

Summary report of NSW enforcement agency activities in the food retail and food service sectors 2014-15

Background

The NSW retail food industry makes an important contribution to the state's economy. The food retail service sector in NSW is valued at more than \$45 billion per annum¹, the biggest contributor to the NSW food industry.

- Food retailing is the biggest driver of growth in NSW's retail industry
- There are 40,000 retail food service businesses in NSW
- 128,000 people in NSW are employed in cafes, restaurants and takeaway food services
- Supermarkets and grocery stores employ around 69,000 people

Food Regulation Partnership

The Food Regulation Partnership is a joint initiative of the NSW Food Authority and 152 local councils to work together to ensure all retail food service businesses in NSW are inspected and comply with food safety regulations. In order to ensure councils have met their duties under the NSW Food Act 2003, they are required to report their enforcement activities to the NSW Food Authority. Data collected from local councils for the 2014-2015 financial year is covered in this summary report.

Retail meetings

During the 2014-15 financial year three NSW councils hosted Food Regulation Partnership meetings with retail and food service businesses in Bega Shire on the NSW south coast, Blacktown in Sydney and Dubbo in central west NSW.

These were well received with up to 100 local food retail businesses attending each event where they had the opportunity for face to face engagement with local council, the Food Authority and other retailers, and learn about food safety and the resources available to help them prepare and serve food safely.

Each meeting has included a presentation on safe egg preparation as part of the Food Authority's broader *Salmonella* reduction strategy and a presentation on the benefits of participation in Scores on Doors for food retail business.

¹ Retail sector statistics are taken from NSW Food Safety Strategy 2015-2021

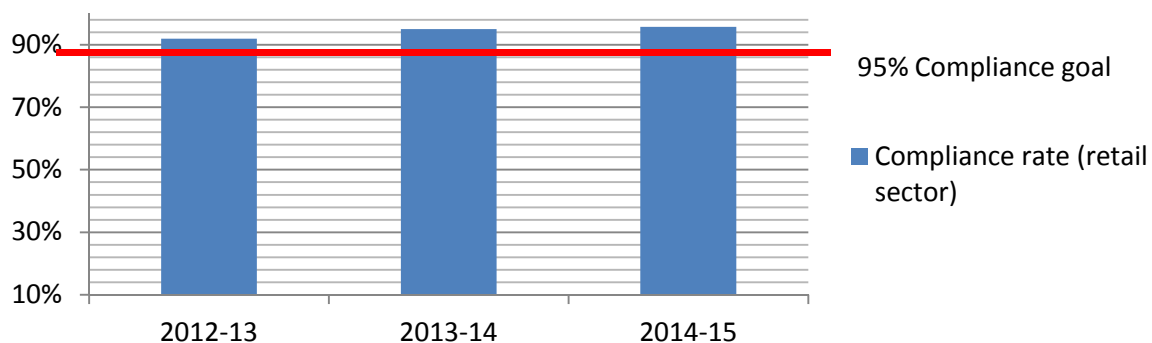
Compliance

Surveillance of food safety standards in the retail sector is overseen by the enforcement agencies acting within the Food Regulation Partnership. All 152 NSW councils and the National Parks and Wildlife Service have been appointed as enforcement agencies in NSW.

Surveillance activity in the retail food services sector involved a total of 64,230 inspections by 474 authorised officers in 2014-15. 97% of all high and medium risk fixed food premises were inspected².

Compliance with food safety requirements across the retail food sector for the 2014-15 financial period was 96%, rising slightly over the last 3 years. Only 1,581 (4%) of premises inspected required ongoing intervention that involved two or more re-inspections by councils.

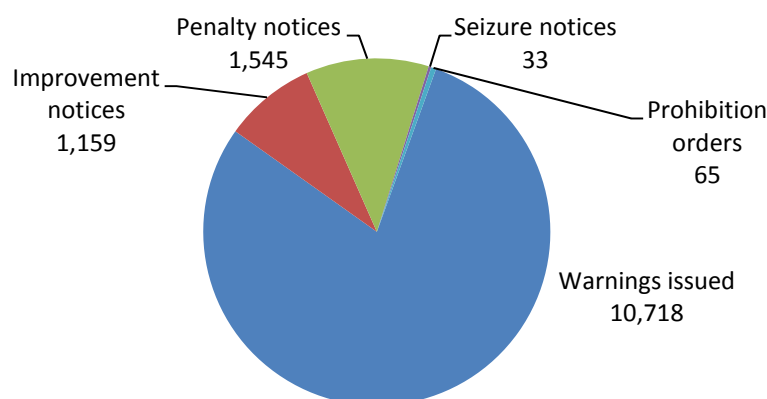
Figure 1: Overall compliance rate of the retail food services sector



Enforcement

The type of enforcement action taken is determined by the nature and severity of the food safety risks. An escalatory approach is used with warnings issued as a first step to encourage improvement in safe food handling processes.

