



Food
Authority

Evaluation of the Food Regulation Partnership

Survey of council Environmental Health Officers
and General Managers in NSW

June 2012

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About this document

This document reports the findings of the NSW Food Authority's (the Authority) *Survey of Council Environmental Health Officers and General Managers in NSW*.

The survey is one of two studies that the Authority undertook to inform its evaluation of the Food Regulation Partnership *Evaluation of the Food Regulation Partnership – Summary Report* (NSW Food Authority, 2012). The other was the *Survey of Multi-outlet Retail Food Businesses* (Social Research Centre, 2012).

If you have any questions about this document, please contact the NSW Food Authority Consumer and Industry Helpline on 1300 552 406 or contact@foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

Acknowledgement

The NSW Food Authority would like to thank Environmental Health Officers from 135 local councils and General Managers from 26 local councils that participated in the online survey.

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Executive summary

Overview

In November 2011, the NSW Food Authority (the Authority) conducted a *Survey of Council Environmental Health Officers and General Managers in NSW* using an online questionnaire system. The survey consisted of two separate questionnaires; one for General Managers and one for gathering collective responses from Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) representing each council. All councils (n=152) in NSW were invited to participate in the survey. A total of 26 (17%) responses were obtained from General Managers and, on average, 121 (78%) council responses were received on most questions in the EHO questionnaire.

The *Survey of Council Environmental Health Officers and General Managers in NSW* was one of five projects the Authority undertook as part of its evaluation of the Food Regulation Partnership (the Partnership) program in NSW. The survey was designed to gather information that was relevant to three intermediate level outcomes of the Partnership Program Logic Model:

- Improved consistency of councils' food surveillance activities (Outcome 6)
- Authority has improved capacity to implement state-based food regulatory initiatives (Outcome 7)
- Retail food businesses experience more efficient/effective food safety surveillance by councils (Outcome 9)¹

General findings

The 2011 Survey of Council Environmental Health Officers and General Managers in NSW found that:

- councils regard the Authority's Local Government Unit (LGU) as a valuable resource. Positive feedback was received regarding LGU's quality of service and materials, however, feedback was received indicating that improvements in some areas are needed, eg the web portal.
- about 70% of councils have implemented enforcement policies entirely, or at least partially, based on the national enforcement policy and more than half of all councils indicated they were using the standard food inspection tool (Food Premises Assessment Report, FPAR) currently under trial.
- about three-quarters of council respondents thought that duplication between the Authority and councils occurred rarely. More than half of them also considered that the level of duplication has decreased since 2007.
- almost all respondents perceived that there was at least some level of cooperation between the Authority and councils, with more than 80% rating cooperation levels as strong. Around three-quarters indicated that cooperation had increased since 2007.
- about three-quarters of respondents regarded the Regional Food Group network as very effective in improving communication between councils in their region. However, a very small number of councils (about 4% of council EHOs) believed the network was ineffective due to resource constraints.
- most respondents agreed there was some consistency in food inspection across councils. However, the perceived level of consistency was different for council EHOs and General Managers. About 40% of EHOs perceived regulatory food inspection experienced by NSW retail food service businesses as quite consistent, compared to almost three-quarters of General Managers. In addition, about three-quarters of EHOs and 95% of General Managers thought consistency has improved since 2007.
- a high proportion (90%) of EHOs and General Managers indicated they thought that food safety compliance in retail businesses had improved since 2007. The remainder thought that it had stayed the same.

Conclusion

Overall, councils in NSW are supportive of the Partnership and the LGU, having experienced the benefits of the Partnership in their day-to-day activities.

In general, it is the opinion of participating councils that the Partnership has been effective in making retail food in NSW safer. Survey results also highlighted areas that need fine-tuning so the Partnership is sustainable in the long term.

The survey of Council Environmental Health Officers and General Managers in NSW

Survey objectives

In 2011, the NSW Food Authority (the Authority) conducted a comprehensive evaluation of its Food Regulation Partnership (the Partnership) program. The *Survey of Council Environmental Health Officers and General Managers in NSW* is one of five projects the Authority undertook as part of the evaluation. This survey was designed to gather information that was relevant to three intermediate level outcomes of the Partnership Program Logic Model:

- Improved consistency of the council's food surveillance activities (Outcome 6)
- Authority has improved capacity to implement state-based food regulatory initiatives (Outcome 7)
- Retail food businesses experience more efficient/effective food safety surveillance by councils (Outcome 9)¹

Survey design and data collection

The Authority conducted the two concurrent surveys in November 2011 using an online questionnaire system—Survey Monkey™. Two separate questionnaires were issued: one for General Managers and one for gathering a collective EHOs response from each council. When developing the questionnaires, two councils provided feedback on the pilot version of the survey. This resulted in redrafting some questions and the decision to limit the number of questions for General Managers.

In total, 154 councils were invited to participate in the survey and each council was asked to limit their EHOs response to one per council. Almost 20% of General Managers responded and 151 (98%) responses were received from council EHOs. Closer analysis revealed that, on average, 121 councils provided responses to most questions with less than 10% of councils providing more than one response. For each council's collective EHO response, at least one EHO indicated they had worked in food surveillance for more than four years.

Appendix 1 and 2 list the breakdown of council participants based on their regional location and the number of medium/high risk businesses present in each council area.

Data obtained from the questionnaire was analysed using the online database – Survey Monkey™.

