



Spotlight shines on shame file

The Food Authority's first public publication of a successful food law prosecution attracted significant media attention.

In an Australian first, the Authority launched its "name and shame" website where consumers can access information about food outlets that have been convicted for offences under the *Food Act 2003*.

The first company to appear on the website launched by the NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald, was an Orange-based wholesaler prosecuted for selling whisky that did not meet minimum alcohol content requirements.

Following a complaint made to the Authority by two industry associations, inspectors seized 294 bottles of whisky that laboratory tests later revealed contained only 38.6 per cent alcohol – below the 40 percent minimum level required by law.

Section 18(3) of the *Food Act* prohibits selling food that is packaged or labelled in a way that falsely describes the food, which in this case includes alcoholic spirits.

The wholesaler was fined \$30,000 in the Supreme Court and the Food Authority was awarded costs of \$80,000.

The court's decision sent out a strong message that consumers are entitled to have food labelled accurately and requirements to comply with the *Food Act* must be taken seriously.

News of the prosecution and its exposure on the Authority's new website on 24 July prompted media coverage across the State.

Top right: The Authority's Compliance Manager, Christine Tumney, inspects bottles of bogus Old McTavish scotch whisky seized in the successful prosecution. (Photo courtesy Network Ten)

Right: The Authority's new "name and shame" website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/prosecutions.asp



Stakeholders have their say on phase two of campaign



Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald addresses the stakeholder forum co-hosted by the Authority and the Local Government Association at North Sydney Council chambers.

Three weeks after the "name and shame" website launch, the Authority co-hosted an industry and stakeholder forum to progress the NSW Government's initiative to publish food industry operators' names who break food safety laws.

The forum was attended by 55 representatives of local councils, industry and consumer groups.

In opening the forum, Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said he did not wish to launch a witch-hunt against the food industry.

"The Government is working to achieve a balance between the public's right to know and the rights of food businesses to their good reputation," Mr Macdonald said.

"The first phase of this initiative has been generally welcomed by the community and I am encouraged that the food industry, councils and other stakeholders have expressed their goodwill in advancing this initiative." *continued page 4.*





PROJECTS

Looking at food through the crystal ball

Food industry experts from around the world converged on Sydney in September for the second Food Safety Conference, jointly hosted by the NSW Food Authority and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

With the theme of "Future Directions", speakers from food manufacturing, packaging, science, regulation and consumer groups collectively gazed into the crystal ball to predict the challenges and opportunities awaiting the food industry.

Some of the noted international speakers were Dr Gerald Moy from the World Health Organisation in Geneva, and Dr John O'Brien, CEO of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

In his address, the acting head of FSANZ, Dean Stockwell, said there was a considerable and growing consumer demand for accurate and understandable ingredient information on food packaging.

He said that labels are the key channel for consumer information, and FSANZ will be starting a review of labelling standards in the food code at the end of 2007.

Dr Bruce Lee, director of the CSIRO Food Futures program, gave a snap shot of what cutting-edge science conducted in Australia promised in "tailoring raw ingredients to develop healthier foods that meet consumer demands."

This included "functional foods" that contained "bioactive" ingredients that were engineered to address specific lifestyle diseases and improvement of overall health.



Authority senior executives Dr Lisa Szabo, George Davey and Peter Sutherland with conference keynote speaker Dr John O'Brien (2nd R), head of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

Vital communication with industry



Communicating with key food industry stakeholders is a vital part of how the Authority works toward the safest possible food chain in NSW.

The Authority has a dedicated technical unit which keeps abreast of industry developments,

new technologies and scientific innovations. The unit provides technical advice to industry through direct contact, workshops, presentations, technical papers, fact sheets and interpretation of standards and legislation.

