

Scores on Doors

Pro Forma Council Report

The Food Authority has developed a pro forma report and resolution that may be useful in seeking Council support for Scores on Doors.

Adoption of the Scores on Doors program

Council motions:

1. That council adopts the NSW Scores on Doors program for its food businesses to promote compliance with hygiene and food safety standards, promote consumer trust in food businesses, and to further the reputation and economy of food businesses in the area.
2. That the initiative be included in Council's food surveillance program.



Report

Council and the community benefit from the local food industry, relying on food premises and the part they play in the diverse local economy.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sanitation practices, consumer safety and community awareness has been substantial, and the program can play an important role in restoring confidence.

Consumers expect:

- food premises to have the highest levels of compliance with hygiene and food safety standards
- access to official information so they can make their own decision about where they eat
- transparency around Council activity such as food inspections, and business inspection performance.

Scores on Doors provides a public face for the work that Council is already doing in food safety. Council Environmental Health Officers have established food inspections to ensure compliance with hygiene and food safety requirements. Where necessary, they undertake enforcement action.

The program requires no extra commitment from councils as it draws on this existing inspection program. Food inspectors calculate the Scores on Doors hygiene and food safety score as part of their routine unannounced food safety inspection process.

The program provides transparency around the inspections and is an incentive for businesses to maintain and increase their inspection results, improving local food standards.

(Optional paragraph) Adjacent local governments (insert name/s) currently participate in the Scores on Doors program.

To further support the significant work in this area, it is recommended that Council take part in the NSW Scores on Doors program.

Program details

Scores on Doors is part of a broad suite of measures to reduce foodborne illness in NSW.

The state-wide voluntary program, first piloted in 2010, is founded on a risk-based priority system and encourages the onsite display of the results of a food business's most recent inspection for hygiene and food safety.

The program is focused on retail food service businesses which process and sell food that is ready-to-eat, intended for immediate consumption, and potentially hazardous if not handled correctly and under the right conditions. These are the higher risk premises that have the greatest potential to cause foodborne illness if food is not handled correctly.

These businesses include:

- restaurants
- pub bistros
- hotels
- cafés
- bakeries
- clubs
- takeaway outlets.

Scores on Doors is not intended for:

- supermarkets
- delicatessens or greengrocers
- low risk food premises or businesses that serve pre-packaged food such as service stations and convenience stores
- temporary markets, mobile food vending vehicles, or
- businesses that hold a NSW Food Authority licence and are separately audited such as butchers.

Council is not liable for compliance failures or issues with premises conditions. Certificates are issued in good faith, intended as a general guide only.

A robust partnership between the NSW Food Authority and local council will strengthen the local food safety culture, support its appeal as a good place to eat and a reliable place to do business, and potentially reduce frequency of inspections.

Operational details

Councils can develop their own guidelines for Scores on Doors based around the following basic elements. See the NSW Food Authority's own Guidelines.

1. At a routine inspection, eligible food premises receive a hygiene and food safety rating based on points allocated under the Scores on Doors guidelines, similar to a demerit system.
2. NSW Food Authority provides the certificates and stickers free of charge to local councils for each of the three ratings: Good, Very Good or Excellent. Businesses assessed with critical breaches or too many lesser breaches are not awarded any grade or certificate/sticker.
3. Certificates and stickers can be issued at the time of the inspection or sent out afterwards.
4. Businesses would display the rating certificate on the front window or door or near the entrance to the premises.
5. Certificates expire on a date determined by the inspecting officer in accordance with Council policy. Businesses are not permitted to display out-of-date certificates.
6. Certificates may also be withdrawn if, for example, critical breaches are found during investigation of a complaint.

The motions are recommended because:

- Increasing transparency around food inspections is good for consumers and business, and improves understanding of the role of councils
- food businesses that do the right thing should be rewarded
- the program provides incentives to food businesses to raise food safety standards which will lead to fewer consumer complaints and fewer compliance issues requiring follow-up
- the program will help provide our community with a high standard of value-for-money food products and services, which positively showcase Council's many communities and culinary attractions.