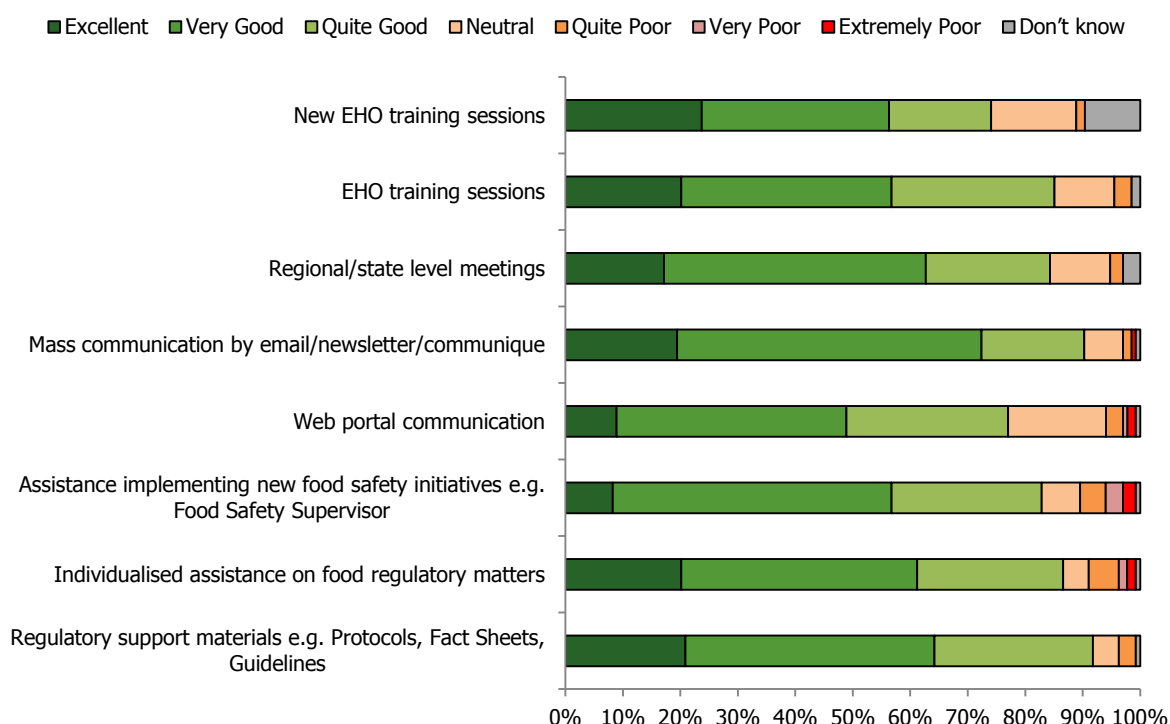
¹ Anon. (2012) *Evaluation of the Food Regulation Partnership – Summary Report*, NSW Food Authority. Available at: www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

Positive feedback on Local Government Unit services and materials

It has been four years since the Partnership was implemented. In order to help with the implementation process, the Authority established a resourced, dedicated internal team (Local Government Unit or LGU) in 2008. The LGU is responsible for the ongoing administration of the program and providing education, support and training for EHOs.

In the survey, EHOs were asked to rate the quality of LGU's services and materials and, on average, 84% of EHOs found them to be quite good to excellent (Figure 1). Additionally, in total, 90% (113/125) of EHOs and 95% (20/21) of General Managers thought the services and materials provided by the LGU were effective in supporting the council's food surveillance responsibilities.

Figure 1. Quality of LGU services and materials



As seen in Figure 1, the quality of the web portal service received the lowest rating compared to the other services and materials provided by the LGU. Comments by EHOs included the portal speed is too slow, login details expire too quickly, information is difficult to locate and the portal is hard to navigate.

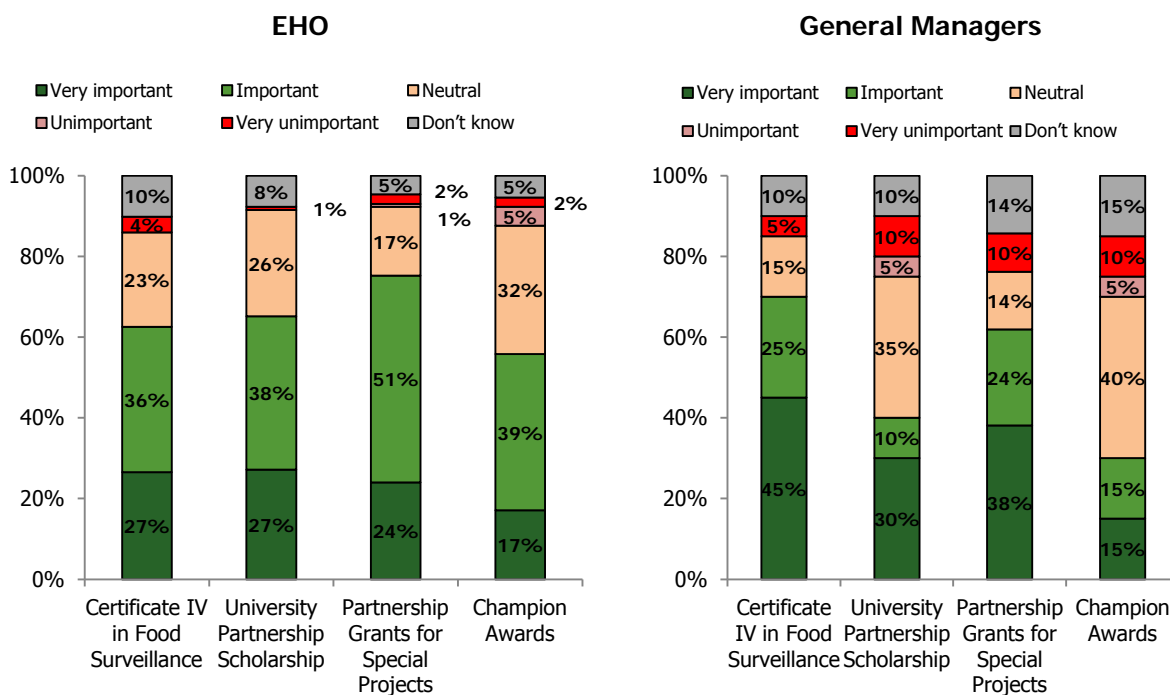
Overwhelmingly, survey responses were positive about the services provided by the LGU. However, there were a number of comments that the LGU is under-resourced and the LGU response time for complaints is too long. A few comments related to the effectiveness of mass emails sent by the LGU; that EHOs commonly receive a large number of emails, making it hard to identify important emails about food surveillance from the LGU. Also, in the opinion of some councils, LGU communication with retail businesses is indirect and too slow.

EHOs provided a number of suggestions on ways to improve food safety compliance materials prepared for retail food businesses. These included:

- developing materials centrally (by the LGU) in consultation with councils
- allowing councils to co-brand the materials
- more translated materials
- food safety information on cross contamination, storage temperature, home-based businesses, temporary events, semi-permanent food businesses and shelf life for frozen foods.

