

# Victorian Food Safety News

Volume 5, Spring 2006

## Inside...

Understanding country of origin labelling	2
Ministerial Council considers extending labelling	2
The fine print	2
Meeting the food safety supervisor requirement	3
PrimeSafe promotes Quality Assurance	4
Chocolatier Australia	5
Studies examine the Environmental Health Officer workforce	6
Food safety in emergency situations	7
Court prosecutes over false health claims	8
Certification scheme improves food safety auditing	8
FSANZ news	9
Legal bites	10
Forthcoming events and opportunities	11
Fine food and safety	12
Participating in the Culinary Challenge	12

## Country of Origin Labelling targets unpackaged products

New standards relating to country of origin labelling on a range of unpackaged food and food products will come into force in Australia over the next 18 months.

The country of origin labelling standard (Standard 1.2.11), gazetted by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) on 8 December 2005, and set out in the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*, came into full force for unpackaged fruit, vegetables, nuts and seafood for Australia only products on 8 June 2006. Since that date, the standard has required that all unpackaged fresh and processed fruit, vegetables, nuts and seafood must carry a declaration on a label or a sign near the food that states the country of origin. This includes, for example, food such as fresh and sun-dried tomatoes,

unpackaged ham and bacon, unpackaged fresh and smoked fish fillets, and frozen unpackaged crumbed fish fillets, fresh apples and dried apples.

The standard will apply to some unpackaged fresh pork products, such as ham and bacon, from 8 December 2006.

Packaged foods will be required to carry a separate statement identifying the country where the food was produced, made or packaged. To give food manufacturers time to make labelling changes and to ensure that staff are trained and prepared, labelling standards for packaged goods are being phased in over two years and will come into force from 8 December 2007.

For more news on country of origin labelling, see page 2.



## Understanding country of origin labelling

The aim of country of origin labelling is to give consumers as much information as possible about food products so that they can make informed choices.

A brochure, *Country of Origin Food Labelling—advice for consumers*, was developed by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) to help consumers understand the new labelling requirements for unpackaged fresh and processed fruit, vegetables, nuts and seafood.

The brochure explains the new labelling requirements and gives examples of the types of food products that will need to be labelled and what information that labelling should include. The brochure also advises that consumers who have a complaint about country of origin labelling should raise the issue directly with the retailer or manufacturer of the food in question or contact their local, state or territory health authority. The FSANZ website, email and contact details are also provided.

The consumer brochure complements the user guide, which was launched in March 2006 to assist business and enforcement agencies understand the labelling requirements.

*Country of Origin Food Labelling—advice for consumers* is available on the FSANZ website at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)



## Ministerial Council considers extending labelling

The eighth meeting of the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council, held in Melbourne in May, considered the evaluation by FSANZ of a possible extension of country of origin labelling to declare the origin (or place where grown) of the principal whole food components of products containing two or less fruit and/or vegetables.

The FSANZ study found that the cost of such an extension would exceed any benefits and that the labelling requirements would harm the horticultural industry, the horticultural processing industry and exports, and the domestic

industry in favour of imports of finished products.

The Ministerial Council therefore decided not to extend the standard and noted that the horticulture sector will be involved in a new working group that will look into developing a voluntary 'Australian Grown' labelling scheme and will examine provisions in the Trade Practices Act to better reflect the content of packaged food products.

To see the FSANZ report visit the website at [www.foodstandards.gov.au/\\_srcfiles/CoOL\\_Feasibility\\_Report\\_%2028\\_March\\_2006.pdf](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/_srcfiles/CoOL_Feasibility_Report_%2028_March_2006.pdf)

## The fine print

The country of origin labelling standard mandates that where a country of origin statement is required on unpackaged food, and where a sign or label is displayed in association with the food, the size of type on the label must be at least 9 mm.

On 10 March 2006, FSANZ received an Application from Food Liaison Pty Ltd seeking to amend the standard to reduce the prescribed size of type from 9 mm to at least 3 mm for signs in connection with unpackaged food presented for sale in an enclosed display cabinet. Food Liaison Pty Ltd points out difficulties with the minimum 9 mm type size labelling for unpackaged products sold in enclosed glass display cabinets and has asked for it to be reduced to 3 mm. This is because consumers are finding it difficult to see

the product behind the labels and that some retailers' labelling equipment cannot produce the 9 mm size type.

