

Food Regulation Partnership

Strengthening food surveillance in the retail food sector of NSW

EDAP conference

Lightning Ridge, 2 May 2013

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NSW Food Authority remit

- Established April 2004
- Ensure food in NSW is safe and correctly labelled
- Foodborne illness investigation across NSW
- High level enforcement actions
- Science and policy development for NSW, contribute to national policies
- Regulation of:
 - Licensed businesses (dairy, meat, seafood, high risk plant products, eggs, food service to vulnerable persons)
 - Non-retail food sectors (primary production, manufacturing)
- **Support role of local government in retail food surveillance -- Food Regulation Partnership**

FRP



- Commenced July 2008
- Formal partnership between local and state government
- All councils appointed as enforcement agencies under *NSW Food Act 2003* - with mechanism to cover costs
- Defined roles for councils and NSW FA
- Councils regulate the retail and food service sector
- NSW FA provides training and support for council EHOs, and facilitate regular networking and communication
- Objectives:
 - Reduce foodborne illness
 - Efficient use of local and state resources
 - Support the environmental health profession
 - Improve communication with the retail food sector
 - Improve consistency of inspection



Local Council responsibilities



1 July 2008 – all 152 councils formally appointed as enforcement agencies under *Food Act 2003*

Category B:

- Routine inspections of **retail food businesses** within their LGA
- Complaint investigations
- Emergency response eg urgent recalls

Category C:

- All of Category B responsibilities **plus**
- Routine inspections and complaint investigations of certain non-licensed and non-retail food businesses

(ie certain unlicensed food manufacturers and wholesalers and/or home-based food businesses in LGA)

Category A:

- Emergency response role only
- No responsibility for inspection or complaint investigation of food premises. NSW Food Authority undertakes inspections in this area