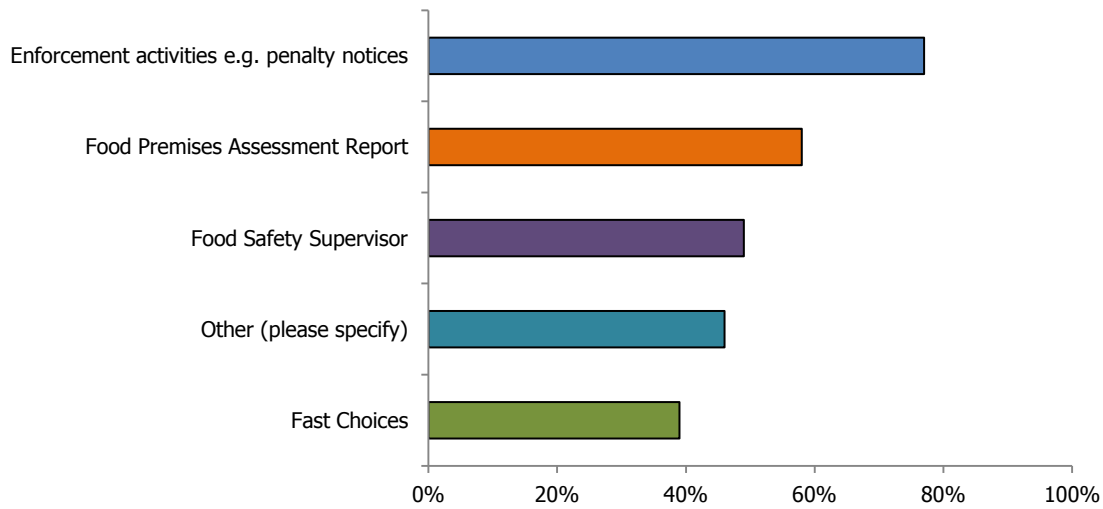
The survey also asked EHOs and General Managers to rate the importance of the Partnership’s additional support programs in encouraging excellence in food surveillance. Both groups rated *Partnership Grants for Special Projects* as highly important. On the other hand, 70% (14/20) of General Managers rated the *Certificate IV in Food Surveillance* as important/very important, while slightly fewer EHOs (63%, 80/128) perceived that as important/very important (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Importance ratings for additional support programs



Council EHOs also indicated their preferences for possible LGU training topics for 2012–13 (Figure 3). Most commonly, councils expressed an interest in receiving training on enforcement activities such as penalty notices and seizures, followed by Food Premises Assessment Report (FPAR). Other topics of interest included food sampling, foodborne illness investigation, labelling assessment, handling of ready-to-eat foods, and temperature control (2-hour/4-hour rule). Additionally, a number of councils indicated the need for more training sessions, especially in regional areas.

Figure 3. Preferred training topics for 2012–13



High levels of alignment with Partnership protocols and guidelines

In the survey, EHOs indicated the levels of alignment between Partnership protocols/guidelines and procedures/practices at their council. In general, about 65% (78/121) of respondents stated that procedures/practices at their council ranged from very to extremely aligned with Partnership protocols/guidelines. Two exceptions included 'Laboratory food sample submissions' and 'Resource assistance in unforeseen circumstances' (Figure 4 and Figure 5). However, it should be noted that these protocols are rarely used by councils.

Figure 4. Level of alignment with Partnership protocols

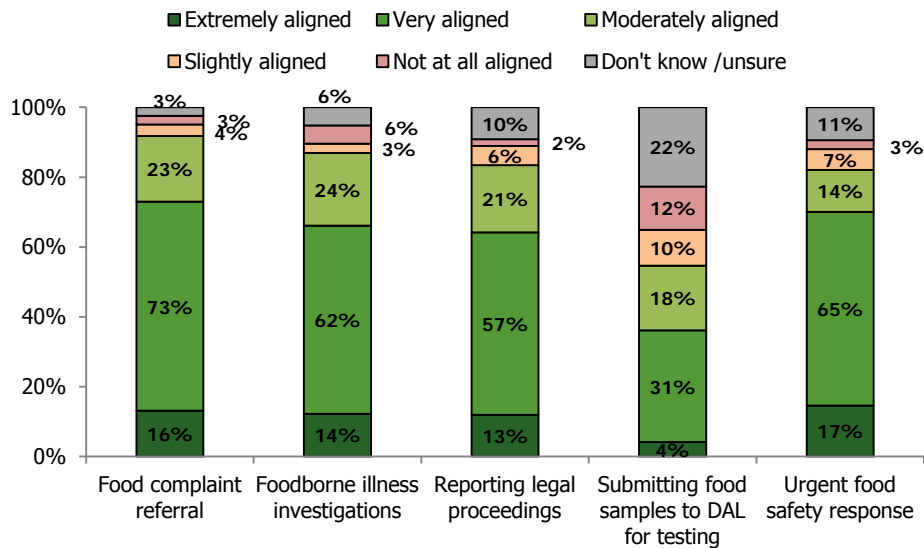
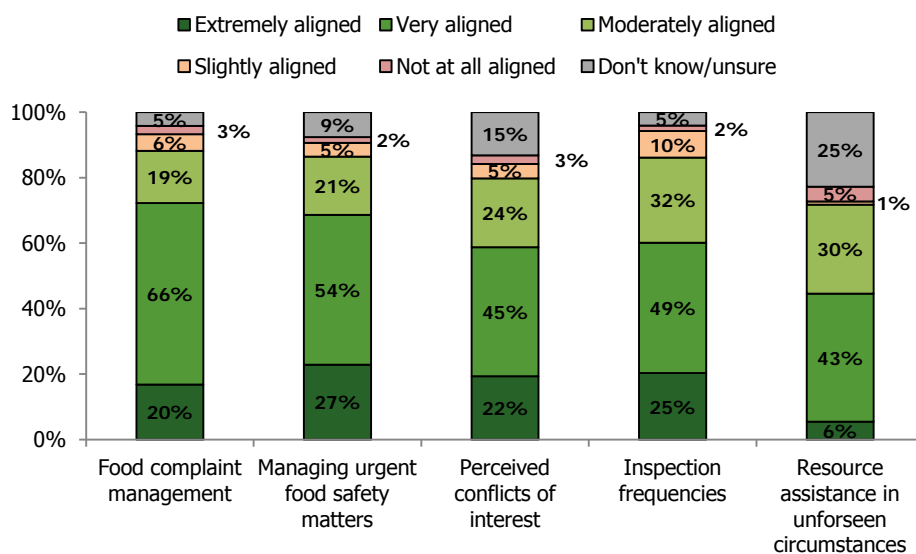


Figure 5. Level of alignment with Partnership advisory guidelines and practices



Encouraging comments from council EHOs were received on the quality of protocols and guidelines produced by the LGU. One council stated 'Protocols provided by the Authority are of a very high standard and council has readily adopted these procedures and practices into our own systems'.

