for ensuring that these premises operate in compliance with the food safety standards, and if necessary can take enforcement action. Councils submit data about their food surveillance activity to the Authority.

This report is for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (FY 2013-14).

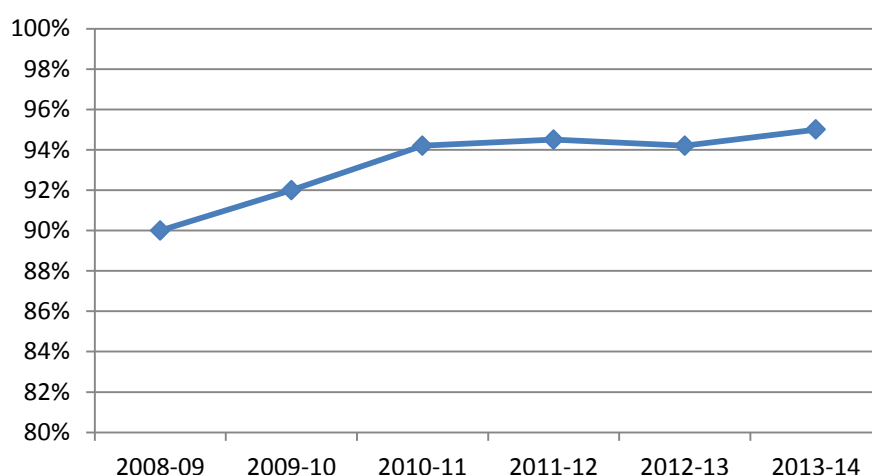
Surveillance in the retail food services sector

Compliance

Surveillance activity in the retail food services sector involved a total of 64,677 inspections by 461 authorised officers. Councils inspected 97% of all high and medium risk fixed food premises.

Compliance has increased since 2008 and remains steady at 95.6% as shown in Figure 1. Only 1,601 (4.4%) of premises inspected required ongoing intervention that involves two or more re-inspections.

Figure 1: Overall compliance rate of the retail food services sector.



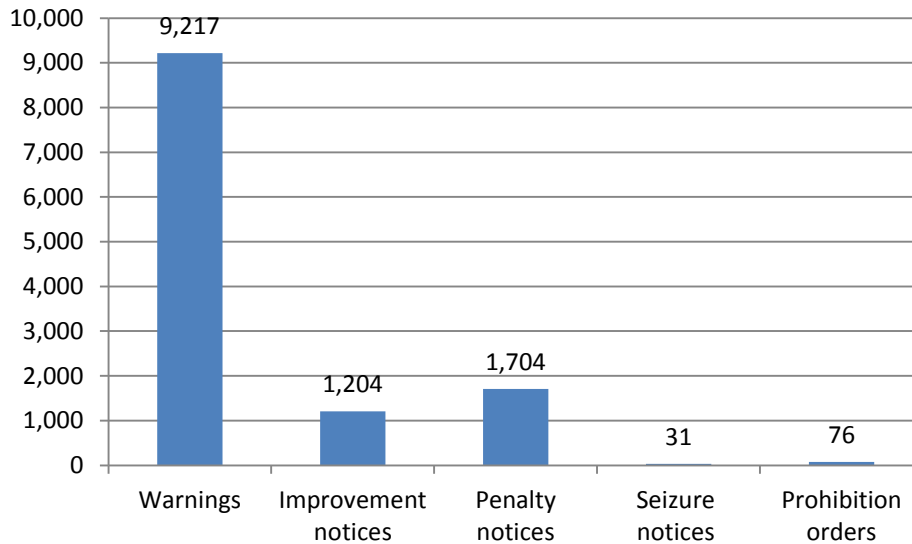
Enforcement

¹ Source: *NSW Trade and Investment 2009-10*

² Source: *Estimating the impacts of food regulation in NSW, Sept 2014, KPMG*

The type of enforcement action taken is dependent on the nature and severity of the food safety risks. An escalatory approach is used with warnings issued as a first step to encourage improvement in safe food handling processes. The types of enforcement issued during FY 2013-14 is shown in Figure 2.

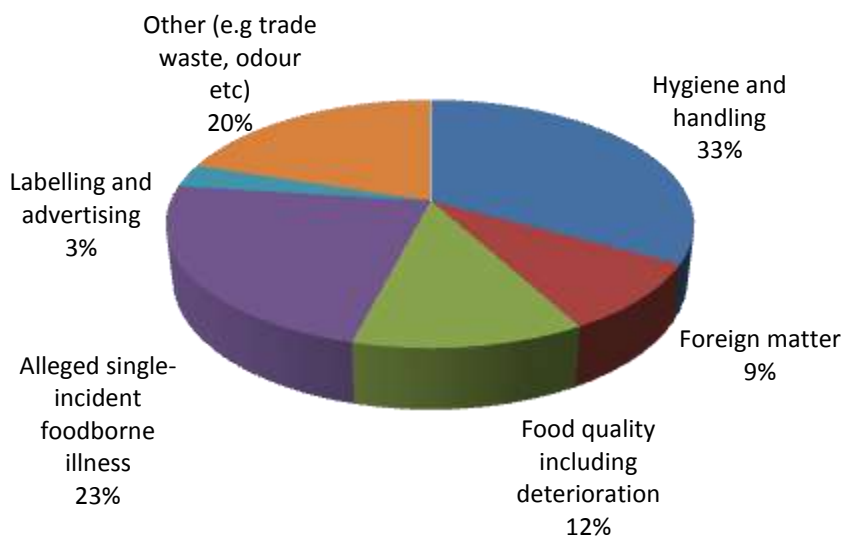
Figure 2: Types of enforcement action



Food complaints

Council is also responsible for investigating food related complaints in accordance with their own policy. A total of 1,574 complaints were investigated and the types of complaints are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Complaint types investigated



Working toward inspection consistency

There are 127 councils (83%) now using the Food Premises Inspection Report (FPAR) which enables standardised inspection across councils. Under the auspices of the Food Regulation Partnership (FRP) between the Authority and councils, the Authority provides ongoing training to authorised officers. This training in conjunction with the use of the FPAR has contributed to improved consistency in inspection of the 50,000 food premises throughout the 152 councils by 461 authorised officers.

Scores on Doors

The Scores on Doors program provides a score for cafes, restaurants and takeaway premises based on the results of their food safety inspection which targets food safety and hygiene standards. Currently 1,234 food premises participate in the program and display a star rating which highlights their food hygiene standards.

As part of Scores on Doors a business is assessed against a standardised food safety checklist and assigned a star rating reflecting their performance where 5 stars is excellent, 4 stars is very good and 3 stars is good. The result is then displayed prominently in the business premises, usually on the front door or window, enabling consumers to make an informed choice about where they eat and they have the assurance the food is safe.