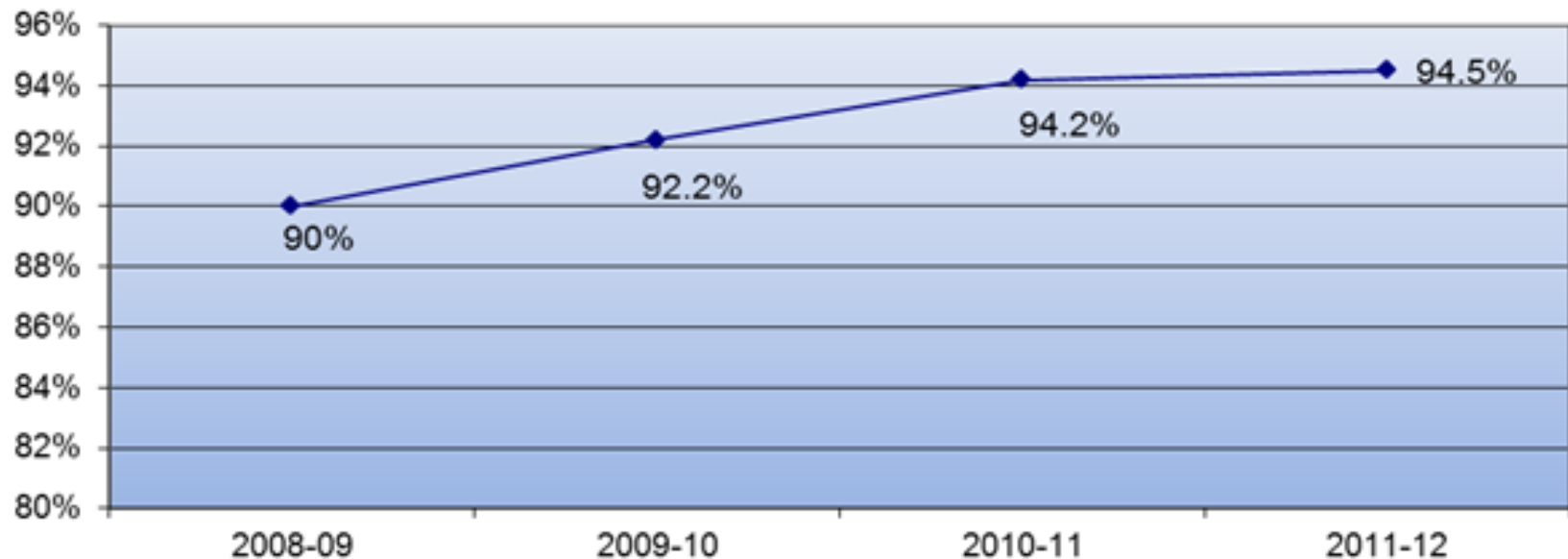


FRP activities report

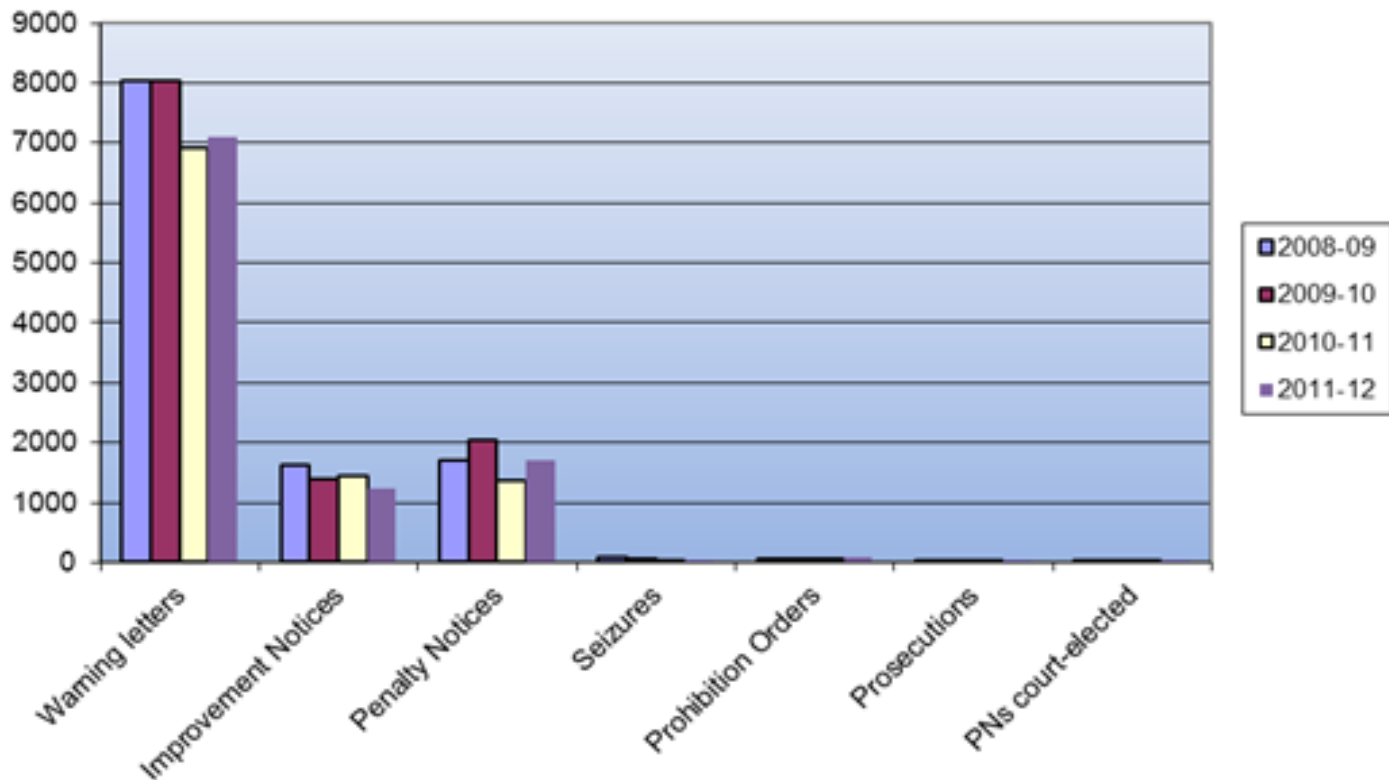
Retail and food service sector: 1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012

- Provides a summary of compliance
- Highlights significant work of councils in the retail sector
- 39,411 high and medium risk food businesses
- 150 FTE Authorised Officers (*Food Act 2003*)
- 59,974 inspections conducted (high and medium risk)
- 2,162 food businesses required ongoing regulatory intervention/inspections

