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FOOD SAFETY AWARENESS

- A RESEARCH REPORT -

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Over the last 12 months there has been a general positive shift in safe food handling, preparation and storage behaviours. In many cases the results show a return to the similar positive positions of 2006 following a decline in compliance with safe practices last year.
- There has been a small but statistically significant decrease in the proportion of respondents who shop at a supermarket in 2008 compared with 2007. All other food venues for purchase remain consistent across years in which data was collected suggesting the convenience of supermarkets have attracted customers from many alternative food venues.
- The dynamics of food preparation responsibilities in the household has remained relatively consistent since 2006. The exception here is with children as 'other preparers of food' who have been increasingly cited each year of data collection and in 2008 now show a significant change to the proportion cited in 2006. This possibly reflects an increase in home and work demands of parents and single parent households and subsequent reliance on younger members of the family.
- While the period 2006-2007 showed a significant decrease in the frequency of Victorian households preparing, handling or cooking raw chicken 'monthly', this movement has not continued in 2008. The data indicates that over the three years of this project the Victorian population has remained skewed towards those households who prepare, handle or cook raw chicken on a 'weekly or more regular' basis.
- Victorians typically enjoy preparing food and though there have been no significant shifts over the three years of this project there has been a notable increase in respondents stating they 'enjoy it a lot' during 2008 in comparison to previous years.
- Messages around hand washing and using separate equipment have seen greater proportions (though non-significant) of people each year saying they 'always' undertake these respective behaviours.
- It is also positive to report that awareness of unsafe practices has increased since 2007 and that the proportions of people saying they 'never' undertake unsafe practices has increased since last year.
- The general decline in the Victorian community's attitude towards the safe handling, storage and preparation of food between 2006 and 2007 appears to have abated with findings being more similar to 2006 and representative of greater awareness of safe food handling, preparation and storage practices. The most important attitudinal movements occurred in the areas of food storage and defrosting, as well as leaving food at room temperature for prolonged periods of time.
- While there was a significant decline in the number of Victorian households who claim to have seen, heard or read food safety information in 2007 (64% of households recalled food safety information in 2007 compared to 72% in 2006), there has been no movement in 2008.

- We would suggest that the static nature of awareness is because the Department of Human Services has not run a food safety campaign in the last twelve months and hence awareness of campaigns and information has remained constant with 2007. It is interesting to note that there have been small but statistically significant shifts in the sources of food safety information from non-specified newspapers to specified newspapers. This may account for awareness of campaigns being consistent with this time last year (that is no Departmental advertising), yet general awareness of safe food handling practices increasing (though non-significantly).
- The takeout messages in 2008 from the various information sources have stayed generic as such, similar to 2007, and revolving around general common sense hygiene practices.
- Despite the general increase in attitudes and compliant behaviour, respondents' self-assessment of their own knowledge of food safety has remained relatively unchanged over the last 12 months.
- Improvements in awareness of safe food preparation are not gender specific, though males have shown greater percentage point improvements since 2007 than females in terms of many safe food handling, preparation and storage practices. Notable improvements include the proportion of males who state they:
 - 'always/most of the time' wash their hands after touching raw chicken, increasing significantly from 77% in 2007 to 89% in 2008; and
 - 'never' pour marinades that contained raw meat over cooked meat, increasing significantly from 73% in 2007 to 85% in 2008.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Food Safety Unit is responsible for ensuring that food produced and consumed in Victoria meets national safety standards. It is a lead agency in administering the food safety regulatory framework and food laws in Victoria. It also has a key role in informing businesses and the community about food safety matters in general.

A number of consumer food safety communications activities to raise consumer awareness and knowledge of specific safe food handling practices were implemented from late 2005 and have continued since with various levels of frequency. In order to maintain an up to date understanding of consumer knowledge and attitudes to food safety, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these communications activities, quantitative market research activities to monitor and track changes in consumer awareness, knowledge and behaviour was required.

Specifically, research was required to ascertain and track consumer awareness and knowledge of safe food handling practices and of food safety messages, over a 30 month period.

This report is the third of three tracking reports that chart changes in community knowledge.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES & ASSOCIATED ISSUES

- The research objectives for the project included:
 - Identifying consumer knowledge of specific safe food handling practices.
 - Identify differences in consumer awareness, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours across different consumer segments.
 - Provide comparisons and track variances in consumer awareness, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours at least every 12 months.
 - Identify gaps in consumer knowledge related to food safety practices.
 - Identify consumer awareness of food safety messages and of specific food safety communication activities.
 - Identify the influence of food safety messages and specific activities have on consumers.
- Objectives have remained consistent across the three waves of data collection.

3. METHODOLOGY

Four hundred telephone surveys conducted via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) were conducted between April 1st and April 12th 2008 with Victorians, aged 18 years or over, who were screened at the beginning of the call to 'regularly' or 'sometimes prepare food'. People who stated they 'never' prepared food or stated 'refused' or 'don't know' to this question were terminated.

The sample for the study was structured to match the first and second wave of research in terms of location, language, gender and age group. See Table 1.0 below for details.

Table 1.0: Comparison of 2006, 2007 and 2008 Samples

	% of 2008 Sample	% of 2007 Sample	% of 2006 Sample
Non-Metro	30	30	30
Metro	70	70	70
English	80	80	80
CALD	20	20	20
Males	28	28	28
Females	72	72	72
18-24 years	6	7	6
25-34 years	17	16	17
35-44 years	23	23	23
45-54 years	20	20	20
55-64 years	15	15	15
65-74 years	10	10	10
75 + years	8	9	9
Living with parents	4	6	3
Living alone	15	15	15
Two or more adults no children	32	36	39
One or more adults and children	49	43	42
Primary	8	6	7
Part secondary	18	22	24
Completed secondary	21	27	24
Tertiary undergraduate	23	23	21
Tertiary postgraduate	17	15	21
TAFE/Trade	3	4	0
Diploma	2	0	0
Certificate	3	0	
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE			

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE	Percentage of 2008 Sample	Percentage of 2007 Sample	Percentage of 2006 Sample
Part time employed	24	18	0
Full time employed	30	35	23
Student	4	4	40
Home duties	17	16	2
Looking for work	1	2	11
Retired	23	25	3
Less than \$20,000	12	17	22
\$20,000 to under \$40,000	17	20	13
\$40,000 to under \$60,000	19	16	20
\$60,000 to under \$80,000	11	11	20
\$80,000 or more	21	22	13
Main grocery buyer – Yes	74	73	17
Main grocery buyer – No	10	12	74
Main grocery buyer – Joint	15	15	12
			14

The sample for the study was drawn from the electronic White Pages. Numbers were randomly selected to ensure regional, rural and more remote locations were appropriately represented. In 2008 the sample was post weighted to the 2006-2007 sample structure.

To minimise self selection bias the interviews were conducted with the person who had the last birthday, from any given household.

Significant differences are highlighted where relevant. In this report, all significance testing is conducted at the 95% confidence level and percentages are only highlighted if significant at this level.

The average interview length across the three waves of data collection was 14 minutes.

