Mornington Peninsula Shire invites local food businesses to nominate for the 2015 Best Bites Food Awards and to list in the 2015 Best Bites Food Guide.

The Shire’s Best Bites program assesses and promotes local food businesses that provide safe and healthy food, use sustainable practices, and provide safe and accessible premises.

Businesses that meet the Best Bites requirements will be listed in the Best Bites Food Guide to be launched in November 2015, and can also nominate for the 2015 Best Bites Food Awards.

The 2015 Best Bites Food Awards are available in the following categories:

- Restaurant
- School Canteen/Child Care
- Supermarket
- Bed and Breakfast/Home Based Retailer
- Cafe
- Take Away
- Aged Care
- Innovation

The finalists in each category are determined from the overall score in their annual Best Bites assessment. Finalists are then judged by an independent panel of expert judges to decide the winner in each category.

Councillor Mayor Bev Colomb recently congratulated 2014 Best Bites Restaurant Award Winner Hummingbird Café in Red Hill and said “the 2014 Best Bites winners and finalists all set great examples within the local food industry by providing healthy and nutritious food at sustainable and accessible premises. I encourage local food businesses to become part of this exciting program”

Shire food businesses have been sent a Best Bites Application Kit and can nominate for the 2015 Best Bites Food Guide by completing and returning the form on page 8 of this newsletter to the Shire’s Environmental Health Team.

Nominations for the awards close on October 12th 2015. Finalists will be announced in late November 2015 and winners announced in March 2016.

If you would like further information on Best Bites please contact the Shire’s Senior Environmental Health Officer Peter O’Brien on phone 5950 1050 or e-mail peter.obrien@mornpen.vic.gov.au.

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Despite more than four million Australians getting sick from contaminated food each year, the overall national rate of food poisoning is falling. Except, that is, when it comes to salmonella. A glance at Victoria’s Department of Health and Human Services figures for example, shows a 50 per cent increase in salmonella in poisoning since 2012. Queensland has seen a doubling of salmonella poisoning cases in the past 12 months.

Salmonella can be found in soil and water, and multiplies rapidly if food is not handled properly, including washing and refrigeration.

It is one of the reasons the independent Fresh Produce Safety Centre Australia New Zealand has released new guidelines for everyone involved in food to try to lift standards. The case of Hepatitis A in frozen in frozen berries imported by Patties Foods focussed attention on food safety and experts agree it was preventable.

"It made 30 people ill. It could have had significantly greater impact if it wasn't nipped in the bud as it was," said Richard Bennett, technology manager for the Fresh Produce Safety Centre and the Fresh Produce Marketing Australia New Zealand.

"Salmonella certainly, according to Department of Health and Human Services, is one of the few areas of food-borne illness that's increasing.

"Overall, despite more coverage, food borne illness is declining, from 4.3 million cases a year in 2000 to 4.1 million cases in 2010.

"Supply chains have become more complex, meal solutions have become a lot more complex. It's not just chops and three veg as it used to be.. Shelf life is stretched to the limit."

"It's across all food items, and Australian consumers can expect to fall ill from food contamination every four or five years on average due to contaminated food."

On its first anniversary, the Australian Fresh Produce Safety Centre Australia, New Zealand in Sydney has launched new guidelines to make growing and handling food safer.

"The aim was to reinvigorate the safety, to give it greater focus, make information available to industry.

"It is a combination of the best knowledge, experience and research pulled together in one document, applies through the supply chain, from farm to retail, and trans-Tasman, with Australian and New Zealand expertise.

"Industry put this as their Number One priority for what we actually needed." Mr Bennett said food safety had nothing to do with Country of Origin labelling.

"The food standards code applies equally to domestically produced food as imported food," he said. "They are the same set of standards, no matter where it's from". To view the guidelines go to http://freshproducesafety-anz.com/guidelines

Source—ABC News Web Site August 14 2015

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**Langham Hotel salmonella outbreak caused by raw egg mayonnaise - The Age 25th August 2015**

An outbreak of salmonella poisoning at Melbourne's exclusive Langham Hotel was caused by raw egg mayonnaise. The Department of Health and Human Services has confirmed the cause of the outbreak, which left 90 people ill and 16 hospitalised.

