



Sustaining growth. Strengthening communities.

## DISH IT UP 2021

### Food Premises Newsletter

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Welcome to Dish it Up 2021. The past eighteen months have been a trying time for food businesses in Ballarat, with COVID-19 restrictions significantly impacting on operations.

The City of Ballarat recently announced a \$1 million support package for local businesses and community groups. This package includes waiving of Food Act registration fees for eligible businesses.

For further information please visit <https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/news/applications-councils-1-million-support-package-open>

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### COVID-19 Update

- Does your business have a COVIDSafe Plan? For help with your COVIDSafe Plan visit [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au) or call the Business Victoria Hotline on 13 22 15
- Do you have your QR code? All businesses must use the Victorian Government QR Code Service (unless an exemption applies). Get your free QR code [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/QRcode](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/QRcode)
- Do you require signs and posters? Signs, posters and stickers for your business are available at [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/signs-posters-and-templates](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/signs-posters-and-templates)
- For any further COVID-19 information or general enquiries, please telephone the COVID-19 hotline on 1800 675 398

**We're in this together, Ballarat**

Get your COVID vaccination  
[bhs.org.au/vaccine](http://bhs.org.au/vaccine)



### Meet the Environmental Health Team

#### Coordinator Environmental Health:

Tyrone Marini

#### Team Leader Environmental Health:

Ned Beslagic (also area officer for Delacombe, Winter Valley, Bonshaw, and Smythes Creek)

#### Environmental Health Officers (EHOs):

**Jenae Angove** - Alfredton, Sebastopol, Lucas, Redan and Ballarat Central

**Barbara Carrick** – Mt Helen, Mt. Clear, Buninyong, Canadian, and Ballarat Central

**Katie McDonald** – Wendouree, Lake Gardens, Learmonth, Miners Rest and Ballarat Central

**Sarah Walker** – Black Hill, Brown Hill, Bakery Hill, Ballarat North, and Ballarat Central

**Tom Niederle** - Assisting all areas

**Student EHO:** Martin Chadderton

**Wastewater Technical Officer:** Warren Swards

#### Health Services Officers:

Bernadette Sudholz and Sarah Flynn

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### Changes in Food Act legislation - buying or selling a food business

As of 1 July 2021, '**Transfer of registration**' has been removed from the *Food Act 1984*.

#### Buying an existing food business

Under the Act, an existing food registration can no longer transfer from one party to another. If you are buying an existing food business in City of Ballarat, you will need to apply for a new Food Act registration:

<https://forms.ballarat.vic.gov.au/RegisterFoodPremises>

#### Selling a food business

If you are selling or closing a food business, you will need to notify us in writing to cancel your food registration – the new owner will need to apply online for a registration under the Food Act.

Note that these changes only relate to businesses registered under the *Food Act 1984*.

## Food Allergens

This 'Dish It Up' issue aims to provide businesses with the information and resources needed for effective allergen control.

It is the responsibility of every food business to understand the risks that allergens pose, and we encourage businesses to develop and implement an allergen management plan to protect both your customers and your business.

Appropriate allergen control is in everyone's best interest. Food service businesses and their staff need to know which allergens are present in their food and the potential for cross-contamination. Even small amounts (traces) in a food component, like tahini containing sesame in hummus for example, can be enough to trigger a life-threatening immune response.

Significant penalties exist for businesses who fail to manage their allergens.

### What is a food allergy?

A food allergy is an abnormal, exaggerated reaction of a person's immune system to proteins in certain foods and food components derived from those same foods. Food allergies affect 1 in 20 children under 5 years of age, and about 2 in 100 adults in Australia. Nobody knows yet what causes people to have a food allergy, and there is no known cure.

Allergic reactions can vary between people in terms of intensity, and may include, swelling, hives, vomiting, or abdominal pain. In some cases, an allergic response may lead to anaphylaxis.

(Source: Food Allergens – What are food allergens, Allergen Bureau, <https://allergenbureau.net/food-allergens/>)

### What is a food intolerance?

A food intolerance is when a particular food, chemical or component creates an adverse reaction but is not related to an immune response.

Reactions may include bloating, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, and vomiting. These responses are not life threatening but can be debilitating for sufferers.