In the last 12 months, the unit has published a range of publications targeting key industries, including 21 new and updated fact sheets, often reproduced in several community languages. Industry publications for 2007 include the following titles:

- Borax, sodium borate or boric acid
- Campylobacter
- Charity fish auctions
- Colour of mince meat
- Controlling histamine food safety
- E. coli
- Eggs - safe use and handling
- Food handling guidelines for temporary events
- Food safety during a power failure
- Food safety during an emergency
- Food safety guidelines for the preparation and display of sushi
- Food safety tips for caterers
- Food service to vulnerable persons newsletter
- Food recalls
- Foodwise – Volumes 4 to 7
- Guidelines for seafood retailers
- Hepatitis A
- Labelling requirements –Country of Origin
- Listeria monocytogenes
- Meat tray raffle safety
- Rockmelons and Salmonella
- Safe handling of fresh fruit and vegetables
- Salmonella
- Seafood substitution in restaurants and takeaways
- Sprout food safety

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NATIONAL

Authority's realignment takes effect

An eight-month structural realignment process took effect in August at the NSW Food Authority which will streamline its function and make it better able to meet larger strategic goals.

The Authority began a major exercise of reviewing its Results and Services Plan in December 2006 to align itself with the NSW State Plan, which will guide the delivery of Government services for the next decade.

As a result, the Authority's seven service groups have been collapse down to three – two external and one internal – making a more streamlined

and better balanced organisation.

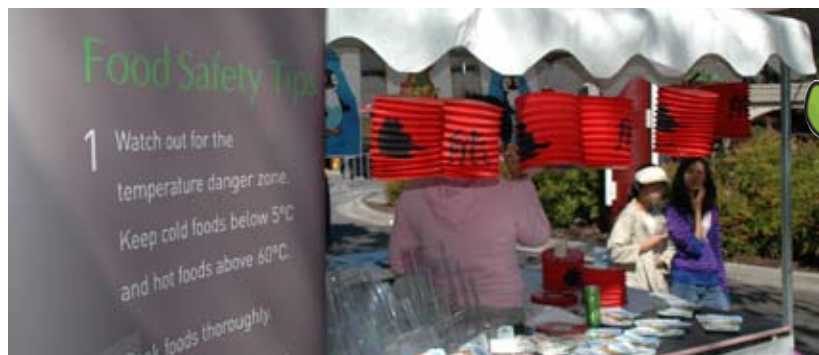
The Authority's Director-General, George Davey, said the realignment was an intensive program done in full consultation with staff, unions and stakeholders.

"Our new organisational structure will enhance our service-delivery capability and enable cross-fertilisation between the branches and joint working teams. All staff are to be congratulated in participating in the realignment, which resulted in no loss or downgrading of positions," Mr Davey said.

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Old service group structure	New service group structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Regulatory Framework • Industry Consultation • Compliance & Enforcement • Communication and Coordination with other Government Services • Public information • Consumer & Industry Contact Centre • Internal Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science, Standards & Communication • Compliance, Investigation & Enforcement • Internal Services.

Safe food messages go to the moon



Culinary delights are the centrepiece of the annual Cabramatta Moon Festival in Sydney, so the Authority was out spreading the word about proper food storage and handling to 60,000 revellers.

The Moon Festival, held in September in one of Australia's most ethnically diverse areas, celebrates the lunar equinox where it is believed the moon has a positive influence on Earth.

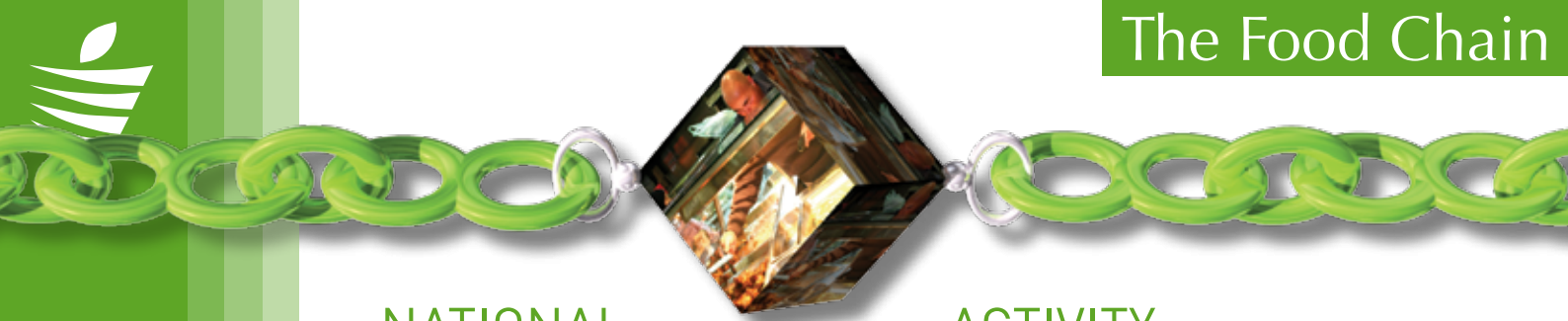
The Authority took this opportunity to deliver its safe food messages by holding a stall at the festival where it distributed pamphlets and temporary kids' tattoos bearing mascots "Squeaky clean platypus",