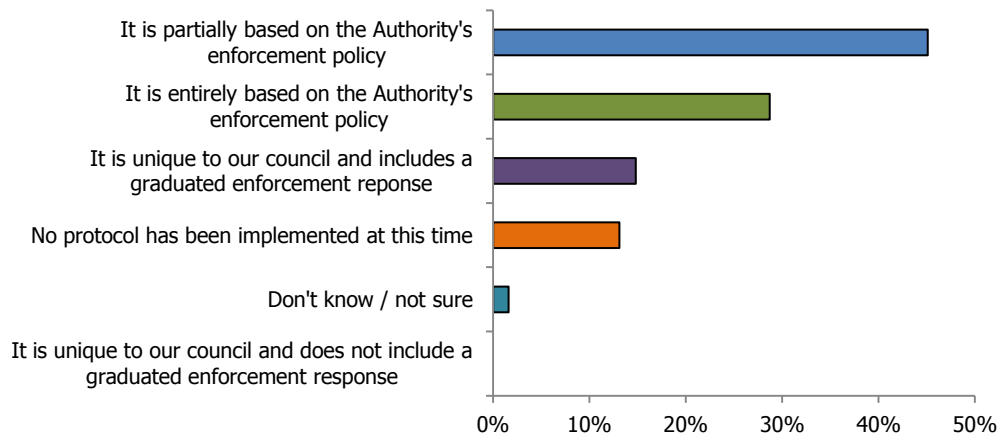
However, in the opinion of a number of EHOs, more training and more refined protocols were needed especially in relation to investigating foodborne illness cases. The survey also revealed that a number of councils had no need to implement protocols and procedures for submitting food samples to DAL for testing as they did not regularly send sample to the laboratory.

A number of councils provided feedback that, despite the existence of helpful advisory guidelines, they were constrained by resources which, in turn, affected their ability to undertake inspection frequencies in accordance with the Partnership guidelines. Understandably, a number of councils were also unsure about their level of alignment with the Partnership practices for 'Resource assistance in unforeseen circumstances'.

Nationally-based enforcement protocols implemented in 70% of councils

EHOs were asked to describe their council's compliance and enforcement protocol for food inspection. Survey results indicated that there was some variation across councils as to the basis/origin of their protocol. Almost half (55/126) of the respondents indicated that their protocol was *partially* based on the national protocol (the one adopted and endorsed by the Authority). Fewer (almost 30%, 29/126) said it was *entirely* based on the national policy and 15% (18/126) said that their protocol was unique to their council and it included a graduated enforcement response (Figure 6). Sixteen councils indicated that no protocol had been implemented at this time.

Figure 6. Origins of compliance and enforcement protocol for food inspection

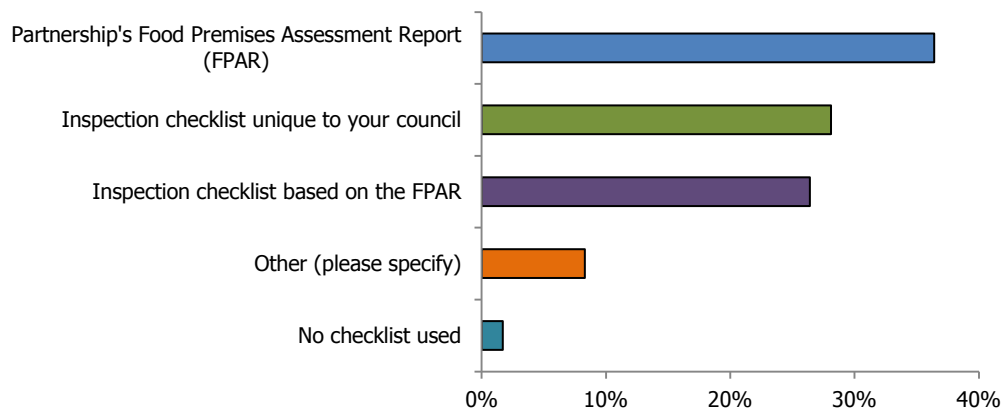


When asked about the availability of the compliance and enforcement protocol for food inspection, about 40% (47/117) of councils stated it was publicly available as compared with 30% (36/117) stating their protocol had not been publicly released. The survey showed that just over 10% (15/117) had not implemented a written protocol at this time.

The survey also found that close to one-half of councils (85/152) indicated they used an inspection checklist based on the agreed food inspection tool (FPAR).

The survey also revealed that at least four different categories of inspection tools were in use in NSW councils in 2011. One-quarter (26%, 31/121) of councils indicated they use an inspection checklist based on the FPAR, another 28% (34/121) said their checklist is unique to their council and a further 8% (10/121) stated they used another type all together such as the Environmental Health Australia checklist (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Type of inspection reporting by councils



Low levels of regulatory duplication

EHOs and General Managers were asked about the level of duplication, if any, they thought exists between the Authority and councils. Figure 8 shows that about one-quarter (29/113) of EHOs thought that duplication occurred at least occasionally. A similar level of duplication was also noted by General Managers who thought that duplication occurred at least occasionally (21%, 4/19).

There has also been some change in the perceived level of duplication between the Authority and councils since 2007. About half (63/115) of the EHOs and half (10/18) of the General Managers indicated there was a little less or a lot less duplication now compared to four years ago, before the introduction of the Partnership. About 13% (15/115) of EHOs and 6% (1/18) of General Managers thought there was about the same level of duplication since 2007 and only 4% (5/115) of EHOs thought there was a little more or a lot more duplication (Figure 9).