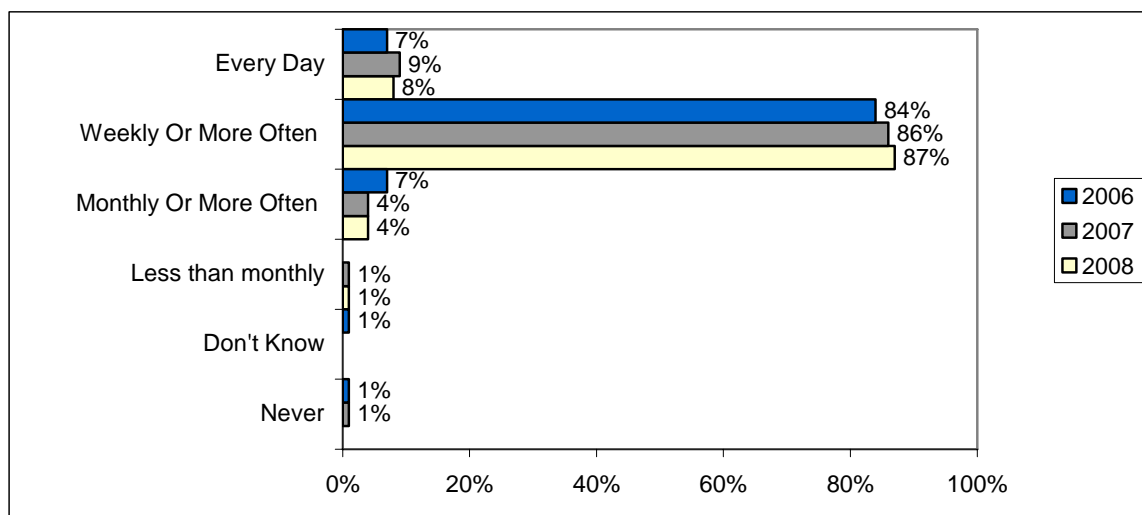
4. KEY FINDINGS

4.1 FOOD BUYING HABITS, PREPARATION & ATTITUDES

Respondents (n=400 in each year) were asked how often they shopped for food for either themselves or others within their household.

As Chart 1.1 indicates, there are no statistically significant differences between the 2008, 2007 and 2006 results for the general Victorian population, with the vast majority of respondents indicating that they shop for food on a 'weekly or more regular' basis.

Chart 1.1: Frequency of shopping for food
(2008 n=400, 2007 n=400, 2006 n=400)

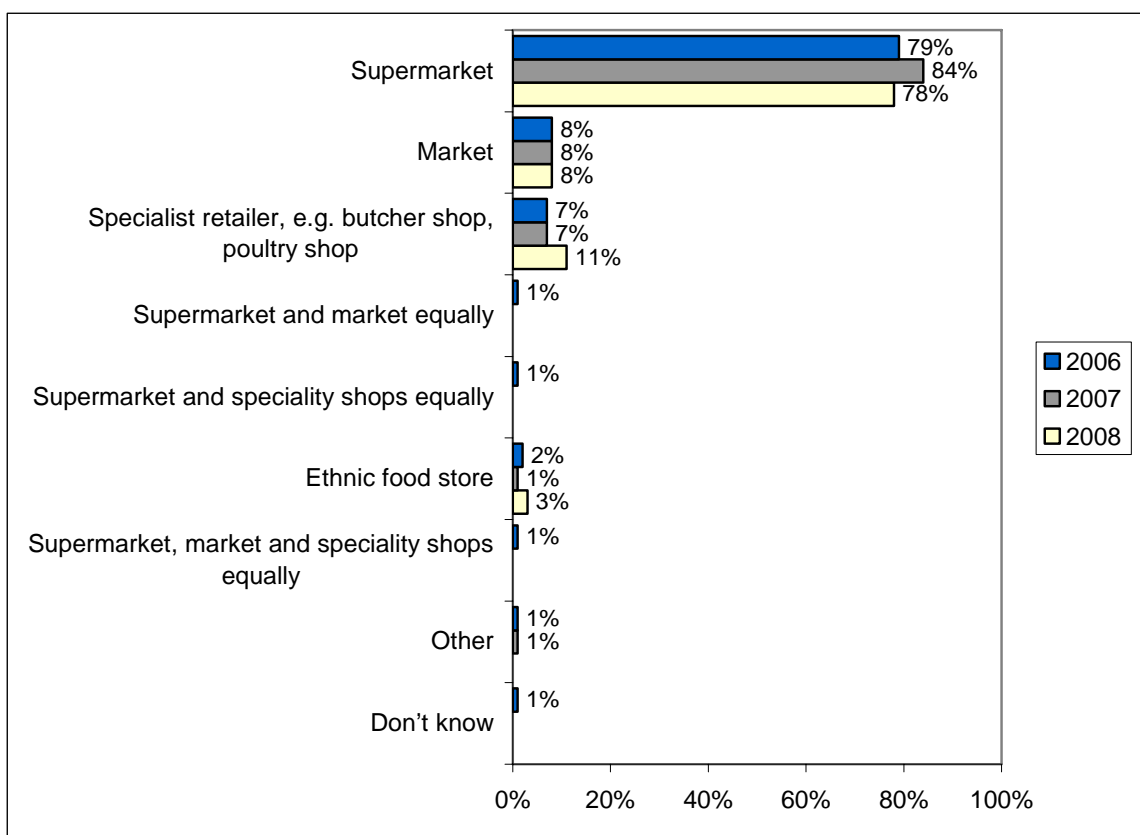


Q1 – How often do you shop for food, for either yourself or others in your household?

All respondents (n=400) were asked where they mainly bought their food.

As Chart 1.2 indicates, there were no statistically significant changes between the 2006 and 2007 results for the general population in terms of various places where food was purchased. In 2008, however, the proportion of respondents who stated they shop at a supermarket (78%) fell significantly over the 2007 figure (84%). It is important to note, however, that this percentage point change is only on the cusp of significance. While the majority of respondents (78%) purchase food at supermarkets, approximately one in ten households shop at either a market (8%) or specialist retailer (7%). Findings for these alternative food venues have remained consistent across previous years of data collection.

Chart 1.2: Main place of food purchase
(2008 n=400, 2007 n=400, 2006 n=400)



Q2 – Where do you mainly shop for food, bought for either yourself or others in your household?

Respondents who took part in the study (n=400) were screened on the basis that they prepared food for their household on a 'monthly or more regular' basis.

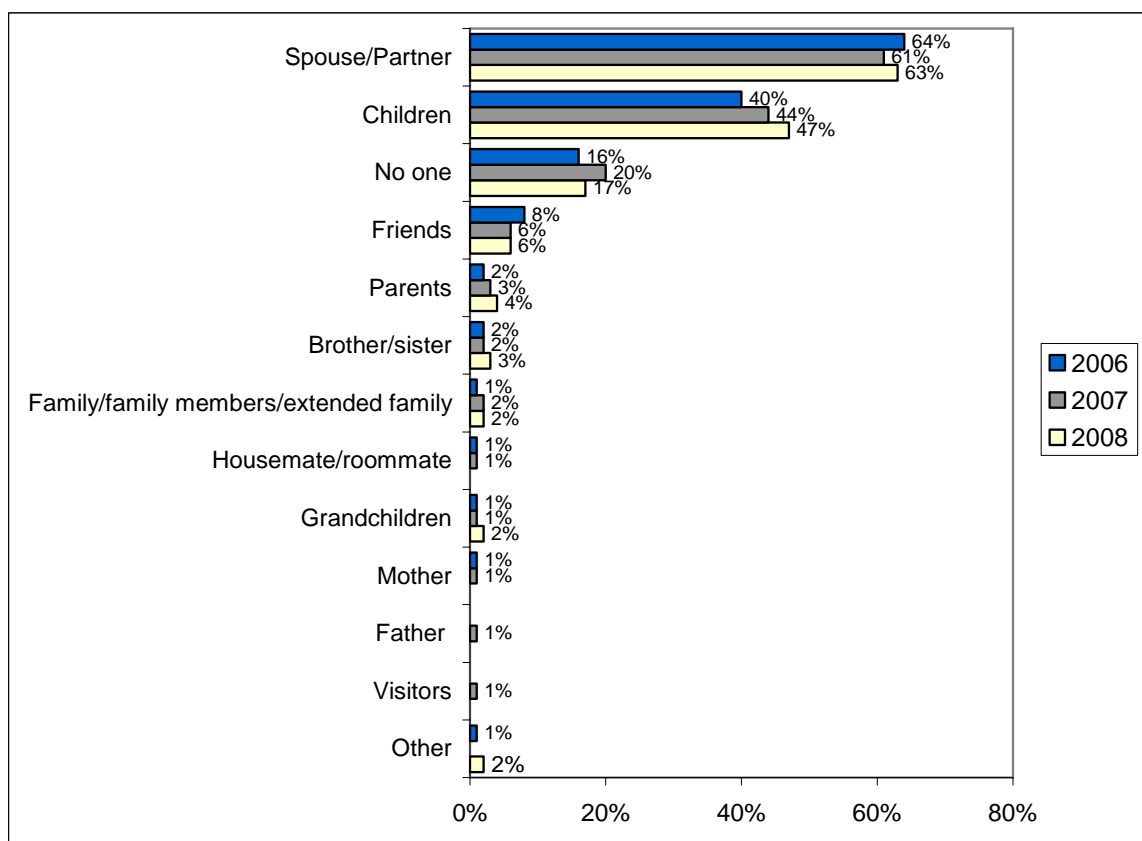
Respondents were asked who, apart from themselves, prepared food in their household.