"Heat it up dragon" and "Keep it cool penguin".

This was the first time the Authority had participated in a local celebration and saw it as good opportunity to communicate important food messages to a large Chinese and Vietnamese community.

Already a famous restaurant area, the streets of Cabramatta's shopping precinct were jammed with thousands of people enjoying great Asian food and traditional entertainment.

The festival was an opportunity for the Authority to expand its multi-lingual communication material, improving access to ethnic communities to address their own unique food issues.



NATIONAL National Egg Safety Summit

The Authority hosted the first national Egg Safety Summit in Sydney in August, attracting representatives of regulators from every state and industry leaders.

Highlights of the day-long summit were state-by-state case studies of egg-related illness outbreaks and lessons learnt in each incident. Other areas covered were risk assessment, the role of expanded regulation and improving risk communication in the egg industry.

Commenting at the close of the summit, Frank Pace, founder and Managing Director of Pace Farms, one of Australia's largest producers of shell eggs and egg products, said the gathering was unique and set a positive precedent for the development of the industry.



Summit presenters (L-R) Paul Pace, Ivy Inwood, James Kellaway, Peter Sutherland, Tennille Fort, Frank Pace, Faye Jenkins and Michelle Keygan.

ACTIVITY Visiting Kiwis



Valuable ideas were exchanged between four employees of the New Zealand Food Safety Agency and their Aussie counterparts during August and September in the first of a formal staff exchange program between the two agencies.

The staff exchange is the first after both agencies formalised a memorandum of understanding in 2006 agreeing to share information and make experts available to each other when needed.

The Authority's D-G George Davey said the trans-Tasman link is a valued relationship as both organisations have similar responsibilities, values and size and share many of the same issues.

The kiwi quartet spent two days at the Newington head office familiarising themselves with local issues and sharing input to a day-long strategic planning workshop with the majority of Authority staff. One visitor, Ron Frederickson, spent over a month at the Authority's Operations Branch.

Top: Visiting staff from NZFSA sharing their ideas and experiences with NSW Food Authority D-G George Davey (centre) are (L-R) Bruce Burdon, Cherie Flynn, Trish Ranstead and Ron Frederickson.

Stakeholders have their say on phase two of campaign *continued from page 1.*

Mr Macdonald said feedback from the forum would inform a package of proposed food industry reforms soon to be considered by the NSW Parliament.

Some NSW local councils have already adopted the practice of disclosing the names of food outlets who have received food safety penalty notices. This currently happens in American cities such as New York and Seattle.

Cr Genia McCaffery, President of the Local Government and Shires Association and Mayor of North Sydney, said she was glad to co-sponsor the forum because local government had a vital role as a co-regulator of retail food businesses.

"This co-regulator role has been carefully worked. We are pleased that the Government and the Minister see our Food Regulation Partnership - between the Local Government & Shires Association and the Food Authority - as a vital relationship and one which is critical to consumer protection," Cr McCaffery said.

"Local Government has a key role to play in this initiative as our officers - our EHOs - are in the field ensuring food safety standards are maintained in restaurants and other retail food businesses.

"But Local Government is also close to retail food businesses - and wants to make sure the system works well and efficiently."