Following independent consumer research, a cost benefit analysis, and assessment against FSANZ objectives, FSANZ is recommending that unpackaged products sold in assisted service refrigerated display cabinets, such as in delicatessens, butchers or fish shops, be labelled with a minimum 5 mm font size. Unpackaged fruit vegetables and nuts, as sold in bins in the supermarket or fruit shop, will still have to have a minimum 9 mm type size.

To view the application and assessment, go to: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/standardsdevelopment/applications/applicationa579count3242.cfm>

PRODUCT OF  
AUSTRALIA

## Meeting the food safety supervisor requirement

Every registered Victorian food business is required under the *Food Act 1984* to have a food safety supervisor. A food safety supervisor is a person who:

- has a statement of attainment from a Registered Training Organisation that shows the required competencies
- has the ability to supervise food handling in the food premises
- has the authority to supervise food handlers and ensure food handling is done safely
- will ensure that the food handlers know how to handle food safely.

The minimum competency standards required by a food safety supervisor depend on the type of business the food safety supervisor is supervising.

To inform and support ongoing improvements in food safety training and practice, the Food Safety and Regulatory Activities Unit commissioned research to evaluate the food safety supervisor requirement. The study explored areas such as issues and concerns of the sector, the quality and accessibility of training, recognition of prior learning, and the need for development of practical skills and knowledge.

The Food Safety Supervisor Requirement Evaluation Project included four research components:

1. Food safety supervisor skills and knowledge for compliance
2. Competencies of food safety supervisors reported to local government authorities
3. Food safety training available in Victoria
4. Stakeholders' understanding of the food safety supervisor role

Consultation was undertaken with stakeholders including business proprietors, registered training organisations, food safety supervisors, environmental health officers and industry associations.

To assess the skills and knowledge of food safety supervisors against the Food Standards Code and the Food Act, a required skill set was developed and compared against current units of competency. The project identified differences between the skills required and those available through current training. It was found that while most food safety supervisors obtained their skills through formal training, many did not see the need to maintain these skills over time. Food safety supervisors also identified as critical the need for training to provide practical skills that could be applied in the workplace.

### Food for thought— Under the wether

Norway's Food Safety Authority has instructed a grocery store to close after finding 10yo mutton in the freezer section. The local shop in Bugøynes, Finnmark in northern Norway also had pork ribs a year past their sell-by date in the freezer. But one customer said no-one had got sick from the shop's meat, and there was too much 'hysteria' around sell-by dates.

*Source: DHS News Notes,  
Wednesday 13th September 2006*

When looking at food safety training available in Victoria, the research found that around 1,020 registered training providers are delivering food safety training in Victoria via a diverse range of course delivery modes, cost and duration. Stakeholders demonstrated confusion about the name of training programs and what is valid evidence to provide to councils. Issues were also raised around the quality of training, communication within the training sector and recognition of prior learning.

**The research found that training has improved skills and knowledge in food safety and awareness of the supervisor role. However, barriers were identified to undertaking the role, such as lack of information, time and support.**

The Food Safety Unit is one of a number of stakeholders that have the opportunity to provide input into the regular reviews of the food safety training. Along with industry and training organisations, national and state education and training bodies, the Department of Human Services is providing input to better align training with the requirements of the Victorian Food Act and the Food Standards Code. The Food Safety Unit is also providing support through information for local government, better defining food sectors so that it is easier to identify appropriate training, communicating best practice and answering queries about the food safety supervisor requirement via phone, email and in person.

To see a copy of the evaluation report, go to [www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/research/fss.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/research/fss.htm)

## PrimeSafe promotes Quality Assurance

PrimeSafe is ensuring the safety of meat and seafood for all consumers in Victoria through the regulation and review of hygiene standards for meat, poultry and seafood processing, together with plant and equipment.

Originally established as the Victorian Meat Authority at the request of industry, PrimeSafe has evolved with industry to broaden its coverage and continually improve its approach.

PrimeSafe today focuses on advancing a quality assurance system throughout the sector that will support sustained compliance with food safety standards. This model of regulatory management leads to higher levels of compliance and greater sustained compliance.

Sustained compliance is about taking a consistent approach to food safety. It is about the sector having the systems, processes and tools to comply at all times. PrimeSafe encourages this approach by identifying businesses that self-regulate, that have robust, detailed internal systems in place and show that they can meet food standards. Third party auditing also supports compliance and quality assurance programs.

For PrimeSafe, and for the meat and seafood industries, quality assurance is the way forward. It represents a system that can ensure and demonstrate the safety of all products and processes. A quality assurance approach involves

accountability, customer confidence, management responsibility, staff training, documentation and internal audit.

