

Summary of Outcomes

Food Regulation Forum

Date: **Tuesday, 18 November 2025**

Time: 10:00am

Members present: Cr Claire Pontin (Chair)

Mr Andrew Davies, A/CEO NSW Food Authority
Mr Mark Mackie, NSW Food Authority
Cr Dr Elizabeth Adamczyk, Local Government NSW
Ms Denise Anderson, Local Government NSW
Mr Hugh Waters, Environmental Health Australia
Ms Erin Hogan, Environmental Health Australia
Ms Fiona Stalgis, Development and Environmental Professionals' Association
Mr Peter Fitzgerald, Local Government Professionals Australia

Guests present: Ms Ruth Houston, NSW Food Authority
Ms Josie Rizzo, NSW Food Authority
Mr Eric Davis, NSW Food Authority
Ms Miriam East, NSW Food Authority

Apologies: Ms Sally-Anne Donahue, Development and Environmental Professionals' Association
Ms Geneveive Taylor, Local Government Professionals Australia
Ms Katherine Gash, NSW Food Authority
Mr David Cusack, NSW Food Authority

Not present: Cr Phyllis Miller, Local Government NSW

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies, previous meeting Summary of Outcomes.

The Chair welcomed all members of the Food Regulation Forum (the Forum). Apologies were noted. Ruth Houston and Elizabeth Adamczyk spoke to the action items as per the Summary of Outcomes from 19 June 2025 which were accepted as true and correct.

2. Information items

2.1 State Liaison Group Meeting, 9 September 2025

Josie Rizzo spoke to the agenda paper 2.1 *Update on the State Liaison Group (SLG) meetings*.

Issue: Since the last Food Regulation Forum meeting there has been one SLG meeting at the end of Round 2 2025 on 9 September 2025, and the Summary of Outcomes is included in the agenda papers *2.1 Attachment 1*.

Outcome: The Forum noted the information provided.

2.2 Food Regulation Partnership Update

Ruth Houston spoke to agenda paper 2.2 *Food Regulation Partnership (FRP) Update*.

Issue: An update on some Food Regulation Partnership (FRP) initiatives was provided including the FRP Library, FRP New Bites, FRP Mangers Forum and cross-agency collaboration.

A survey will be circulated in 2026 to gain formal feedback from authorised officers (AOs) on the FRP Library and FRP News Bites to ensure they are fit for purpose and to adjust/improve these resources where required.

Outcome: The Forum noted the information provided.

2.3 Training to Authorised Officers 2025/26

Ruth Houston spoke to agenda paper 2.3 *Training for Authorised Officers 2025/26*.

Issue: An update on the professional development programs for local government enforcement agencies appointed under the NSW *Food Act 2003*.

Discussion: Erin Hogan raised the concern of councils moving away from having qualified EHOs in EHO roles, and requiring them to do the Authorised Officer Course, which has implications for professionalism and the qualifications of the EHO role.

There was considerable discussion on this issue.

Outcome: The NSW Food Authority to:

- review its decision matrix for eligibility onto the Authorised Officer Course
- explore the possibility of an amendment to the NSW *Food Act 2003* to require a formal qualification for EHOs
- continue to explore options to build EHO capacity within the existing EHO pool by automating EHO back-office jobs.

The following proposed training topics at the RFGMs for 2026, along with Labelling, was endorsed by the Forum:

- FAQs workshop
- Food recalls/allergens
- Issuing prohibition orders or Food Act Seizures
- Food safety schemes for Food Authority licensed businesses (information piece only)

2.4 Artificial Intelligence Tool for Assessing Penalty Notices Project

Ruth Houston spoke to agenda paper 2.4 *Artificial Intelligence Tool for Penalty Notice Assessments*.

Issue: The Food Authority has commenced a new project to develop an artificial intelligence (AI) tool for the assessment of penalty notices issued under the NSW *Food Act 2003*.

Outcome: The Forum noted the information provided.

2.5 Childcare Services Project Update

Josie Rizzo spoke to agenda paper 2.5 *Childcare services project*.

Issue: A collaborative project to assess compliance in facilities providing childcare services has commenced. Currently there are 25 councils participating, surveying 618 premises.

Discussion: Denise Anderson questioned if the survey was collecting data on the type of provider and Josie confirmed yes.

Outcome: The Forum noted the information provided.

3. Discussion items

3.1 Council Activity Reports 2024/25

Josie Rizzo spoke to agenda paper 3.1 *Annual activity reports 2024-25*.

Issue: Annual activity reports have been received from all enforcement agencies for 2024-25 and the data has been collated and analysed.

Discussion: Hugh Waters queried the rationale for the performance measures for the 44 councils that were required to provide feedback. Josie outlined the criteria for performance measure A, C, D and L.

Outcome: The Forum noted the information provided.

3.2 Food Regulation 2025

Miriam East spoke to agenda paper 3.2. *Food Regulation 2025 implementation*.

Issue: Delegations to Enforcement Agencies and the ability of councils to reduce inspection fees are two key issues that have arisen in the implementation of Food Regulation 2025.

There are 23 GM delegations outstanding that require a response to the Food Authority, and the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is seeking joint legal advice with the Office of Local Government regarding reducing the inspection fee.

Outcome: The Forum noted the information provided.

3.3 Retail and Food Service Information Sessions 2026/27

Ruth Houston spoke to agenda paper 3.3 *Retail and Food Service Information Session Locations 2026/27*.

Issue: Locations for Retail and Food Service Information (RIS) sessions in 2026/27.

The recommended dates and locations for Retail and Food Service Information sessions in 2026 and early 2027 are:

- Albury City Council (June 2026)
- Inner West Council (September/October 2026)
- Hilltops Council (February/March 2027)

Outcome: The Forum endorsed the dates and locations for the RISs in 2026/27.

4. Standing items

4.1 Organisation updates

Local Government NSW

- Denise Anderson is Strategy Manager of Social and Community Policy at Local Government NSW and is in attendance as Jay Suuval stepped down as a Councillor. Denise will reach out to Eric Davis (NSW Food Authority) to discuss a regulatory management function system.

NSW Food Authority

- Andrew Davies, Acting CEO NSW Food Authority advised recruitment is underway for the role of Chief Executive Officer for NSW Food Authority, with resolution due by the end of the year. There has been some change management across the Department, but the food safety space has not been overly impacted. The Local Government Unit remains the same, resourced the same with the same remit moving into the future.

5. General business

5.1 Any other business

Issue: EHO workforce capacity.

Eric Davis spoke to EHO workforce capacity. Eric advised:

- there are 517 EHOs (AOs) doing food work which equates to 176 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)
- there are a total of 608 EHOs delivering all EHO functions which equates to 498 FTE of EHO capacity
- it is estimated that automating back-office functions associated with EHO activity would save 79 FTE of council staff in total across NSW and of those 52 FTE would be EHOs.

Making this additional EHO capacity available will require implementation of an automated regulatory function management system across all EHO functions not just food. Eric will contact the EPA about this as the EPA is asking Councils to enforce its FOGO mandate under the POEO Act even though Councils have a current shortage of EHO capacity.

Outcome: Eric's spreadsheet will be circulated to the Forum.

5.2 Next meetings

The next Food Regulation Forum meetings for 2026 will be held on Tuesday, 16 June 2026 and Tuesday, 17 November 2026.

3. Close of meeting

Meeting closed at 11.10 am.