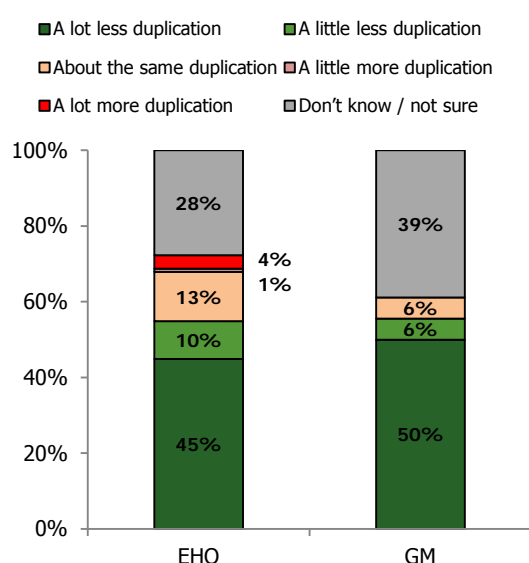
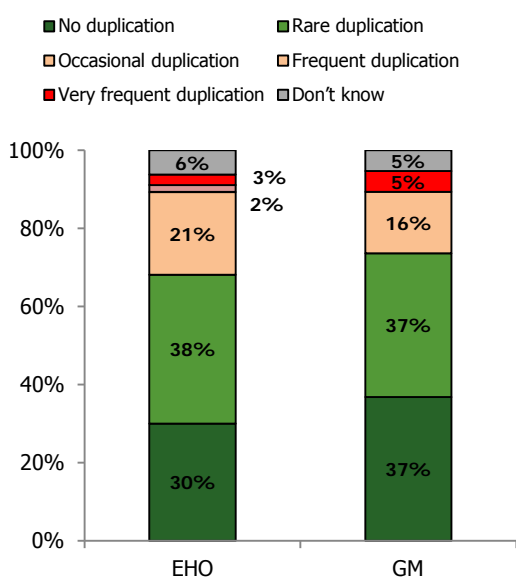
It has become clear that under the Partnership, duplication (two regulatory agencies performing the same food compliance roles on the process within a food business) may no longer be an issue. However, there appears to be a number of outstanding business examples where a form of regulatory overlap still occurs. Council EHOs provided a number of examples where state and local agencies visited the same food business, albeit for different purposes. These included:

- hospital sites with retail shops
- wholesale and retail premises such as a raw chicken shop selling ready-to-eat chicken and fish products
- oysters (retailers/shuckers)
- supermarkets with licensed butcher shops (boning rooms)

A number of councils requested the Authority to address these remaining areas of regulatory overlap. Some respondents suggested that if businesses are licensed under the Food Regulation 2010, then the Authority should deal with the business entirely. Others suggested that councils should take full responsibility for all retail premises with no exceptions.

Figure 8. Level of duplication between the Authority and councils

Figure 9. Change in level of duplication between the Authority and councils since 2007



Level of cooperation between the Authority and councils

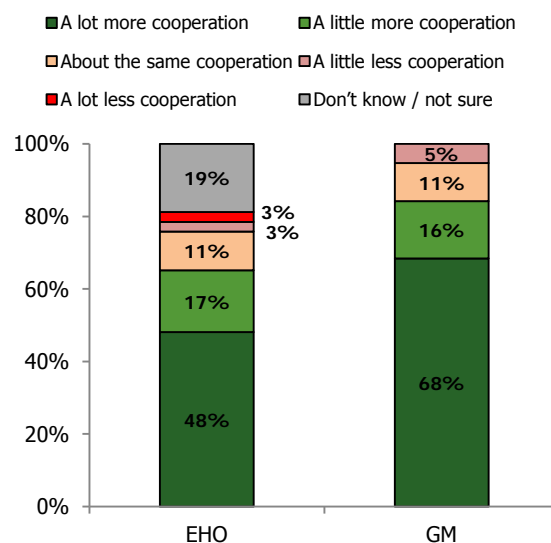
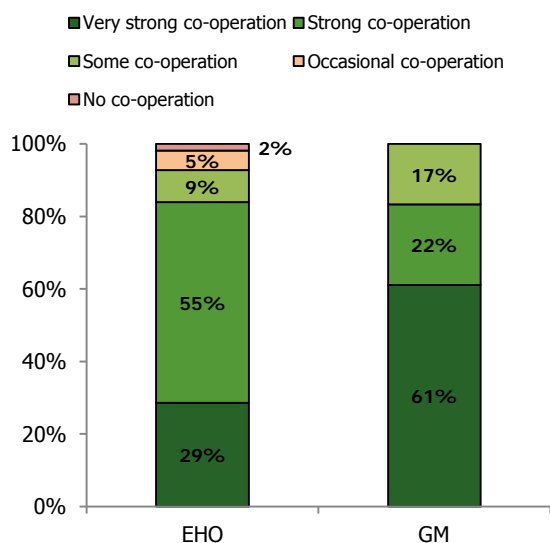
Figure 10 shows the level of cooperation that EHOs and General Managers believe exists between the Authority and councils regarding food regulation. It can be seen that 84% (94/112) of EHOs perceived strong levels of cooperation between regulatory agencies and a further 9% (10/112) perceived some cooperation. General Managers also perceived similar levels of cooperation, with 83% (15/18) indicating they thought cooperation between the two agencies was at least strong.

When EHOs and General Managers were asked about the change in level in cooperation between the Authority and councils since 2007, around half of the EHOs (48%, 54/112) and 68% (13/18) of General Managers thought there was a lot more cooperation. About one-fifth of respondents perceived a little more cooperation. The rest of respondents saw no change or a little less cooperation.

Open-ended comments provided by respondents referenced the Partnership in improving communication and cooperation between councils and the Authority. Specific examples such as the state group meetings, training and the web portal were included. Only a small number of EHOs (3%, 3/112) thought they experienced a lot less cooperation with the Authority. Apparently, this was not a criticism of the Partnership itself but more a comment about changing circumstances and severe financial constraints on food businesses, councils and programs (Figure 11).

