

Welcome to Flavours

Spring Edition 2017

Renewal of Food Act Registration

It's that time of year again. Have you paid your Food Act Registration? If your business is no longer in operation please let us know so you won't incur a fine.

Council's Environmental Health Officers (EHO) have recently come across an increasing number of unregistered food premises, which means these premises are currently operating without permission from the City of Greater Dandenong and in contravention of the Food Act 1984.

Anywhere there is food (including packaged food or drinks) such as takeaways, restaurants, food warehouses, distributors, church kitchens, community centres and vending machines, must obtain a Food Act Registration.

There are heavy fines and court action for operating a food business without registration. In 2014 Council instigated court action against a proprietor who was operating, storing and distributing packaged food without permission. The owner was fined over \$60,000 and now carries convictions on all charges.

If you are unsure whether you need a Food Act Registration please contact an EHO on 8571 1000.

Environmental Protection Authority and Council

Food safety doesn't stop with safe food practices within your business. Environmental Health Officers also work closely with Planning Compliance Officers to ensure industries, including major, mid-level and smaller food manufacturers comply with the provisions of the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme.

Planning provisions capture a raft of amenity/environmental controls intended to limit industry to industry nuisance emissions: including odour, dust, noise, waste liquid discharge (chemical & biological), discharge to storm water drains. Use of non-bunded hard stand areas for the storage of shipping containers, refrigerated containers and other food transport equipment left for extended periods externally to buildings on the land. Controlling emissions and the ad hock storage of plant and equipment protects the environment and improves local amenity.

In support of the role of Planning Compliance Officers Council has been successful in securing the services of an 'OPLE' (Officer Protecting Local Environment) So what is an OPLE?

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in partnership with Local Government have entered into an agreement to look holistically at environmental management within the City of Greater Dandenong.

An officer from the EPA will join the Environmental Health team and interact with planning compliance officers to target point source polluters. Joint land use inspections with a focus on point source pollution emitter complaints, illegal waste dumping and community engagement will see an improvement in our local environment.

With the OPLE coming on board it is likely that as part of a proactive industry audit programme your

food manufacturing plant/ distribution warehouse will be paid a visit from one of our compliance staff.



Being requested to stop trading

Why do food businesses reach a point that an authorised officer considers it necessary to close a business?

There are 1530 registered food businesses in Greater Dandenong and a vast majority of them meet all food safety requirements of a daily basis. However, each year there is a small percentage that requires intervention to minimise risks to the public. This includes businesses being directed to close.

Council's public health coordinator Geoff Fraser has been working in the field for 30 years.

"I think most regulators will tolerate the risks of minor non-compliance, trusting that once pointed out to a business operator those issues will be rectified. However, when we see a business doing the food safety equivalent of 160km/h in an 80km/h zone we cannot ignore the potential risks to consumers."

Geoff says the following issues are the main reasons businesses end up having to cease trading:

- **Pest infestation** – In 2017 no consumer should have to tolerate a product being contaminated with insect or rodent faeces. Authorised officers will generally take closure action if pest infestations pose a risk to food products.
- **Not managing food volumes** – Every food business gets busy and a restaurant or takeaway stocking up or pre-preparing for an approaching long weekend is acceptable. However, failing to label containers of foods with dates and losing control of inventory is unacceptable.
- **Unknown food history** – Being unable to reasonably demonstrate the history of food in the food business is a serious issue. An officer may suspect there has been part preparation in a domestic kitchen or unregistered food business, but if a business owner says they do not know details about businesses supplying their food that is unacceptable.
- **Filthy conditions** – There is a difference between daily operating mess and general laziness, and officers can tell the difference. Dirty conditions in uncleaned equipment, difficult to reach areas, ceilings, floors and drains are where infectious diseases are likely to grow. Diseases such as Listeria will take advantage of other protein sources (meats, eggs) in your food premises and could grow in finished product.
- **Infectious disease outbreak** – (Including staff being diagnosed with infectious diseases.) If a person is diagnosed with an infectious disease, their doctor is obligated to report that finding to the State Government. In turn local authorised officers are asked to investigate the likely source of the infection, and this includes investigating the patient's food consumption. Officers will test surfaces at food businesses and food handlers hands to determine if that business is linked to an outbreak. If it is authorities will recommend the business remain closed until the business has been fully sterilised.
- **Unable to demonstrate safe management of food** – Some businesses just simply cannot demonstrate good food management practice or process control.