As Chart 1.3 indicates, the dynamics of food preparation in Victorian households did not significantly change between 2006 and 2007. 'Partners and spouses' play an active roll in food preparation in almost two-thirds of Victorian households (63%), followed by 'children', 'no one' and 'friends'.

While this is a similar pattern broadly to previous years there is the notable exception of 'children'. Mentions of 'children' being an 'other preparer of food' have increased consistently since 2006 and in 2008 now represent a significant increase over the initial collection of data.

It is interesting to note that in up to one-fifth of households there is only one person responsible for the preparation of food. Of those respondents who stated 'no-one' else is responsible for preparing food, just under three-quarters (73%) also live alone.

Chart 1.3: Other person/s responsible for food preparation
(2008 n=400, 2007 n=400, 2006 n=378)



Q3 – Apart from yourself, who else do you prepare food for in your household?

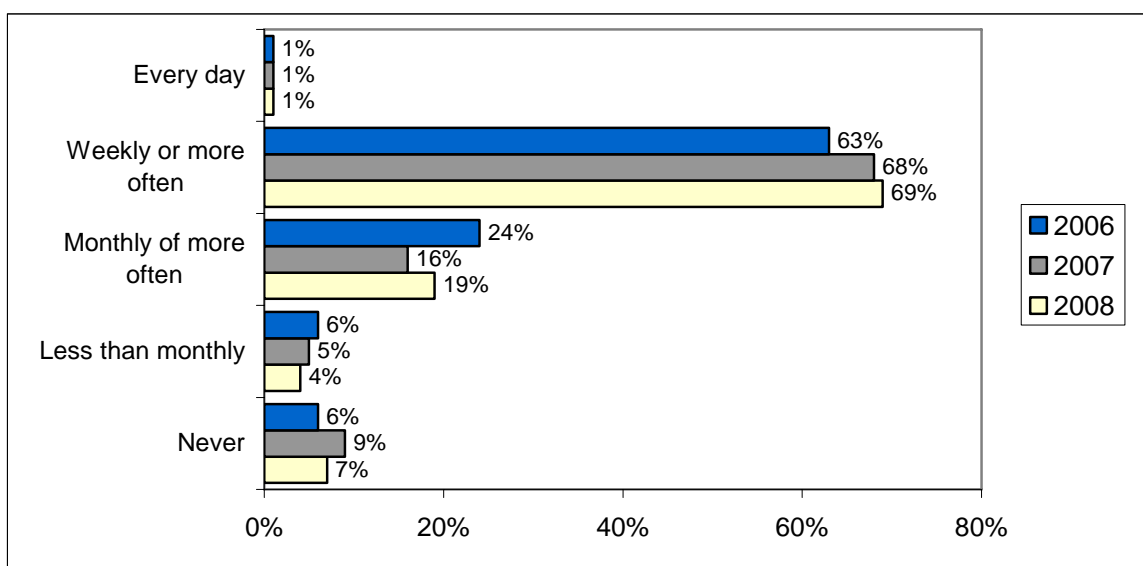
Respondents (n=400) were asked how often they prepared, handled or cooked raw chicken.

As Chart 1.4 indicates, in 2007 there was a small but statistically significant decrease in the frequency of Victorian households preparing, handling or cooking raw chicken 'monthly or more often', however, this movement has not continued in 2008. The proportion of respondents who stated they prepare, handle or cook raw chicken 'every day' has remained at a similar level to 2007.

More specifically, the data indicates that over the three years of data collection the Victorian population is heavily skewed towards those households who prepare, handle or cook raw chicken on a 'weekly or more regular' basis.

Almost one in ten Victorian households (7%) indicated that they 'never' prepare, handle or cook raw chicken, compared to 6% in 2006 and 9% in 2007. This is in contrast to over three in five households (70%) indicate that they prepare, handle or cook raw chicken on a 'weekly or more regular' basis, compared to 64% in 2006 and 69% in 2007.

Chart 1.4: Frequency of handling raw chicken
(2008 n=400, 2007 n=400, 2006 n=400)

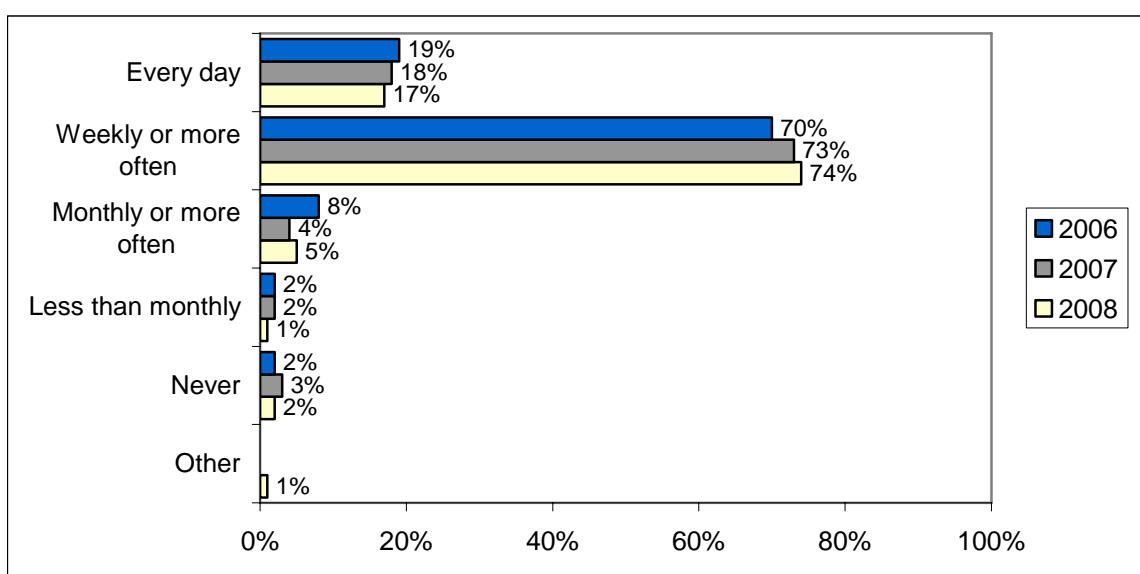


Q4 – How often do you prepare, handle or cook raw chicken?

To provide a comparison with raw chicken, respondents (n=400) were asked how often they prepared, handled or cooked other raw meats or fish.