Figure 10. Level of cooperation between the Authority and councils

Figure 11. Change in level of cooperation between the Authority and councils since 2007



Councils were also asked their opinion about the helpfulness of the Partnership in improving their food regulatory services (eg inspection, training). Just over 60% (69/112) of councils thought the Partnership was very helpful, with a further quarter (27/112) perceiving it to be quite helpful. A number of positive comments were received regarding the quality of training sessions held by the LGU, as well as the provision of inspection materials in different languages.

However, in the opinion of two councils (2/112), the Partnership was regarded as quite unhelpful or extremely unhelpful. One council stated that because it did not have enough resources to attend training, they therefore did not see it as helpful. The other council indicated that its dealings with the Authority were limited and therefore it viewed the Partnership as unhelpful.

Effective communication networks established via Regional Food Groups

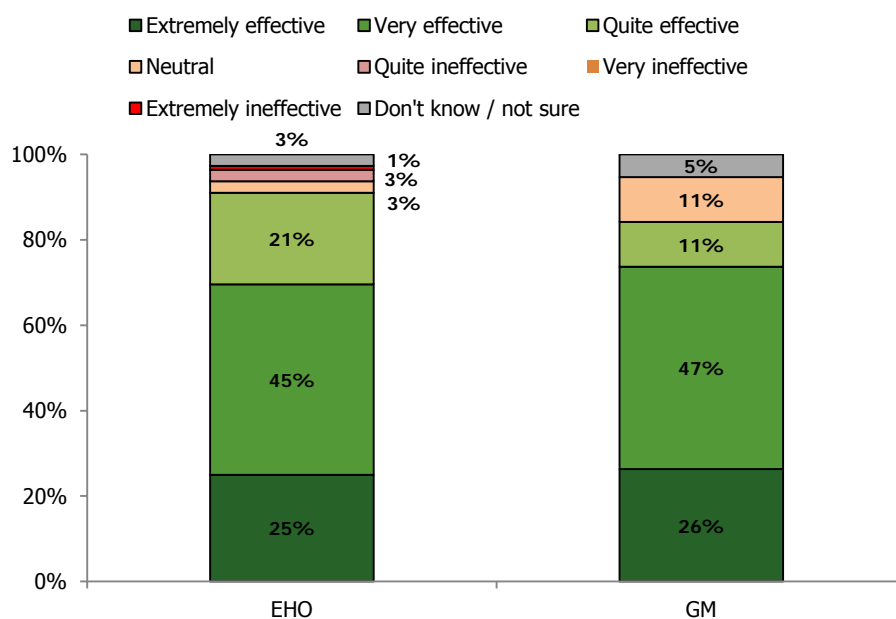
Figure 12 shows that about three-quarters of EHOs (70%, 78/112) and General Managers (73%, 14/19) regarded the Regional Food Group network as very effective in improving communication between councils in the area. A further 21% (24/112) of EHOs and 11% (2/112) of General Managers rated it as quite effective.

For some councils, the Regional Food Group was regarded as one of the most essential forms of communication between councils and the Authority. Some groups indicated they met more regularly than three times a year to work on special projects. In addition, one council stated that the Regional Food Group in their area also used the network to communicate on issues other than food safety.

A small number of EHOs (4/112) believed the network was quite ineffective or extremely ineffective. The reasons provided included:

- lack of participation in the network due to resource constraints
- long distances between councils in certain region which made it impossible to meet
- it had become ineffective because councils had stopped attending

Figure 12. Effectiveness of Regional Food Group network



Councils perceived improvements in food inspection consistency since 2007

Figure 13 shows that council EHOs and General Managers had slightly different views on levels of food inspection consistency experienced by retail food businesses across councils. This was not unexpected given that EHOs are at the 'coal face' conducting the food inspections.

In the opinion of about 40% (43/110) of EHOs, food businesses in NSW experience quite consistent food inspections across councils. In comparison, almost double (14/19) the number of General Managers believed this was the case. Furthermore, only 5% of General Managers thought businesses experience some levels of inconsistency compared with 15% of EHOs that rated consistency levels as between some levels of inconsistency and very inconsistent. Again, this difference is most likely due to EHOs having a closer relationship with businesses as they conduct routine food inspections. They also communicate more broadly with other EHOs via the Regional Food Group meeting.

EHOs offered possible reasons for businesses experiencing inconsistent food inspection across councils. These included:

- in terms of enforcement action, some councils routinely issue penalty improvement notices (PINs) whereas other councils only occasionally issue PINs as a last resort
- every EHO interprets the Food Standards Code differently; often EHOs look at things differently with a different level of focus
- there are different fee structures amongst councils

Many EHOs believed that, to some extent, inconsistent food surveillance by EHOs can be resolved by training new EHOs and using the standardised inspection form (FPAR).

In the view of council EHOs and General Managers, the level of consistency experienced by retail food businesses has improved since the introduction of the Partnership (Figure 14). In the opinion of about three-quarters of EHOs (74%, 83/112) and 95% (18/19) of General Managers, consistency has improved, at least a little, since 2007.

Figure 13. Overall consistency in regulatory food inspection

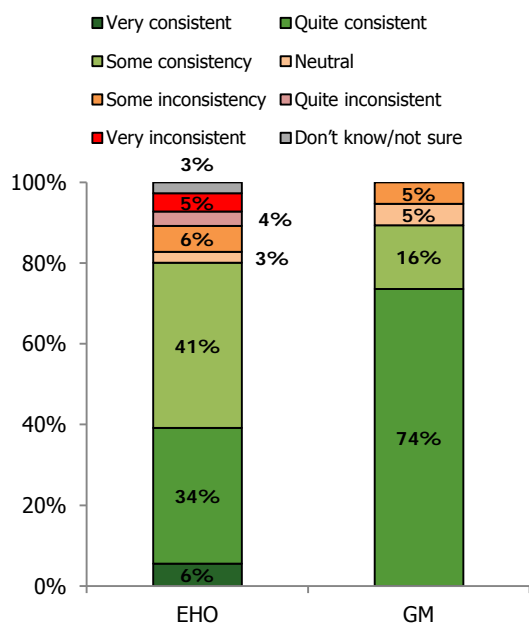
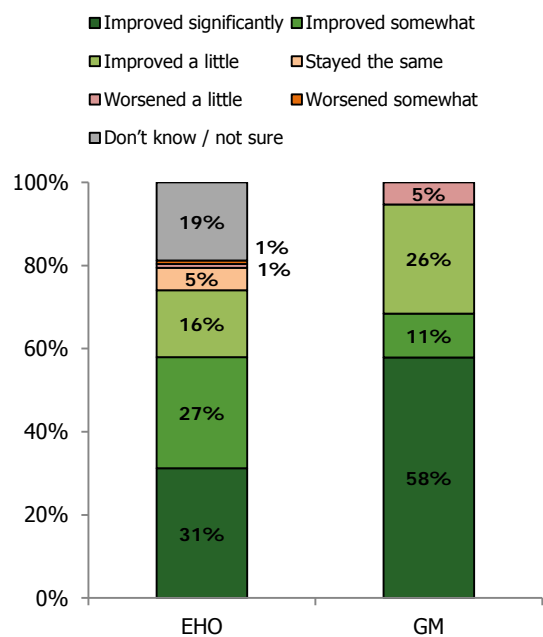