Council's Economic Development Unit (EDU) at your service

The team at Council's EDU is keen to support existing businesses and encourage the establishment of new enterprises.

They provide small business grants and access to professional business mentors. They also run business improvements workshops and events, connect you to government agencies and organisations to assist in accessing local and export markets, run trade delegations to China and promote Greater Dandenong as a tourist destination.

They will also keep you up to date with the latest business news via the Stakeholder magazine and e-newsletters. The EDU even runs a special network for food manufacturers and has a dedicated Food Enterprise Officer.



Visit greaterdandenong.com/business to find out more, email business@cgd.vic.gov.au or phone 8571 1550.

Have you noticed the seagulls in Dandenong?

In a bid to reduce the number of birds in central Dandenong, Council officers are issuing formal notices to people who encourage the birds to stay in the area or fail to keep their premises clean of bird waste. This includes people who feed birds on the street or in rear yards, leave food waste around bins, leave food waste bins open or overflowing, collect food waste in open unprotected trucks or trailers, provide harbourage to birds or fail to clean up bird waste.

All native birds, including seagulls, are protected under the Victorian Wildlife Act 1975 and there are serious penalties for taking, harassing or injuring native wildlife. It is illegal to kill birds, destroy their nests or eggs without a permit or authority.



Waste

Waste issues are an ongoing problem, therefore, the more we can do to help reduce and recycle waste the better it is for our environment. As part of this process we can save good food from being thrown away and give it to people in our society who may be struggling to pay for food.

There are many organisations now collecting unwanted food from food businesses and delivering it to people who need help.

Please call any of the following organisations to arrange for food to be collected from your premises:

Second Bite 1800 263 283
secondbite.org/donate-food

OzHarvest 1800 108 006
ozharvest.org/food-charity

Fairshare 9428 0044 • fareshare.net.au

Foodbank 9362 8300 • foodbankvictoria.org.au

Avocare 9793 9766 • avocare.org.au

There are other companies who collect waste food/organic matter for composting and other recyclable materials. Search the Yellow Pages online to find out more.

For more information contact the Victorian State Government Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group on 8698 9800 or via their website mwrrg.vic.gov.au/waste/recycling

Controlling Gastroenteritis

The seasonal increase in viral gastroenteritis has seen a number of outbreaks within the municipality over the past few months.

There are a number of different viruses that can cause gastro; however, one of the most common is Norovirus. Symptoms can include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, and generally feeling unwell.

Norovirus is highly infectious and is spread through the ingestion of the virus. This can occur by consuming infected food or drink, having contact with infected surfaces, or through person-to-person contact.

Prevention and management of viral gastro involves good personal hygiene and attention to cleaning. Ensure that you wash your hands regularly with warm soapy water, particularly after coughing, sneezing, or using the toilet, and before handling or consuming food. The use of chlorine-based chemicals (e.g. bleach) for cleaning is recommended.

People who work in the food industry that experience gastro, or gastro-like symptoms should ensure that they do not work for at least 48 hours after symptoms have ceased. By doing this, you will help prevent the spread of infection.

Further information on gastroenteritis can be found on the Better Health Channel Website at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au.



Customer Complaints

Your attitude, presentation and adherence to food safety all count toward positive reviews and returning customers.

When you combine internet savvy customers with easy access to online reviews, staff with a poor attitude and a perceived food safety issue, this could become a large customer loss in seconds.

Customers are watching what is going on in your food business and are very quick to post online or put their reviews onto Urbanspoon, Menulog or Zomato if they receive poor customer service or believe you are not handling food safely.

Give your business the best chance to succeed by training your staff in food safety standards and customer service.

