

## A successful merger, a new beginning...

The NSW Food Authority was established in April 2004 following the successful merger of SafeFood NSW with NSW Health food safety staff. As the Authority passes its first 12 month milestone, it has delivered a more streamlined, consistent and efficient approach to food regulation in NSW. The NSW Food Authority remains a unique organisation - Australia's first "through chain" agency. This means it can regulate food safety all the way from "paddock to plate". Here are some highlights from the first 12 months!

## A new Act and a new home



New head office at Newington.

A new, purpose-built facility at Newington was built for the NSW Food Authority. Occupying 2300 square meters, the building features office accommodation over three floors. Staff from both agencies relocated to the building in November 2003. The new Authority was accompanied by a new Act - the NSW Food Act 2003 was introduced in February 2004.

## Official opening



Regional Development Minister David Campbell (right) declares the NSW Food Authority open with the help of Director-General George Davey.

## First Easter Show



Minister Macdonald with staff and children at the show.

The 2004 Easter Show was the NSW Food Authority's first major public event. The Authority's stand featured a range of informative displays - a hand washing demonstration using ultraviolet light to simulate bacteria proved very popular with children. Ensuring the food safety message remains interesting and vital remains a challenge, with the Authority adopting an even higher profile during the recent 2005 Easter Show. (See report and pics pages 3 & 4)

## Public & industry interface



Consumer & Industry Contact Centre manager Craig Morony.



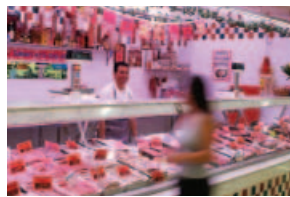
Strong and open lines of communication with consumers and industry are critical to how the Food Authority does business. With this in mind, the

Authority established the Consumer & Industry Contact Centre (CICC) in April 2004. The CICC provides consumers and industry with a wealth of information about a range of food safety issues, from safe food handling to food for vulnerable groups. The centre, which receives more than 300 calls a week, also logs complaints about businesses and food issues. Sophisticated data logging enables the CICC to track emerging issues by region.



# NSW Food Authority - year in review

## Making food safer protecting consumers



The Food Authority's first priority is to make sure the food reaching NSW consumers is safe and healthy. The Authority accomplishes this by working closely with industry to monitor and improve standards, as well as routine testing across food groups to ensure compliance. The Authority also cooperates closely with national (FSANZ), international, state and territory food agencies on emerging issues that might impact on food safety. Regular survey work ensures the Food Authority identifies potential issues before they impact on public health or consumer choice. These include investigations into meat substitution, illegal use of sulphur dioxide as a preservative; fish/prawn substitution and illegal health claims made by some sectors of the juice bar industry.



The media widely reported on moves by the Food Authority to ensure butchers and retail meat outlets did not substitute cheaper meats for more expensive cuts. Follow up work by the Authority revealed widespread compliance. Likewise with juice bars that had been making illegal health claims. The Authority was able to work with the industry and other state and territory food agencies to ensure compliance.



Ensuring NSW consumers were not misled about prawn and fish species was an important area of work in 2004.

## International cooperation



Director-General George Davey addresses Olympic seminar in Beijing

The Food Authority cooperates closely with numerous international food agencies. Sharing expertise and information is important to improve food safety in Australia and overseas.



Food Authority Director-General George Davey addressed the first ICMSF-China Food Safety International Conference and Food Technology for the Beijing Olympics Seminar in Beijing late last year. Mr Davey attended the ICMSF conference to speak on the Sydney experience managing food safety at the 2000 Olympics. The address followed meetings with Beijing Olympics officials, accompanied by Dr Patricia Desmarchelier of Food Science Australia, to provide insight into managing food safety effectively.



The successful Sydney Olympics and its blemish free food safety record was examined by a visiting Chinese Olympic delegation (pictured) in December. The Food Authority hosted the fact-finding mission by members of the Beijing Agriculture Bureau on Food Supply During Olympic Games. The visit strengthened an already strong working relationship between the Authority and Beijing Olympic Officials following Mr Davey's visit to Beijing.



To ensure that food in NSW is safe and correctly labelled and that NSW consumers are able to make informed choices about the food they eat



# NSW Food Authority- year in review

## Australian Standards Award for D-G



John Castles, Chair of Standards Australia presents George Davey with an Outstanding Service Award.

Food Authority Director-General George Davey was presented with the Outstanding Service Award - Standards Australia Board 2004, in November 2004. Mr Davey started as a committee member developing methods for the dairy industry in 1972 and is responsible for many of Standards Australia's publications on food microbiology. He is a member of the Food Products working group and chairs the working group on Food Safety. The working group is helping prepare the ISO/DIS 22000 Food Safety Management Draft Standard.

## Methyl-mercury expert



Mercury expert Professor Sean Strain and George Davey

International methyl-mercury expert, Professor Sean Strain, visited the Authority in February, 2005. While in NSW, Professor Strain met the Authority's executive and senior staff to discuss latest research on mercury and fish consumption. Professor Strain is Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the Food Safety Promotions Board of Ireland, and is a Professor of Human Nutrition at the University of Ulster.

## Authority Staff Awards



Minister Ian Macdonald, Katie Kinaun and George Davey at the awards day

The NSW Food Authority celebrated the first anniversary of its Newington head office in December with a giant mud cake in the shape of the new building, and the inaugural staff awards ceremony. Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald addressed staff, as did Director-General, George Davey. Staff members from each branch, who had been nominated by their peers for outstanding service, were awarded a Food Authority commemorative pen, a miniature Authority car and a personalised Award Certificate.

## 2005 Easter Show



Minister Macdonald and Peter Howard on stage

## Celebrity "cook off"

The Food Authority adopted a much higher profile at this year's Easter Show. The Authority's stand was relocated to the popular **Woolworths Fresh Food Dome**. As with last year, Authority staff were on hand to answer food safety questions for members of the public. This year's highlight included the Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald launching the Authority's safe raw meat and poultry campaign with celebrity chef Peter Howard during a "cook off".



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# NSW Food Authority- year in review

## Food Authority Stand



Capacity crowds watch the "cook off" to promote safe food handling

The Authority's stand featured interactive displays showing how to avoid cross-contamination, correct cooking temperatures and where to store different foods in a refrigerator. As always, the display was a barometer of public awareness, enabling specialist staff to determine public demand on any particular food safety issue. Public education materials can then be produced for future events.



The Food Authority's George Davey, Jo Melling and Minister Macdonald at the Food Authority stand.



The Food Authority's stand featured eye-catching displays and graphics to promote healthy food among all sectors of the community.



Minister Macdonald and the Authority's Samara Kitchener at the stand

Mercury in Fish educational materials informing women how to eat fish to maximise the benefits of Omega-3 fatty acids while reducing the risk from mercury were revealed to the public for the first time. This included a small "wallet card" outlining FSANZ dietary advice. Food Authority staff also handed out fact sheets on a variety of food safety issues, including safe kids lunches and general food safety tips.

## Safer Seafood



Food safety programs were introduced across the NSW seafood industry, with about 1000 commercial fishers and oyster processors being trained to introduce these important programs.



Separately, a seafood industry consultative committee was established representing NSW's \$90 million-plus commercial fishing industry.



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