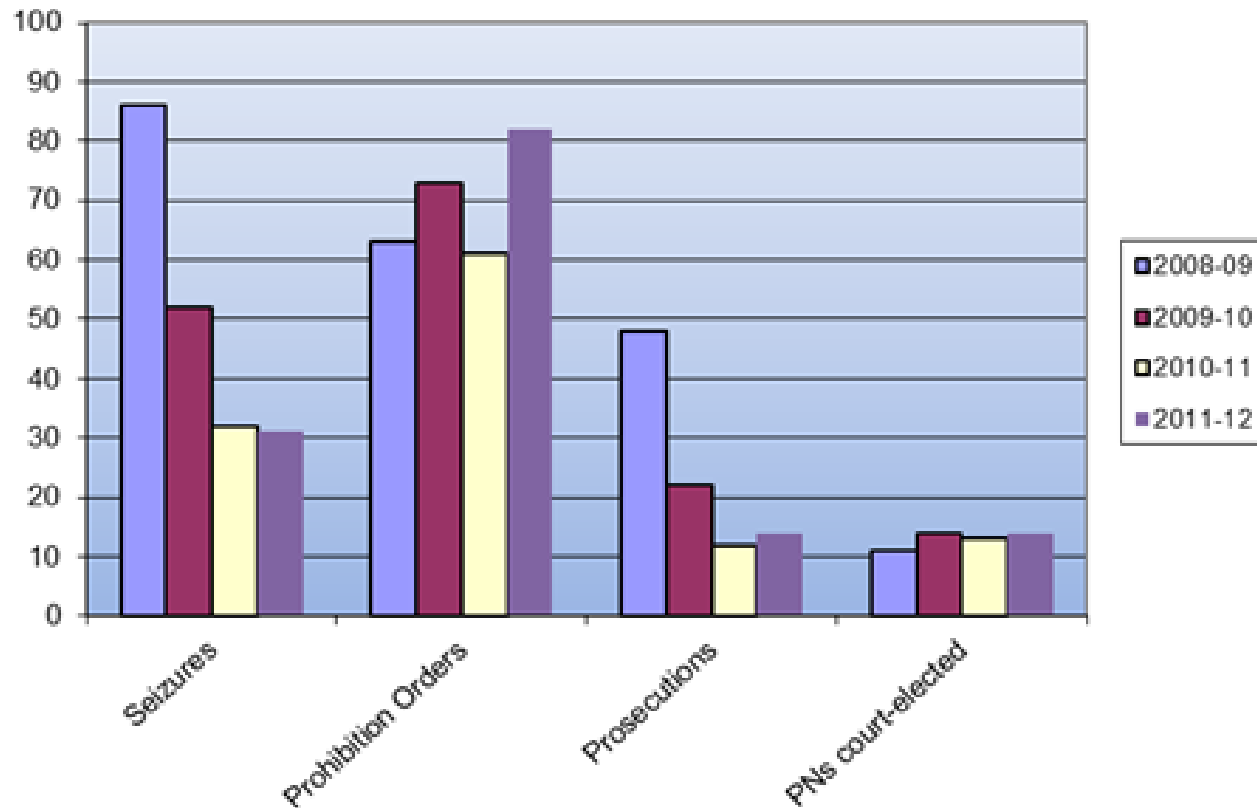
Compliance rate for retail inspections conducted 2008-12 has improved since partnership began