In contrast to the frequency of handling raw chicken, Chart 1.5 indicates, there are no statistically significant variations in the frequency of Victorian households preparing, handling or cooking other raw meats and fish between 2006 and 2008. A small and non-significant decrease can be seen in the frequency of handling other raw meats 'every day' and an increase in those stating 'weekly or more often'.

Chart 1.5: Frequency of handling other raw meats
(2008 n=400, 2007 n=400, 2006 n=400)

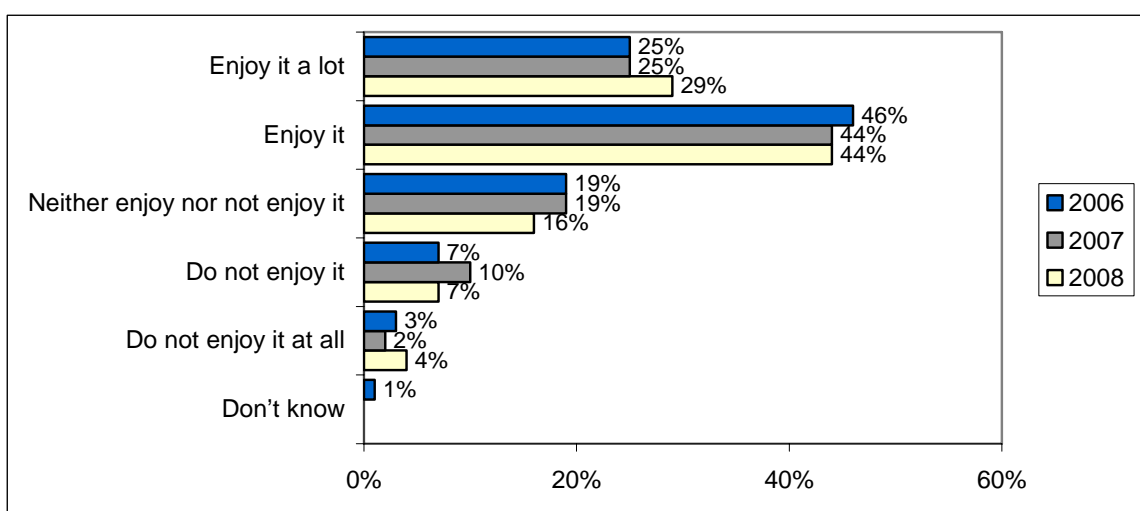


Q5 – How often do you prepare, handle or cook other raw meats, or fish?

In order to understand if there were attitudinal indicators of respondents' knowledge of safe food handling practices, we asked respondents (n=400) how much they enjoyed preparing food for their household, on a scale from 'enjoy it a lot' to 'do not enjoy it all'.

As Chart 1.6 indicates, there have been no statistically significant attitudinal changes in the level of enjoyment for food preparation within the Victorian population since 2006. In total, over two-thirds of respondents (73%) who are responsible for preparing all or some of a household's food actually 'enjoy' cooking to some degree. In fact 2008 saw a sizable, though non-significant, increase in the proportion of respondents stating they 'enjoy it a lot', possibly reflecting the popularity of cooking in various media consumed by the general population.

Chart 1.6: Level of enjoyment in preparing food for households
(2008 n=400, 2007 n=400, 2006 n=400)



Q6 – Do you enjoy preparing food for your household? Would you say that you...?

4.2 FOOD SAFETY BEHAVIOUR

4.2.1 Compliance with Safe Food Handling Behaviours

Respondents (n=400) were presented with a series of prompted statements, designed to determine how frequently (if at all) Victorians unsafely handled, stored or prepared food.

Since 2007 there have been some important shifts in food preparation behaviours. All of these shifts have been positive in nature, and suggest the decline recorded in 2007 in compliance with safe food handling, storage or preparation behaviour has not continued.

The most notable positive change in behaviour is that a significantly larger proportion of Victorian households now claim to always 'wash their hands after handling raw meats or fish', increasing from 81% in 2007 to 89% in 2008.

Consistent with findings from last year, the incidence of 'using a separate cutting board or knives just for raw chicken meat' is higher amongst those respondents who recall seeing, hearing or reading information on food safety (52% versus 42% for those who have no recall of food safety messages).

In 2008 the proportion of respondents who state 'rarely/never' to leaving cold food out of the fridge for more than 4 hours is significantly greater for those who recall seeing, hearing or reading information on food safety (91%) versus those who don't recall any messages (85%).

Also reflecting positively on awareness of food safety, there are several messages that have seen greater proportions (though non-significant) of people each year saying they 'always' undertake the following behaviours:

- Wash your hands after touching raw chicken meat
- Wash your hands after touching raw meats or fish
- Use separate cutting boards or knives for just raw chicken meat; and
- Rinse cutting boards, knives and plates used for raw chicken before using them for other food.

However, as Table 1.7 on the following page indicates, in 2008 less Victorian households stated they avoid leaving cold food out of the refrigerator for more than 4 hours (74% versus 63% in 2007), or pouring marinades containing raw meats over cooked meat (87% versus 79% in 2007).

It is also positive to report that awareness of 'leaving hot foods at room temperature for more than 4 hours' has increased, though non-significantly, since 2007 from 63% to 67%. The proportions of people saying they 'never' undertake other unsafe practices have remained relatively consistent with previous years:

- 'Put cooked meats back onto the same plates used to store raw meats without washing them first' (95% in 2008 compared to 94% in 2007); and
- 'Defrost frozen foods outside the fridge' (18% in 2008 and 2007).

Improvements in awareness of safe food preparation are not gender specific, though males have shown greater percentage point improvements since 2007 than females in terms of many safe food handling, preparation and storage practices. Notable improvements include the proportion of males who state they:

- 'always/most of the time' wash their hands after touching raw chicken increasing significantly from 77% in 2007 to 89% in 2008; and
- 'never' pour marinades that contained raw meat over cooked meat increasing significantly from 73% in 2007 to 85% in 2008.

Table 1.7: Food preparation behaviours
(2008 n=400, 2007 n=400, 2006 n=400)

	Always %			Most of the Time %			Sometimes %			Rarely %			Never %			DK/Refused %		
	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006
Wash your hands after touching raw chicken meat	86	83	81	8	5	7	2	3	5	0	2	2	3	5	5	1	2	0
Wash your hands after touching raw meats or fish	89	81	85	9	12	8	1	4	3	0	1	2	1	2	2	0	0	0
Use separate cutting boards or knives for just raw chicken meat	57	48	43	6	8	6	5	5	4	4	4	5	33	31	41	1	5	1
Rinse cutting boards, knives and plates used for raw chicken before using them for other food	83	77	78	6	7	6	1	3	4	1	1	2	8	9	10	1	3	1
Leave cold food out of the fridge for more than 4 hours	1	2	1	1	1	2	9	14	12	15	14	19	74	63	67	0	1	1
Put cooked meats back onto the same plates used to store raw meats without washing them first	1	2	2	0	2	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	95	94	94	1	1	0
Pour marinades that contained raw meat over cooked meat	1	3	2	1	2	1	4	6	6	7	10	7	87	79	83	0	2	1
Leave hot foods at room temperature for more than 4 hours	1	3	1	3	3	3	11	14	13	18	16	21	67	63	62	0	1	0
Defrost frozen foods outside the fridge	16	15	15	17	20	18	30	31	33	18	15	16	18	18	19	1	1	1

Q7 – Can you tell me how often you do any of the following things when preparing food?

4.2.2 Knowledge of Safe Food Handling, Preparation and Storage Practices

Respondents (n=400) were then presented with the same list of food preparation, handling and storage behaviours, and asked to rate each one in terms of food safety (how safe or unsafe they were in terms of causing food poisoning).

