



THE SOCIAL
RESEARCH CENTRE

Level 1, 262 Victoria St, Nth Melbourne Vic 3051
Phone: (03) 9236 8500 Fax: (03) 9326 4060
Toll-free phone: 1800 023 040 ABN: 91 096 153 212
www.srcentre.com.au info@srcentre.com.au

Evaluating the Food Regulation Partnership: Survey of Multi-Outlet Retail Food Businesses

January 2012

Prepared for:

NSW FOOD AUTHORITY
PO BOX 6682
SILVERWATER NSW 1811

Prepared By:

HEALTH OUTCOMES TEAM
THE SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTRE
LEVEL 1, 262 VICTORIA ST
NORTH MELBOURNE VIC 3051

Contents

Executive Summary	i
Overview.....	i
Summary of Key Measures.....	iii
Measures of Consistency and Efficiency.....	v
Awareness and Effectiveness of the Partnership.....	vii
General Food Safety Issues.....	viii
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background and objectives.....	1
1.2 Methodology.....	5
2. General Trends	6
2.1 Food compliance.....	6
2.2 Changes in safety of food served since 2007.....	8
2.3 Level of cooperation between NSWFA and councils.....	9
3. Overall Opinion of Local Councils and NSWFA	11
3.1 Perceptions of effectiveness.....	11
3.2 Opinion of yearly food inspections by councils.....	14
4. Measures of Consistency and Efficiency	16
4.1 Perceived consistency across councils.....	16
4.2 Perceived efficiency of councils.....	19
4.3 Perceived consistency in severity of enforcement action.....	21
4.4 Level of duplication across councils.....	22
5. The Food Regulation Partnership	24
5.1 Awareness and effectiveness of the Partnership.....	24
5.2 Rating of the Partnership.....	25
6. General Food Safety Issues	26
6.1 Main food safety issues currently facing the NSW retail food sector.....	26
6.2 Priorities for food safety compliance in the NSW retail food sector over the next five years...	26
Appendix 1 – Questionnaire	27
Appendix 2 – Technical notes	28

Table of Figures

Figure 1:	Change in food compliance in outlets since 2007	6
Figure 2:	Safety of food served since 2007	8
Figure 3:	Level of cooperation between NSWFA and councils	9
Figure 4:	Change in level of cooperation between NSWFA and councils since 2007	9
Figure 5:	Effectiveness of local councils in assisting delivery of safer food	12
Figure 6:	Effectiveness of NSWFA in assisting delivery of safer food.....	12
Figure 7:	Effectiveness of NSW Food Authority in providing support and advice to retailers	13
Figure 8:	Opinion of yearly food safety inspections by councils	15
Figure 9:	Consistency in food regulatory requirements across councils	18
Figure 10:	Change in level of consistency in food regulatory requirements since 2007	18
Figure 11:	Change in food safety surveillance activities by councils since 2007	20
Figure 12:	Consistency in severity of enforcement action across councils	21
Figure 13:	Change in consistency in severity of enforcement across councils since 2007	21
Figure 14:	Level of duplication across councils	23
Figure 15:	Change in level of duplication across councils since 2007	23
Figure 16:	Effectiveness of the Partnership in improving food safety in NSW	24
Figure 17:	Rating of the Partnership among those aware of it	25

Table of Tables

Table 1:	Summary of key measures.....	iii
Table 2:	Final sample distribution.....	5

Executive Summary

Overview

The Social Research Centre conducted fifty in-depth telephone interviews with managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses in NSW in late October and November, 2011. The *Survey of Multi-Outlet Retail Food Businesses* is one of five projects the NSW Food Authority is undertaking as part of its evaluation of the Food Regulation Partnership, a regulatory program it established with NSW local councils in July 2008. The ultimate objectives of the Food Regulation Partnership (the Partnership) are to reduce the number of people becoming ill or injured from eating food produced by retail food businesses and to improve the reputation of the NSW retail food sector.

The survey was specifically designed to gather information that is relevant to two intermediate level outcomes of the NSW Food Regulation Partnership Program Logic Model:

- More effective/ efficient food safety surveillance by councils (as indicated by fewer multi-outlet businesses reporting receiving duplicate inspections by the Authority and local councils) (Outcome 9); and
- More consistent food safety surveillance by councils (as indicated by multi-outlet businesses reporting improved food surveillance consistency) (Outcome 10).

The focus of the first three years of the Partnership has been on implementing the foundation requirements of the program – mandatory reporting, developing protocols and procedures, setting up communication networks, conducting EHO training classes – while the second phase of the program will focus on improved surveillance and enforcement consistency and industry communication.

Prior to the full implementation of the Food Regulation Partnership, a 'pilot' baseline survey was conducted in late 2007 which provides some limited reference data. However, the 2011 survey will serve as the baseline against which changes in food safety surveillance and enforcement consistency will be measured in the future.

General Findings

The 2011 Retail Food Business Survey has found that (see Summary of Key Measures Table below):

- Since the introduction of the Food Regulation Partnership in 2008, most managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses reported better compliance with food safety standards, and all but one of the remainder felt that compliance had stayed about the same since 2007;
- For almost half of the managers surveyed, food was perceived to be much safer now across all or some sectors than it was in 2007, and for most of the remainder it was slightly safer overall or in some sectors. Only two State managers and two regional/local managers felt that there had been no change at all in the delivery of safer food since 2007;
- Almost half of the managers surveyed perceived strong cooperation between the NSW Food Authority and local councils regarding food safety compliance in general, and a further quarter perceived some cooperation; however, around one-in-five thought that there was only occasional cooperation or no cooperation at all;
- Perceptions of cooperation between the NSW Food Authority and councils have improved since 2007 with around one third perceiving a lot more cooperation over the last four years, and a further twelve percent a little more cooperation. Most of the remainder saw no change in cooperation levels. Only one State manager was negative on this measure, seeing a lot less cooperation since 2007.

It can be concluded that, overall, NSW retail food business managers have seen a general improvement in compliance with food safety standards over the last four years, and the delivery of safer food. Many also perceived improved cooperation between the NSW Food Authority and local councils.

Summary of Key Measures

The following table presents a summary of key measures in the survey and are grouped as measures of consistency, duplication or efficiency, and effectiveness. Each one is analysed by whether respondents were aware or not aware of the Partnership, and whether the respondent held a position with national or State, or regional or local responsibility. Statements shown in *italics* represent changes perceived by managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses in NSW since 2007; estimates in **bold** indicate changes of more than ten points from the statistic in the adjacent column.

Table 1: Summary of key measures

	Total (50) %	Aware of Partnership		Position of respondent	
		Aware (21) %	Not aware (29) %	National/ State (28) %	Regional /Local (22) %
Measures of consistency:					
<i>Better compliance with FS standards since 2007</i>	66	67	66	64	68
Food regulatory requirements between councils – very or quite consistent	28	19	35*	18	41
<i>Improved consistency in food regulatory requirements between councils since 2007</i>	28	38	21	32	23
<i>More efficient FS surveillance activities by councils since 2007</i>	24	33	17	32	14
More consistent severity of enforcement action across councils	30	19	38	25	36
<i>Improved consistency of severity of enforcement action by councils since 2007</i>	24	33	17	25	23
Measures of duplication/efficiency:					
Rare or no duplication between NSWFA and local councils in FS inspections	76	81	72	75	77
<i>Less duplication between NSWFA and local councils in FS inspections since 2007</i>	20	43	3	32	5
Strong cooperation between NSWFA and local councils in FS compliance in general	44	67	28	39	50
<i>More cooperation between NSWFA and local councils since 2007</i>	44	67	28	46	41
Measures of effectiveness:					
Effectiveness of food regulatory services currently provided by councils – extremely, very or quite effective	76	67	83	75	77
Effectiveness of food regulatory services currently provided by NSWFA – extremely, very or quite effective	84	86	83	82	86
Effectiveness of NSWFA in providing support and advice to retailers in disputes with councils about food safety – extremely, very or quite effective	60	67	55	71	45
<i>Much safer food produced by retail food businesses across at least some sectors since 2007</i>	48	48	48	50	45

*Note: A **bold number** signifies row difference of at least ten points. Statements in *italics* seek to measure trends since 2007.

It is clear from the Summary of key measures that:

- Managers aware of the Partnership were generally more likely to report improvements in consistency and efficiency since 2007 than those unaware of the Partnership, as well as less duplication of inspections and more cooperation between the NSW Food Authority and local councils over that time.
- A higher proportion of managers not aware of the Partnership rated the level of consistency in food regulatory requirements between local councils stronger than those who were aware of the Partnership; similarly, managers not aware of the Partnership gave a higher rating to the consistency in the severity of enforcement action across councils, and more considered the food regulatory services currently provided by councils as effective, compared with those aware of the Partnership. These are important findings, as any 'promotional' impact associated with the Partnership itself is removed from these conclusions, which suggest overall improvement in the consistency and effectiveness of food regulation across NSW.
- A higher proportion of managers aware of the Partnership were likely to consider there to be strong cooperation between NSWFA and local councils in food safety compliance in general, and to consider the NSWFA effective in providing support and advice to retailers in disputes with councils about food safety – being aware of the Partnership may have given them greater familiarity with the activities and services of the Authority.
- Generally, national and State managers bring a broader perspective to food safety issues than their regional or local operatives, while the latter group is more likely to be dealing on a 'hands-on' basis with food safety inspections and council officers. Against this background, it is noteworthy that the regional/local managers were more likely to rate the food regulatory requirements between councils as very or quite consistent, compared with the State managers, who may receive feedback about many more councils, reflecting greater variability.
- More regional/local managers also reported more consistency in the severity of enforcement action across councils compared with their State counterparts, who are likely exposed to greater variability; they also reported stronger cooperation between the NSWFA and local councils in food safety compliance in general.
- A higher proportion of State managers considered the food safety surveillance activities by councils to be more efficient since 2007, and noted less duplication between the NSWFA and local councils in food safety inspections over that time, compared with regional/local managers; State managers bring a broader perspective to the assessment of the efficiency of food safety activities. State managers were also more likely to consider the NSWFA effective in providing support and advice to retailers in disputes with councils about food safety, a responsibility more likely to be part of the role of a State manager.

Perceptions of Local Councils and the NSW Food Authority

- The majority of managers (56%) rated the effectiveness of the food regulatory services currently provided by NSW local councils in assisting the delivery of safer food as quite effective; however, there was some polarisation, with 20% regarding these services as extremely or very effective, and 22% considering them quite or very ineffective.
- Around one third (34%) of managers regarded the NSW Food Authority as extremely or very effective in assisting the delivery of safer food, while only six percent rated it quite ineffective; the majority (50%) considered it to be quite effective in assisting the delivery of safer food through its food regulatory services.
- Managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses were asked whether they thought the NSW Food Authority was effective or ineffective in providing support and advice to retailers in disputes with councils about food safety. State managers were more often able to give a view on this question than regional/local managers. Around sixty percent of managers overall, and 71% of State level managers, considered the Authority to be at least quite effective in providing support and advice to retailers in disputes with councils about food safety. Only a few managers considered it ineffective in performing this role.
- Most managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses believed that food safety inspections should be conducted by local councils at least once each year, as agreed under the Partnership; about one quarter considered annual inspections to be not frequent enough – more likely State (32%) than regional/local managers (14%), who are more at the 'coal-face', while only one regional/local manager considered this to be too frequent.

It can be concluded that the majority of multi-outlet NSW retail food business managers consider the NSW Food Authority to be at least quite effective in providing support and advice to retailers in disputes with councils about food safety, and most considered it to be effective in assisting the delivery of safer food through its food regulatory services.

Measures of Consistency and Efficiency

All measures of consistency and efficiency recorded through the survey demonstrate some improvement since 2007, although there is still room for improvement:

- In the view of many multi-outlet retail food business managers, there is still some way to go in building food regulatory consistency between local councils across NSW. Overall, more than one quarter (28%) of respondents thought that local councils were generally quite consistent in their food regulatory requirements of retail food outlets, with this being the view of 41% of regional/local managers who presumably experience council regulatory requirements first hand. Around one third (34%) of managers provided a more neutral response, noticing some consistency and some inconsistency between councils. Another one third (36%) of managers thought that councils were quite or very inconsistent; with a higher number of State level managers (25%) compared with regional/local managers (5%) rating councils as very inconsistent. This difference in opinion may be reflective of the State level manager's broader perspective across more councils.