Most councils use graduated approach in dealing with non compliance

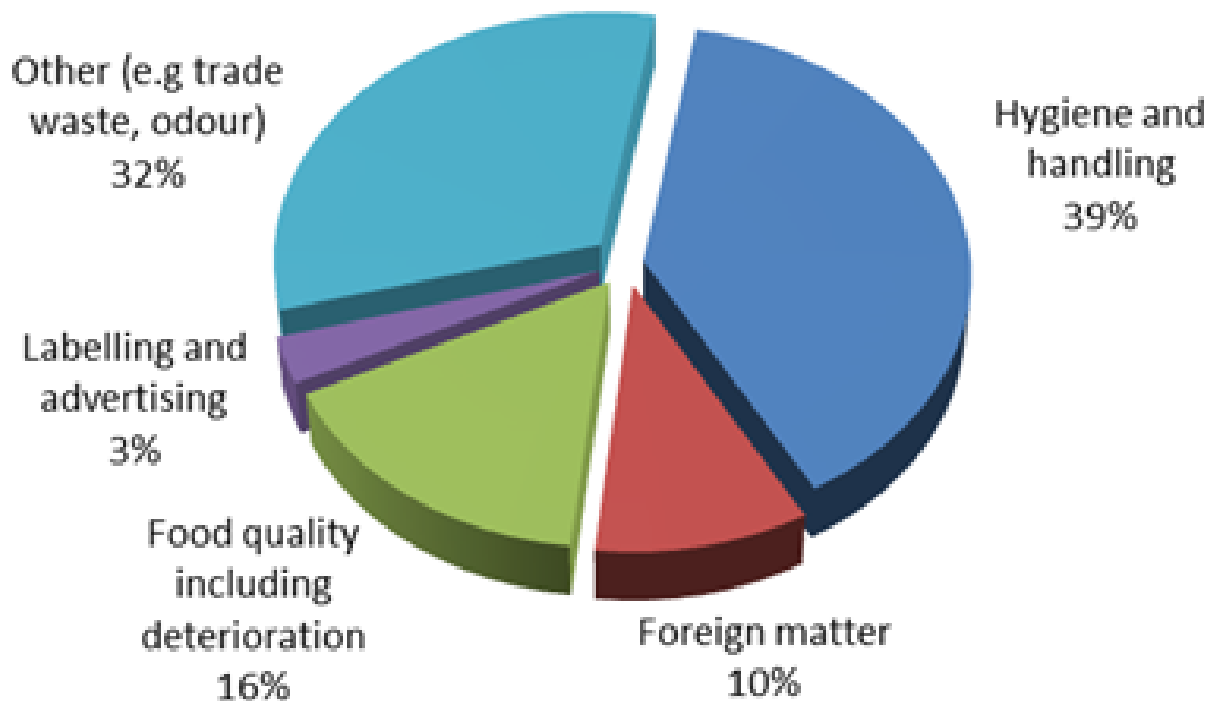


Major enforcement types



Food safety complaints

- 4,196 food safety complaints investigated
- Complaint types:



Councils continue to help food businesses

- 96% provided technical advice
 - food safety
 - construction and fit out of new food premises, pre-purchase and pre-operational inspections
- 97% provided information
 - newsletters, posters, calendars, websites, fact sheets (some in various languages)
- 42% provided basic food hygiene training
- 41% involved in a range of other activities
 - surveys, pilots/trials (FPAR, SoD)
 - collaborated with approved RTOs to provide FSS training
 - providing information to school students and event organisers

Networks

- All stakeholders
 - Retail and food service industry advisory group meetings
- Council EHOs
 - Regional Food Group meetings - discussions and training:
 - Food Notify notification system
 - Penalty Notices
 - Activities reporting
 - State Liaison Group meetings
 - New EHO training days:
 - Food Act seizures
 - Pest control
 - Foodborne illness and food compliant investigations
- Sponsorship and support for professional associations – conferences/meetings

Special Projects Grants



Food
Regulation
Partnership™

Successful applicant

Topic

Kogarah City Council

Recipe for Food Safety Short Course for Thai businesses

Wagga Wagga City Council

Food Safety Calendars 2012

Port Stephens Council

Portfolio of photographs as a resource that can be used as examples of best practice/worst practice by EHOs in presentations/seminars

Queanbeyan City Council

Development and trial of electronic inspection procedures using a tablet/tough book interface with the FPAR

North Sydney Council

Development of a manual/SOP for medium to small food business operators

Randwick City Council

Development of an information sheet for development/construction certificate (or complying development certificate) for fit out of food premises

City of Canada Bay Council

Development of a spiral bound food safety booklet that will assist food businesses to keep important food safety records (temp, cleaning, maintenance, deliveries, pest control, etc)

Fairfield City Council

Temporary food stall folder



Food
Authority

Champion Awards

- Recognition of individual, organisations/groups who have made significant contribution to food surveillance in NSW

Category

Group/Organisation – City

Group/Organisation - Country

Individual – Country

Individual – City

Lifetime Service

Lifetime Service

Champions Award Recipient

North Sydney, Ryde and Ku-ring-gai Councils

The Environmental Health Section, Ballina Shire Council

Joshua Smith, Greater Taree City Council

Jody Houston, Manly Council

Kelvin Frost

David Martin



FRP scholarship

Scholarship recipient

Erin Hogan, Sutherland Shire Council

Jera Kubitzky, Shellharbour City Council

Renae McCanna, Griffith City Council

Project

'Investigation into the knowledge level and application of safe temperature control practices amongst food handlers in the Sutherland Shire area'

'How is food safety at temporary food stalls at events regulated by NSW councils and Food Authority? An investigation into resource allocation, inspection protocols and statistics on food safety and control'

'Food Handlers Knowledge: An Investigation into the Gaps in Knowledge of Food Handlers'





Other activities where councils have been instrumental – Scores on Doors

- Common program in overseas jurisdictions
- State wide model developed to ensure consistency and minimise confusion for councils, businesses and public
- 28 councils participating in on-going trial
- Over 600 food businesses participating across NSW
- Grades awarded:
 - 5 star = Excellent, 4 star = Very Good, 3 Star = Good
- Interested councils can participate at any time



