



### WELCOME

Welcome to MidCoast Council's December 2019 'Food Safety Newsletter'.

In this edition you will find a range of useful information on:

- The Campylobacter Reduction Strategy
- Preparing to be Allergy Aware; and
- Food Safety in Emergencies



Enclosed is a copy of the Retail Food Business Sector 'Food Safety' calendar for 2020. The calendar includes food safety information and tips each month in addition to a pull out section containing examples of temperature monitoring charts and a cleaning schedule. We encourage you to display it in a prominent position as an ongoing reminder to staff of the importance of food safety.

On behalf of the Environmental Health Team at MidCoast Council, we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous new year.

### CAMPYLOBACTER REDUCTION STRATEGY

During May, Council's Environmental Health Officers participated in the retail food premises component of the NSW Food Authority's Campylobacter Reduction Strategy. Campylobacter is the leading cause of gastroenteritis and foodborne illness in Australia. There are more than 25,000 notifications nationally and it is estimated there has been a 13% increase in foodborne Campylobacteriosis over the last 10 years.

Campylobacter spreads from infected animals to humans and occasionally from person to person, with raw and undercooked poultry being the leading transmission vehicle in most countries. Livers as an organ can concentrate microorganisms and post-slaughter provide an ideal medium for microbial growth with high water activity and neutral pH. Several Campylobacter outbreaks have occurred in recent years in Australia (and internationally) linked to pâté made from poultry livers.

Our participation covered:

- The collection of pâté and cook/chill poultry products for laboratory analysis;
- Swabbing of food contact surfaces including chopping boards, benches and utensils;
- Completion of a survey relating to processes and food handler knowledge; and
- Completion of a Food Premises Assessment Report (FPAR).

Particular focus areas, to reduce the risk of Campylobacteriosis include:

- Effective cleaning and sanitising;
- Eliminating cross-contamination;
- Thorough cooking - ensuring high risk products (such as livers) are cooked to a core temperature of 70°C for at least 2 minutes; and
- Maintaining vigilance regarding raw egg use.

We would like to thank the businesses involved in the survey, as research is crucial to ensure the provision of safe and suitable food throughout NSW. Further updates in relation to the outcomes of the Campylobacter Reduction Strategy will be provided once a report is finalised.





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council



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## FREE FOOD HYGIENE SEMINAR

Everyone likes a freebie, so why not join our free food safety seminar.

The November Food Seminar at Taree was cancelled as a result of bushfire conditions, and has now been rescheduled for May 2020.

We've received some excellent feedback from participants in the past, who gained practical advice on how to meet safety legislation in their retail food businesses. Start the New Year off on the right foot and register today.

The aim of our free seminar is to inform food businesses of their responsibilities in preparing and handling safe food for sale.

You'll also walk away with tips and suggestions on how your business can improve its food safety outcomes.

**When:**

2pm - 5pm, Tuesday 5 May 2020

**Where:**

Taree Visitor Information Centre, 21 Manning River Drive.

**RSVP:**

Bookings are essential by phoning us on 6591 7222. Light refreshments will be provided.

**This is a great opportunity for MidCoast retail food businesses, so please register today.**

## PREPARE TO BE ALLERGY AWARE

Most people who have severe food allergic reactions in Australia have them when eating food prepared by another person. Many reported reactions occur in cafés, restaurants and clubs, and those working in the food service sector have an important role to play.

The next step for cooks and chefs is a free online training course - All about Allergens: free downloadable supporting resources are available from [www.foodallergytraining.org.au](http://www.foodallergytraining.org.au)



## STAY OFF SANTA'S NAUGHTY LIST

Stay off Santa's naughty list this Christmas by ensuring the only 'giving' your food premises is doing this year is providing your customers with safe and suitable food.

During the upcoming busy Christmas and New Year period, it is crucial to ensure that all processes for cleaning, sanitising and personal hygiene are maintained and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. Your food business must ensure that:

- The food business has no accumulation of garbage; recycled matter; food waste; grease or other visible matter in the food premise or on any fixtures, fittings and equipment.
- The food business is in a clean and sanitary condition and food contact surfaces and equipment are sanitised (where required).
- All staff are washing their hands regularly and that the hand wash basin has a supply of paper towel and liquid soap available at all times.

Focussing on these issues as well as your other cleaning, sanitising and staff personal hygiene procedures will assist you in providing safe food over the Christmas period.



## FOOD SAFETY IN EMERGENCIES

Many of you may have been affected by the recent bushfires in our local area. We would like to thank food businesses for their efforts in ensuring only safe food was being sold during these difficult times. Knowing how to determine if food is safe and how to keep food safe during an emergency will reduce the risk of foodborne illness and help reduce the potential loss of food stocks.

Further information relating to food safety in emergencies is available on the NSW Food Authority's website at: [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/\\_Documents/foodsafetyandyou/flood\\_fire\\_power\\_cut\\_emergencies.pdf](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/foodsafetyandyou/flood_fire_power_cut_emergencies.pdf)

If there is anything you'd like to see featured in the next food safety newsletter, contact an Environmental Health Officer to discuss your ideas.

[midcoast.nsw.gov.au](http://midcoast.nsw.gov.au)