According to PrimeSafe Chief Executive, Brian Casey, a commitment to quality assurance brings benefits to business and to consumers. ‘Businesses that are committed to quality assurance do not fail. They are able to consistently provide quality products and services through the application of effective management systems,’ he said.

For consumers, the benefits are in continued quality products as well as confidence in the food industry. ‘Consumer confidence in food safety in Victoria is high—as it should be. However, we need to remain vigilant. PrimeSafe will continue to develop and encourage systems that support sustained compliance and will highlight where we want the industry to be in terms of food safety. While regulation is part of our role, PrimeSafe also encourages businesses to be innovative, to seek and implement efficiencies,’ said Brian Casey.

Communication, consistency and strong relationships with the sector and with other regulatory bodies are vital to progressing quality assurance management in the meat and seafood sector. ‘PrimeSafe strives to provide clear messages to the sector and ensure consistency in its approach and responses. This is critical if we are to remain credible,’ he said.

### PrimeSafe vision, mission and key objectives

PrimeSafe is established under the *Seafood Safety Act 2003* and the *Meat Industry Act 1993* and reports to the Minister for Agriculture.

#### Vision

PrimeSafe ensures the safety of Victorian meat and seafood for all consumers.

#### Mission statement

To regulate and advance food safety in the Victorian meat and seafood industries through a credible, effective and efficient Quality Assurance system that facilitates opportunities for industry growth and innovation.

#### Key business objectives

To deliver the Vision and Mission, PrimeSafe continues to:

- Develop and advance the QA system of regulatory control
- Provide a QA system that delivers value to industry stakeholders
- Ensure a high level of consumer confidence in the safety of meat and seafood in Victoria.



PrimeSafe’s working relationship with local government is defined in a Memorandum of Understanding developed in conjunction with the Department of Human Services, the Department of Primary Industries and Dairy Food Safety Victoria. A strong relationship with local government is essential to ensuring a good food safety outcome and the MoU promotes greater collaboration between the supervisors of regulatory management of red meat, poultry, seafood and dairy products in Victoria.

## Chocolatier Australia

*The Food Safety Unit works with many businesses in promoting and ensuring high levels of safety across Victoria's food sector. Here we profile a successful local business that has implemented and achieved high standards in food safety.*

Chocolatier Australia is achieving world class standards in chocolate making and is taking Australian chocolates to the rest of world. As supplier of premium quality handmade chocolates to the finest hotels, entertainment venues, airlines and companies, Chocolatier Australia has a well respected brand that is linked to quality.

An important aspect of ensuring and expressing that quality is the company's commitment to a safe and hygienic workplace and production practices. Chocolatier Australia implemented HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point), which is a system that identifies, evaluates and controls food safety hazards.

Since then the company has found that the benefits of this commitment to food safety flow through to the business, the brand, the staff and customers.

Chocolatier Australia's clients are at the premium end of the market—they expect

quality. HACCP certification demonstrates a commitment to safety in ingredients and processes, as well as accountability. It generates confidence in the Chocolatier brand.

Implementing HACCP has had a significant impact on the way staff work. While the program has imposed new disciplines into the business and required cultural change within the organisation, it has also provided opportunities for staff to develop skills and broaden their expertise and experience. HACCP is supported by a computerised documentation and recording process that makes it possible to track all materials and ingredients. Staff have learnt how to use this system as well as adopt work practices that ensure a focus on food safety.

'Food safety is now second nature to Chocolatier Australia staff. It is part of the process and the language. We are proactive about safety and quality', said John Grisold, Director and Founder of Chocolatier Australia.

A focus on food safety also makes good business sense. Chocolatier Australia has built a reputation as a producer of premium products. 'Most successful and well run businesses want to protect their business and minimise exposure to risk. Establishing food safety practices, achieving certification and instilling a culture of quality is part of protecting the business. It is also about being socially responsible and, of course, wanting consumers to enjoy your product,' said John Grisold.



### Chocolatier Australia— their recipe for success

Over 20 years ago, David, John and Mark Grisold saw a gap in the Australian market for premium, handmade chocolates. They learnt the art of chocolate making from the European experts then perfected their own recipes which combine traditional European style products with Australian flair and expertise. Today, Chocolatier Australia employs 50 staff (up to 70 during peak production times) and supplies major airlines, five star hotels, top resorts, catering companies and leading department stores both locally and internationally with a selection of Chocolates, Truffles and Pralines.

John Grisold believes that the recipe for success is a commitment to quality from the raw materials to the final packaged product.