Food Safety Supervisor Regulation

- Food handler training initiative to safeguard consumers from foodborne illness
- Designed to improve food safety skills and knowledge in medium and high risk food businesses
- Enforcement provisions commenced 1 October 2011 after 12 month implementation period
- 126 approved RTOs, 50914 FSS certificates issued
- Review of FSS program and notification requirements underway
- Increase in warning letters during 2011-12 possibly due to new FSS requirement
- PNs re failure to appoint FSS published on 'Name and Shame' register following warning

kJ information for fast foods

- Larger 'fast' and snack food chains in NSW from 1 Feb 2012 must show:
 - the **amount of energy (kJ = energy)** in the food on their menu boards, and
 - an average **daily intake reference value** for adults of 8700kJ
- Applies to food businesses with 20 or more outlets in NSW or 50 or more outlets nationally
- The kJ information helps customers make choices

FRP evaluation - 2012

- Survey of EHOs, GMs and multi outlet food businesses to gauge effectiveness of FRP and areas for improvement
- Over 100 councils responded
- Final reports published on the Authority's website
- Recommendations:
 1. Improve food regulatory consistency across NSW - promote use of standard regulatory tools for inspection, compliance and enforcement
 2. Authority assist councils in resolving cross boundary food regulatory issues
 3. Authority develop a communication strategy targeting retail food businesses - assist in improving the flow of information to retail food businesses (dedicated web pages, retail newsletter)
 4. The Authority to improve how it communicates, supports, assists and monitors food compliance and enforcement activities by councils (e.g FRP web portal, training)
 5. Authority examines 'duplication' of regulatory resources

Current issues / challenges

Consistency

- **Inspection** - Development and implementation of standardised inspection checklist (FPAR) and accompanying Guidelines
- **Enforcement** - Adoption of enforcement policy by councils
- **Scope** - Regulation of mobile vendors, temporary events, home-based businesses
- **Skills and Knowledge** - Certificate IV Food Surveillance offered in face to face mode (July to August 2013)
- **Knowledge and Network** - FRP conference, September 2013
- **Continuous improvement in FRP** – Implement recommendations of the FRP evaluation



Food Premises Assessment Report (FPAR)

- Key objective – tool to improve consistency in the application of food regulation
- Assists food businesses undertake self-assessment
- 152 NSW councils were surveyed regarding FPAR usage to better understand barriers to uptake

The image shows a sample Food Premises Assessment Report (FPAR) form. The form is titled 'Food Premises Assessment Report' and includes sections for 'General Requirements', 'Food Handling Controls', 'Health & Hygiene Requirements', 'Cleaning & Sanitation', and 'Miscellaneous'. Each section contains a list of specific requirements with checkboxes for compliance. The form also includes a 'Total Points' section and a 'Signatures' section for the assessor and the business owner/employee. The form is dated 'FFAR Edition 1 June 09'.

Key response information from survey

- 83 of 152 (54%) of councils responded
- 75% of responding councils use FPAR
- Nearly 50% of councils not using FPAR preferred their own tailor made form
- But - over 90% of responding councils expressed interest in an electronic version of the FPAR
- And - nearly 15% of councils using FPAR already use some form of electronic FPAR

Main reasons given by councils for not using FPAR (NB – some gave multiple reasons)

- 10 preferred their own wording
- 7 wanted to use up stock on hand
- 9 didn't like the crowded layout, font size and space for making notes
- 4 were resistant to change
- 1 is waiting for an electronic version

Exploring the potential for electronic FPAR

- 78 councils answered the question to indicate their interest in an electronic FPAR
- 90% were either definitely interested or interested subject to council policy, resourcing or technology
- 4% were unsure
- 6% were opposed
- Of the councils interested in electronic FPAR, most (94%) were also interested in integrating this with their data management systems

Where to from here?

- The Authority has committed to two pieces of work in relation to recommendations made by the FRP evaluation. Both of these will be better informed by the results of this survey
 1. Explore policy options to facilitate universal adoption of FPAR by councils
 2. Consider how digital availability of FPAR may be facilitated including experience of councils already using digital FPAR

- Last 12 months of FRP has been very successful
- Team effort – partnership between 153 councils, > 400 EHOs and NSW Food Authority

Thank you !!!

More info?

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- Email: contact@foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- Tel: 1300 552 406