### What is Anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and is potentially life threatening. Hospital admissions for anaphylaxis have increased 5-fold in the last 20 years and are a growing public health issue. It must be treated as a medical emergency, requiring immediate treatment and urgent medical attention.

A severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis usually occurs within 20 minutes to 2 hours of exposure to the trigger and can rapidly become life threatening. However, with proper education and allergen management, food allergy reactions can be reduced, and deaths due to anaphylaxis can be avoided.

(Source: Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia, What is Anaphylaxis? <https://allergyfacts.org.au/allergy-anaphylaxis/what-is-anaphylaxis>)

## Your Obligations

The Australian and New Zealand Food Standards Code identifies eleven foods or substances as requiring mandatory declaration on the label of packaged foods for sale in Australia. These foods or substances can cause an allergic, intolerant or auto-immune response in some people. In the case of unpackaged foods (such as meals sold from a restaurant/café) allergen advisory statements and declarations must be stated in labelling that is displayed in connection with the display of the food or provided to the purchaser on request.

The 11 foods/substances are:

- cereals containing gluten and their products – namely, wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt, and their hybrid strains
- crustacea and their products
- egg and egg products
- fish and fish products
- milk and milk products
- peanuts and peanut products
- tree nuts and tree nut products (does not include coconut)
- sesame seeds and sesame seed products
- soybean and soybean products
- added sulphites in concentrations of 10 mg/kg or more
- lupin.

For more information see the Department of Health website

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/allergens-and-intolerances-factsheets-food-businesses>

**THE USUAL SUSPECTS**

WHEAT, MILK, PEANUT, FISH, CRUSTACEA, SESAME, TREE NUTS, EGG, LUPIN

**FOOD ALLERGY AWARE**  
NATIONAL ALLERGY STRATEGY

**Food allergy is a serious issue**  
Know YOUR INGREDIENTS  
Avoid CROSS CONTAMINATION  
Listen TO YOUR CUSTOMERS  
Understand THE CONSEQUENCES

**What to do if a customer has an allergic reaction CALL 000**

While waiting for the ambulance to arrive  
1 Lay person first, do not allow them to stand or walk. If breathing is difficult allow to sit on the ground with legs uncrossed.  
2 Follow customer's AASCA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis (if they have one) and administer adrenaline (epinephrine) subcutaneous in accordance with the instructions on the Plan.

FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION  
NSW Food Authority  
Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia

(Source: Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia – Food Service The Usual Suspects [https://allergyfacts.org.au/images/pdf/Food\\_Service\\_The\\_Usual\\_Suspects\\_2020.pdf](https://allergyfacts.org.au/images/pdf/Food_Service_The_Usual_Suspects_2020.pdf))

## Allergen Management and Your Business

The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code sets out the requirements for food businesses to ensure food sold is safe, suitable and labelled correctly.

To effectively manage allergens in your business you need to ensure:

- You have and maintain a food safety program which documents how you identify and control hazards (such as food allergens) in the production, preparation and handling of food.
- You and your staff are adequately trained.
- All food is labelled correctly if packaged, and that the correct information is available at the point of sale for unpackaged food.

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## Food Safety Programs and Allergens

All class 2 food premises are required to have and maintain a food safety program – a standard template which is suitable for most businesses is available on the Department of Health website. Also available is a food safety guide for class 3 food businesses – links to both documents can be found in the ‘support and resources’ section of this document.

Proprietors should refer to their program or guide and become familiar with the allergens section – it covers the risks involved with allergens, measures businesses should be taking to reduce those risks and ways to ensure that your actions are working. It also provides information on labelling of products and information that should be available to customers who purchase unpackaged foods.

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## Free Online Food Allergens Training

The National Allergy Strategy, in collaboration with Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia, offer a free online training program on allergen management called ‘All about Allergens’.

This program contains excellent information aimed at helping food businesses educate their staff and improve their allergen controls. You can find the free ‘All about Allergens’ training program online at <https://foodallergytraining.org.au/>

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## Food Labelling

Food labels can provide a wide range of information to help consumers make food choices. Food labels also help to protect public health and safety by displaying information such as use by dates, ingredients, certain allergens, instructions for

storage and preparation, and advisory and warning statements. The Food Standards Code outlines the labelling and information requirements for food – it can be found at

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/labelling/Pages/default.aspx>

If your business packages food, you can speak to your Environmental Health Officer regarding labelling advice or submit your product and label to a NATA accredited food laboratory for testing.