## Studies examine the Environmental Health Officer workforce

Two studies commissioned by the Food Safety Unit provide a picture of the Environmental Health Officer workforce in Victoria, including who makes up the workforce, how and where they are employed, their skills and knowledge, and areas of need for further professional development.

### Reviewing the Environmental Health Officer Workforce

In response to concerns that local councils in Victoria, particularly those in rural areas, were finding it difficult to employ and retain qualified Authorised Officers/Environmental Health Officers, the Food Safety Unit commissioned a project to study the Environmental Health Officer workforce and identify the skills and knowledge needed to adequately enforce the *Victorian Food Act 1984*.

The project examined:

- the nature and demographics of the existing Environmental Health Officer workforce in Victoria and what it might look like in the next 10 years
- skills and knowledge required to administer the Victorian Food Act
- possible training pathways to acquire these skills and knowledge
- options for managing workforce skills and knowledge.

Qualitative and quantitative data collection involved surveys of Authorised Officers and Environmental Health Officers and local government managers, as well as focus groups with Environmental Health Officers. Responses were also received from a small group of Environmental Health Officers who had recently left the role. Training pathways were mapped and models for managing workforce skills and knowledge were identified.

In studying the Environmental Health Officer workforce characteristics and roles, the project found that:

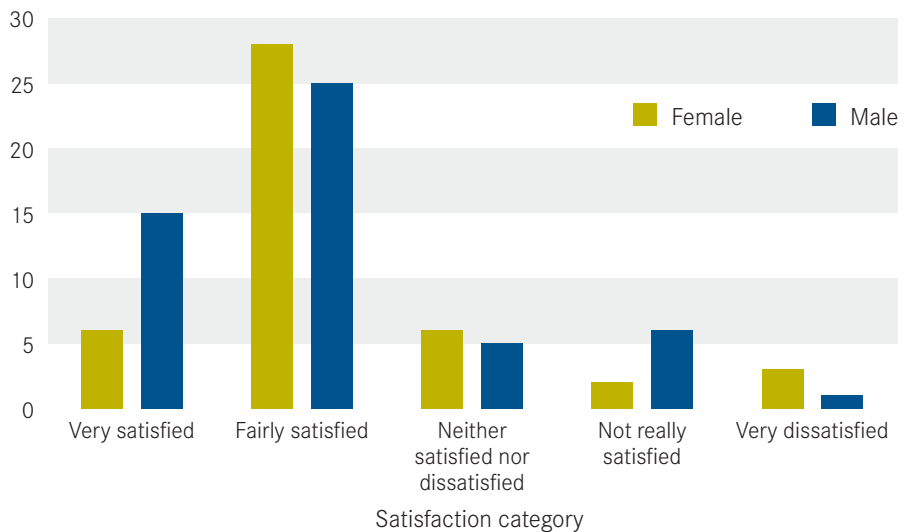
- the Environmental Health Officer workforce is in transition, with a shift to a younger, more feminised workforce
- Environmental Health Officers are generally employed on a full-time, permanent basis, however non-standard employment arrangements may be a feature of the future workforce given the changing demographics
- the Environmental Health Officer role covers a range of functions, with the main activity being administration of the Food Act
- Environmental Health Officers are generally satisfied with their job; however they identify a poor fit between their expectations of aspects of the role and their levels of satisfaction. The areas of poor fit include support or recognition of the role, career opportunities, pay and conditions and mentoring and development.

The report makes 27 recommendations relating to areas such as supply and demand for Environmental Health Officers, profile of their role, improved support for officers, enforcement, job design, training and development, food handler skills, and managing workforce skills and knowledge.

To find out more, you can view or download a copy of the report on the food safety website at <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/research/workforce.htm#eho>

The study found that Environmental Health Officers report a high level of satisfaction with their job. Three-quarters of the survey respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with their job.

### AO/EHO satisfaction ratings



Source: *Environmental Health Officer Workforce Review*, page 33

## Food safety in emergency situations

In emergency situations such as during bushfires, natural disasters and power failures, many people want to help out in any way they can. Some people are keen to donate food for emergency services workers and their contributions are certainly appreciated. However, before you give food, you need to consider how the food will be stored and kept safe.

The Food Safety Unit has developed a pamphlet that recommends the best types of food to donate, as well as those not suitable.

**Donating food to emergency services** is available from the Food safety website at: [http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/downloads/donating\\_food\\_emergency%20services.pdf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/downloads/donating_food_emergency%20services.pdf)

The website also includes other pamphlets and checklists that provide a useful guide to food safety during emergencies.