A pregnant woman, who was holding her baby shower at the hotel's high tea, was among those struck down by poisoning. Doctors were forced to deliver the woman's baby five weeks early and the newborn suffered breathing problems as a result of a traumatic birth.

The department began an investigation of food served at the hotel on the weekend of July 11 and 12 after a number of people reported illness.

"Through our investigations, we found that the mayonnaise contained the same strain of salmonella found in the confirmed cases," Victoria's acting Chief Health Officer Professor Michael Ackland said. The mayonnaise, used in food including chicken sandwiches, was traced as the cause for salmonella poisoning in more than 40 people.

_Eggs are a highly nutritious food, used in many different recipes and ways. However, like meat, seafood and dairy products, eggs have the potential to be hazardous. To reduce the risk of making your customers ill, particular care must be taken to handle and store eggs and raw egg products safely. If you handle or prepare raw products please refer to the Department of Health and Human Services web site for further information at http://www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer/advisories/advisory-2013-06-egg-safety.htm_
With the popularity of open air and alfresco dining, proprietors are running the risk of flying insects, creepy crawlies, birds and vermin entering their premises and potentially causing serious food contamination. Rats and cockroaches are also attracted to grease and food scraps found in food premises.

During the past few months the Shire’s Environmental Health Team has investigated several local food premises as a result of complaints regarding rodent or cockroach infestation.

The Shire’s Environmental Health Team would like to take this opportunity to remind proprietors of their obligations in relation to preventative pest control. We encourage premises to contract a licensed pest controller to attend the premises on regular basis (at least quarterly) and leave reports detailing the works completed and recommendations for the premises to improve their pest control.

Here’s some simple tips that you can follow:
- Install self closing fly wire screen doors and mesh screens on windows.
- Remove rubbish and store securely.
- Protect food and ingredients from pests.
- Install air curtains or hang fly strips across external doorways.
- Install insect light traps, insect electrocutors. These units should be located away from food preparation and food storage areas.
- Keep your premise well maintained to minimise the likelihood of pests being attracted.
- Seal any cracks or holes in walls, ceilings or floors.
- Seal gaps inside fixtures and fittings as they may become places for pests to live.
- Install a ‘weather strip’ or rubber flap where there are gaps between the base of the door and the floor.

If you suspect pests are in your premises:
- Discard any affected food products or containers immediately and implement pest control measures.
- Ensure bait stations or traps are located appropriately, this should be done by a licensed pest controller.
- Label bait stations with the date of service and secure them to the ground.
- Protect food from possible contamination if chemicals are used for pest control.
- Engage a licensed pest control company to conduct regular checks and follow any of their recommendations immediately. Pest control operators must be licensed by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services

If you choose to do your own preventative pest control, extra care needs to be taken. For further information go to http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Pest_control_in_the_home?open
Remote Monitoring of Food Temperatures

Remote monitoring (RM) of food temperatures involves using temperature thermocouples (or probes) that transmit information to an operating system to monitor the temperature of storage units, usually fridges and freezers, create records and trigger alarms if the set parameters are breached. While these systems are varied in the technology applied, there are criteria that must be met for the system to be considered an adequate alternative method of compliance instead of taking twice daily temperatures of food using a probe thermometer. A RM system must consist of:

- Monitoring and reporting showing (at a minimum) twice daily temperature readings
- Triggering of alarms when a refrigeration/freezer unit is not holding food within the set temperature limits*
- Documented corrective actions that are taken when temperature control issues occur
- Thermocouple accuracy of +/-1 degree Celsius
- Validation of the system to demonstrate the system produces consistently accurate results
- Annual calibration of the system – thermocouples and alarms
- A maintenance program to ensure continuous operation of the system.

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services has developed a draft guide to assist food businesses that wish to use remote temperature monitoring as a method of managing food storage temperatures. Systems vary greatly, and must be considered on a case by case basis by your area Environmental Health Officer.

