

Sydney Restaurants Blitzed

The NSW government has recently announced that it will be conducting targeted inspections across Sydney restaurants as part of its crackdown on food outlets. This blitz comes on the back of the newly implemented 'Name and Shame' laws which were considered by some to be the toughest in the country. The laws have empowered councils to act as food safety enforcers and allows offenders to be published on the NSW Food Authority website. For many the laws have been hailed as a win for the consumer who can now make an informed decision about where they eat.

The announcement was made by Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald and will see a joint task force between the Food Authority and local councils formed. Mr Macdonald said "The blitz on Sydney restaurants is to ensure consumers are protected from getting a foodborne illness and to maintain Sydney's great reputation for dining out. The crackdown on Sydney eateries will start in the near future, Food Authority and council officers will perform unannounced inspections over several months. Most food outlets are doing the right thing, but those that are not will be forced to clean up their act. New food safety laws introduced by the Lemna Government that took full effect from 1 July give local councils more clout in cracking down on food outlets that don't come up to scratch."

These are a few infringements that are already featured on the website:

- A noodle and a Chinese restaurant in Muswellbrook fined \$330 and \$1320 each for a range of food hygiene-related infringements including temperature control and dirty shelving;
- A fish market in Shellharbour fined \$660 for breaching a condition of a mandatory food safety program;
- 32 offences ranging from cockroach infestations to permitting live animals in food preparation areas in restaurants and takeaways in the Penrith area.
- Four multinational fast-food restaurants for pest infestation and hygiene breaches.

While the threat of being published on a website may seem harmless, in August alone, over 79 000 people visited the site. The new laws have been implemented to provide better protection for consumers and to put a stop to poor food practices. For more information about the new laws and how they may affect your business please visit www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au.

Source: NSW Food Authority