### **Emergency Catering Food Handlers Checklist**

This is a short checklist with tips for keeping food safe. It includes tips for hygiene as well as food storage and handling.

### **Emergency Catering Supervisors Checklist**

Designed for supervisors, this handy checklist includes tips for food storage, preparation and cleaning of equipment.

### **Food Safety and Emergency Power Failure**

In the case of a power failure, it is important to try to keep cold and frozen food cold. This pamphlet includes information on what to do with food before, during and after a power failure.

### **Emergency Power Failure Food Storage Checklist**

This pamphlet sets out the steps to take when storing food during a power failure to ensure that it remains safe.

To see these publications, go to: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/bus/keeping.htm>

## Donating food to charities—it's easier than you think

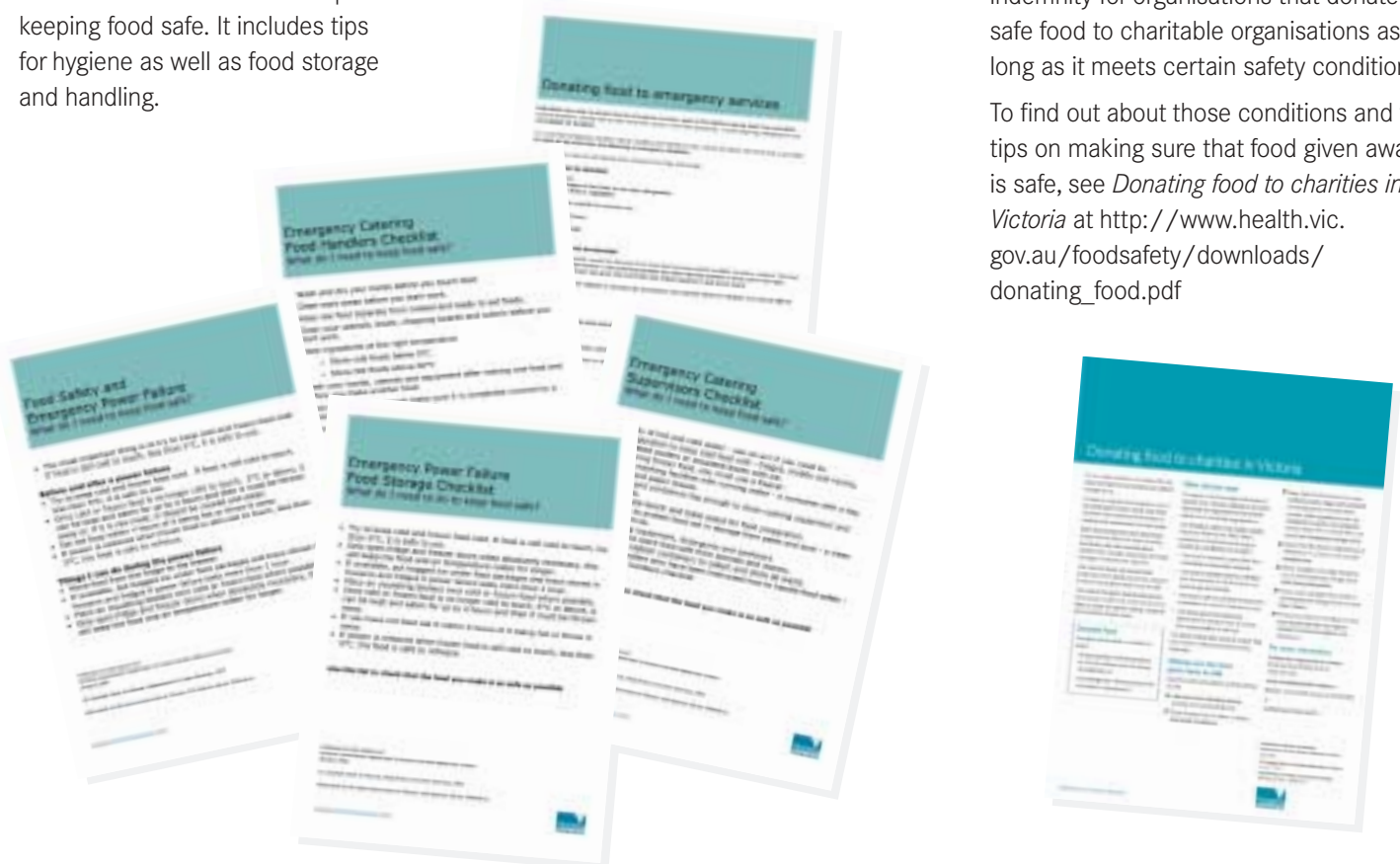
Many food businesses want to support charities that provide much-needed food for people in our community who can't afford or access food. However, often businesses are concerned about what food they can give away and what legal consequences there may be.

