

# Video transcript:

## Regulating Food Safety

### About this audit

In this audit, we looked at the Department of Health and 5 councils to see whether councils are meeting their legislated food safety responsibilities, which are designed to protect public health.

Robust food safety regulation and enforcement helps prevent illness, hospitalisation and death. In Australia, over 4.7 million cases of foodborne illness cost the community \$2.4 billion a year.

Councils are responsible for registering, assessing, inspecting and reporting on most of Victoria's food premises. The department administers the Food Act and has an important supporting role.

### What we concluded

We concluded that the audited councils are not complying with all the legislated requirements.

And we identified 3 key issues.

### Key issue 1

Firstly, the audited councils are not meeting all their obligations. They are not assessing or inspecting all food premises as required or systematically identifying unregistered food premises.

This is partly due to workforce shortages, especially in rural areas.

The councils **are** responsive and fair in the way they handle community food safety complaints. However, they could improve their recording and reporting of complaints.

### Key issue 2

Secondly, the quality of the department and councils' reporting does not support good decision-making.

The department's reporting does not include useful or timely information about how councils are managing food safety.

Also, not all councils use the same calculation methods in their public reporting, and they don't have performance targets.

## Key issue 3

Lastly, while the department's training modules and workshops are effective, the councils' inspectors need more sessions, including refreshers.

Unless the department addresses this, councils will continue to apply the Food Act inconsistently.

## What we recommended

To address these issues, we made 10 recommendations – 3 to the audited councils and 7 to the department.

We made 3 recommendations to the 5 audited councils about:

- compliance with legislative responsibilities
- workforce planning.

We made 7 recommendations to the Department of Health about:

- addressing workforce shortages
- improving reporting on food safety performance
- improving guidance and training.

## More information

To read our full report or download a full transcript of this video, please see our website.