As Table 1.8 indicates, there was a general decline in the Victorian community's attitude towards the safe handling, storage and preparation of food between 2006 and 2007. The most important attitudinal movements occurred in the areas of food storage and defrosting, as well as leaving food at room temperature for prolonged periods of time. The 2008 data shows a reversal of this decline with findings being more similar to the 2006 figures and are representative of greater awareness of safe food handling, preparation and storage practices.

Improvements in awareness of safe food preparation are not gender specific, though males have shown greater percentage point improvements since 2007 than females in terms of many safe food handling, preparation and storage practices. Notable improvements include the proportion of males who state:

- 'Washing hands after touching raw chicken' is 'safe/very safe' – increasing significantly from 91% in 2007 to 97% in 2008
- 'Use separate cuttings boards or knives for just raw chicken meat' is 'safe/very safe' – increasing significantly from 85% to 91% in 2008; and
- 'Pour marinades that contained raw meat over cooked meat' is 'unsafe/very unsafe' – increasing significantly from 70% in 2007 to 84% in 2008.

Table 1.8: Attitudes towards safe food handling practices
(2008 n=400, 2007 n=400, 2006 n=400)

	Very Safe %			Safe %			Neither Safe or Unsafe %			Unsafe %			Very Unsafe %			DK/Refused %		
	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006
Wash your hands after touching raw chicken meat	67	60	66	30	37	29	1	0	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	1
Wash your hands after touching raw meats or fish	62	61	66	35	35	29	0	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	-	0	0
Use separate cutting boards or knives for just raw chicken meat	52	46	50	40	42	34	4	5	9	1	3	5	1	1	3	1	3	0
Rinse cutting boards, knives and plates used for raw chicken before using them for other food	47	44	46	34	38	33	2	2	5	11	11	10	6	4	8	1	1	0
Leave cold food out of the fridge for more than 4 hours	1	2	2	4	6	7	6	10	8	53	53	48	35	27	36	2	2	0
Put cooked meats back onto the same plates used to store raw meats without washing them first	0	2	4	0	1	2	0	0	1	35	39	35	64	58	59	0	1	0
Pour marinades that contained raw meat over cooked meat	0	1	2	4	5	4	2	6	6	41	38	36	47	43	52	6	7	0
Leave hot foods at room temperature for more than 4 hours	0	1	2	5	9	7	7	9	8	53	56	48	34	22	35	1	3	0
Defrost frozen foods outside the fridge	3	3	3	29	36	31	12	15	22	39	34	28	11	8	16	5	4	0
Store cold foods at 8 degrees Celsius or above	6	3	7	10	11	15	7	6	17	43	47	35	19	14	26	14	18	0

Q9 – How safe is it to do the following things? Safe, meaning not likely to cause food poisoning.

Respondents (n=400) were asked to nominate, in either degrees Celsius or Fahrenheit, what temperature their refrigerator is set at. During coding all responses provided in Fahrenheit were converted to Celsius to allow for direct comparison.

As in 2006 and 2007, the majority of 2008 respondents (72%) did not know what temperature their refrigerator was set at, in either degrees Celsius or Fahrenheit. In 2008 the proportion of students who didn't know the temperature decreased notably (though non-significantly) from 87% in 2007 to 82%. The proportion of respondents aged 18 to 24 years to state 'don't know' decreased only very slightly from 85% in 2007 to 83% this year, while the proportion of older respondents (55 years +) to state 'don't know' increased, as high as eleven percentage points for the 55-64 year cohort. This suggests that younger and older people are still a key target demographic for future food safety campaigns.

As Table 1.9 shows, awareness of refrigerator temperature remained a constant level between 2006 and 2008.

Table 1.9: Refrigerator temperature (in degrees Celsius)

	2008 (n=400) %	2007 (n=400) %	2006 (n=400) %
TEMPERATURE			
10	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
6	1	0	1
5	2	3	4
4	12	12	10
3.5	0	1	0
3	7	5	7
2	3	2	3
1	0	1	1
-3	1	0	1
-4	1	1	0
-6	0	0	0
-10	0	0	0
Other Temperature	0	2	0
Other – refrigerator dial	0	2	3
Refused/Don't know	72	71	70

Q8 – What temperature is your refrigerator set at?

4.3 SAFETY MESSAGES

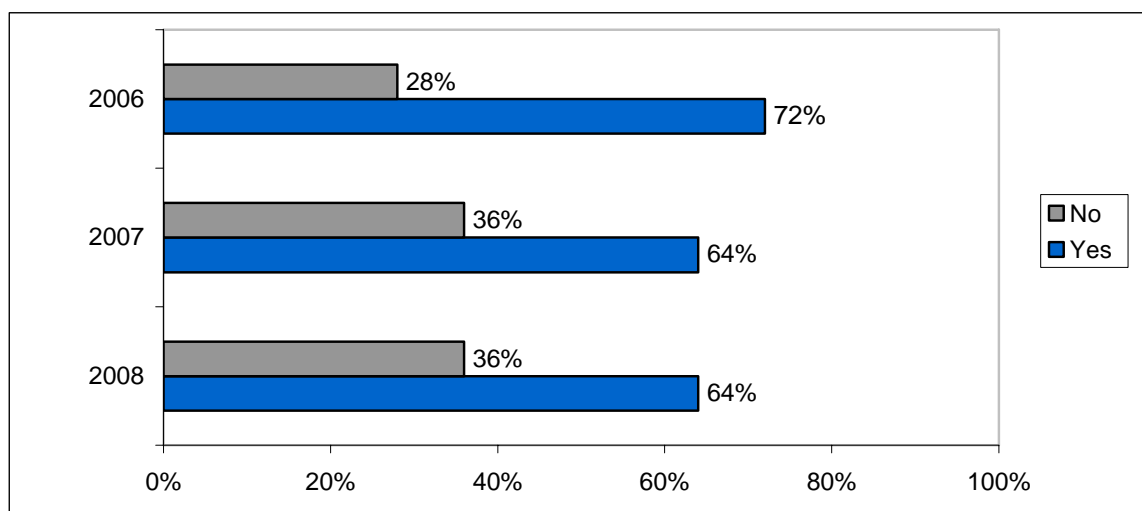
4.3.1 Recall of Food Safety Messages

Respondents (n=400) were asked if they could remember, seeing, hearing or reading any food safety information.

As Chart 1.10 demonstrates, there was a significant decline in the number of Victorian households who claim seeing, hearing or reading food safety information in 2007 (64% of households recalled food safety information in 2007 compared to 72% in 2006). This proportion has remained static in 2008.

It is interesting to note that while awareness of recalled information has not changed since 2007, respondents' actual behaviour and attitudes have strengthened suggesting a community wide increase in awareness of safe food handling practices.

Chart 1.10: Recall of food safety messages
(2008 n=400, 2007 n=400, 2006 n=400)



Q10 – Can you remember seeing, hearing or reading any information about food safety?

4.3.2 Sources of Food Safety Information

Respondents who had heard, seen or read any food safety information (2008 n=256, 2007 n=257 and 2006 n=289) were asked where they had 'heard, seen or read the information'.

As Table 1.11 indicates, 'TV news programs' and 'other television programs' have become less often cited sources of food safety information in contrast to this time last year. However, coverage of food safety issues on 'current affairs' programs, through 'friends' and 'other advertising' and 'The Age' and 'Herald Sun' have increased during the same period. Likewise, 'magazines' have become a less cited source of food safety information for Victorian households each year of this project.

We would hypothesise that the statistically significant shift to more traditional and perhaps reviewed or reputable sources of information like 'specified newspapers' and significant shift away from 'unspecified newspapers' may explain some of the improvement in attitudes towards the safe preparation, handling and storage of foods.