The Food Act does not prevent food businesses from giving away food, however the food that is given away must be safe. Businesses are required, under the Act, to throw away food that is likely to cause the person eating it physical harm.

Food donated to charities is usually unused portions of food prepared by a food business and not served to customers or food bought by a food business that is excess to their needs.

To support and encourage businesses to donate food, Victorian legislation provides indemnity for organisations that donate safe food to charitable organisations as long as it meets certain safety conditions.

To find out about those conditions and for tips on making sure that food given away is safe, see *Donating food to charities in Victoria* at [http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/downloads/donating\\_food.pdf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/downloads/donating_food.pdf)



## Court prosecutes over false health claims

A recent prosecution in Queensland serves as a reminder that it is illegal to misrepresent health claims when selling products.

Queensland Health successfully prosecuted a Brisbane food retailer for making illegal health claims about noni juice. The retailer claimed, through website advertisements, product labelling, printed material and advice to customers, that Tropical Gold Noni Juice can treat very serious and life-threatening diseases like cancer, stroke and depression.

The retailer, Brisbane Fine Foods Pty Ltd, was convicted and fined a total of \$16,000 for breaching sections 16 (3) and 16(4) of the *Food Act 1981* and standard 1.1A.2 of the Food Standards Code.

Noni juice is made from mature *Morinda Citrifolia* fruit originating in South Pacific islands. There is no scientific evidence that it is effective in preventing or treating cancer or any other disease in humans.

Consumers are encouraged to contact their local health authorities if they believe food advertising makes illegal health claims.

## Certification scheme improves food safety auditing

A consistent approach to food safety auditing has been established with the launch of the National Food Safety Auditor Certification Scheme.

The scheme requires food safety auditors to undertake national competency-based training. Organisations can select from four risk-based groups of food safety auditors, ranging from compliance audits to food processing/business audits. The scheme outlines criteria for assessment and monitoring, including peer review, recognition of competence and monitoring the performance of auditors.

Across Australia, businesses have implemented food safety and quality systems at each stage of the supply chain, and these systems are checked by commercial auditors. The National Food Safety Auditor Certification Scheme aligns

training and certification requirements nationally and supports greater confidence in the audit process. The scheme was designed to achieve compliance with ISO/IEC 17024:2003, the international standard for personnel certification.

The scheme was established through the Australian Government's National Food Industry Strategy Food Safety and Quality Systems Initiative to improve the nation's food safety auditing infrastructure. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry worked with the RABQSA International, industry and regulators to develop the scheme.

For more information, visit the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website at [www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au)



## Plant sterols and formulated beverages now approved

Two new food standards are now law. The first standard will allow Australians and New Zealanders to have access to a range of foods enriched with plant sterols. The second standard will allow manufacturers to make formulated beverages in Australia, not just New Zealand.

Christopher Pyne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, said that the new standards were excellent examples of allowing the food industry to be innovative while also protecting public health and safety.

‘Plant sterols can reduce cholesterol uptake when eaten in sufficient amounts. Until now, plant sterols have only been allowed for use in margarines. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has carried out an extensive safety assessment and, from today, plant sterols are also allowed to be added to low fat milks, low fat yoghurts and breakfast cereals. These type of products are

already permitted for use in Europe and North America,’ Mr Pyne said.

‘FSANZ’s consumer research found that most consumers of plant sterol products are health conscious adults who choose foods with a health benefit in mind and as part of a healthy lifestyle. Plant sterol products must carry advisory statements that they should be consumed as part of a healthy diet and that they are not suitable for children under 5 years or pregnant or lactating women. Plant sterols do not provide additional benefits when more than 3 grams a day are consumed.

‘FSANZ is working with the National Heart Foundation of Australia and the Dietitians Association of Australia to provide information about plant sterol foods to doctors, health professionals and consumers. A fact sheet is available on the FSANZ website.

‘I am also pleased to announce that water-based beverages with added vitamins and

minerals (formulated beverages) can now be legally manufactured in Australia. These products have been on the shelves in Australia for many years as they have been manufactured in New Zealand as dietary supplements and legally imported to Australia. Now they can be made in Australia. These products will have a maximum limit of 24% fruit ingredients and 7.5% sugar,’ Mr Pyne concluded.