If your business sells unpackaged food, the Food Standards Code still requires you to ensure the following information is available to the purchaser:

- Name of the food
- Allergen information
- Directions for use or storage (if food is not intended to be eaten immediately)

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## Our Food Allergen Matrix

The City of Ballarat’s Food Allergen Matrix has been developed to assist food businesses manage allergens.

It contains a table for businesses to list allergens for each menu item, providing a quick reference to help ensure staff deliver customers with accurate allergen information. It also contains further links to resources, training and allergen information.

We highly recommend having a look at it on our website

<https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/business/environmental-health/food-safety>

**Please note** - this template should be treated as a working document and should be revised regularly, such as when changing brands of food items or updating menus.

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## Anaphylaxis Notifications

Since 1 November 2018, all Victorian hospitals are required to notify the Department of Health when a person presents at a hospital emergency department with anaphylaxis.

The notification allows the Department of Health to take swift action where there is a suspected undeclared allergen in a packaged food or poor food allergen management at a food business.

Some notifications are referred to local councils for investigation. An EHO will inspect and may interview the business proprietor and staff to determine how or why the incident occurred, as well as to implement strategies to minimise the risk of it occurring in the future.

## Tips for managing allergens

### Communication

- Talk to customers honestly about any potential dietary needs and/or allergies.
- Train your staff to ask follow-up questions when customers advise of a dietary requirement – is the request because of an allergy? Does the customer have any other dietary requirements/allergies?
- Consider adding a line to the bottom of your menus reminding customers to declare any food allergies to staff.

### Claims

- Businesses need to be aware of the claims that they make regarding their products. If something is stated to be allergen-free (e.g., dairy free, gluten free), then there must be absolutely no trace of the allergen in the product and no possibility of cross-contamination occurring.
- When thinking of sources for cross contamination at your business you should consider your preparation and cooking surfaces (benches, cutting boards grills, fryers), utensils, milk wands on coffee machines, hands and storage areas.

### Processes

- Provide a separate area in your kitchen with dedicated utensils and equipment.
- Distinguish allergen free meals for wait staff by using different plates, garnishes or skewers/labels.
- Ensure you have thorough cleaning processes in place.
- Check labels and contents of all ingredients on your menu to ensure you know the contents of your meals.
- Ingredient labels on pre-packaged foods can change without warning so it is important to check labels each time you use the product.

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## Allergens can be deadly

In March 2021, a Wollongong restaurant was prosecuted and fined \$105,000 after a customer died following an anaphylactic reaction to a dish containing sesame.

The dish had been served to him at the premises, despite him declaring his allergy when ordering.

(Source: Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia, Death by Sesame – Restaurant prosecuted – 17 March 2021, <https://allergyfacts.org.au/news-alerts/latest-news/breaking-news-restaurant-fined-for-causing-death-of-37-year-old-in-2017-17-march-2021>)

## Support, links and resources

For more information and support, check out:

- Department of Health food safety program template for class 2 retail and food service businesses  
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/food-businesses/food-safety-program/food-safety-program-templates/food-safety-program-template-class-2>
- Department of Health food safety guide for food businesses – class 3  
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/food-safety-guide-for-food-businesses-class-3>
- Department of Health Allergen Factsheets for food businesses -  
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/allergens-and-intolerances-fact-sheets-food-businesses>
- City of Ballarat's Food Safety page -  
<https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/business/environmental-health/food-safety>
- The National Allergy Strategy booklet for General Food Service businesses -  
<https://foodallergytraining.org.au/resources/qfs>
- NATA Accredited Food Laboratories  
<https://nata.com.au/find-organisation/>
- Free posters and resources are available at  
<https://allergyfacts.org.au/>
- Your EHO will also be able to provide advice on improving your allergen controls.

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## Allergens Information Session

City of Ballarat's Environmental Health Team are looking to hold an allergens information session later in the year for food business proprietors. This session would offer more detailed information about allergen management and would provide the opportunity for proprietors to ask questions.

If you or your staff are interested in attending, please register your interest by 31 October 2021 clicking on the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/K2KMJBP>

Note: the session will only go ahead if there is sufficient interest.

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