Figure 14. Change in the level of consistency since 2007



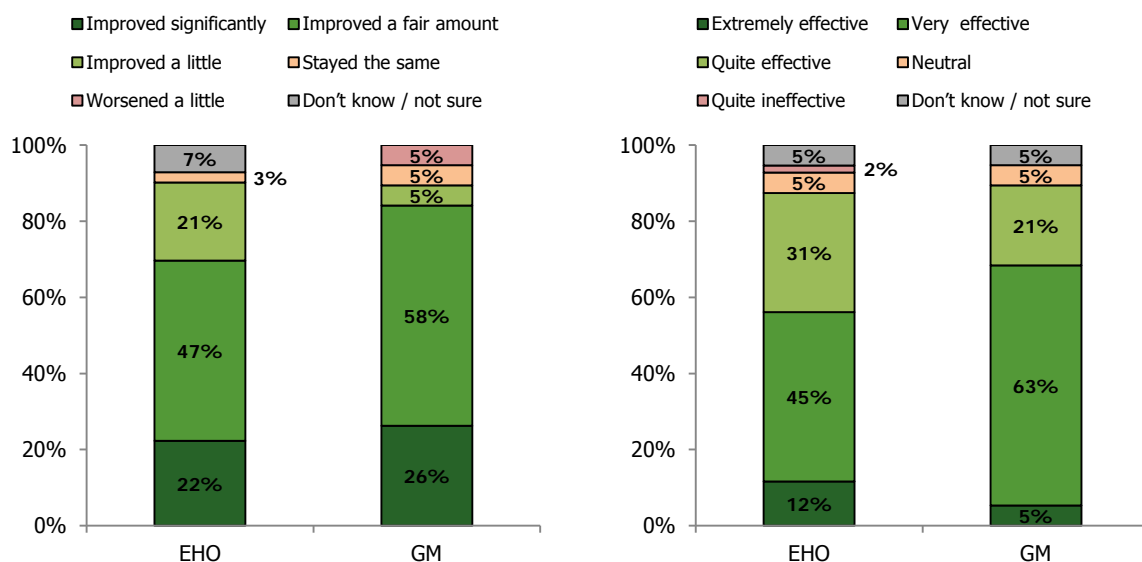
Perceived improvements in food safety compliance for retail food service businesses

Figure 15 illustrates that 90% of both EHOs (101/112) and General Managers (17/19) believed that retail food service businesses have improved their food safety compliance, at least a little, since 2007. The remaining 10% thought compliance levels had stayed the same. One General Manager believed compliance levels had worsened because council EHOs must now perform a multitude of non-food related tasks, therefore spending less time on food inspections.

At least half of EHOs (63/112) and General Managers (13/19) thought the Partnership had been very effective in making retail food in NSW safer. A further 31% (35/112) of EHOs and 21% (4/19) of General Managers rated the Partnership as quite effective. There were a number of comments received from EHOs on this issue and, in conclusion, EHOs indicated that until reliable accurate foodborne illness data is available (without significant omissions or duplication) we will not know whether food is getting any safer.

Figure 15. Retail food business compliance since 2007

Figure 16. Overall effectiveness of the Partnership in making retail food safer



Main food surveillance issues currently facing councils in NSW

Overall, 89 councils offered information on the main food surveillance issues they were facing². The top three, ranked in descending order of frequency, were:

1. resourcing their food inspection program, including recruiting qualified EHOs (31 responses)
2. managing retail food business compliance (or lack of compliance) with the general food safety requirements including cross contamination, temperature control and general hygiene (20 responses)
3. upholding consistent inspection and enforcement practices (9 responses)

Others included business compliance with the Food Safety Supervisor program and the lack of food safety skills and knowledge of business owners (10 responses), new businesses/ language and cultural issues (5 responses) and regulating home-based/temporary premises businesses. There is an increasing trend towards this type of food businesses.

² Based on EHO comments only. Similar comments were received from General Managers.

Councils' number one priority is to educate food businesses on food safety compliance

In order of decreasing frequency, 85 councils offered their opinion on priorities for encouraging food safety compliance in retail food businesses over the next five years². The top three responses are:

1. educating food businesses on food safety compliance (21 responses)
2. maintaining council's current inspection program (in term of frequency) (21 responses)
3. improving compliance with the Food Safety Supervisor requirements (13 responses)

Others included improving inspection consistency, eg by implementing the FPAR, managing/overcoming cultural differences and language barriers, enforcing compliance with basic food safety requirements (temperature control, cross contamination, storage and hand hygiene), checking building compliance and implementing public disclosure systems such as Scores on Doors.

For EHOs, the Partnership's top priority is to maintain LGU service levels

Eighty-four councils provided their views on what they considered to be the priorities for the Partnership over the next five years². The top three most frequently mentioned responses are in declining order:

1. maintain current levels of education/communication/support/materials and helpline services for EHOs (32 responses)
2. continue training EHOs (19 responses)
3. continue to work on promoting food regulatory consistency between councils (12 responses)

Other Partnership priorities were noted as: continuing to promote food safety in NSW to consumers, continuing to promote the EHO profession (by encouraging EHOs to obtain their *Certificate IV in Food Surveillance*), reviewing fee structure procedures, not implementing any new initiatives, simplifying/improving the enforcement activities reporting process in order to use it to manage council performance across NSW, simplifying the Food Safety Supervisor requirements and fixing issues with the Authority's Food Business Notification Database.