Table 1.11: Source of food safety information

	2008 (n=256) %	2007 (n=257) %	2006 (n=289) %
On TV/TV programs/TV news	31	38	31
Newspapers (unspecified)	11	18	20
Magazines (unspecified)	10	13	20
Through work/work in a profession which involves food handling	18	16	14
Did a food safety course/part of my studies	13	12	12
On a current affair program	9	4	11
At school	7	4	6
Radio	2	4	5
Brochures/leaflets/pamphlets/booklets	6	3	7
Through family/friends	8	2	5
Books/text books	4	3	4
Food shows/cooking shows	5	3	4
Signage/posters	3	2	4
Advertising/commercials	7	2	3
School canteens	0	1	3
Cookbooks	2	3	1
Word of mouth	0	2	2
Herald Sun	7	2	2
On news/news report (unspecified)	0	1	3
Local papers	1	1	2
Articles on food safety	0	2	2
The Age	7	1	2
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE			

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE	2008 (n=256) %	2007 (n=257) %	2006 (n=289) %
Through the food industry	0	3	0
Information/literature from council	3	0	2
'What's Good for You' Program	0	3	0
Women's Weekly	2	1	1
Internet	3	1	1
Media (unspecified)	1	2	0
On food items/food packaging	2	1	1
In journals	0	0	1
At child care centres	0	0	1
OH&S meetings/OH&S notices	0	0	1
Hospitals	1	0	1
Doctors/Health Care Professionals/Medical/Health Clinic/Centre	3	0	0
Supermarkets	3	0	0
Groups/Clubs (Sporting/Church etc)	1	0	0
Health/Safety Inspector	1	0	0
Other	8	9	3
Don't know/not stated	2	2	0

Q10a – Where did you see, hear or read information about food safety?

4.3.3 Takeout Message

Those respondents who had heard, seen or read any food safety information (2008 n=256, 2007 n=257 and 2006 n=289) were asked what the information said.

As Table 1.12 indicates, the message takeout from the various information sources during 2008 remains similar to 2007 and is more generic (and therefore less specific) than in 2006. The recall of detailed messages and/or desired behaviours, such as 'use separate utensils' or 'be careful when cooking chicken', has been replaced with generic hygiene and safety messages.

Table 1.12: Food safety message

	2008 (n=256) %	2007 (n=257) %	2006 (n=289) %
Safe food storage, preparation and handling	17	27	7
Hand washing/wash hands after touching raw meat, rubbish and going to the toilet	18	18	20
Separate chopping boards – don't mix up raw and cooked meat and vegetables	16	15	16
Don't leave food out of the fridge too long (or at all)	12	14	9
Store food at the correct temperature/avoid the temperature danger zones	16	10	15
Hygiene and cleaning	14	10	6
Food safety in general/common sense/general knowledge	9	10	3
Bacteria is dangerous, e.g. food poisoning, take swabs, breeds everywhere	4	7	3
Defrost food in the fridge/don't defrost on bench or in the microwave	3	6	9
Washing chopping boards (bacteria on them)	9	6	7
Chicken (be careful with it/don't mix with other foods/cook well)	9	5	10
Thoroughly cook/reheat food (correct cooking temperatures)	2	5	2
Separate utensils, knives and plates for raw and cooked foods	4	4	10
Separate raw and cooked meats and vegetables	4	4	3
Meat – be careful handling it	2	4	3
Safe food storage in the fridge or cool room – correct temperature	1	3	9
Be careful handling raw food/meat (avoid cross contamination)	2	2	4
Don't store and prepare different meats together	0	2	2
Commercial food scares/poor practices	3	2	2
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE			

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE	2008 (n=256) %	2007 (n=257) %	2006 (n=289) %
Wash everything well before eating, cooking, e.g. meat, fruits and vegetables	0	2	0
What's healthy/healthy diet	0	2	0
Amount of bacteria in chicken/Salmonella from chicken	1	2	0
Compliance with Food Safety legislation/need a food handling certificate	1	1	3
Don't let meat juices drip on other food in the fridge/store raw meat at the bottom of the fridge	1	1	3
Takeaway food/restaurants/delis may not be kept at the right temperatures or prepared properly	0	1	2
Safe food transportation	0	1	2
Don't freeze thawed meat/food	1	1	1
Fish – be careful handling it	2	1	1
Tie hair back/hair nets	0	1	1
How long do we keep things in the fridge	0	1	0
Plastic boards are better	0	1	0
Use of gloves for food preparation	2	1	0
Never use things past their due date	1	1	0
Use gloves in restaurants, bakeries, takeaways and hospitals	0	0	3
Cover food	1	0	2
Careful not to pour raw meat marinade overed cooked meat	1	0	2
Cooked rice – be careful handling it	0	0	1
Bacteria is formed when food (raw or cooked) is not refrigerated	0	0	1
Dairy food – be careful handling it	1	0	1
Defrosting food	5	0	0
Other	8	10	10
None	3	1	1
Don't know/not stated	11	7	11

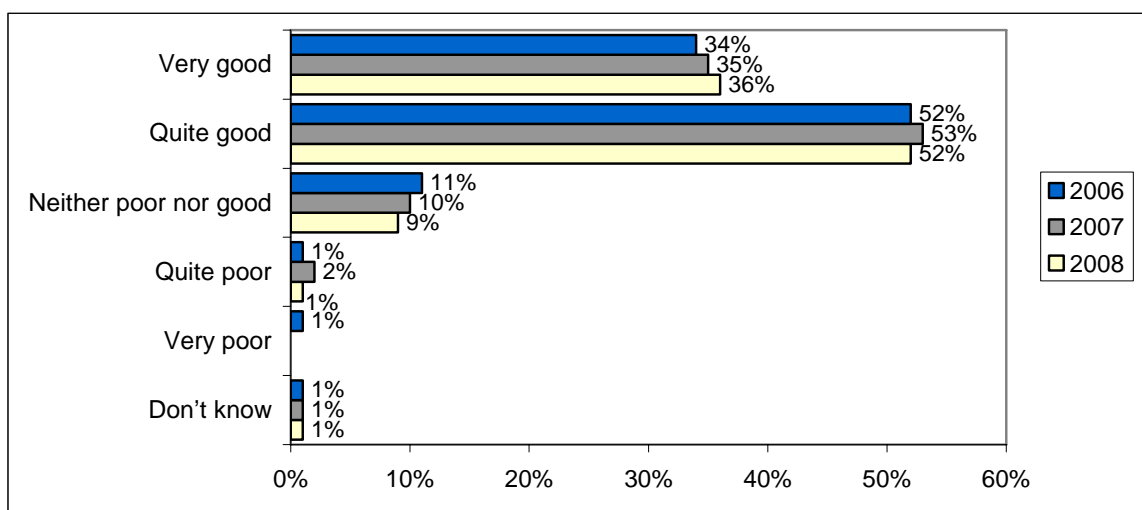
Q10b – What did the information about food safety say?

4.4 SELF ASSESSMENT OF FOOD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE

Respondents (2008 n=400, 2007 n=400 and 2006 n=400) were asked to assess their own knowledge of safe practices when transporting, handling, preparing and cooking food.

As Chart 1.13 indicates, despite the general drop in attitudes and compliance behaviour witnessed between the 2006 and 2007 data collections, the respondents' self-assessment of their own knowledge of food safety remained unchanged. The 2008 wave sees self-assessed knowledge remain relatively static, fluctuating non-significantly for males (decreasing) and for females (increasing), even though reported behaviours are on average more positive. There were not significant movements by demographic group.

Chart 1.13: Perceived level of food safety knowledge
(2008 n=400, 2007 n=400, 2006 n=400)



Q11 – Would you say that your knowledge of safe practices when transporting, handling, preparing and cooking food is?

Respondents (2008 n=400, 2007 n=400 and 2006 n=400) were asked where they felt they had the least level of understanding on food safety, or when they would most benefit from receiving additional information on food safety issues.