- In the 2007 baseline survey, respondents were asked about the level of consistency in food regulatory requirements they had encountered in their dealings with food regulatory authorities across the NSW councils their businesses operated within. Although the samples are not strictly comparable between the two surveys, and the two questions used different wording and response frames, there is evidence of further improvement in the level of consistency of food regulatory requirements between councils since 2007.
- In terms of changes in the level of consistency in food regulatory requirements between local councils since 2007, overall 23% of regional/local managers and 32% of State managers thought that there had been at least a little improvement since 2007. Another 66% of managers reported no change, that is, the level of consistency between councils had stayed the same, while 6% thought that consistency between councils had actually worsened somewhat over the last four years.
- A similar pattern of responses was given in terms of changes in the efficiency of food safety surveillance activities (e.g. food safety inspections, follow-up assessments and enforcement activities) by councils since 2007: 14% of regional/local managers and 32% of State managers reported improved efficiency. Another 72% of managers thought that there had been no change in the level of efficiency and 4% reported less efficiency.
- Overall, managers reported mixed feelings regarding the consistency in severity of enforcement action across the councils they deal with – with about 30% reporting very or quite consistent severity of enforcement action and about 34% reporting quite or very inconsistent enforcement action severity. Enforcement action was defined as referring to the issuing of warning letters, improvement notices or penalty notices. Regional/local managers were more likely (36%) than State managers (25%) to report consistency in the severity of enforcement action, with the latter group more likely to report inconsistency (43% vs 23%), again possibly because they work across a wider number of councils.
- There has been some improvement since 2007 in the area of consistency in the severity of enforcement action. More than half of each group thought that consistency in this area had stayed about the same over the last four years, with around one quarter of each group noticing an improvement and eleven to fifteen percent feeling that it had worsened at least a little.
- Managers were asked about the level of duplication, if any, they think exists between the NSW Food Authority and local councils regarding food safety inspections - about forty percent of both State and regional/local managers thought that there was no duplication, another third saw rare duplication and most of the remainder reported only occasional duplication. One State manager reported frequent duplication.
- Comments made by twelve managers suggest that the duplication between the NSW Food Authority and the local councils regarding food safety inspections is quite rare, and in some cases, may be deliberate – such as when officers from the Authority inspect the meat section of the outlet, while council officers inspect other sections of the food store (or when an outlet sells both fresh and takeaway food).

- There has been some perceived change in the level of duplication across councils since 2007. Overall, 20% of managers thought that there was at least a little less duplication between the Authority and local councils, although another 14% were unable to provide a response. State managers (32%) were more likely than regional/local managers (5%) to think there was less duplication between the NSW Food Authority and local councils now than there was in 2007, possibly reflecting the broader perspective of State managers who most often participated in the Retail Food Business Industry Stakeholder meetings.

Without a robust baseline survey to use as a point of comparison, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the extent of change in the consistency and efficiency measures since 2007. However, on four of the six Key Performance Indicators retrospectively assessing trends in these areas since 2007 (see Summary Table above), it does appear that there have been positive changes in consistency and efficiency since 2007 for around one quarter of the multi-outlet managers interviewed. For most of the remainder, there has been no change since 2007 – presumably at least some of them saw no need for change - although there is still room for improvement in the future, mainly in building food regulatory consistency between local councils across NSW, and in the consistency in severity of enforcement action across the councils.

On the two more general trend KPIs, almost half the sample reported more cooperation between the NSWFA and local councils since 2007, and two-thirds reported better compliance with food safety standards since that time.

Awareness and Effectiveness of the Partnership

- Managers were asked whether they had heard of the Food Regulation Partnership (Partnership) between the NSW Food Authority and the 152 NSW local councils. 42% of managers had heard of the Partnership, higher among the State level managers (54%) than their regional/local counterparts (27%). Sixteen of the latter group had not heard of the Partnership (73%), nor had thirteen of the State level managers (46%). The latter group more often participates in Retail Food Business Industry Stakeholder Meetings and other Partnership activities.
- The 21 managers who were aware of the Partnership were asked how effective or ineffective they consider it has been in improving food safety in NSW. All but one of the fifteen State level managers aware of the Partnership considered that it has been at least quite effective (two extremely and five very effective) in improving food safety in NSW – only one regarded it as quite ineffective. Four of the regional/local level managers rated it as quite effective, one extremely effective and one did not know about its effectiveness.
- The 21 managers aware of the Partnership were asked to rate the Partnership on five key dimensions – improving food safety compliance, improving consistency between local councils, minimising duplication in food safety inspections, improving efficiency in food safety regulation and assisting the delivery of safer food. Generally, the Partnership was seen to be performing at a good to very good level, with between 67% and 86% responding in this range on all five dimensions. Improving the consistency between local councils was the area most likely to be rated as quite poor (24%), and could be the focus for future improvement.

Overall, it can be concluded that the Partnership is starting to be seen by some key industry stakeholders as having some positive impact on food safety in NSW. Out of 50 managers interviewed, 21 were aware of the Partnership, eleven considering it quite effective in improving food safety, five very effective and three extremely effective; one considered it quite ineffective and one did not respond. In total, 38% of managers thought it has been at least quite effective in improving food safety in NSW, though all but four of these were State level managers.

Clearly there are many other factors helping to drive the general improvement in compliance with food safety standards over the last four years, and the delivery of safer food, as reported above. According to the managers interviewed, these include the increased awareness of food safety by both customers and the media in recent years, and the need for food retailers to protect and strengthen their reputation for the provision of safe food (partially stimulated by programs like the 'Name and Shame' website and the 'Scores for Doors' star rating system for restaurants).

General Food Safety Issues

Managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses were asked what they consider to be the main food safety issues currently facing the retail food sector in NSW: The overwhelming response concerned increasing knowledge among retail staff of personal hygiene practices, food handling, temperature control and to a lesser extent pest control, particularly among those working in single outlets and small businesses, and among those from a non-English speaking background, who may have had less exposure to NSW food safety standards. Education in food storage, shelf life and stock rotation were other main food safety issues commonly mentioned.

Managers were also asked what they consider to be the priorities for food safety compliance in the retail food sector in NSW over the next five years. The key priorities given by respondents were:

- The need for more education and training in safe food handling and personal hygiene practices, focussing on high risk areas that have a higher probability of producing food borne illness;
- The need for uniform food safety standards across NSW, preferably which are consistent with national standards, to improve the efficiency of national food retailers in complying with food safety requirements; and
- Greater consistency in the process of inspections by council EHOs, across and within councils, and across different types of stores.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and objectives

The NSW Food Authority was established in 2004 through the merger of SafeFood NSW with the food regulatory activities of NSW Health. As stated in the NSW Food Authority's 2009-10 Annual Report:

"The Authority's role in the NSW Food Regulation Framework is to ensure the safety and integrity of the food supply in the State by monitoring food industry compliance with the law. Through the Food Regulation Partnership – which began operating in 2007 – the Authority and local councils now work more closely together to enforce the Food Act 2003."

Thus, the NSW Food Regulation Partnership is a regulatory program which formalises the Partnership between the Authority and local councils in NSW. A conceptual model of how the Food Regulation Partnership works was developed as part of the evaluation planning process. The Program Logic Model identifies: inputs; activities, outputs; and outcomes (immediate, intermediate and final). The ultimate objective of the Food Regulation Partnership is to reduce food borne illness attributable to retail food settings and to improve the reputation of the NSW retail food sector.

Key reference documents on the Food Regulation Partnership which were listed in the Request for Quotation (RFQ) of 15 August, 2011, describe the development of the model for a Food Regulation Partnership between the NSW Food Authority's Local Government Unit and NSW Local Governments, and details to inform councils of the key changes to food regulation in NSW and the role and requirements of councils going forward.

The Food Regulation Partnership comprises a number of program components including:

- Education (Local Government Unit (LGU) provides training to Environmental Health Officers)
- Compliance and enforcement support and training (provided by the LGU with councils signing up to service level agreements)
- A regulatory component (local councils are able to recover food surveillance costs), and
- Mandatory performance monitoring (councils provide data on food regulatory activities which is compiled by the LGU and published as a report).

On 1 July 2008, councils began their new enforcement agency role under the Food Regulation Partnership. Mandatory performance monitoring has shown that since the implementation of the Food Regulation Partnership, there has been an increase in the number of councils that have a food inspection program in place and an improvement in the compliance rate among retail food premises¹:

Prior to the commencement of the Food Regulation Partnership on 1 July 2008, a baseline study showed that 88% of councils had a food inspection program in place. Since the Partnership all (100%) 152 NSW councils have a program in place.

¹ http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/localgovernment_pdf/summary_report_nsw_lg_activities_july_june_2010.pdf

There has been a steady improvement in compliance rates with:

- 60% of primary inspections (any planned, programmed or routine inspection) in compliance with the food safety standards in the six months 1 July to 31 December 2008
- 69% complying in the six months from 1 January to 30 June 2009, and
- 74% of the 50,055 primary inspections of food premises conducted from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 were rated as satisfactory.

Certain sectors of the NSW food industry are regulated under Food Regulation 2010 and are required to hold a NSW Food Authority license. Most of these food businesses are also required to maintain a Food Safety Program. They include:

- Businesses that conduct food service to vulnerable populations
- High-priority plant product businesses
- Businesses that handle or process meat
- Businesses that further process seafood
- Businesses that handle shellfish
- Dairy producers, factories and vendors, and
- Businesses that produce or process eggs & egg related products.

The Authority regularly audits and inspects these types of food businesses to try to ensure that the NSW public is offered safe and correctly labelled food. These licensed businesses were considered to be out-of-scope for the *Survey of Multi-Outlet Retail Food Businesses* reported herein.

All other NSW food businesses which handle food for sale are required by the Food Act (2003) to notify the Authority of their food handling activities and must comply with the national food safety standards, Standards 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 of the Australia and New Zealand Food Standards Code. These businesses are inspected by the council in which the business operates and were considered to be in-scope for the *Survey of Multi-Outlet Retail Food Businesses*.

A recent change that may impact on the operation of many retail food businesses in NSW is the introduction of the Food Safety Supervisor (FSS). The introduction of the FSS aligns with the Victorian and Queensland requirements for a FSS to be nominated by particular types of food businesses. By 1 October 2011, impacted businesses (that is, businesses processing and selling food at retail level that is ready-to-eat and which is potentially hazardous) needed to appoint and notify the relevant enforcement agency (usually the local council) of the name and contact details of the FSS for each of their business premises. Attitudes to this change, and what this change will mean in terms of cost, have not been explored in the recent *Survey of Multi-Outlet Retail Food Businesses*.

The Survey of Retail Food Business

Prior to the full implementation of the Food Regulation Partnership, the Authority commissioned a baseline study in 2008. One component of this project was the Food Regulation Partnership: Baseline Survey B4 (reduce regulatory burden for industry). The primary objective, as stated, was to establish the extent and implications of time spent by NSW retail outlet staff in satisfying regulatory requirements as prescribed by Local Government Areas in response to food regulations (and their interpretation and implementation of the Code), before the commencement of the Food Regulation Partnership. The Social Research Centre has reviewed this document and considered the findings and recommendations in the design of the refined baseline survey.

Now some three years later, the Authority is undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the Food Regulation Partnership Program. The *Survey of Multi-Outlet Retail Food Businesses* is one of five projects the Authority is undertaking as part of this evaluation. It was designed to gather information that is relevant to two intermediate level outcomes of the NSW Food Regulation Partnership Program Logic Model:

- More effective/ efficient food safety surveillance by councils (as indicated by fewer businesses reporting receiving duplicate inspections by the Authority and local councils) (Outcome 9); and
- More consistent food safety surveillance by councils (as indicated by multi-outlet businesses reporting improved food surveillance consistency) (Outcome 10).

Ideally, each of these intermediate level outcomes requires the measurement of change since the 2007 Baseline Survey – how they were measured then becomes of paramount importance. The Social Research Centre carefully reviewed the sample selection procedures employed in 2007 and the key questions that were administered to a sample of 25 small, medium and large businesses, including a combination of retailers and manufacturers, by telephone interview between July and September, 2007.

It was concluded that the 2007 survey served as an imperfect baseline for the 2011 *Survey of Multi-Outlet Retail Food Businesses* primarily because:

- Only 52% or 13 of the businesses surveyed were retail food businesses, a very small sample size to serve as a baseline;
- There was no detailed information available on the characteristics of the 13 respondents interviewed from retail food businesses (ie their job title by industry sector) so that these could be matched through the sample selection procedures employed in 2011; and
- As indicated above, the objectives for the two surveys were quite different, necessitating quite different lines of questioning.

Furthermore, in 2011 it was decided to double the sample size to 50 respondents, with a view to obtaining feedback from both State level and regional/local managers, wherever possible within the same food retailing organisation. It was considered likely that the regional/local managers would have more direct dealings with the Council Environmental Health Officers, and therefore would be in a better position to assess changes in the effectiveness, efficiency and consistency of food safety surveillance by councils in recent years. The State level managers would be in a better position to give the

organisational perspective on these issues, and possibly to give feedback about changes in compliance across all their NSW outlets. Another key difference in the methodology was to only include retail businesses that operated across at least two retail outlets located in at least two different local councils, thereby allowing the respondent to reflect and respond to questions concerning their experiences of consistency and duplication across local councils.