Other comments

A number of positive comments were received from councils:

"The current Partnership between councils and the Authority is the most positive and productive change in regulating food premises in NSW in the history of food regulation."

"We would like to thank the Partnership for all the assistance in the past and look forward to strengthening relationships even further. A special thanks to the Partnership for holding their annual meeting this year in a regional area."

"The Partnership has raised the profile of food safety within council and is a major improvement on the situation that existed more than five years ago."

"The Partnership between the City of Sydney and the Authority has been an extremely successful venture. Relationships formed have been invaluable and staff here is very positive about the continuation of the Partnership well into the future."

"It is a shame there is not a similar level of involvement from other state agencies in regulating legislation. The Partnership has been a fantastic result and can only be described as positive for everyone."

However, this cautionary comment summarises a theme that was expressed in a number of responses:

"The Partnership, while a good initiative, is sometimes lacking in its own charter of actually being in and of itself a 'Partnership'. There are times when councils have been directed to carry out activities rather than requested. At its inception and road show the Partnership's flagship were communication and a two-way approach to discussing issues pertaining to councils. It seems that in a few short years the NSW Food Authority has taken on the mantle of directorship rather than mentorship. Those being said, at the local level we want the NSW Food Authority to work WITH, consult and communicate with appointed enforcement agencies when it comes to policy making and amendments to legislation and regulations."

Comparing EHO and General Manager survey findings

Views from General Managers and EHOs have been summarised below.

In general, General Managers of councils view the Partnership and its impact more favourably than EHOs. This is probably attributed to the fact that General Managers experience less day-to-day interaction with the Partnership program compared with EHOs who operate daily at the 'coal face'. A summary of high level findings includes:

- General Managers view LGU services slightly more favourably compared with EHOs
- *Certificate IV in Food Surveillance* is very important to more General Managers compared with EHOs
- Both General Managers and EHOs hold similar views on how helpful the Partnership has been in improving the effectiveness of food regulatory services provided by councils
- Very similar views from EHOs and General Managers on the effectiveness of the Regional Food Group Network
- Compared with EHOs, General Managers have a more positive view of the levels of food inspection consistency they think retailers experience in NSW
- EHOs are much more conservative in their estimates of how consistency has improved over the last four years
- The levels of perceived effectiveness of the Partnership in making food safer are higher for General Managers compared with EHOs.

More details on responses to relevant questions are listed in the table in Appendix 3.

Conclusion

Overall, it can be concluded that councils in NSW were supportive of the Partnership and the LGU having experienced the benefits of the Partnership in their day-to-day activities.

In general, it is the opinion of councils that the Partnership has been effective in making retail food in NSW safer. Survey results have also highlighted areas that need fine-tuning so the Partnership is sustainable in the long term.

Appendix 1. Participating councils based on their regional location

Region	Number of councils in the region	Number of responses received for EHO questionnaire ³	Number of responses received for GM questionnaire
Central Sydney	8	10	1
Central West	13	12	6
Far West	3	4	1
Hunter	14	13	1
Illawarra	4	3	3
Mid North Coast	5	7	1
Murray	13	5	1
Murrumbidgee	14	12	3
Northern Region	12	6	0
Northern Rivers	8	7	0
Northern Sydney	11	13	3
North West	11	7	2
South East	14	10	3
South Eastern Sydney	8	8	0
South Western Sydney	7	3	0
Western Sydney	8	13	1
Unknown	-	2	0
Total	153⁴	135	26

Appendix 2. Number of medium/high risk businesses in participating councils

Number of medium/high risk businesses	Number of responses received for EHO questionnaire	Number of responses received for GM questionnaire
50 or less	20	7
100 or less	20	7
200 or less	18	2
300 or less	24	3
400 or less	19	0
500 or less	5	1
More than 500	27	6
Not sure	2	0
Total	135	26

³ A total of 151 responses were received. Sixteen of them were excluded because they answered less than 50% of the survey.

⁴ Lord Howe Island is not located in any of the Regions mentioned

Appendix 3. Summary comparison of views from EHOs and General Managers

	Top responses	
	General Managers	EHOs
Overall rating effectiveness of LGU services and materials (EHO Q10)	Extremely 10% (2/20) Very 67% (14/21) Quite 19% (4/21)	Extremely 11% (14/125) Very 40% (50/125) Quite 40% (50/125)
Support programs (EHO Q7)	More neutral responses for the Partnership Scholarship (7/20) and the Champion Awards (8/20)	All four programs equally rated in importance
Over the last four years, how helpful as the Partnership been in improving the effectiveness of food regulatory services provided by your council (EHO Q22)	Extremely 20% (4/20) Very 45% (9/20) Quite 25% (5/20) Neutral (2/20)	Extremely 18% (20/112) Very 44% (49/112) Quite 24% (27/112) Neutral 7% (8/112)
Effectiveness of Regional Food Group network (EHO Q21)	Extremely 26% (5/20) Very 47% (9/20)	Extremely 25% (28/112) Very 45% (50/112)
Perceived levels of consistency in food inspection experienced by retailers in NSW (EHO Q23)	Quite 74% (14/20) Some 16% (3/20)	Quite 34% (37/112) Some 41% (45/112)
How much has consistency improved over the last four years (EHO Q24)	Significantly 58% (11/19) Improved somewhat 11% (2/20)	Significantly 32% (35/112) Improved somewhat 26% (30/112)
Overall, how effective is the FRP in making food safer? (EHO Q25)	Very 63% (12/20) Quite 21% (4/20)	Very 45% (50/112) Quite 32% (35/112)
Levels of perceived duplication (EHO Q17)	Occasional 16% (3/19) Rare 37% (7/19)	Occasional 24% (24/113) Rare 38%
Duplication changing in 4 years (EHO Q18)	A lot less 50%	A lot less 45%
Levels of co-operation (EHO Q19)	Very strong 61% (11/18) Strong 22% (4/18)	Very strong 29% (32/112) Strong 55% (62/112)
Changes in the level of co-operation now compared to four years ago (EHO Q20)	A lot more 69% (13/19) A little more 16% (3/19)	A lot more 48% (54/112) A little more 17% (19/112)

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