Ultimately all we want – is a sign at your door that says “my business pride and food safety skills are on show – let me know if we are not meeting any standard”.

Good customer service skills are essential for businesses to succeed

Here are some tips on how to provide good customer service:

- Ensure that the customers' needs are considered the most important thing
- Make sure that the food is always fresh and stored, cooked and prepared according to your food safety program



- Staff should always appear to be clean and tidy; no bracelets or arm bands that may dangle into the food, long hair should be tied back or hair nets or hats should be worn
- Customers like to see staff washing their hands
- Listen to your customers and pay attention to what they want
- Be sure that your staff know what is on the menu
- When you serve food have a system so that you know who the food is for
- Never make the customer feel like you want them to leave
- Customers always appreciate quick service
- If there is a problem listen to the customer without interrupting them
- Acknowledge that there is a problem and apologise
- Keep calm especially if you do not agree with the customer
- Ask the customer what they would like, try to negotiate a solution
- Try not to blame anyone and always try to empathise with the customer
- Apologise and always try to solve the problem quickly and without drama

New premises- French Baguette

After a complete renovation and new management, The French Baguette in Springvale is now serving café style modern Asian food with cakes, coffee and a soon to be bar. There is an outdoor seating with a dedicated area for both smoke free diners and one for smokers.

We hope you enjoy!





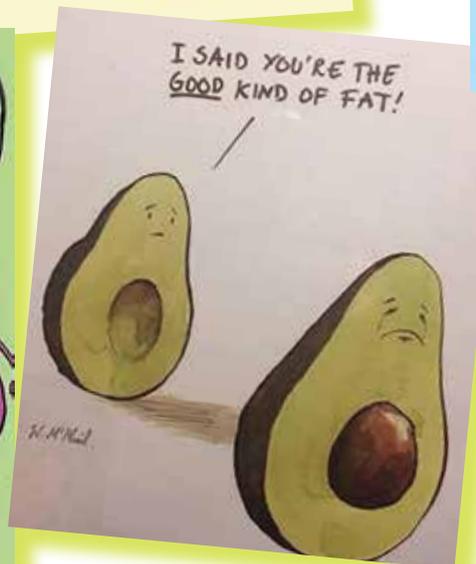
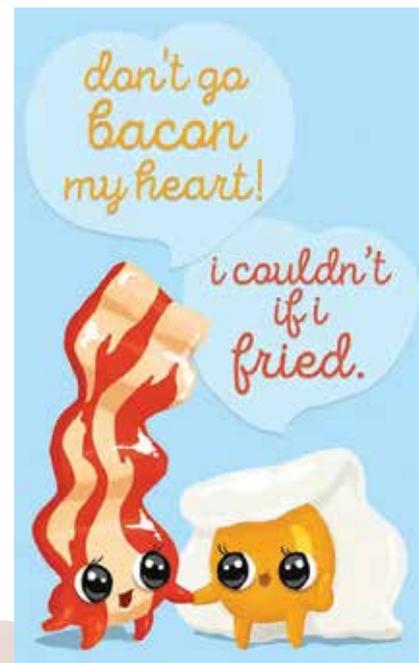
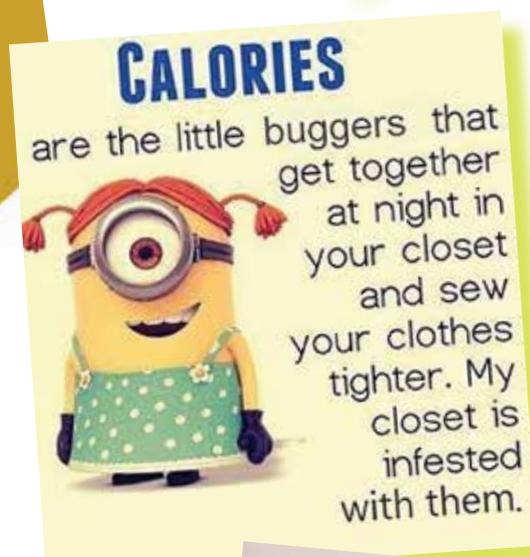
Our newest EHO – Meagan Hibbert

Meagan is the newest Environmental Health Officer at the City of Greater Dandenong. Meagan works part-time (Monday-Tuesday) and is sharing Area 3 (Dandenong North and Noble Park North) with Susy.