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NSW Food Authority
6 Avenue of the Americas,
Newington NSW 2127
Tel 1300 552 406
Fax 02 9647 0026
contact@foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au



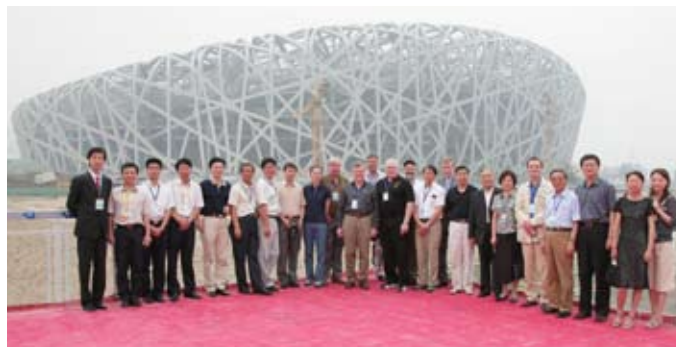
INTERNATIONAL

The final countdown to the Beijing Olympics 2008

Food Authority Director-General Georg Davey participated in the second meeting of the Expert Committee on Food Safety for the 2008 Beijing Olympics in July. He gave a presentation on lessons learnt from Sydney's experience of managing food safety at "mega events" in recent years. He also undertook inspections of the Olympic sites and food companies supplying prepared meals to Olympic venues. The experts also met with the Mayor of Beijing who addressed the importance of food safety not only to the success of the Olympics but also to the Chinese economy.



George Davey addresses food safety experts in Beijing.



Expert panel visited venues for 2008 Olympics.

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Dairy group meets in Ireland



George Davey (2nd from right) presented a workshop on the food safety communication using the NSW Food Authority's experience with mercury in fish and the pregnancy portal campaigns as recent case studies. He is pictured with (L-R) Professor David Carson, University of Ulster; Craig Plymnesser, DMI Inc, Chicago USA; Bertus de Jongh, MPO, South Africa; Nathalie Noel, Dairy Farmers of Canada and Dr Mike Johnston, University of Ulster and CEO Dairy Council of Northern Ireland.

George Davey was a member of the Australian delegation to the 2007 International Dairy Federation (IDF) World Dairy Summit held in Dublin, Ireland in October. He attended meetings of the IDF Program Coordination Committee, IDF General Assembly and Forum, the International Milk Promotions Group and the IDF Standing Committee on Marketing where he was elected Chairman. He also chaired an IDF Marketing Conference session held as part of the summit.

While in Ireland, Mr Davey also gave a presentation on risk communication at an agri-food seminar and workshop conducted by the School of Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Strategy at the University of Ulster, and participated in a World School Milk Day organised by the Dairy Council of Northern Ireland.



STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS New partnership improves food safety

New legislation passed by NSW Parliament on 24 October will co-ordinate local government's role in food regulation and enable quicker responses to food emergencies and recalls.

Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said the Food Amendment Bill 2007 will better define the role of 152 local councils in NSW in several areas, including food inspections.

"There is no doubt the new laws will improve food safety co-ordination between councils and the Food Authority.

"The bottom line is to make sure the people of NSW continue to get access to safe and correctly labelled food, and we are confident this new initiative will deliver just that," Minister Macdonald said.

Passage of the bill culminated in three years of work by the NSW Food Authority and intensive liaison with local government and other stakeholders including the Local Government and Shires Associations, the Australian Institute of Environmental Health NSW, Development and Environmental Professionals Association and the Local Government Managers Australia NSW Division.

The Presidents of the Local Government and Shires Associations have stated that it sets the standard for how State and Local Government can work together.

The Government has allocated \$6.5 million over five years to support the new initiative to improve food safety coordination between councils and the Food Authority.

Food Authority Director-General George Davey said the new bill is "one of the most significant pieces of legislation to be passed in NSW regarding the food regulatory system since the first Food Act of 1908."

In a congratulatory message to all Authority staff, Mr Davey said the new laws would "clarify and strengthen the respective roles of the Food Authority and local councils in our shared work of ensuring the safety and suitability of food for sale in NSW."



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New legislation just passed will set out how 152 NSW local councils and the Food Authority will work closely together to protect six million consumers.