

## Summary of meeting outcomes

### Food Regulation Forum

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**Date:** 16 May 2022, 10:00am

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

**Attendees:** Mr Paul Braybrooks OAM, (Chair), Dr Lisa Szabo (CEO, NSW Food Authority), Cr Phyllis Miller and Cr Helen Tickle (Local Government NSW), Ms Erin Hogan (Environmental Health Australia), Mrs Fiona Stalgis and Ms Yael Lang (Development and Environmental Professionals' Association).

**Guests:** Mr Andrew Davies, Ms Katherine Gash, Ms Ruth Houston, Mr Judd Owen and Ms Josie Rizzo (NSW Food Authority, Local Government Unit).

**Apologies:** Mr Greg Vakaci (NSW Food Authority), Mrs Lisa Hughes (Environmental Health Australia), Cr Ruth Fagan (Local Government NSW).

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### National working groups

The FRForum members were provided an update the two national projects where the NSW Food Authority (NSWFA) sit on Working Groups (WG).

The Food Safety Culture (FSC) project aims to develop resources for environmental health officers (EHOs) to rate food businesses' level of FSC and assist them in improving. In early 2020 the Local Government Unit (LGU) introduced FSC at Regional Food Group meetings, and developed a voluntary survey for local councils to take observations and ask questions re allergen management. However this was suspended due to COVID and has been subsequently postponed a number of times. It is proposed to update the existing resources and roll out the survey from July 2022. The survey targets businesses promoting allergen free food items. Results will be reported back to the WG for consideration in regard to foodborne illness reduction strategy.

The Food Safety Management (FSM) tools P1053 WG has proposed 3 additional tools to be added to Chapter 3 Food Safety Standards of the 'Food Standards Code'. The draft standard was released 14 February 2022 with a call for public submissions. The proposed regulatory requirements are to require a Food Safety Supervisor (this provision already exists in NSW and the national model is same with an enhancement whereby 'reasonably available' is defined), food handling training and, substantiation of food safety management of prescribed activities, for some food businesses (eg high risk activities such as raw egg sauce to include records re egg receipt, pH, storage etc). The 'Implementation Guide' provides further detail and there will be a 12-month implementation period.

### State Liaison Group

The last two State Liaison Group (SLG) meeting were held on 15 February 2022 and 7 December 2021 where representatives from the 16 Regional Food Groups (RFGs) attended. The SLG facilitates opportunity to provide updates at a state level on matters relevant to the FRP eg Food Regulation Forum, Retail Information Sessions, training including topics for RFGs, the Authorised Officer Online program, various projects etc, as well as opportunity to discuss any issues that have been raised at RFGs. The next meeting will be 24 May 2022.

## **Authorised Officer (AO) online training**

This is being developed in conjunction with colleagues in Biosecurity and Food Safety (BFS). Several modules have been completely or almost finished, transcript for video animations have commenced and assessments are being finalised. This is on target to roll out at the end of 2022. Many expressions of interest to attend the training have been received.

## **FRP Workshop**

Unfortunately, due to COVID the FRP Workshop planned for August 2021 was postponed to March 2022 and then cancelled. This is a biennial event and the next will be 27-28 April 2023 at the same venue, Rydges World Square Sydney. All the speakers have been contacted and are likely to participate in 2023, so the program will likely be the same with some minor tweaks to make it current. All registrants have been refunded, tours have been rescheduled, and other other logistics addressed. The WG members have confirmed they are happy to continue to plan the 2023 event and will reconvene in the second half of 2022.

## **Regional Food Group Meetings 2022**

Round One RFG has been completed and most were face-to-face meetings. A telecon option has been introduced so that people who cannot attend in person can join in the meeting and training in real time. In addition, the training will continue to be recorded and posted to the FRP Portal for access by EHOs at any time. The Round One topic was 'Food Act Investigation Tips' and was very well received by attendees. The next round of training will highlight the outcomes of the Food Notification work and roll out of the FSC survey targeting allergen management.

## **FRP Champions Awards**

The biennial FRP Champion Awards aim to acknowledge excellent retail food safety work by leading individual professionals and teams that work in councils. The assessments are made by a sub-group of the FRForum independently of the NSWFA. Typically, the award ceremony is part of the FRP Workshop, but due to its postponement and cancellation this could not occur for 2021. Hence awards were presented at the recipients' local council or other location as advised.

Congratulations to the following 2021 recipients:

- Group - City: Environmental Health Team, City of Canada Bay
- Individual - City: Shivani Nair, Liverpool City Council
- Group - Country: Environmental Health Team, Wagga Wagga City Council
- Individual - Country: Cameron Smith, Lismore City Council
- Lifetime Award - Jeff Cartwright, Yass Valley Council

A call for nominations for 2023 will be circulated at end of 2022.

## **Retail and Food Service Information sessions for 2022**

These are usually held three times per year at a mix of regional and metropolitan locations. However since 2020 there have been very few due to COVID. Due to this and the demand from the expressions of interest received, several are planned for 2022. The first was held in Mosman on 22 February and was significantly hampered by poor weather, transport disruptions, flooding and rising COVID cases. The next is scheduled for Tumut on 18 May with Snowy Valleys Council, followed by Picton on 2 August with Wollondilly Council. Three councils that are close together

expressed interest so there will be a roadshow with Lake Macquarie Council, Cessnock City Council and Port Stephens Council in October.

### **Food notification project 2021-22**

The project involved 20 volunteer councils and 131 in-scope businesses. Only preliminary data is available at present as a report is being prepared. The project looked at low visibility fixed food premises, which mainly advertise via online social media. The NSWFA also reached out to online delivery platforms and has received some basic information about their processes. The project is to also deliver a free food safety webinar to interested food businesses within the volunteer councils' local government area and is planned for 1 June.

**Date of next meeting** - to be confirmed