In summary, to ensure valid feedback, all respondents in the 2011 survey had to have had at least four or more years experience in the NSW retail food industry, and managed or had responsibility for at least two outlets across at least two NSW local councils. While the 2007 and 2011 are essentially not comparable, reference has been made in the body of this report to some findings from 2007 which give perspective to the 2011 findings. The *2011 Survey of Multi-Outlet Food Retail Businesses* provides a new baseline against which to measure future changes in key measures and Key Performance Indicators reflecting the intermediate and final outcomes of the Partnership.

1.2 Methodology

The *Survey of Multi-Outlet Retail Food Businesses* was conducted by the Social Research Centre between 28 October and 17 November 2011. All interviews were conducted using SRC's Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. The questionnaire administered was designed by the SRC Health Outcomes Team in collaboration with the NSW Food Authority. A Word (non-CATI) version of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1, including twelve open-response questions. The average interview administration time was 25 minutes.

Fifty telephone interviews were completed: 28 with National and State managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses operating in NSW; and 22 with regional/local managers (Table 2:). Thirteen food industry sectors were represented in the survey.

Table 2: Final sample distribution

	Total	National/State	Regional/Local
	50	28	22
Bakery	6	3	3
Beverages	1	1	0
Café/Coffee	3	1	2
Chicken	6	3	3
Fast Food Takeaways	9	4	5
Icecream	5	2	3
Kebabs	3	2	1
Petrol Stations	3	2	1
Pizza	3	2	1
Restaurant	1	1	0
Salad	1	1	0
Sandwiches	1	1	0
Supermarkets	8	5	3

Detailed technical notes are presented below in Appendix 2. Sufficient detail has been provided to allow future replication of the survey as part of a subsequent evaluation.

2. General Trends

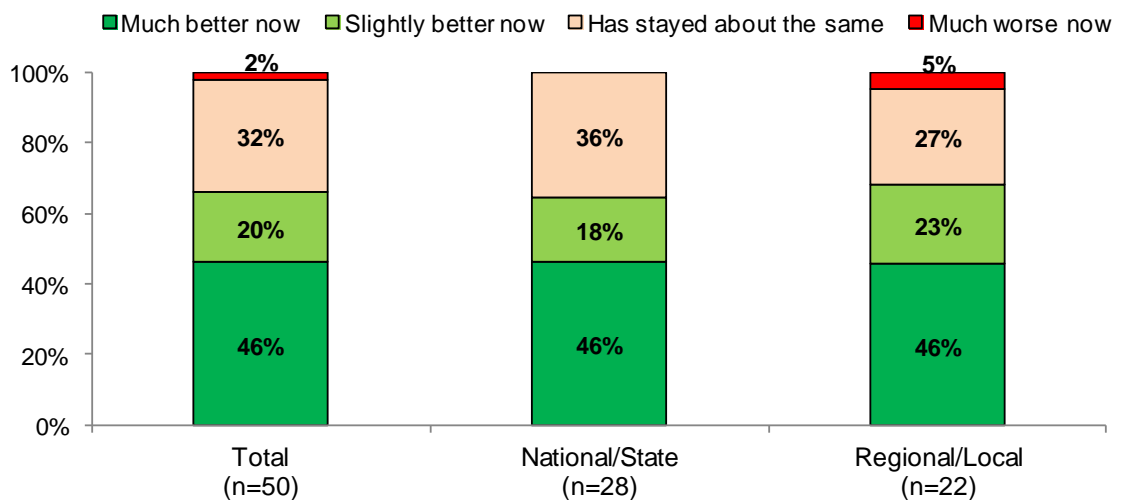
2.1 Food compliance

All respondents were asked to think back four years to 2007 and assess whether compliance with food safety standards in their outlets has become better or worse. The findings are presented in Figure 1 below for the total sample (50), and for the 28 State level managers and the 22 regional/local managers.

It can be seen that almost half of each group (46%) considered compliance with food safety standards to be much better now than in 2007, and for a further one-in-five (20%) thought it was slightly better now. Almost all the remaining third felt that compliance with food safety standards had stayed about the same in their outlets since 2007. Only one regional/local manager thought that compliance was much worse now than in 2007.

In summary, since the introduction of the Food Regulation Partnership in 2007, most managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses reported better compliance with food safety standards.

Figure 1: Change in food compliance in outlets since 2007



Base: All retail food businesses

Q3 So thinking back four years to 2007, since that time has compliance with food safety standards in your outlets become better or worse, or has it stayed about the same?

Managers who thought that compliance with food safety standards in their outlets had become much better or slightly better than in 2007 were asked to give the main reasons for this improvement. Six key themes emerged from the responses, with one being implicit across many of the other responses – a stronger focus from senior management driving better compliance with food safety standards, also being reflected in increased accountability and the appointment of specialist Quality Assurance or Food Safety staff.

The other key themes driving better compliance with food safety standards which may be a direct result of, or are closely related to the Partnership activities and outputs, were:

- More inspections from council EHOs, with stricter monitoring and enforcement (combined with some feedback that councils are more consistent in what they are looking for, are more helpful in working with some managers to improve food safety and that council inspections are now followed up more closely by some retailers);
- Increased awareness of food safety by both customers and the media in recent years, and the need for food retailers to protect and strengthen their reputation for the provision of safe food (related to this, six managers spontaneously mentioned the 'Name and Shame' website, five as a listing to avoid and one in a disparaging way, being critical of the government for publicly criticising private businesses and not itself);
- The need for food retailers to up-date their food safety policies, procedures or programs to meet the new food safety regulations;
- The improved training of staff in food safety standards, sometimes involving Council staff; and
- A feeling that food retailers are generally attributing more importance to food safety standards, assisted by the support programs being run in NSW and better co-ordination among industry bodies.

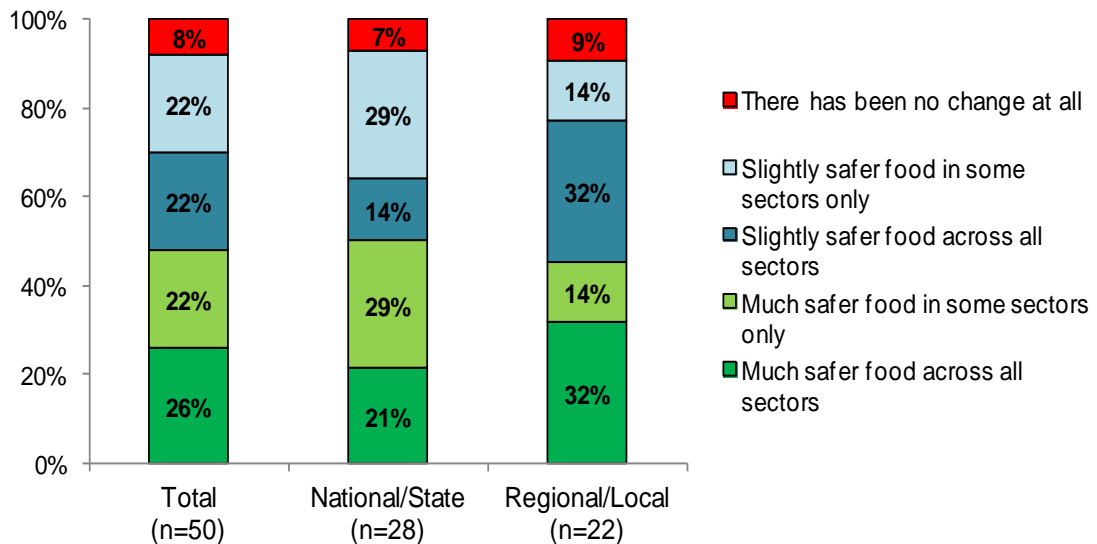
One regional/local manager, who thought that compliance with food safety standards had become much worse since 2007, was particularly critical of the 'Name and Shame' website (as indicated above), the recording form that is used for inspections, the poor training provided to EHOs and the difference in rules across different local councils resulting in massive costs to retailers to execute the programs. From his viewpoint, the Partnership has a long way to go.

2.2 Changes in safety of food served since 2007

All respondents were asked a general question about changes in the safety of food offered by NSW retail food businesses since 2007. The findings are presented in Figure 2. For almost half of the respondents, food is much safer now across all or some sectors than it was in 2007, and for most of the remainder it is slightly safer overall or in some sectors. Only two State managers and two regional/local managers felt that there had been no change at all in the delivery of safer food since 2007.

In summary, since the introduction of the Partnership in 2007, most managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses reported the offering of safer food in at least some sectors. The challenge now is for managers to see the delivery of much safer food across all sectors of the retail industry in NSW.

Figure 2: Safety of food served since 2007



Base: All retail food businesses

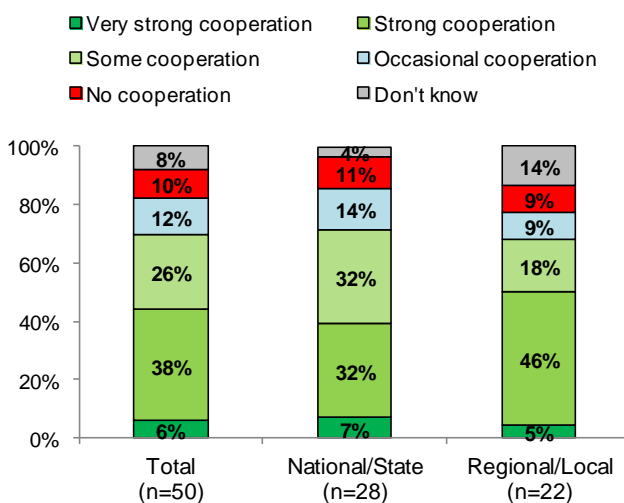
Q28 Since 2007, in general do you think that retail food businesses in New South Wales now produce...

2.3 Level of cooperation between NSWFA and councils

Figure 3 shows the level of cooperation that managers from multi-outlet retail food businesses believe exists between the NSW Food Authority and local councils regarding food safety compliance in general. It can be seen that almost half of the managers surveyed perceived strong cooperation between the organisations, and a further quarter perceived some cooperation. However, around one-in-five thought that there was only occasional cooperation or no cooperation at all – strengthening industry perceptions of the Partnership could be a focus for the future.

Figure 4 shows that perceptions of cooperation between the NSW Food Authority and councils have in fact improved since 2007. Around one third perceived a lot more cooperation over the last four years, and a further twelve percent a little more cooperation. Most of the remainder saw no change in cooperation levels. Only one State manager was negative on this measure, seeing a lot less cooperation since 2007.

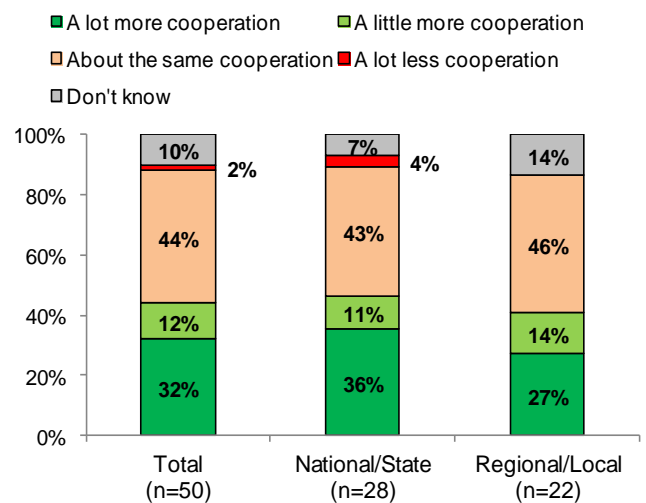
Figure 3: Level of cooperation between NSWFA and councils



Base: All retail food businesses

Q17 What level of cooperation, if any, do you believe exists between the New South Wales Food Authority and local councils regarding food safety compliance in general?

Figure 4: Change in level of cooperation between NSWFA and councils since 2007



Base: All retail food business

Q19 Compared to four years ago (since 2007), would you say there is NOW less cooperation between the New South Wales Food Authority and local councils, about the same, or more cooperation?