*Media Release 10 November 2006*

A FSANZ fact sheet on plant sterols is at <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/newsroom/factsheets/factsheets2006/plantsterols9novembe3399.cfm>

### Front of pack nutrition labelling system

Ministerial Council members considered a proposal to examine a front of pack nutrition labelling scheme, including traffic light labelling similar to one in the UK, that provides consumers at glance information about nutritional content of foods. Council members agreed to ask the Food Regulation Standing Committee to explore and report to the Council at its next meeting whether a uniform front-of-pack food labelling system would be an effective health strategy, and to advise on the efficacy of a range of options for such a labelling system, which may include the traffic light labelling system, the behavioural labelling system and any other options.

*Extracts from the Joint Communiqué of the 25th October Australia New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council*

## National Food Safety Audit Policy

The Ministerial Council has agreed to a National Food Safety Audit Policy. The policy will promote uniformity and consistency in the management of food safety auditors and auditing within Australia, and where possible, facilitate equivalence with New Zealand. The policy

will be implemented over the next five years. The Food Regulation Standing Committee will now develop an implementation plan for the policy to identify resource requirements, accountabilities and specific timeframes.

## Mandatory fortification with folate

All Ministerial Council members reinforced their commitment to reduce the number of neural tube defects through mandatory fortification with folic acid as quickly as possible. The Ministerial Council discussed the Final Assessment Report from Food Standards Australia New Zealand on a

proposal for consideration of mandatory fortification of food with folic acid.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand has been asked to review the proposed standard due to technical considerations with the implementation of the standard, and compliance issues, within six months.

## Legal bites

The City of Greater Dandenong is pursuing some major food safety compliance issues that have significance beyond the Council's boundaries and highlight unsafe practices from food preparation to delivery.

### Illegal operator supplies students

Council will prosecute an illegal backyard operation that has been preparing and supplying meals to a large customer base of international students living and studying in Melbourne. Meals were found to be prepared in extremely unhygienic premises within the municipality, were packaged ineffectively in boxes not designed to keep food safe and were then transported by individuals via public transport to locations across the metropolitan area.

Council has seized the operator's documents and records which show that more than one hundred students, living in accommodation at Docklands, St Kilda Road, Queens Road and at universities were customers. The operators had been advertising a fully prepared and delivered meals at university campuses in languages other than English.

### Food for thought— Coffee watch

English office workers kicked nearly three times more into an 'honesty box' to pay for coffee and tea when they were faced by a poster that made it seem human eyes were watching them. Newcastle University behavioural science researcher Melissa Bateson said the eyes were influential because the brain naturally reacts to images of faces and eyes.

*Source: DHS News Notes,  
Friday 18th August 2006*

Greater Dandenong's Environmental Health Team Leader, Geoff Fraser, described the operation as 'putrid' and said that Greater Dandenong was proceeding against the operator due to breaches across all aspects of food preparation, storage and delivery.

Council has also contacted other metropolitan councils to make them aware of this operation and type of food handling practice.

### Shopping Centre action

The City of Greater Dandenong is also prosecuting an entire shopping centre for being unclean and contributing to environmental degradation. Council has issued summons on all 18 individual body corporate owners. This action follows efforts by Council over the last five years to work with the business owners and operators to clean up their act.

### Recent prosecutions

Over the past few months, the City of Greater Dandenong has been successful in prosecuting a number of significant restaurants, a nightclub and a supermarket for unclean premises. Costs and fines imposed on these businesses have ranged from around \$9,000 up to \$77,500. 'The types of foods and products involved in these cases include packaged and unpackaged foods and the premises range from food outlets to supermarkets and a nightclub that provides only small quantities of food. This demonstrates that all businesses that prepare, store or sell food need to be aware of and comply with food safety principles.' Geoff Fraser.

### Food for thought— Goose duce

The slaughter of millions of Chinese geese to prevent the spread of bird flu has left a shortage of the fine feathers used to make shuttlecocks for top-level badminton. Only the thickest, heaviest goose feathers from northern China are used to make premium shuttlecocks and sometimes as few as two feathers per goose make the final cut. But now, shuttlecock makers are having to settle for substandard feathers.

*Source: DHS News Notes,  
Wednesday 6th September 2006*

## Forthcoming events and opportunities

### Food Safety Week 13–18 November 2006

The theme of this year's Food Safety Week, held from 13–18 November was, 'Young people leaving home for the first time'. Research conducted by the Food Safety Information Council shows that young people, particularly young men, have poor knowledge of basic food safety issues, such as the importance of hand washing and food temperature control.