She has previously worked as an Environmental Health Officer at Frankston City Council and in South Australia.

In her spare time Meagan enjoys gardening, going to the beach, and camping.

CHEESY CORNER



Declaring Allergens

Food allergies can be life threatening and are a growing concern in Australia. In fact, Australia has one of the highest allergy prevalence rates in the world.

Correct allergen labelling can mean the difference between life and death for people with food allergies, so it is vital that food businesses meet labelling requirements

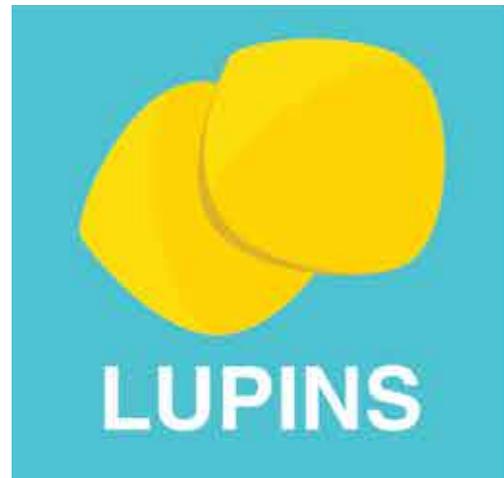
There are currently ten foods which must be declared whenever they are present as ingredients or as components of food additives or processing aids. The newest addition to this list is **LUPINS**. All products containing Lupins, including existing ones already out on shelves, have until 26 May 2018 to update product information.

The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy has recently launched its free online training course, All about Allergens, under the banner of the National Allergy Strategy, a partnership between ASCIA and Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia.

The All about Allergens training course is now available via the National Allergy Strategy website, and provides free online food allergen training targeting the food service industry. In addition, a community education program has also been released.

All about Allergens provides information about responding to customers that disclose a food allergy, managing orders for those with food allergies and minimising the risk of cross-contamination. It also provides examples of good and poor service for customers with food allergies, and educates users on the symptoms of a food allergic reaction, including what to do if a customer experiences an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis.

For more information visit:
foodstandards.gov.au
foodallergytraining.org.au
allergenbureau.net



Is your Fridge Running?

As Winter draws to a close and the days start to get warmer, it is a timely reminder to ensure that all refrigerators, freezers, and cool rooms are working correctly and are able to keep food below 5 degrees Celsius. During warm and hot days, refrigeration and freezer units have to work harder to ensure that your food and drink stays cold. If the units are not properly maintained, they are more likely to fail in these conditions.

Issues that can contribute to inefficient equipment include:

- Build-up of ice and/or debris;
- Poor maintenance;
- Low coolant levels;
- Overstocking; and,
- Misuse (e.g. leaving doors open for extended periods).

Ensure that equipment is kept clean, free of dust and ice build-up, is not overloaded with products, and is maintained regularly.





FOOD STANDARDS
Australia New Zealand
Te Mana Kounga Kai - Ahitereiria me Aotearoa

ALLERGEN LABELLING SAVES LIVES



TREE NUTS



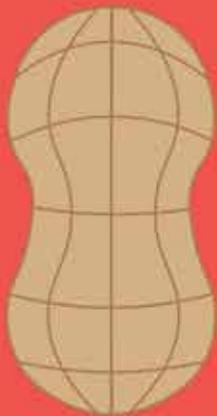
SEAFOOD



WHEAT



MILK



PEANUTS



SHELLFISH

Know the ten allergens that have to be on food labels

Read more about mandatory
allergen labelling
[www.foodstandards.gov.au/
allergenlabelling](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/allergenlabelling)



LUPINS



SOY



EGGS



SESAME
SEEDS

GREATER Dandenong

FLAVOURS



GREATER
DANDENONG
City of Opportunity

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