Managers from multi-outlet retail food businesses who believed that at least occasional cooperation existed between the NSW Food Authority and local councils were asked to report the specific areas of cooperation they knew of concerning food safety compliance. The key areas of cooperation thought to exist were many and varied, with a large group of these respondents giving a very vague response, or no response at all. The general view was that the organisations actually have complementary roles, with the NSW Food Authority responsible for setting policy and regulation, and the councils responsible for food safety inspections and compliance. This was considered an efficient approach, with regular meetings between the organisations sometimes cited as building consistency. For example, State managers commented the following:

- *“The introduction of the Retail Food Advisory Group. This has helped councils, industry and the Food Authority all work much closer. It has everyone sitting at the same table so we are able to discuss inconsistencies with all the parties.”;*
- *“Because they wanted to do the new standard document for food inspections across councils. We can now see that the documents they use look the same and the EHos generally act the same.”.*

3. Overall Opinion of Local Councils and NSWFA

3.1 Perceptions of effectiveness

Managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses were asked their opinion of the effectiveness of the food regulatory services currently provided by NSW local councils in assisting the delivery of safer food. The majority regarded these services as quite effective, as shown below in Figure 5. However, there was some polarisation, with around one-in-five regarding these services as extremely or very effective, and a similar proportion considering them quite or very ineffective. This polarisation was more pronounced among the regional/local manager group, probably reflecting their more localised views of the council services, with State managers likely providing a broader picture across a wider range of councils.

Eleven managers who considered NSW local councils to be ineffective in assisting the delivery of safer food were asked to nominate specific areas of food regulatory services in which councils were ineffective. The main themes reported here were:

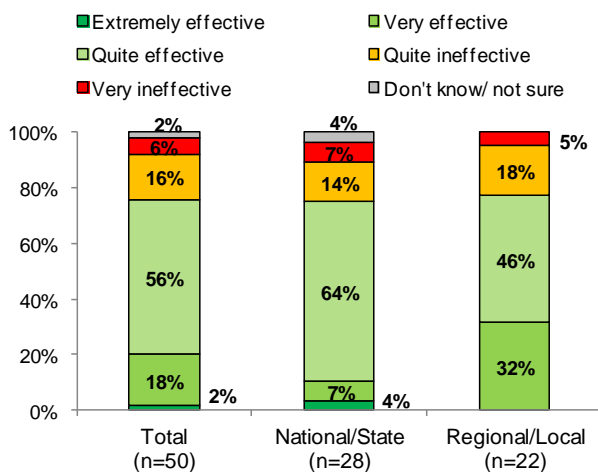
- Inconsistency across councils – *“It really depends on the local council, there is still just a level of inconsistency with local councils. Some are overly rambunctious about challenging us and others walk in and after 15 minutes say ‘it’s all good’ and others stay there for 3 hours. So you can never know that the store has adequately been audited on 100 percent of occasions”;*
- Inconsistency between large and small food retailers – (in relation to priorities for food safety compliance) *“Being fair across all retailers. I know the bigger chain stores do get away with a lot more. There need to be consistent treatment of small and large businesses.”;*
- Inconsistency between the role of the NSW Food Authority and local councils – *“From my perspective you have the council and the Food Authority which one do you follow. You have two policeman who do you follow? There needs to be more clarity on who is running the food safety in the State. You have a State requirement and a council requirement and everyone is different so it makes it hard to know what you need to do to make sure you meet the food safety standard. The best thing that can happen is the council to have a workshop with industry leaders about food safety issues. It’s all very confusing.”;*
- The infrequency of visits, and councils *“not targeting key areas such as hot food being kept hot and cold food being cold, and basic hygiene”;*
- Councils having a stronger focus on enforcement than education and training – there is a need for more proactive reporting and communication of the findings following council inspections, with a view to encouraging necessary action across all retail businesses.

In terms of the effectiveness of the NSW Food Authority in assisting the delivery of safer food (Figure 6:), 34% of managers regarded the NSW Food Authority as extremely or very effective in assisting the delivery of safer food, while only six percent rated it quite ineffective; and half (50%) considered it to be quite effective in assisting the delivery of safer food through its food regulatory services.

The three managers who rated the NSW Food Authority as quite ineffective in assisting the delivery of safer food were critical of:

- Slow progress – *“I just don't think the general standard has improved enough for the effort that's been put in. When I go from store to store I'm not seeing the effort and focus and the ...dramatic improvement on the standards of the stores.”;*
- Lack of communication regarding the Food Safety Legislation with food retailers – *“The only way I've come into contact with them was through the manufacturing side of things not through food retail stores. I never really hear from them or deal with them. So what is needed to meet standards could be more clearly communicated by the Food Authority.”;* and
- Confusion for the average small business to comply with food regulations – *“I think the information isn't delivered to the small business in a way they can understand. They have to jump through many loops in order to comply. For example, with recent food handling certificates they have to do the training and they have to get the certificate from the administration, which would cost more and wouldn't train anymore or deliver more training. It was just another administration fee. That was very confusing for our small business owners.”*

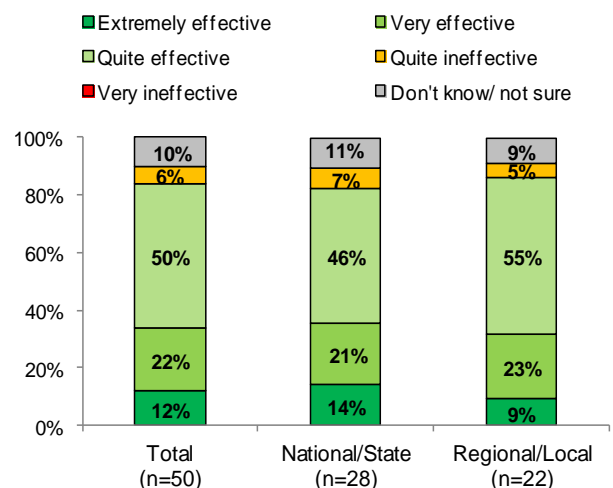
Figure 5: Effectiveness of local councils in assisting delivery of safer food



Base: All retail food businesses

Q20 Overall, would you say the food regulatory services currently provided by the New South Wales LOCAL COUNCILS are effective or ineffective in assisting the delivery of safer food?

Figure 6: Effectiveness of NSWFA in assisting delivery of safer food

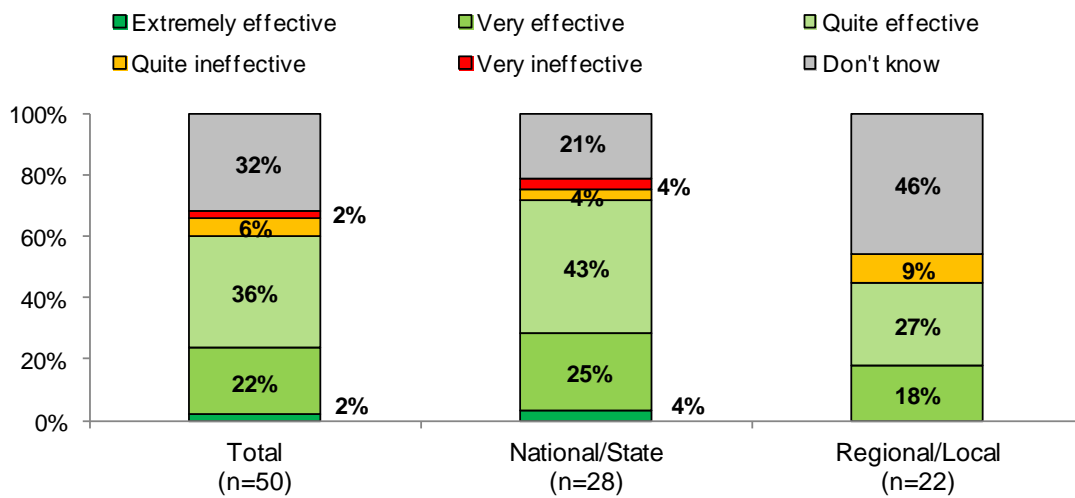


Base: All retail food business

Q22 Would you say the NEW SOUTH WALES FOOD AUTHORITY is effective or ineffective in assisting the delivery of safer food through its food regulatory services?

Managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses were asked whether they thought the NSW Food Authority was effective or ineffective in providing support and advice to retailers in disputes with councils about food safety. As shown in Figure 7, State managers were more often able to give a view on this question than regional/local managers, almost half of whom did not know. Sixty percent of managers overall, and 72% of State level managers, considered the Authority to be at least quite effective in providing support and advice to retailers in disputes with councils about food safety. Only a few managers considered it ineffective in performing this role.

Figure 7: Effectiveness of NSW Food Authority in providing support and advice to retailers



Base: All retail food businesses

Q24 Would you say the New South Wales Food Authority is effective or ineffective in PROVIDING SUPPORT AND ADVICE to retailers in disputes with councils about food safety?

3.2 Opinion of yearly food inspections by councils

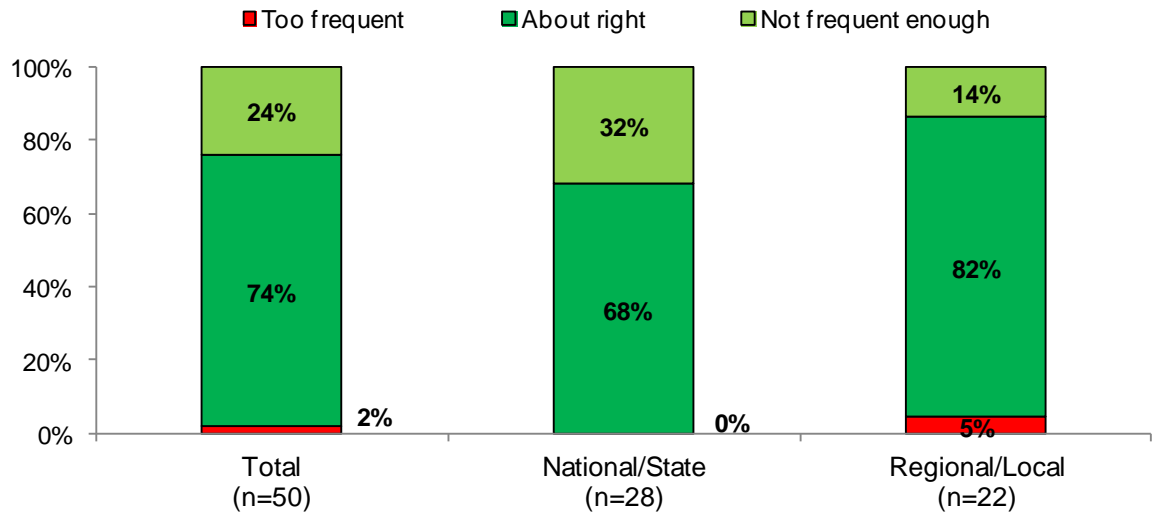
Most managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses believed that food safety inspections should be conducted by local councils at least once each year, as recommended by the NSW Food Authority – see Figure 8 below. Only one regional/local manager considered this to be too frequent, while about one quarter considered annual inspections to be not frequent enough – more often State (32%) than regional/local managers (14%) who are more at the ‘coal-face’.

The regional/local manager who considered annual food safety inspections by councils to be too frequent thought that *“our food safety program is more in depth and monitored more strictly as part of a franchise group, the (council) inspections are not even as in-depth as our own program anyway”*.

The main reasons given by the twelve managers who felt that annual food safety inspections by councils need to be more frequent were:

- The need to keep up food safety standards in smaller outlets – *“Just to provide more consistency, I think that the food chains that have systems in place like franchises, once a year would probably be enough. But other small independent businesses need to be supervised more closely. Because I don't think their standards are up to the same level as the franchises. By standards I mean the record keeping of temperature control, storage and food contamination. More frequent inspections would make sure the food safety standards are followed as they have no system in place and the food inspector is the only thing in place to make sure those standards are being followed.”*;
- The need to ensure compliance by all staff – *“It's important to have inspections more than once a year. More regular inspections will increase the food safety compliance levels. Business owners can have misunderstandings about food safety compliance and at the moment the training of the team members is not adequate enough. The inspections will insure that the team members' and managers' awareness of food safety compliance is up to standard. Currently I don't think that is happening.”*;
- The need to ensure compliance by new staff – *“A lot can change in a year. Food outlets often have staff turnover. Well basically if they have got people checking the stores they will be more diligent in training the staff in food safety.”*; and
- Some retail food businesses are quite seasonal – *“...a year is a long time, things change and most food businesses are seasonal so if they get them at a quiet time they might be doing the right thing and if they get them at a busy time they might not be.”*

Figure 8: Opinion of yearly food safety inspections by councils



Base: All retail food businesses

Q1 The New South Wales Food Authority recommends that retail outlets that make and serve food should receive food safety inspections by their local council at least once per year. In your opinion is this...?

4. Measures of Consistency and Efficiency

4.1 Perceived consistency across councils

In the view of many retail food business managers, there is still some way to go in building food regulatory consistency between local councils across NSW. Overall, more than one quarter (28%) of respondents thought that local councils were generally quite consistent in their food regulatory requirements of retail food outlets, with this being the view of 41% of regional/local managers who presumably experience council regulatory requirements first hand (Figure 9:). Around one third (34%) of managers provided a more neutral response, noticing some consistency and some inconsistency between councils. Another one third (36%) of managers thought that councils were quite or very inconsistent; with a higher number of State level managers (25%) compared with regional/local managers (5%) rating councils as very inconsistent. This difference in opinion may be reflective of the State level manager's broader perspective across more councils.

