BAC-BR-18471

Professor Euan M Wallace AM
Secretary
Department of Health

50 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Secretary

**STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH’S FOOD SAFETY UNIT.**

I am pleased to provide you with my expectations for the Department of Health’s (the department) Food Safety unit to guide the regulator’s business planning processes.

In my portfolio as Minister for Health, I administer a range of Acts and regulations designed to promote wellbeing and to protect the health of the Victorian community.

I am committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Victorians including protecting the Victorian community from the risks and harms associated with food safety.

As Minister for Health, I am responsible for administering the *Food Act 1984* (the Act) and this guidance should be read in the context of the objectives, obligations and functions outlined in this Act. This guidance should also be read in the context of any other legislative and non-legislative obligations on the Food Safety unit.

Based on consultation with the department about the government’s priorities and emerging risks, my expectations for the Food Safety unit are as follows.

* Implement FoodTrader and OSCAR systems with early adopter councils to improve food safety regulatory practices, data collection and business performance.
* Work with and support local councils in their roles as food safety regulators by ensuring the provision of timely and accurate information and advice, as it relates to risks posed by new food products.
* Seek feedback from stakeholders to determine the effectiveness of workshops, presentations and forums conducted by the Food Safety unit in terms of satisfaction/or improvement in knowledge (or competency).
* Implement the government’s responses to recommendations from the parliamentary Inquiry into the closure of I Cook Foods Pty Limited
* Implement the department’s action plan to address the recommendations of the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office report – Regulating Food Safety.

In addition, I expect all regulators in the health portfolio to commit to and action:

* Contributing to health, wellbeing, and safety outcomes for Aboriginal people and the advancement of Aboriginal self-determination.
* Climate change adaptation and enhancing health system resilience through the improvement of environmental sustainability.

I request the department’s Food Safety unit to incorporate these expectations into their business plans and include milestones for when the team will meet these expectations, and report on progress. The business plans should also include appropriate milestones to review the content of this letter and to advise me when it needs to be updated or renewed. At any time, I may request that you report on meeting my expectations or issue a new statement of expectations letter.

I further request the department’s Food Safety unit to undertake a light touch review of the expectations in this letter as part of their annual reporting obligations and to advise me if there are any refinements they would recommend.

I look forward to the Food Safety unit working continuously towards achieving best practice in the administration and enforcement of regulation.

Yours sincerely

**Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

 1 / 7 / 2023