Food Safety Week 2006 aimed to raise awareness of food safety among young people and to educate them about the risks of poor food handling.

The Food Safety Information Council has issued national press releases and advertisements and will provide brochures to organisations who were interested in promoting Food Safety Week and conducting activities. For more information, visit <http://www.foodsafety.asn.au/foodsafetyweek/>

### Hygiene training

William Angliss Institute is now conducting the following hygiene training for the health and community services sector:

- Workplace Hygiene HLTFS7A
- Hygiene for Food Safety Supervisors HLTFS7A, HLTFS10A, HLTFS9A.
- Bridging Course for holders of the current hospitality units THHGHS01B and THHBCC11B and those who want to transfer those skills to the health and community services hygiene competencies.

### For dates, time and further information, visit

<http://shortcourses@angliss.vic.edu.au>

Ph: 03 9606 2111

Email: [shortcourses@angliss.vic.edu.au](mailto:shortcourses@angliss.vic.edu.au)

### Auditors Forum— November 2006

The fourth auditors forum will be held in November 2006. This annual forum provides an opportunity for the Food Safety Unit and Approved Auditors to meet and discuss a range of relevant matters. For more information contact Belinda Rice on 9096 0366.

### Local Government Food Safety Forum 2007

Following on from the successful forum held in 2005, the department is planning a second full-day forum on Wednesday 18 April 2007. The event will be held at Flemington Racecourse and the Food Safety Unit will seek ideas on topics to be covered at the forum.

### Food safety facts online

There is no shortage of avenues for learning about food safety. As well as the information provided through the Food Safety Unit, two very popular websites feature articles and fact sheets that provide the public with information, and links to further assistance and information, about food safety.

'Go for your life' is a Victorian Government initiative that aims to make Victorians healthier by providing access to information, services and resources to eat well and be physically active—and enjoy the health benefits that result. The campaign involves all departments and includes a range of activities and programs aimed at people of all ages and abilities.

Improving eating habits is a major focus of this campaign, and this includes food safety. The Go for your life website ([www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au)) includes 13 articles covering topics such as preventing food poisoning, understanding 'use-by' and 'best before' dates, storing food safely, food safety outdoors, mercury in fish and cooking safely in the microwave.

The Better Health Channel, which was established in May 1999 by the Victorian Government to help improve the health and wellbeing of the Victorian community, also features articles on food safety. This website ([www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)) provides online health and medical information that is quality assured, reliable, up-to-date, easy to understand and relevant.

The Better Health Channel was rated the most popular health and medical advice website visited by Australians in 2005 and received more than 10,400 visits (Internet sessions) in 2005–06 (Department of Human Services Annual Report 2005–06).



## Your contributions

*Victorian Food Safety News* is a journal focusing on news in the food and food safety industry. We welcome your input. If you have any comments or stories of interest, please contact Danielle Walker on 1300 364 352 or email: [Danielle.Walker@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:Danielle.Walker@dhs.vic.gov.au).

Please note that articles and information provided may be edited.

## Food Safety Hotline

Tel: 1300 364 352  
(local call charges)

## Fine food and safety

The Food Safety Unit promoted food safety at Fine Food Australia, the food and beverage industry's largest exhibition. Held at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre from 11 to 14 September, this international event demonstrated innovations in food, drink and equipment for retail, catering and

hospitality, and focused on key food industry areas such as bakery, confectionery, dairy, meat and seafood and natural products.

Food Safety 'showbags' with brochures, magnets, thermometers and fact sheets were handed out to around 1500 visitors.



## Participating in the Culinary Challenge

The Melbourne Culinary Challenge provided another opportunity for the Food Safety Unit to highlight the importance of food safety.

The Culinary Challenge is a competition for professional cooks, chefs and apprentices, and teams from some of Victoria's most prestigious restaurants.

The competition framework is endorsed by the World Association of Cooks Society, and achieves a worldwide standard through judging criteria and ACF approved Judges.

*Victorian Food Safety News*  
Published by Food Safety Unit,  
Victorian Government Department of Human  
Services Melbourne Victoria.

November 2006

© Copyright State of Victoria, Department of Human  
Services, 2006

Authorised by the State Government of Victoria,  
50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

Printed by Print Bound Pty Ltd, 8 Apollo Court,  
Blackburn, 3130.



Department of  
Human Services