In the 2007 baseline survey, respondents were asked about the level of consistency in food regulatory requirements they had encountered in their dealings with *food regulatory authorities* across the NSW councils their businesses operated within. Although the samples are not strictly comparable between the two surveys, as discussed above, and the two questions used different wording and response frames, there is evidence that consistency has improved since 2007 – then, 47% regarded the food regulatory authorities operating across the councils as very or quite consistent, with 35% regarding them as very or quite inconsistent. In 2011, 28% of managers regarded the food regulatory requirements between councils as quite consistent, with 36% regarding them as very or quite inconsistent. However, there is evidence of improvement in the level of consistency of food regulatory requirements between councils since 2007, as noted by 28% of managers (32% of State managers and 23% of regional/local managers). Clearly, the way managers evaluate the consistency of food regulatory requirements between councils is more informed in 2011, or the 2011 sample is simply more reliable (or both).

Eighteen of the fifty managers interviewed assessed the level of consistency in food regulatory requirements between the local councils their businesses deal with as quite or very inconsistent in 2011. The specific inconsistencies they have experienced between NSW councils can be summarised as follows:

- Clear differences in the inspection and checking processes employed by EHOs across councils, often having quite different areas of focus;
- Differences in expectations between EHOs, in interpretation of the food safety code, and in definitions of compliance levels;
- Differences in enforcement and warning practices, and some long delays in their delivery; and
- Differences in the advice given for similar issues and the quality of reporting.

In terms of changes in the level of consistency in food regulatory requirements between local councils since 2007, overall 23% of regional/local managers and 32% of State managers thought that there had been at least a little improvement since 2007 (Figure 10:). Another 66% of managers reported no change, that is, the level of consistency between councils had stayed the same, while 6% thought that consistency between councils had actually worsened somewhat over the last four years.

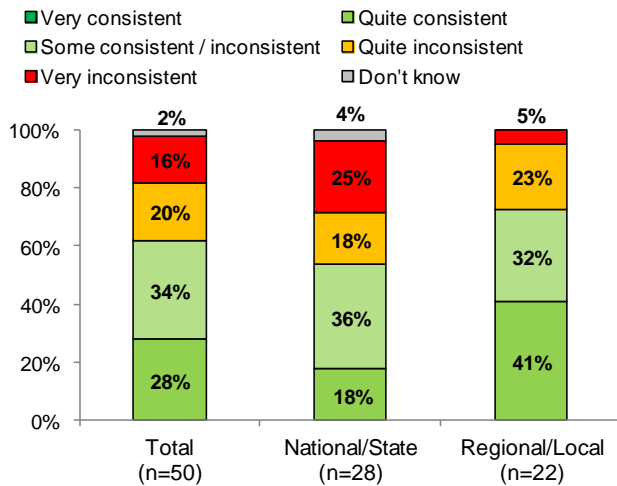
The fourteen managers who thought that the level of consistency in food regulatory requirements across NSW councils had improved since 2007 gave the following main reasons:

- Statewide training – *“The application of Statewide training providing standards and procedures to local councils and a wider use of a single form. The form has the standards on it that the local councils use.”*;
- Better communications between councils and the NSW Food Authority, assisted by the Food Regulation Partnership, and between the councils themselves, leading to greater consistency in inspections – *“It’s because of the Food Regulation Partnership and the communication between the local council and the NSW Food Authority”*; also improved communications between EHOs and food retailers;
- New program initiatives such as the ‘Scores on Doors’ program, through which restaurants receive star ratings, and the ‘Name and Shame’ website, which both promote good food safety practices;
- Increased public awareness about food safety, and willingness to ask questions about the issue in retail outlets – *“If the public go and ask questions at a ground level that will increase awareness of food safety for business owners and local councils.”*;
- The introduction of the Food Safety Supervisor program is resulting in more consistent food safety standards across the State; and
- The levying of fees by local councils means that more outlets are inspected, resulting in greater consistency across the sector.

The main reasons given by the three managers who thought that the level of consistency in food regulatory requirements across NSW councils had worsened somewhat since 2007 were:

- The lack of training of Council EHO’s – *“The basic knowledge skills of temperatures and times. The understanding of the food code. How up-to-date they are to changes and policies and their interpretation of the common work sheet.”*; and
- The inexperience and ‘hardline’ of some new Council EHOs, *“who are trying to prove themselves”*, and sometimes make unreasonable and costly demands on food retailers.

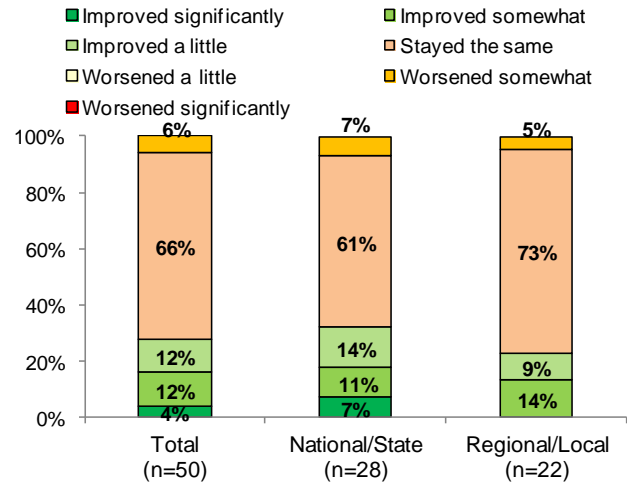
Figure 9: Consistency in food regulatory requirements across councils



Base: All retail food businesses

Q5 Generally, what level of consistency in food regulatory requirements is there between the (NUMBER) local councils your business currently deals with?

Figure 10: Change in level of consistency in food regulatory requirements since 2007



Base: All retail food business

Q7 Compared to four years ago (around 2007) has the level of consistency in food regulatory requirements (across the New South Wales local councils you deal with) improved or worsened. Or has it stayed about the same?

4.2 Perceived efficiency of councils

Managers were then asked to think back to 2007 and assess whether the food safety surveillance activities by councils in their outlets had become more or less efficient. The term surveillance was defined as food safety inspections, follow-up assessments and enforcement activities.

State managers were more likely than regional/local managers to report more efficiency in food safety surveillance activities by councils since 2007 – 32% compared with regional/local managers (14%). However, the majority of both groups had noted no change in efficiency levels in council food safety surveillance activities – 64% for State managers and 82% for regional/local managers.

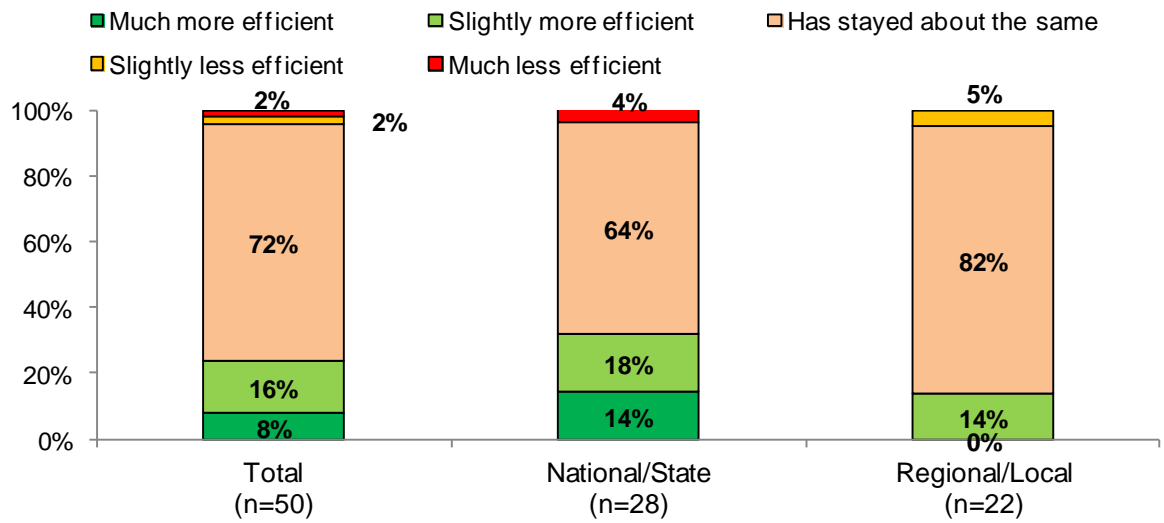
The twelve managers (24%) who felt that food safety surveillance activities by councils had become more efficient in their outlets since 2007 gave the following main reasons for their assessment:

- The increased frequency of inspections leads to improved standards (despite the inconsistencies that still exist across councils);
- The standardisation of processes results in greater efficiency;
- Inspectors with better knowledge and rapport with store managers improve the efficiency of food surveillance activities;
- New programs like 'Name and Shame' lead to clearer inspections in terms of compliance and regulations that need to be met;
- Increased public awareness of food safety, and complaints to councils, which then ensure that stores meet the standards; and
- The leadership and guidance of the NSW Food Authority.

A minority of managers (4% or 2 out of 50 managers) rated the food safety surveillance activities by councils as less efficient than in 2007:

- One State manager, who rated food safety surveillance activities by councils as much less efficient than in 2007, appeared to be making this assessment using a 'value-for-money' paradigm – because the fees charged by councils for food inspections had increased so rapidly over that time when the service delivered had remained unchanged, the assessment made was that it is now much less efficient.
- The regional/local manager, who rated the food safety surveillance activities of councils as slightly less efficient than in 2007, drew this conclusion on the basis that the same job is still being done, but less frequently than four years ago.

Figure 11: Change in food safety surveillance activities by councils since 2007



Base: All retail food businesses

Q9 Again thinking back to 2007, since that time have the food safety surveillance activities by councils in your outlets become more efficient or less efficient? Or has it stayed about the same?

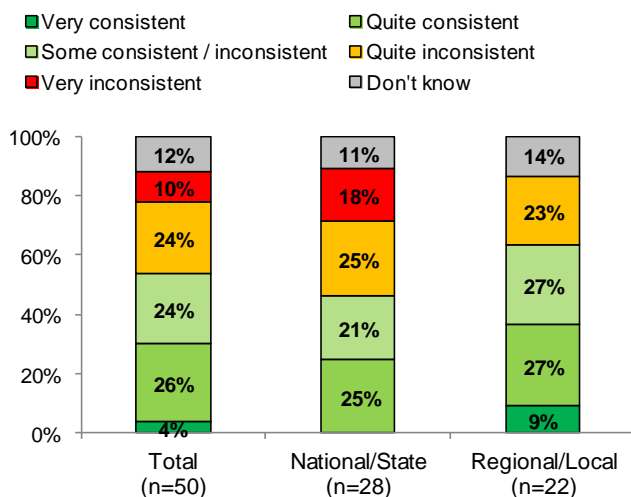
4.3 Perceived consistency in severity of enforcement action

Overall, managers reported mixed feelings regarding the consistency in severity of enforcement action across the councils they deal with – 30% reported very or quite consistent severity of enforcement action and 34% reported quite or very inconsistent enforcement action severity. Enforcement action was defined as referring to the issuing of warning letters, improvement notices or penalty notices. Regional/local managers were more likely (36%) than State managers (25%) to report consistency in the severity of enforcement action, with the latter group more likely to report inconsistency (43% vs 23%), again possibly because they work across a wider number of councils.

The specific inconsistencies that the seventeen managers had experienced between NSW local councils in the severity of enforcement action concerning food safety issues focussed mainly on the variations in enforcement actions taken by EHOs for seemingly similar breaches of the code – sometimes the same breach could attract a verbal warning, an improvement notice or a fine, depending on the EHO or council involved. There was also mention of different standards of enforcement action being applied to different types of outlets (e.g. retail chains versus independent stores).

Figure 13 shows some improvement since 2007 in the area of the consistency in the severity of enforcement action. More than half of each group thought that consistency in this area had stayed about the same over the last four years, with around one quarter of each group noticing an improvement and eleven to fifteen percent feeling that it had worsened at least a little.

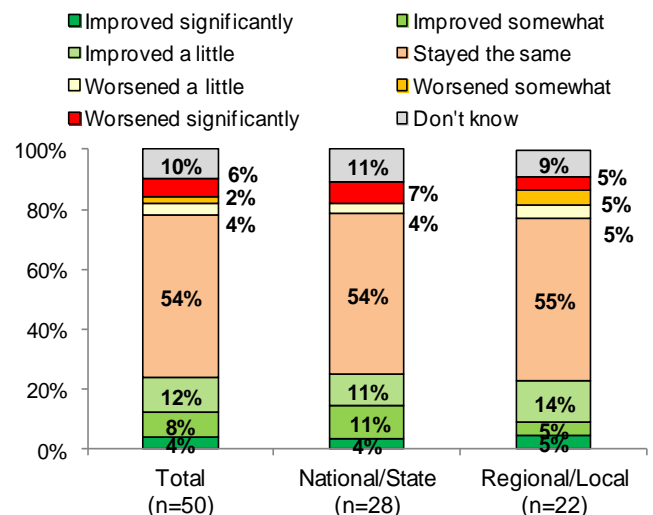
Figure 12: Consistency in severity of enforcement action across councils



Base: All retail food businesses

Q11 In your experience, would you say the severity of enforcement action across councils is...?

