

Summary of meeting outcomes

Food Regulation Forum

Thursday 18 July 2019

The Food Regulation Forum oversees the work of the Food Regulation Partnership (FRP). The latest meeting was held via teleconference.

Forum members present at the meeting were:

Paul Braybrooks OAM (Chair), Josie Rizzo (delegate for Lisa Szabo NSW Food Authority), Ruth Fagan, Local Government NSW, Damien Thomas, Local Government NSW, Julie Kisa, Development and Environmental Professionals' Association, Sarah Flowers, Environmental Health Australia, Craig Shadbolt (delegate for Peter Day, NSW Food Authority), Tyler Wakefield (delegate for Robyn Hobbs, NSW Small Business Commissioner)

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

Apologies:

Lisa Szabo, NSW Food Authority, Gina McConkey, Local Government Professionals Australia, Lisa Hughes, Environmental Health Australia, Peter Day, NSW Food Authority, Robyn Hobbs OAM, NSW Small Business Commissioner (Independent), Ms Fiona Stalgis, Development and Environmental Professionals' Association, Paul Harmon, Local Government NSW, Peter Day, NSW Food Authority),

An overview of the meeting is below:

Food Regulation Partnership Champion Awards

The FRP Food Surveillance Champion Awards were established to recognise outstanding performance and achievement in food safety surveillance by environmental health officers (EHOs), councils and groups.

There are 5 award categories which are determined biennially and presented at the FRP Workshops.

Members received information on the nominations submitted for the Champion Awards. The sub-committee of the Forum has been formed to decide on the award recipients. The assessments to select a winner are to take place shortly.

The presentation of Champion Awards will take place at the dinner at the FRP Workshop in August 2019.

Report from State Liaison Group Meeting 3 July 2019

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

- An update on the planning for the upcoming FRP Workshop, August 2019
- Current issues and trends regarding penalty notices
- Information on the progress of the food safety inspection system development project

Food Regulation Forum

Secretariat: NSW Food Authority, 6 Avenue of the Americas, Newington NSW 2127
Telephone: 1300 552 406 Fax: 02 9741 4888

- Introduction of the next phase of the Food Authority's *Campylobacter* reduction strategy
- The next meeting will be 25 September 2019

Report on the Retail and Food Service Information Session, 26 June 2019

Members were briefed on the outcomes of the most recent session, held in Byron Bay. In all, 57 attendees were present to learn about the FRP, the work and programs of the Food Authority, Byron Shire Council initiatives relating to retail food businesses, food labelling and compliance information for small manufacturers.

The panel session consisting of speakers was very popular with local food businesses asking many questions on the topics raised.

The next retail session will be hosted with Blacktown City Council and held on 7th November.

FRP Workshop, Manly 22-23 August 2019

Members were provided a report on the Food Regulation Partnership (FRP) Workshop 2019. This event is currently in the planning phase and will be 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.

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

Members have been provided a copy of the draft program for the FRP Workshop. It includes a mix of speakers from the Food Authority and local councils. The program provides an update on the Local Government Food Safety Inspection System, interactive speed networking session, "Essentials Workshops" on labelling and investigations, and optional technical tours to local businesses.

Members were invited to contribute wherever possible and to attend the event.

Department of Planning Legislative Changes

The Food Authority provided a brief update on the review of planning legislation as it affects home-based food businesses:

- LGU has contributed to the draft proposals
- Department of Planning is planning further consultation
- Forum members will be provided with further updates once available.

Food Safety Inspection Database

Members were provided an update on a reporting database proposal.

The Food Authority is co-designing a food safety inspection recording and reporting database with councils. The resulting proposal is a world class model utilising the most recent technology. A business case for the database was approved in October 2018 and prioritised for funding. A funding decision is expected later this year.

The Forum discussed the merits of the proposal, the alternative systems already available in the marketplace plus the growing frustration on the delay in approvals. The Forum offered a letter of support for the database development.

Further updates will be provided to the Forum as they become available.

***Campylobacter* Reduction Strategy**

Members were provided an overview of a current Food Authority initiative contributing towards both the NSW and national Foodborne Illness Reduction strategies.

The Food Authority developed a program to reduce *Campylobacter* in consultation with various stakeholders, including key Food Authority staff and local council EHOs.

The Food Authority provided an update on the progress of this work:

- 22 councils participated
- Data collected from approximately 144 premises, including 230 food samples
- *Campylobacter* was detected in 13 samples
- No *Salmonella* was found
- *E.coli* was found in 15 samples
- Further data analysis is to be done

Members discussed these initial findings and asked the Food Authority to consider ways to promote the study and its participants.

An update will be provided to the Forum in future meetings.

Local Government Skills Shortage

The Forum has previously learned about developments on skills shortages for some professionals in the local government sector.

The Australian Local Government Association has produced a report on skills shortage in councils, e.g. town planners, EHOs. The shortages are due to lack of remuneration and experienced candidates.

Local Government NSW has written to the NSW Public Sector Industry Training Advisory seeking to have qualifications added to the Skills List in an attempt to address the skills shortage.

Members learned that the new local government training package with new VET qualifications will be finished in 2020 and LGNSW will consider having these added to the Skills List at that time.

The Forum will look to influence developments on this issue in the future.

Date of the next meeting

The date of the next Food Regulation Forum meeting is 7th November 2019.