Self-assessment of the areas where Victorians felt they would most benefit from hearing additional information have not changed over three data collections between 2006 and 2008. Again in 2008, it was the correct temperatures for food storage where respondents' believed they had the least knowledge (9% in 2006 and 8% in 2007 and 9% in 2008).

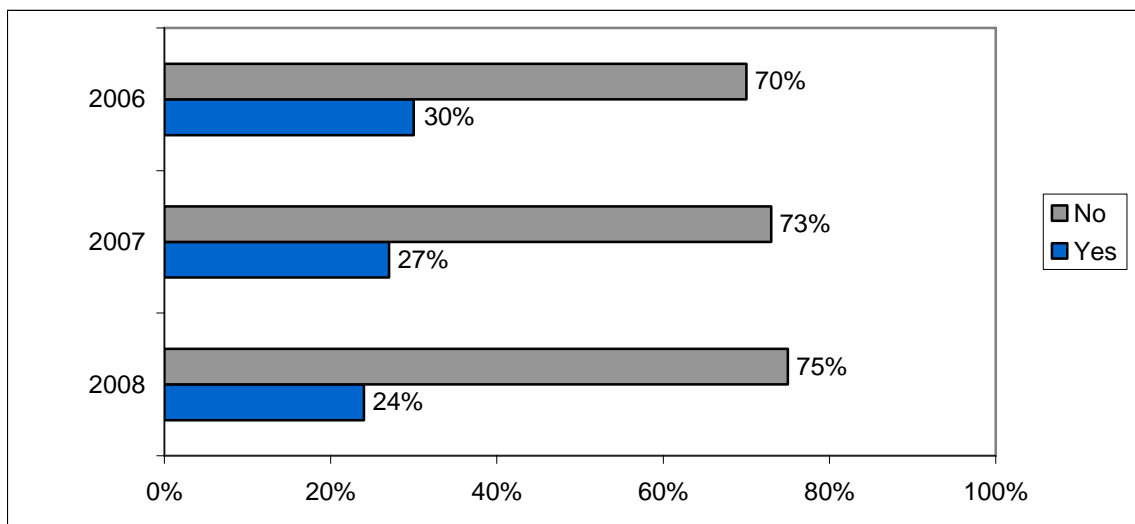
Table 1.14: Food safety message

	2008 (n=400) %	2007 (n=400) %	2006 (n=400) %
Temperature you keep food at/variety of temperatures on different foods	9	8	9
Storage/correct way of storing food	7	5	8
Length of storage/length of time food can be stored for	6	5	4
Everything in general about food safety	4	4	3
How to handle meat/raw meat	3	4	2
How long can uncooked/cooked food be left at room temperature	2	3	6
Safe transportation of food	2	2	4
General hygiene/cleanliness	1	2	3
Preparation of food/how to cook it	4	2	4
Handling of seafood/fish	1	2	3
The sharing of boards	2	2	2
Reheating hygiene safety	1	2	2
Storage of frozen foods/frozen meals	1	2	1
Handling/cooking chicken	4	2	0
Handling of food/more information on food handling	2	1	3
How long can you leave food outside the fridge to defrost	1	1	2
How safe is it to leave food/meat sitting out of the fridge when defrosting	2	1	2
Storage of chicken	0	1	2
Defrosting in a microwave	1	1	1
Use by dates	0	1	1
Microwave cooking/heating	0	1	0
Effects of leaving food out/what happens if I leave food out	1	1	0
Timeframes for leaving food out to cool down	2	1	0
More about dairy products	0	1	0
Takeaway food preparation	0	0	2
How long food takes to be contaminated	1	0	2
Other	0	7	6
None	40	42	43
Refused	1	1	0

Q12 – Which area(s) of food safety do you feel you understand least, and might benefit from hearing more information about?

Respondents (2008 n=400, 2006 n=400 and 2007 n=400) were asked whether they had any food handling training. There were no significant changes in the percentage of respondents with formal food handling training between 2006, 2007 and 2008.

Chart 1.15: Formal training in food safety or food preparation
(2008 n=400, 2007 n=400, 2006 n=400)



Q13 – Have you ever had any formal training in food safety or food preparation?

APPENDIX A
– QUESTIONNAIRE –

CONSUMER AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE STUDY
- English -
 Draft version, created 20/03/2006

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is **SAY NAME** from NWC Research, the social research company. We're conducting research on food safety practices for the Department of Human Services in Melbourne. Your household has been selected as part of a random sample of Victorians.

To ensure our sample is completely random, can I please speak to a person in your household who sometimes or regularly prepares food, aged 18 years or older, who most recently had their birthday.

NECESSARY RE-INTRODUCE YOURSELF

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. This is market research and it is carried out in compliance with the Privacy Act and the information you provide will only be used for research purposes. All your responses will be treated with the strictest confidence.

The survey is about the transportation, handling, preparation and cooking of perishable foods. By perishable foods I mean food that can cause an upset stomach or even food poisoning if it is not properly stored or handled. We are thinking about things like fresh meat, dairy products, fresh fruit and vegetables.

MONITORING

My supervisor might monitor this interview for quality control purposes.

If you do not wish for this to occur, please me know.

1. Ok to monitor
2. Do not monitor

SCREENER

ASK ALL

S1 **RECORD GENDER**

SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT, CHECK QUOTAS

- 1 Male
 2 Female

ASK ALL

S2 Which of the following age groups best describes you?

SINGLE RESPONSE, READ OUT, CHECK QUOTAS

- | | | |
|---------|----------------|------------------|
| 1..... | Under 18 years | TERMINATE |
| 2..... | 18-24 years | |
| 3..... | 25-34 years | |
| 4..... | 35-44 years | |
| 5..... | 45-54 years | |
| 6..... | 55-64 years | |
| 7..... | 65-74 years | |
| 8..... | 75+ years | |
| 96..... | Refused | TERMINATE |
| 99..... | Don't know | TERMINATE |

ASK ALL

S3 How often do you prepare food, bought for either yourself or others in your household?

SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT

- | | | |
|---------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1..... | Every day | |
| 2..... | Weekly or more often | |
| 3..... | Monthly or more often | |
| 4..... | Less than monthly | |
| 5..... | Never | TERMINATE |
| 96..... | Refused | TERMINATE |
| 99..... | Don't Know | TERMINATE |

ASK ALL

S4 What is the main language spoken in your household?

SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT, CHECK QUOTAS

- 1..... Arabic
 2..... Cantonese
 3..... Croatian
 4..... English
 5..... Greek
 6..... Italian
 7..... Macedonian
 8..... Mandarin
 9..... Serbian
 10..... Turkish
 11..... Vietnamese
 96..... Refused
 97..... Other **SPECIFY** _____
 99..... Don't Know

TERMINATE**TERMINATE****FOOD BUYING HABITS, PREPARATION & ATTITUDES****ASK ALL**

Q1 I would like to start by asking some questions about food shopping and preparation. How often do you shop for food, for either yourself or others in your household?

SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT

- 1..... Every day
 2..... Weekly or more often
 3..... Monthly or more often
 4..... Less than monthly
 5..... Never
 96..... Refused
 99..... Don't Know

ASK ALL

Q2 Where do you mainly shop for food, bought for either yourself or others in your household?

SINGLE RESPONSE, READ OUT

- 1..... Supermarket
 2..... Specialist retailers such as butchers shop, poultry shop
 3..... Market
 4..... Ethnic food stores
 5..... Restaurants
 97..... Other **SPECIFY** _____
 96..... Refused
 99..... Don't Know

DON'T READ OUT**DON'T READ OUT****ASK ALL**

Q3 Apart from yourself, who else do you prepare food for in your household?

MULTIPLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT

- 1..... Partner
 2..... Friends
 3..... Children
 4..... No one
 96..... Refused
 97..... Other **SPECIFY** _____
 99..... Don't Know

ASK ALL

Q4 How often do you prepare, handle or cook raw chicken?

SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT

- 1..... Every day
 2..... Weekly or more often
 3..... Monthly or more often
 4..... Less than monthly
 5..... Never
 96..... Refused
 99..... Don't Know

ASK ALL

Q5 And how often do you prepare, handle or cook other raw meats, or fish?

SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT

- 1..... Every day
- 2..... Weekly or more often
- 3..... Monthly or more often
- 4..... Less than monthly
- 5..... Never
- 96..... Refused
- 99..... Don't Know

ASK ALL

Q6 Do you enjoy preparing food for your household? Would you say that you...?

SINGLE RESPONSE, READ OUT

- 1..... Enjoy it a lot
- 2..... Enjoy it
- 3..... Neither enjoy nor not enjoy it
- 4..... Do not enjoy it
- 5..... Do not enjoy it at all
- 96..... Refused
- 99..... Don't Know

DON'T READ OUT

DON'T READ OUT

FOOD SAFETY BEHAVIOUR**ASK ALL**

Q7 Using the scale **READ OUT SCALE**, can you tell me how often you do any of the following things when preparing food. How often do you...?

RANDOMIZE ORDER, SINGLE RESPONSE, READ OUT SCALE**IF NECESSARY**

- 1..... Always
 2..... Most of the time
 3..... Sometimes
 4..... Rarely
 5..... Never
 96..... Refused
 99..... Don't Know

DON'T READ OUT**DON'T READ OUT**

- 1 Wash your hands after touching raw chicken meat
- 2 Wash your hands after touching raw meats or fish
- 3 Use separate cuttings boards or knives for just raw chicken meat
- 4 Rinse cutting boards, knives and plates used for raw chicken before using them for other food
- 5 Leave cold food out of the fridge for more than 4 hours
- 6 Put cooked meats back into the same plates used to store raw meats without washing them first
- 7 Pour marinades that contained raw meat over cooked meat
- 8 Leave hot foods at room temperature for more than 4 hours
- 9 Defrost frozen foods outside the fridge

ASK ALL

Q8 What temperature is your refrigerator set at?

RECORD TEMPERATURE INCLUDE MINUS SIGN IF APPLICABLE

- 1..... Record temperature_____
- 96..... Refused
- 99..... Don't Know

ASK ALL

Q8b Is this temperature of **INSERT FROM Q8** in Celsius or Fahrenheit?

SINGLE RESPONSE – ONLY ASK IF RESPONDENT DOES SAY IT

- 1..... Celsius
- 2..... Fahrenheit
- 3..... Don't know

FOOD SAFETY AWARENESS**ASK ALL**

Q9 In your opinion, using the scale **READ OUT SCALE**, how safe is it to do the following things? By safe I mean that is not likely to cause food poisoning.

RANDOMIZE ORDER, SINGLE RESPONSE, READ OUT SCALE

IF NECESSARY

- 1..... Very safe
- 2..... Safe
- 3..... Neither safe or unsafe
- 4..... Unsafe
- 5..... Very unsafe
- 96..... Refused
- 99..... Don't Know

DON'T READ OUT

DON'T READ OUT

IF NECESSARY SAY

I am just interested in your opinion, whether you think you are right or wrong.

- 1 Wash your hands after touching raw chicken meat
- 2 Wash your hands after touching raw meats or fish
- 3 Use separate cuttings boards or knives for just raw chicken meat
- 4 Rinse cutting boards, knives and plates used for raw chicken before using them for other food
- 5 Leave cold food out of the fridge for more than 4 hours
- 6 Put cooked meats back into the same plates used to store raw meats without washing them first
- 7 Pour marinades that contained raw meat over cooked meat
- 8 Leave hot foods at room temperature for more than 4 hours
- 9 Defrost frozen foods outside the fridge
- 10 Store cold foods at 8 degree Celsius or above (46 degrees Fahrenheit)

SAFETY MESSAGES

Q10 Apart from this survey, can you remember, seeing, hearing or reading any information about food safety? Where did you see, hear or read this information? And what did it say?

1 Yes

99 Can't recall anything/Don't know

97 Refused

SKIP TO Q11**SKIP TO Q11**

Q10a Where did you see, hear or read this information?

PROBE FULLY

Q10b What did it say?

PROBE FULLY

SELF ASSESSMENT OF FOOD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE**ASK ALL**

Q11 Would you say that your knowledge of safe practices when transporting, handling, preparing and cooking foods is...?

SINGLE RESPONSE, READ OUT

- 1..... Very poor
 2..... Quite poor
 3..... Neither poor nor good
 4..... Quite good
 5..... Very good
 96..... Refused
 99..... Don't Know

DON'T READ OUT**DON'T READ OUT****ASK ALL**

Q12 Which area (or areas) of food safety do you feel you understand least, and might benefit from hearing more information about?

PROBE FULLY**IF RESPONDENT SAY 'NONE' ASK BEFORE CODING**

So you feel that you fully understand all the issues surrounding the safe buying, transport, preparing, cooking, serving and storing of food? There is nothing else you feel that you might benefit from being given more information on?

- 1..... None
 96..... Refused
 99..... Don't Know

ASK ALL

Q13 Have you ever had any formal training in food safety or food preparation?

SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT

- 1..... Yes
 2..... No
 96..... Refused
 99..... Don't Know

CLASSIFICATION**ASK ALL**

Q14 Which of the following best describes your household?

SINGLE RESPONSE, READ OUT

- 1..... Living with parents
 2..... Living alone
 3..... Two or more adults and no children
 4..... One or more adults and children
 96..... Refused
 99..... Don't Know

DON'T READ OUT**DON'T READ OUT****ASK ALL**

Q15 What is the highest level of formal education you have achieved so far?

SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT

- 1..... Primary
 2..... Part Secondary
 3..... Completed Secondary
 4..... Tertiary undergraduate
 5..... Tertiary postgraduate
 96..... Refused
 97..... Other **SPECIFY** _____
 99..... Don't Know

ASK ALL

Q16 Which of the following best describes your current occupation?

SINGLE RESPONSE, READ OUT

- 1..... Part time employed
 2..... Full time employed
 3..... Student
 4..... Home duties
 5..... Looking for work
 6..... Retired
 96..... Refused
 99..... Don't Know

DON'T READ OUT**DON'T READ OUT**

ASK ALL

Q17 Which of the following categories best describes your annual household income before tax?

SINGLE RESPONSE, READ OUT

- 1..... Less than \$20,000
- 2..... \$20,000 to under \$40,000
- 3..... \$40,000 to under \$60,000
- 4..... \$60,000 to under \$80,000
- 5..... \$80,000 or more
- 96..... Refused
- 99..... Don't Know

DON'T READ OUT

DON'T READ OUT

ASK ALL

Q18 And finally, would you describe yourself as the main grocery buyers for your household?

SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT READ OUT

- 1..... Yes
- 2..... No - Someone else
- 3..... No - Joint responsibility
- 96..... Refused
- 99..... Don't Know

Thank you for your time; this is the end of the interview.

For quality control purposes you may be re-contacted, to verify some of the information. We will remove your contact details when all interviewing is completed in approximately 3 weeks time. In the mean time you may contact us about the interview.

Should you require verification of our company's bona fides, or have any queries, please feel free to contact the Market Research Society of Australia's Surveyline on 1300 364 830.

INTERVIEWER RECORD:

Respondent Name.....

Respondent Phone Number

I certify that this interview was completed in a professional manner and has been checked subsequently for completeness.

Signed Your Name