Figure 13: Change in consistency in severity of enforcement action across councils since 2007



Base: All retail food business

Q13 Since 2007, has the consistency in the severity of enforcement action about food safety issues (taken by the New South Wales councils you deal with) improved or worsened? Or has it stayed about the same?

4.4 Level of duplication across councils

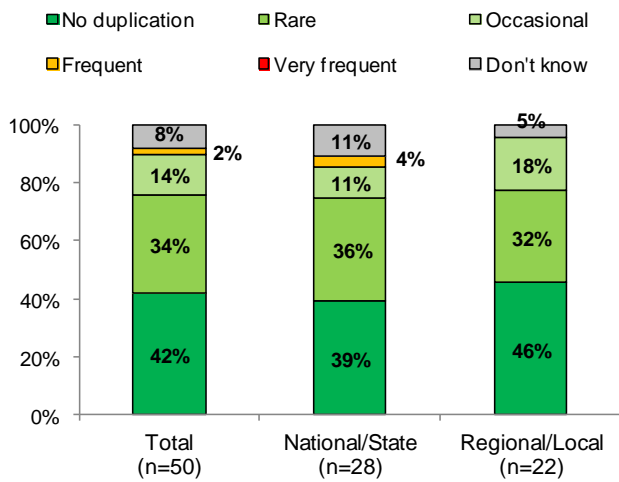
Managers were asked about the level of duplication, if any, they thought exists between the NSW Food Authority and local councils regarding food safety inspections. Figure 14 shows that about forty percent of both State and regional/local managers thought that there is no duplication, another third saw rare duplication and most of the remainder reported only occasional duplication. One State manager reported frequent duplication.

Comments made by twelve managers suggest that the duplication between the NSW Food Authority and the local councils regarding food safety inspections is quite rare, and in some cases, may be deliberate – such as when officers from the Authority inspect the meat section of the outlet, while council officers inspect other sections of the food store (or when an outlet sells both fresh and takeaway food).

Consistent with the other key measures in this section, there has been some perceived change in the level of duplication across councils since 2007. However, it depends upon the amount of duplication that was perceived to exist between these organisations before 2007 – if there was little duplication experienced then, probably little has changed since the Partnership was launched.

The 2007 baseline survey sheds some light on this issue, though again comparisons have to be treated with caution because of differences in both the sample characteristics and question wording. However, more than half of that sample felt that there was significant or moderate duplication across a range of organisations, including the NSW Food Authority, regarding food compliance. So Figure 15 suggests that the level of duplication between the Authority and local councils has reduced to some extent since 2007 – with 66% of managers feeling that the level of duplication was about the same as four years ago, including 86% of those regional/local managers who have more day-to-day dealings with the food regulation authorities. However, 32% of State managers felt there was less duplication between the NSW Food Authority and local councils now than there was in 2007, reflecting their broader perspective (compared with regional/local managers, almost all of whom reported no change).

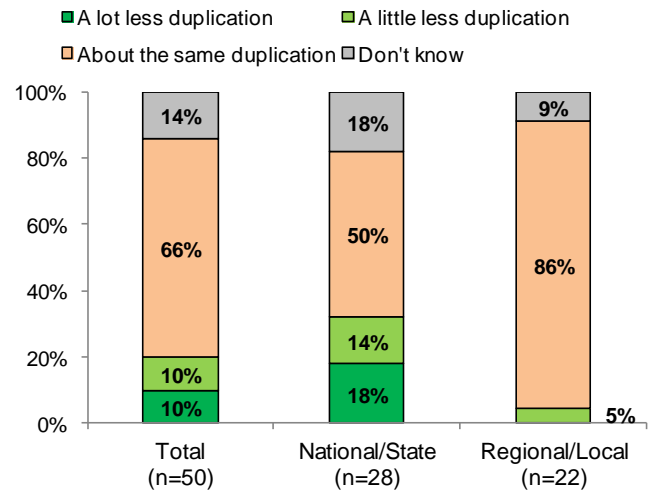
Figure 14: Level of duplication across councils



Base: All retail food businesses

Q14 What level of duplication, if any, is there currently between the New South Wales Food Authority and local councils regarding food safety inspections?

Figure 15: Change in level of duplication across councils since 2007



Base: All retail food business

Q16 Compared to four years ago (since 2007), would you say there is NOW less duplication between the New South Wales Food Authority and local councils, about the same, or more duplication?

5. The Food Regulation Partnership

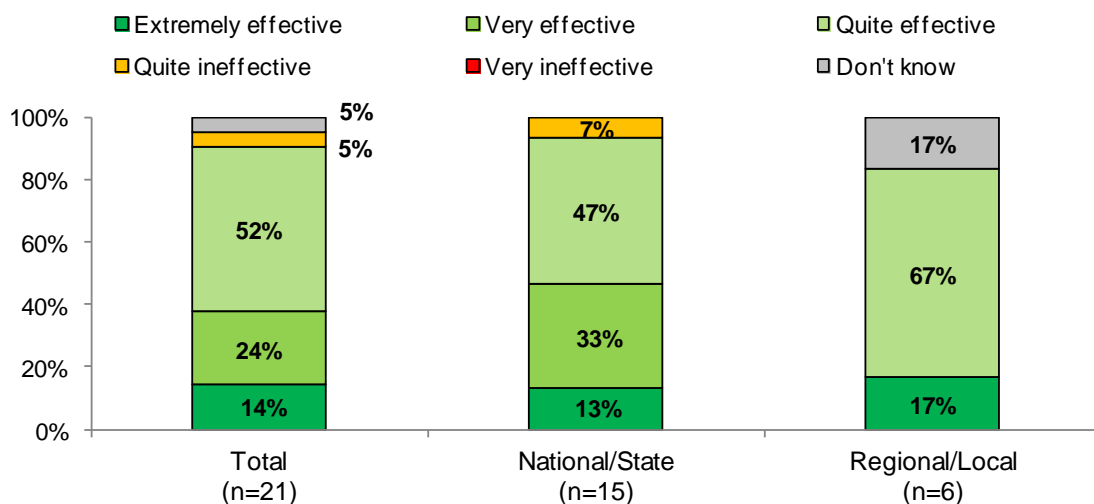
5.1 Awareness and effectiveness of the Partnership

Respondents were asked whether they had heard of the Food Regulation Partnership between the NSW Food Authority and the 152 NSW local councils. Overall, 42% of managers had heard of the Partnership, higher among the State level managers (54%) than their regional/local counterparts (27%). Sixteen of the latter group had not heard of the Partnership (73%), nor had thirteen of the State level managers (46%). State managers more often participate in Retail Food Business Industry Stakeholder Meetings and other Partnership activities, and are likely to have more direct interaction with the NSWFA.

The 21 managers who were aware of the Partnership were asked how effective or ineffective they considered it had been in improving food safety in NSW. Their responses are presented below in Figure 16, which must be treated with caution because of the small sample sizes. All but one of the fifteen State level managers aware of the Partnership considered that it has been at least quite effective (two extremely and five very effective) in improving food safety in NSW – only one regarded it as quite ineffective. Four of the regional/local managers rated it as quite effective, one extremely effective and one did not know about its effectiveness.

Overall, it can be concluded that the Partnership is starting to be seen by some key industry stakeholders as having some positive impact on food safety in NSW. Out of 50 managers interviewed, 21 were aware of the Partnership, eleven considering it quite effective in improving food safety, five very effective and three extremely effective; one considered it quite ineffective and one did not respond. In total, 38% of all fifty managers surveyed thought it has been at least quite effective in improving food safety in NSW, though all but four of these were State level managers.

Figure 16: Effectiveness of the Partnership in improving food safety in NSW



Base: Retail food businesses aware of the Food Regulation Partnership

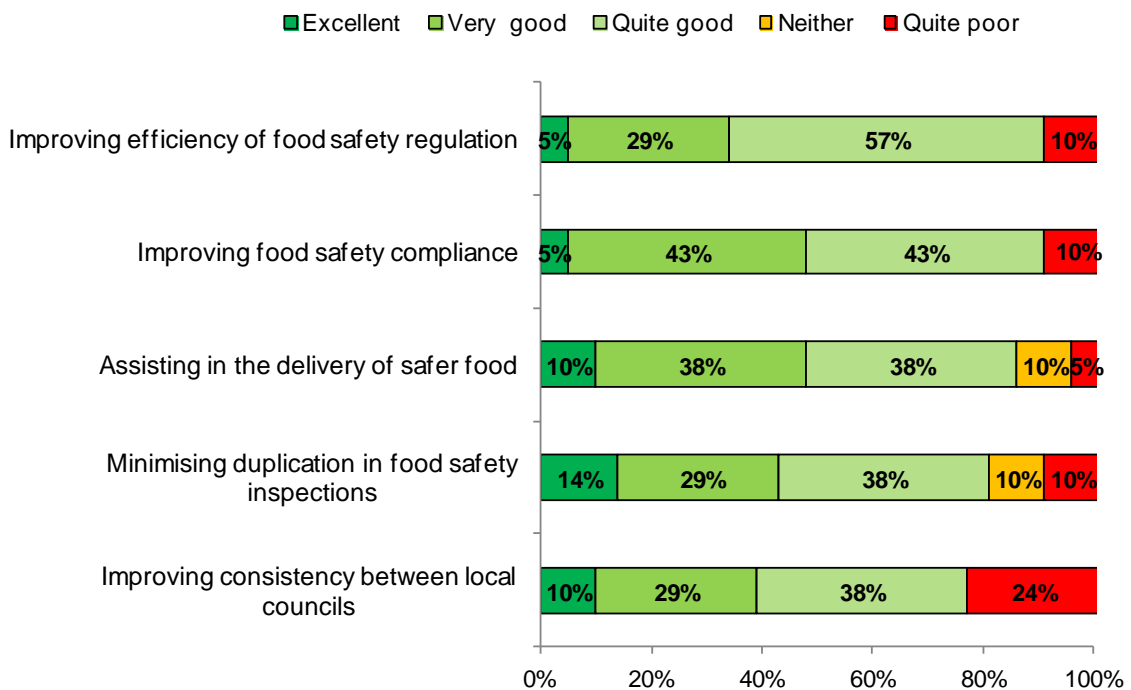
Q26 Overall, would you say the Food Regulation Partnership between the New South Wales Food Authority and the 152 local councils (in New South Wales) is effective or ineffective in improving food safety in NSW?

* Note: Low sample size

5.2 Rating of the Partnership

The 21 managers aware of the Partnership were asked to rate the Partnership on five key dimensions. Again, these findings must be treated with caution due to the small sample sizes. Generally, the Partnership was seen to be performing at a good to very good level, with between 67% and 86% responding in this range on all five dimensions. Improving the consistency between local councils was the area most likely to be rated as quite poor (24%), and could be the focus for future improvement.

Figure 17: Rating of the Partnership among those aware of it



Base: Retail food businesses aware of the Food Regulation Partnership (n=21)

Q27 I am now going to read out a number of statements about the Food Regulation Partnership between the New South Wales Food Authority and the 152 local councils (in New South Wales). How would you rate the Food Regulation Partnership for (ROTATED STATEMENT).

6. General Food Safety Issues

6.1 Main food safety issues currently facing the NSW retail food sector

Managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses were asked what they consider to be the main food safety issues currently facing the retail food sector in NSW. The overwhelming response concerned increasing knowledge among retail staff of personal hygiene practices, food handling, temperature control and to a lesser extent pest control, particularly among those working in single outlets and small businesses, and among those from a non-English speaking background, who may have had less exposure to NSW food safety standards. Education in food storage, shelf life and stock rotation were other main food safety issues commonly mentioned.

Two other issues were mentioned by a few respondents – these concerned nutrition labelling and displays and the new kilojoules law, and the impact they will have on NSW food retailers. Getting suppliers to food retailers to comply with food safety standards was also an issue for some respondents.

6.2 Priorities for food safety compliance in the NSW retail food sector over the next five years

Managers of multi-outlet retail food businesses were asked what they consider to be the priorities for food safety compliance in the retail food sector in NSW over the next five years. The key priorities given by respondents were:

- The need for more education and training in safe food handling and personal hygiene practices, focussing on high risk areas that have a higher probability of producing food borne illness;
- The need for uniform food safety standards across NSW, preferably which are consistent with national standards, to improve the efficiency of national food retailers in complying with food safety requirements; and
- Greater consistency in the process of inspections by council EHOs, across and within councils, and across different types of stores.

