

Summary of meeting outcomes

Food Regulation Forum

Thursday 7 November 2019

The Food Regulation Forum oversees the work of the Food Regulation Partnership (FRP). The latest meeting was held in Blacktown NSW.

Forum members present at the meeting were:

Mr Paul Braybrooks OAM (Chair), Mr Damien Thomas, Local Government NSW, Ms Gina McConkey, Local Government Professionals Australia, Ms Lisa Hughes, Environmental Health Australia, Mr Andrew Davies (delegate for Mr Peter Day, NSW Food Authority), Dr David Cusack (delegate for Dr Lisa Szabo (NSW Food Authority), Ms Fiona Stalgis, Development and Environmental Professionals' Association

Guests present: Ms Sarah Northam, NSW Food Authority (Minutes)
Ms Ruth Endicott, NSW Food Authority

Apologies: Dr Lisa Szabo, NSW Food Authority, Mr Peter Day, NSW Food Authority, Ms Julie Kisa, Development and Environmental Professionals' Association, Mr Paul Harmon, Local Government NSW, Cr Ruth Fagan, Local Government NSW, Ms Robyn Hobbs OAM, NSW Small Business Commissioner (Independent)

An overview of the meeting is below:

Report from State Liaison Group Meeting 25 September 2019

The outcomes from the latest meeting were noted and discussed by the Forum. Discussion points included:

- An introduction to the consumer food safety behavioural insight work currently underway to learn about current food safety practices by consumers.
- NSW Department of Planning informed attendees about the proposals to amend the Codes SEPP affecting home-based businesses.
- The retail inspection database project is awaiting funding approval. The Food Authority is exploring all opportunities to progress its development into 2020.

Regional Food Group training activities for 2019 and 2020

Members were provided an overview of the current and future training sessions delivered by the Local Government Unit for EHOs.

The current round of training is the focus on identifying emerging trends in the food service and retail sectors and how the regulatory system can best address any concerns raised. Once the round is completed future actions will be developed.

The 2020 training topics are proposed to be:

- Food safety culture with a focus on allergen management – how EHOs can assess allergen management during an inspection with a view to informing a business's food business culture.

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- *Salmonella* – case studies focusing on the SE outbreaks to encourage EHOs to maintain vigilance with regard to raw egg use
- Emerging issues and how to effectively investigate and regulate them – internet delivery, mobile/temporary events etc.

Forum members offered observations on these topics. Based on the retail session questions it was suggested that food labelling awareness and training be considered too.

Members were informed that an online training option is now available for each round. This is to provide flexibility in engagement for any EHOs who were unable to attend the face to face meetings. These webinars are well received.

FRP Workshop, Manly 22-23 August 2019

Members were provided a report on the Food Regulation Partnership (FRP) Workshop 2019. This event was held on 21-23 August 2019 at Q Station Manly.

The biennial FRP Workshop aims to enhance Environmental Health Officers' (EHOs) food surveillance capacity, promote professional networking between EHOs, and strengthen the Food Regulation Partnership between councils and the Food Authority.

Members were advised on the following outcomes:

- The event was a great success. Food Authority worked in conjunction with EHA. Feedback was very positive about the great location.
- There were 150 registrations on Wednesday, 123 registrations on Thursday and 25 registrations for technical tours on Friday.
- In the delegate feedback, the Food Authority received 42 responses of 'Excellent' or 'Very good'.
- the range of topics well received. Attendees liked speed networking but not the logistics (50/50).

A joint dinner event was held on Wednesday 21 August at which the EHA Excellence Awards and FRP Champion Awards were presented.

Activity reporting from enforcement agencies 2018-19

Members were provided a report on the trends and data from the latest food surveillance activity reporting period. Of particular note the following were discussed:

- Outcomes scores: 46% 5-star / 28% 4-star / 14% 3-star.
- Penalty Notices, warning letters and prohibitions actions have all dropped.
- The number of Improvement notices issued has increased.
- Feedback letters from Dr Liza Szabo were sent to council General Managers in late October.

A Summary Report has been produced and can be found on the Food Authority website.

Retail & Food Service Information Session at Blacktown

Forum members reflected on the morning's session.

Discussion points included:

- We need to ensure sufficient time for Q&As for attendees, although acknowledged time constraints on this occasion.
- Questions from the audience included:
 - Packaging/labelling in-store.
 - Best before and use-by dates.
 - Alcohol in food.
 - Addition/alteration of labels on imported products, allergen declarations.
 - Kilojoule labelling in supermarkets.
 - Added sugar labelling.

Retail & Food Service Information Session for 2020

Members were informed of the expressions of interest received to host a session for 2020. The merits of each council area and location were discussed.

Discussion points included:

- EOI sent to Councils in October. 4 councils replied (Mid Western Regional Council, Georges River Council, Bayside Council and Bega Valley Shire Council).
- Recommend that Georges River and Bayside Councils be a joint event.
- Opportunity to piggy-back Orange Food Week in April 2020.

Further discussion is needed on venues and dates. Once arrangements are finalised members will be informed out of session.

***Campylobacter* Reduction Strategy**

The Food Authority informed Forum members on the strategy, the program of training and survey activities, and the initial results that have now been collated.

Forum members noted:

- The survey was conducted April-July 2019.
- 22 individual councils participated
- Data collected from approximately 169 premises, including 230 food samples
- *Campylobacter* was detected in 13 samples
- No *Salmonella* was found
- *E.coli* was found in 15 samples

A report will be produced and the Food Authority will provide a copy as part of future meetings. The Forum suggested we promote the results of the survey to retail food sector.

Date of the next meeting

The date of the next Food Regulation Forum meeting will be in March 2020. The exact date and location will be determined shortly.