Figure 2: Types of enforcement action in the retail sector 2014-15



² Enforcement agency activity statistics provided by enforcement agencies July 2015

Name and Shame

A total of 1504 penalty notices for 866 retail food businesses were published on the Name and Shame register in 2014-15 for failing to meet food safety standards. This represents 2% of retail food businesses.

The most common food safety breaches in the retail sector during this period were:

- cleanliness of food premises (18.7%)
- pest control (18.6%)
- storage and temperature control (21.7%)
- cleanliness of food fixtures and equipment (16.7%)
- hygiene of food handlers (6.1%)

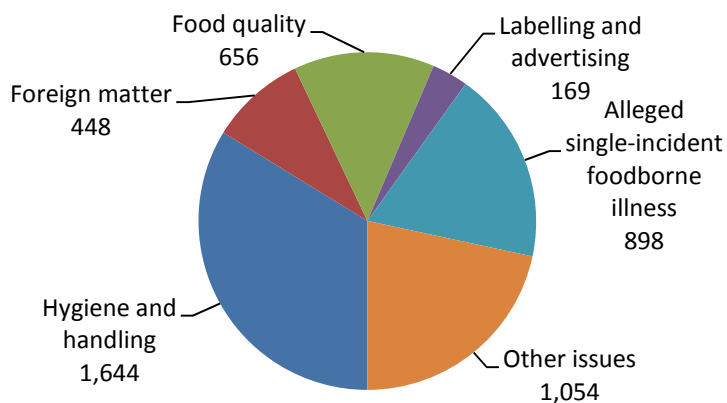
Figure 3: Penalty notices published for retail food businesses in the last three years

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
No. of penalty notices published	1806	1395	1504
No. of facilities that had penalty notices published	1036	824	866

Food complaints

Enforcement agencies are also responsible for investigating food related complaints. A total of 4,869 complaints were investigated in 2014-15.

Figure 4: Complaint types investigated 2014-15



Scores on Doors

The Food Authority's Scores on Doors program helps improve food safety and reduce foodborne illness by displaying the results of food premises regular hygiene and food safety inspections and advising the public how well businesses are complying with requirements.

The Food Authority conducted a targeted promotion during 2014-15 to increase the number of councils participating in the program. Thirty eight local government areas (25%) are now taking part and these areas collectively provide the opportunity for more than a third of NSW retail businesses to participate.

In future, the Food Authority aims to have 75% of NSW retail food businesses participating in Scores on Doors by 2021 as part of the NSW Government Food Safety Strategy 2015-2021.

The Scores on Doors program is underpinned by the Food Premises Assessment Report (FPAR) and training provided to council Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) to ensure confidence and consistency in audits and inspections. Training has been provided to EHOs on FPAR and Scores on Doors.

The Authority has implemented a Scores on Doors Users' Forum which meets monthly to allow participating and adopting councils to share best practice and develop supplementary resources for the program. The User Forum has been well attended and has resulted in the development and launch of an online Forum to allow councils to communicate between meetings and share documents.

In July 2014, the Authority launched a video resource specifically produced for food retailers outlining the benefits of Scores on Doors.

The Authority held three regional training sessions for EHOs and line managers of councils intending to adopt Scores on Doors in 2015-16. Representatives from 16 councils attended the sessions which are designed to ensure that council EHOs are fully prepared to roll out the program in their areas.

Salmonella reduction strategy

The Food Authority and councils have continued their work to reduce the rate of *Salmonella* by implementing a *Salmonella* reduction strategy, which includes safe egg preparation in the retail food sector. This aligns with the goal of a 30% reduction in Salmonellosis, Campylobacteriosis, Listeriosis and anaphylaxis across the food chain by 2021. These targets are articulated in the NSW Government Food Safety Strategy 2015-2021.

The *Salmonella* reduction strategy includes for the retail sector, the development of resources for retailers, including checklists, guidelines and an egg safety video that provides a practical demonstration guide that can be used in store for food retailers and consumers.

Support for retailers

In addition to their regulatory duties, NSW councils provided a range of complimentary services to support the retail businesses in their areas in 2014-15:

- 83% councils provided technical advice to food businesses
- 88% of councils provided information to food businesses to help them comply
- 32% of councils organised food handler training for food businesses.