There were a large number of more specific issues raised which have been provided to the NSW Food Authority in a separate 'verbatim comments' file.

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

**NSW Food Authority
Retail Food Business Survey**

Field names:

CONTACT
CONTACT2
COMPANYID
REGIONAL/LOCAL
NATIONAL/STATE

Introduction

INTRO1

Good morning/ afternoon. My name is (...) and I'm calling on behalf of the New South Wales Food Authority.

S1 Are you...(CONTACT)?

1. Yes (GO TO INTRO2)
2. No (GO TO INTRO3)

*PROGRAMMER – REPLACE WITH WORDS IN BRACKETS (/) IF STATUS=6 (SRC TO FOLLOW UP)

INTRO2

Your name was provided to us by the New South Wales Food Authority as a person who (we should/ may be appropriate to) interview in our survey of retail food businesses in New South Wales. You may have been expecting a call from us; I'm from the Social Research Centre. The survey should take around 15 minutes.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF REQUIRE MORE INFORMATION REFER TO "COLD CALL" SCRIPT IN BRIEFING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Respondent available (GO TO S2)
2. Respondent not available now (Arrange callback)
3. Wrong number/person not known (GO TO S2A)
4. SOFT REFUSAL – NOT THIS TIME (TERM2)
5. HARD REFUSAL – NOT THIS TIME (TERM2)
6. Respondent away for duration of survey (TERM2)
7. Respondent not best person to speak with (GO TO S2A)

INTRO3

(CONTACT)'s name was provided to us by the New South Wales Food Authority as a person who we should interview in our survey of retail food businesses in New South Wales. Do you have a phone number I could call (CONTACT) on?

1. Have phone number (Record detail)
2. Do not have phone number (TERM2)

PROGRAMMER NOTE: ORGANISATION TYPE WILL BE PROVIDED IN THE SAMPLE. THIS WILL NEED TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DATAFILE AND USED FOR SAMPLE MANAGEMENT

*(ALL)

S2 For how many years have you worked in the retail food industry in NEW SOUTH WALES, including this organisation and any others you may have worked for?

1. Less than four years (GO TO S2A)
2. 4 to 10 years (CONTINUE)
3. More than 10 years (CONTINUE)

S5 How many of the retail food outlets in New South Wales do you yourself manage or have responsibility for?

IF NECESSARY: It doesn't have to be exact, just an estimate will be fine.

1. Contact has ONE retail outlet only in NSW (GO TO S2A)
2. Number of retail food outlets in NSW given (RANGE 2 TO 999) (GO TO S6)
3. Don't know (GO TO S2A)
4. (Refused) (GO TO S2A)

S6 And of the (INSERT NUMBER FROM S5) outlets that you have responsibility for, across how many different local councils are these outlets located?

IF NECESSARY: It doesn't have to be exact, just an estimate will be fine.

1. Contact has ONE council only in NSW (GO TO S2A)
2. Number of councils in NSW given (RANGE 2 TO 152) (GO TO PRES7)
3. (Don't know) (GO TO S2A)
4. (Refused) (GO TO S2A)

S2A For this survey we need to speak with those who have at least FOUR OR MORE YEARS experience in the retail food industry in New South Wales, manage (or have responsibility for) at least TWO OUTLETS across at least TWO NSW LOCAL COUNCILS.

Could you suggest anyone else in your organisation who may be able to help? We ideally would need to speak with someone working at an Area Manager level or higher.

1. Have phone number (Record name, position and phone number)
2. Have name but do not have phone number (Record name and position) (go to TERM3)
3. Do not have name or phone number (GO TO TERM2)
4. SOFT REFUSAL – NOT THIS TIME (TERM2)
5. HARD REFUSAL – NOT THIS TIME (TERM2)

PROGRAMMER: put new phone in SMS and flag it. ALL original sample detail are kept.

*(WORKED FOUR OR MORE YEARS IN NSW FOOD) (S2=2 OR 3)

S3 How many retail food outlets does your organisation currently operate in NEW SOUTH WALES?

IF NECESSARY: It doesn't have to be exact, just an estimate will be fine.

1. Number of retail food outlets in NSW given (RANGE 2 TO 999)
1. (Don't know)
2. (Refused)

*(MORE THAN ONE OUTLET IN NSW) (S3=2)

S4 And across how many different local councils (SAY IF NECESSARY: Local Government Areas) are these outlets (in NSW)?

IF NECESSARY: It doesn't have to be exact, just an estimate will be fine.

1. Number of councils in NSW given (RANGE 2 TO 152)
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

Our call may be monitored by my supervisor for quality assurance purposes. Please tell me if you don't want this to happen?

1. Monitoring allowed
2. Monitoring not permitted

***SECTION 1: LEVEL OF CONSISTENCY**

*(ALL)

Q1 The New South Wales Food Authority recommends that retail outlets that make and serve food should receive food safety inspections by their local council at least once per year. In your opinion is this...?

1. Too frequent
2. About right (GO TO Q3INTRO)
3. Not frequent enough
4. (Don't know / not sure) (GO TO Q3INTRO)

*(THINK INSPECTIONS TOO FREQUENT OR NOT FREQUENT ENOUGH) (Q1=1 OR 3)

Q2 What are the main reasons that you think yearly food safety inspections by local councils of food retail outlets are ...(INSERT RESPONSE TO Q1)?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

Q3INTRO Throughout the survey I will ask you about what the food industry was like four years ago compared to now. So we are talking about late 2007; a time when we changed from a Liberal to Labour government and Mr Rudd became Prime Minister. It was also before the Global Financial Crisis just to give you an idea.

1. Continue

*(ALL)

Q3 So thinking back four years to 2007, since that time has compliance with food safety standards in your outlets become better or worse, or has it stayed about the same?
(IF BETTER OR WORSE) Is that much BETTER/WORSE or just slightly better/worse?

1. Much better now
2. Slightly better now
3. Has stayed about the same (GO TO Q5)
4. Slightly worse now
5. Much worse now
6. (Don't know/ not sure) (GO TO Q5)

*(IF COMPLIANCE BETTER OR WORSE) (Q3=1, 2, 4 OR 5)

Q4 What are the main reasons that you think that compliance with food safety standards has become...
(READ OUT Q3 RESPONSE)?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

Q5 Generally, what level of consistency in food regulatory requirements is there between the (INSERT NUMBER FROM S6) local councils your business currently deals with? Would you say it is ...READ OUT?

1. Very consistent (GO TO Q7)
2. Quite consistent (GO TO Q7)
3. There are some consistencies and some inconsistencies (GO TO Q7)
4. It is quite inconsistent
5. It is very inconsistent
6. (Don't know/ not sure) (GO TO Q7)

*(IF INCONSISTENT) (Q5=4 or 5)

Q6 What specific inconsistencies have you experienced in food regulatory requirements between New South Wales local councils?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

Q7 Compared to four years ago (around 2007) has the level of consistency in food regulatory requirements (across the New South Wales local councils you deal with) improved or worsened. Or has it stayed about the same?
(IF IMPROVED OR WORSENERED) Is that significantly, somewhat or just a little?

1. Improved significantly
2. Improved somewhat
3. Improved a little
4. Stayed the same (GO TO Q9)
5. Worsened a little
6. Worsened somewhat
7. Worsened significantly
8. (Don't know/ not sure) (GO TO Q9)

*(IF CONSISTENCY OF FOOD REGULATORY ACTIVITIES IMPROVED OR WORSENERED) (Q7=1 TO 3, OR 5 TO 7)

Q8 What are the main reasons that you think the level of consistency in food regulatory requirements across New South Wales local councils has...(INSERT RESPONSE TO Q7)?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

Q9 Again thinking back to 2007, since that time have the food safety surveillance activities by councils in your outlets become more efficient or less efficient? Or has it stayed about the same?

(IF MORE OR LESS EFFICIENT) Is that much MORE/LESS or just slightly?

IF NECESSARY: By surveillance we mean food safety inspections, follow-up assessments and enforcement activities.

1. Much more efficient
2. Slightly more efficient
3. Has stayed about the same (GO TO Q11)
4. Slightly less efficient
5. Much less efficient
6. (Don't know/ not sure) (GO TO Q11)

*(IF MORE OR LESS EFFICIENT) (Q9=1, 2, 4 OR 5)

Q10 What are the main reasons that you think food safety surveillance activities by councils have become...(INSERT RESPONSE TO Q9 IF= 1, 2, 4 or 5) since 2007?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

Q11 The next question is about the severity of enforcement action. By enforcement action we mean the issuing of warning letters, improvement notices or penalty notices. In your experience, would you say the severity of enforcement action across councils is ...READ OUT?

1. Very consistent (GO TO Q13)
2. Quite consistent (GO TO Q13)
3. There are some consistencies and some inconsistencies (GO TO Q13)
4. It is quite inconsistent
5. It is very inconsistent
6. (Don't know/ not sure) (GO TO Q13)

*(IF INCONSISTENT) (Q11=4 OR 5)

Q12 What specific inconsistencies have you experienced between New South Wales local councils in the severity of enforcement action (concerning food safety issues)?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

Q13 Since 2007, has the consistency in the severity of enforcement action about food safety issues (taken by the New South Wales councils you deal with) improved or worsened? Or has it stayed about the same?
(IF IMPROVED/WORSENE) Is that significantly, somewhat or just a little?

1. Improved significantly
2. Improved somewhat
3. Improved a little
4. Stayed the same
5. Worsened a little
6. Worsened somewhat
7. Worsened significantly
8. (Don't know/ not sure)

***SECTION 2: DUPLICATION**

*(ALL)

Q14 What level of duplication, if any, is there currently between the New South Wales Food Authority and local councils regarding food safety inspections?
Would you say the duplication is...?

1. Very frequent
2. Frequent
3. Occasional
4. Rare
5. Or is there no duplication (GO TO Q16)
6. (Don't know/ not sure) (GO TO Q16)

*(IF THERE IS DUPLICATION) (Q14=1 to 4)

Q15 What specific duplications do you know of between the New South Wales Food Authority and local councils concerning food safety inspections?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

Q16 Compared to four years ago (since 2007), would you say there is NOW less duplication between the New South Wales Food Authority and local councils, about the same, or more duplication?

IF LESS/ MORE Is that a lot or a little?

1. A lot less duplication
2. A little less duplication
3. About the same duplication
4. A little more duplication
5. A lot more duplication
6. (Don't know/ not sure)

*(ALL)

Q17 What level of cooperation, if any, do you believe exists between the New South Wales Food Authority and local councils regarding food safety compliance in general?
Would you say there is...READ OUT?

1. Very strong cooperation
2. Strong cooperation
3. Some cooperation
4. Occasional cooperation
5. No cooperation (GO TO Q19)
6. (Don't know/ not sure) (GO TO Q19)

*(IF THERE IS COOPERATION) (Q17= 1 to 4)

Q18 What specific areas of cooperation do you know of between the New South Wales Food Authority and local councils concerning food safety compliance?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

Q19 Compared to four years ago (since 2007), would you say there is NOW less cooperation between the New South Wales Food Authority and local councils, about the same, or more cooperation?

(IF LESS/ MORE) Is that a lot or a little?

1. A lot less cooperation
2. A little less cooperation
3. About the same cooperation
4. A little more cooperation
5. A lot more cooperation
6. (Don't know / not sure)

***SECTION 3: OVERALL OPINION**

*(ALL)

Q20 Overall, would you say the food regulatory services currently provided by the New South Wales LOCAL COUNCILS are effective or ineffective in assisting the delivery of safer food? Is that extremely, very or quite?

1. Extremely effective (GO TO Q22)
2. Very effective (GO TO Q22)
3. Quite effective (GO TO Q22)
4. Quite ineffective
5. Very ineffective
6. Extremely ineffective
7. (Don't know/ not sure) (GO TO Q22)

*(IF LOCAL COUNCILS INEFFECTIVE) (Q20=4 to 6)

Q21 In what specific areas of food safety are local councils ineffective in assisting the delivery of safer food?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

Q22 Now thinking specifically of the food regulatory services currently provided by the New South Wales Food Authority. For example, like providing support and advice to retailers. Would you say the NEW SOUTH WALES FOOD AUTHORITY is effective or ineffective in assisting the delivery of safer food through its food regulatory services? Is that extremely, very or quite?

1. Extremely effective (GO TO Q24)
2. Very effective (GO TO Q24)
3. Quite effective (GO TO Q24)
4. Quite ineffective
5. Very ineffective
6. Extremely ineffective
7. (Don't know/ not sure) (GO TO Q24)

*(IF NSW FOOD AUTHORITY INEFFECTIVE) (Q22=4 to 6)

Q23 In what specific areas of food safety is the New South Wales Food Authority ineffective in assisting the delivery of safer food?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

Q24 Would you say the New South Wales Food Authority is effective or ineffective in PROVIDING SUPPORT AND ADVICE to retailers in disputes with councils about food safety? Is that extremely, very or quite?

1. Extremely effective
2. Very effective
3. Quite effective
4. Quite ineffective
5. Very ineffective
6. Extremely ineffective
7. (Don't know/ not sure)

***SECTION 4: FOOD REGULATION PARTNERSHIP**

*(ALL)

Q25 Have you heard of the Food Regulation Partnership, which is between the New South Wales Food Authority and the 152 local councils (in New South Wales)?

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO Q28)
3. (Don't know/ not sure) (GO TO Q28)

*(IF HEARD OF PARTNERSHIP) (Q25=1)

Q26 Overall, would you say the Food Regulation Partnership between the New South Wales Food Authority and the 152 local councils (in New South Wales) is effective or ineffective in improving food safety in NSW?
Is that extremely, very or quite?

1. Extremely effective
2. Very effective
3. Quite effective
4. Quite ineffective
5. Very ineffective
6. Extremely ineffective
7. (Don't know/ not sure)

*(IF HEARD OF PARTNERSHIP) (Q25=1)

Q27 I am now going to read out a number of statements about the Food Regulation Partnership between the New South Wales Food Authority and the 152 local councils (in New South Wales). How would you rate the Food Regulation Partnership for (ROTATED STATEMENT).

(STATEMENTS – ROTATE)

- a. Improving food safety compliance
- b. Improving consistency between local councils
- c. Minimising duplication in food safety inspections
- d. Improving efficiency of food safety regulation
- e. Assisting in the delivery of safer food

(RESPONSE FRAME)

1. Excellent
2. Very good
3. Quite good
4. (Neither good nor poor)
5. Quite poor
6. Very poor
7. Extremely poor
8. (Don't know)

*(ALL)

Q28 Since 2007, in general do you think that retail food businesses in New South Wales now produce...
(READ OUT)?

1. Much safer food across all sectors
2. Much safer food in some sectors only
3. Slightly safer food across all sectors
4. Slightly safer food in some sectors only
5. There has been no change at all
6. (Don't know/ not sure)

*(ALL)

Q29 What do you consider to be the main food safety issues currently facing the retail food sector in New South Wales?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

Q30 Over the next five years, what do you consider to be the priorities for food safety compliance in the retail food sector in New South Wales?

1. Response given (Specify) * (PROGRAMMER NOTE: Set up as full verbatim)
2. (Don't know/ not sure)
3. (Refused)

***SECTION 5: CLASSIFICATION**

THIS FITS MOST LOGICALLY AT THE END OF THE SURVEY FOR THOSE WHO WE HAVE AS CONFIRMED CONTACT.

FOR THOSE WHO WE DON'T HAVE ANY DETAIL (STATUS=6), THIS WILL OBVIOUSLY NEED TO BE ASKED UP FRONT

*(ALL)

Q31 That is now the end of the survey. Thank you for your time. Just so that we know who we have spoken to, could you let me know what your current job title is?

1. Quality Assurance Manager/ Officer
2. Regulatory Manager/ Officer
3. Business Manager/ Officer
4. Technical Manager/ Officer
5. Area or Regional Manager
6. National or State Director/Manager (DO NOT DISPLAY IF SAMPLE TYPE REGIONAL/LOCAL)
7. Franchise Owner/Manager (DO NOT DISPLAY IF SAMPLE TYPE NATIONAL/STATE)
8. Outlet or Store Manager (DO NOT DISPLAY IF SAMPLE TYPE NATIONAL/STATE)
9. Other (specify)
10. Refused

PRES7 IF STATUS=1 OR 3 (NATIONAL/STATE LEVEL CONFIRMED WITH REGIONAL/LOCAL CONTACT OR NATIONAL/STATE LEVEL NOT CONFIRMED WITH REGIONAL/LOCAL CONTACT), GO TO S7a

IF STATUS=2 OR 4 OR 6 (NATIONAL/STATE LEVEL WITHOUT REGIONAL/LOCAL CONTACT OR NATIONAL/STATE LEVEL WITHOUT REGIONAL/LOCAL CONTACT), GO TO S7b

*(NATIONAL/STATE LEVEL CONFIRMED WITH REGIONAL/LOCAL CONTACT) (STATUS=1)
S7a For this survey we would also like to speak with (INSERT CONTACT2) about food safety in NSW.

Could you please confirm their details ?

PROGRAMMER NOTE: DISPLAY DETAILS FOR CONTACT2 PRESENT IN SAMPLE AND CONFIRM / EDIT EXISTING DETAILS AS NECESSARY.

<DISPLAY FNAME, MIDDLE NAME (IF PRESENT) AND SNAME>
<DISPLAY POSITION >
<DISPLAY TELNUM >
<DISPLAY ALTNUM >

*(NATIONAL/STATE LEVEL CONFIRMED WITHOUT REGIONAL/LOCAL CONTACT OR NATIONAL/STATE LEVEL UNCONFIRMED WITHOUT REGIONAL/LOCAL CONTACT OR SRC to follow up (STATUS=2 OR 4 OR 6)
S7b For this survey we would also like to speak with a [(IF LEVEL=2) national/state / (IF LEVEL=1) regional/local] manager in your organisation about food safety in NSW.

Could you suggest anyone in your organisation who may be able to help?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: We ideally would need to speak with someone working at an Area Manager level or higher and has knowledge about food handling safety requirements.

1. Yes (Record name, position and phone number)
2. No (Do not have name or phone number)

PROGRAMMER: put details in CONTACT2 and flag it. ALL original sample detail are kept.

PROGRAMMER:Re-iterate S7c until S7c=2, collecting multiple respondent details

*(ALL)

S7c Could you suggest anyone else in your organisation who may be able to help? COLLECT MULTIPLE RESPONDENTS IF POSSIBLE

1. Yes (Record name, position and phone number)
2. No (Do not have name or phone number)

END

That's the end of the survey. Thanks very much for your time. Just in case you missed it my name is (...) and this survey was conducted on behalf of the New South Wales Food Authority.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF CONCERNED OR HAVE QUERIES ABOUT INTERVIEW

If you have any queries or concerns about the survey, I have some numbers I can give you if you like....

NSW Food Authority: Catherine Bass (02 9741 4737)
Social Research Centre: Graeme Peacock (03 9236 8500)

*TERMINATION SCRIPTS

TERM1

I was trying to contact (CONTACT NAME). Do you have a phone number I could call (CONTACT) on?

TERM2

Thank you for your time.

TERM3

Thank you for the information. I will try to contact that person.

*ALLTERM

PROGRAMMER NOTE: Please create summary of all terminations

Incorrect contact details – terminated at INTRO 2=3; INTRO 3=2

Have new contact name but no phone – terminated at S2A=2

Do not have alternative contact name or phone – terminated at S2A=3

Soft refusal – terminated at INTRO 2=4

Hard refusal – terminated at INTRO 2=5

Away for duration of survey – terminated at INTRO2=6

Contact responsible for only one outlet or in only one council in NSW – S5 or S6=1

Appendix 2 – Technical notes

1. Detailed Methodology

1.1 Sample Provision

The sample for the *Survey of Retail Food Businesses* was provided to the Social Research Centre by the NSW Food Authority. This sample evolved from one used for the Fast Choices initiative (nutrition labelling of fast food outlets) being implemented by the Authority and other food safety initiatives. The organisations were selected on the basis of having multiple outlets across multiple councils within NSW.

An Industry Stakeholder Meeting was arranged on the 16th September 2011 and many contacts on the list attended and provided their contact details for the survey (via e-form or website). Attendees at the Industry Stakeholder Meeting were also sent a follow up email explaining the nature of the survey and when fieldwork would be conducted.

Those who did not attend the Industry Stakeholder meeting were called by the NSW Food Authority (up to three times) in order to identify the best contact within the organisation. Often an email was also sent providing additional information. Some regional/local level contacts were 'volunteered' by their national/state level counterparts.

The Social Research Centre would like to acknowledge the 'priming' process undertaken by the NSW Food Authority. This proved invaluable in the fieldwork process with all respondents contacted willing to participate.

1.2 Sample Selection

In total, 112 sample records were provided to the Social Research Centre; not all had contact details and not all were thought to be the appropriate contact for an organisation. However, this listing provided a starting point from which the usable sample was derived.

The optimal design of the project required a matching interview for an organisation at the national/state and regional/local level and the interviews were to be spread across the defined food industry sectors. The list was reviewed and each sample record was assigned a status code:

- Status 1 – Confirmed national/state and regional/local match
- Status 2 – Confirmed national/state, but no confirmed regional/local match
- Status 3 – Not confirmed national/state, but confirmed regional/local match
- Status 4 – No confirmed national/state or regional/local match
- Status 5 – Do not contact
- Status 6 – For follow-up.

1.3 Field Report

A full briefing of the project was conducted with the one interviewer assigned to the project on the 27th October 2011. Fieldwork commenced on the 28th October and was completed on the 17th November 2011. The average interview administration time was 25 minutes.

1.3.1 Release of the sample in batches

The first priority was to exhaust those sample records assigned a Status 1 or 2, that is, there was a confirmed contact at the national/state level and there was a matching regional/local contact that was (Status 1) or was not (Status 2) confirmed as willing to participate. This first batch was exhausted by the 8th November 2011.

After this time, in order to meet the quota of 50 interviews for the project, there was a need to open up the sample to Status 3, 4 and 6 to achieve as many interviews as possible. Sample records originally assigned a Status 5 (do not contact) were reviewed and those who were willing to participate were loaded into the system for potential contact.

In designing the sample release for the project, it was determined that the optimal design would be a matching organisation interview at both the national/state and regional/local level. These interviews were to be spread across the 17 food industry sectors as defined by the NSW Food Authority. It became clear during fieldwork that allowing just one match at each level in an organisation would result in too few interviews being achieved. For this reason the sample was opened up and permitted up to three interviews at the regional/local level within an organisation.

1.3.2 Referrals

As part of the screening process, contacts were also asked to provide details for others within the organisation who could meet the selection criteria for the survey:

- Had at least four years experience in the food industry in NSW; and
- Responsible for at least two outlets in two different council areas.

This proved an important part of the survey process in order to build the sample around those organisations for which there was no matching contact details at either a national/state or regional/local level.

1.3.3 Final call outcomes

In total 50 interviews were achieved with:

- 58% of interviews (29) achieved within 3 calls to the qualifying respondent;
- 30% of interviews (15) achieved after 4 to 6 calls to the qualifying respondent;
- 12% of interviews (6) achieved after 7 or more calls to the qualifying respondent;
- 76% of interviews (38) were with the contact provided by the NSW Food Authority
- 24% of interviews (12) were achieved through the referral process built into the questionnaire.

Table 1: Final call outcomes

	Total n=	Total %	
Total sample selected	108		
Total numbers initiated	105		
Telstra message, number disconnected	3	3%	
Incoming Call Restrictions	0	0%	
Fax/Modem	0	0%	
Not a business number	0	0%	
Incorrect contact details / Wrong number, contact not known	1	1%	
New contact name, no phone number	0	0%	
No alternative contact person or phone number	1	1%	
Sub unusable (as % sample initiated)	5	5%	
Eligible numbers (as % sample initiated)	100	95%	
		As % Eligible Numbers	As % in-scope contacts
No Contact			
Engaged	0	0%	
Answering machine	25	25%	
No answer	1	1%	
Sub total no contact	26	26%	
Out of scope			
Contact has less than 4 years experience	0	0%	
Contact responsible for only one outlet or in only one council in NSW	0	0%	
Claims to have done survey	0	0%	
LOTE no follow up	0	0%	
Other out of scope	8	8%	
Subtotal out of scope	8	8%	
Contacts			
Completes	50	50%	76%
Appointments	15	15%	23%
Hard refusal	0	0%	0%
Soft refusal	0	0%	0%
Contact away for duration of survey	0	0%	0%
Removed number from list	0	0%	0%
Overquota	0	0%	0%
Terminated midway	1	0%	1%
Sub total in scope contacts	66	65%	100%
All attempts	100		

1.3.4 Sample distribution

Interviews were completed in 13 of the 17 food industry sectors as defined by the NSW Food Authority. Interviews were not completed in the following sectors:

- Cinema complex
- Doughnuts
- Noodles
- Pies.

Table 2: Final sample distribution

	Total	National/State	Regional/Local
	50	28	22
Bakery	6	3	3
Beverages	1	1	0
Café/Coffee	3	1	2
Chicken	6	3	3
Fast Food Takeaways	9	4	5
Icecream	5	2	3
Kebabs	3	2	1
Petrol Stations	3	2	1
Pizza	3	2	1
Restaurant	1	1	0
Salad	1	1	0
Sandwiches	1	1	0
Supermarkets	8	5	3

Table 2