The draft guide is provided as a tool to assist food businesses to demonstrate the remote temperature monitoring system adequately manages temperatures to assist with food safety.

Please contact the Shire’s Environmental Health Team if you would like to introduce remote monitoring of temperatures.

The Shire needs to approve any proposed method of remote temperature monitoring before it is used in place of manual temperature checking with a probe thermometer.


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Review of Safe Food Australia

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has recently released a consultation paper on a review of *Safe Food Australia*. *Safe Food Australia* is an explanatory guide to the food safety standards in Chapter 3 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

Chief Executive Officer Steve McCutcheon said *Safe Food Australia* is used as a practical tool, by both industry and regulators, to help understand and implement safe food handling practices.

“This key document is used by food businesses to help them produce safe food,” Mr McCutcheon said.

*Safe Food Australia* is being reviewed to address current food safety issues and trends, provide new guidance for mobile vendors and home-based vendors and to update the evidence referenced in the guide,” Mr McCutcheon said.

“FSANZ will also consider the format and delivery of the publication, for example by providing it in mobile friendly formats.”

Comments can be provided through [submissions@foodstandards.gov.au](mailto:submissions@foodstandards.gov.au)

Food Safety Information For ‘Doggy Bags’

A ‘doggy bag’ is a small bag provided on request by a restaurant for a customer to carry home leftovers of a meal.

Once a ‘doggy bag’ is given out, it becomes the property of the consumer. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the consumer to store and handle food taken away from the restaurant safely to minimise the risk of food poisoning.

However, it is still important that the food business provides accurate information and advice about the food.

The Law
The Victorian Food Act 1984 does not prohibit restaurants from providing ‘doggy bags’; however it is at the restaurants discretion whether they provide this service or not.

In any case, customers can bring along their own container (doggy bag) to take food home. There are potential health risks associated with this practice.

Associated Risk
There is a risk of food poisoning if the food is not stored or handled correctly such as;

- Food kept unrefrigerated for too long.
- Food that has been kept for too long.
- Food that has not been suitably reheated.
- Food that has been touched with unwashed hands.
- Food that has been transported and/or stored incorrectly.

Everyone is at risk, however some people may be more vulnerable than others. High risk groups include the elderly, infants and the immuno-compromised

Minimising Risk

**Proprietors:**
Have a procedure in your Food Safety Program for dealing with ‘doggy bags’.
Advise the customer against giving the ‘doggy bag’ food to any high risk group or persons with food allergies.
Some foods may not be suitable for a ‘doggy bag’ e.g. If it has been outside temperature control for a given period (for service or display), or if it has already been reheated. In such instances, you must advise the customer accordingly.
Document such information as date, time, food, customer’s details and advice given. This will act as a useful record, should any queries regarding the ‘doggy bag’ later arise.
Transfer food into new, unused food-grade containers.
Provide suitable labels for all products leaving the premises

**Consumers:**
Follow the advice given by the restaurant.
Refrigerate the food as soon as possible. Food left out of the fridge for longer than two hours may become unsafe due to bacterial growth and should be discarded.
When reheating food, it should be heated until piping/steaming hot all the way through.
Food which is not eaten within 24 hours should be thrown away.
Do not give the food to high risk groups and/or customers with food allergies.

If in doubt, throw it out.
Contact Us
If you would like to contact the Environmental Health Team please call us on phone 1300 850 600 or e-mail us at food@mornpen.vic.gov.au

Useful Websites
Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) - www.foodstandards.gov.au
Foodsmart (Web Based Food Safety Program) - www.foodsmart.vic.gov.au

Digital Probe Food Thermometers

You must have a digital food thermometer if your business transports, stores, prepares, cooks or sells high-risk foods.
By using the thermometer you can check whether your foods are received, stored, cooked and re-heated safely.
The internal temperature of high-risk foods must be checked if they are cooked, re-heated or stored hot. If your business handles these foods you will need a digital probe thermometer. It must be accurate to +/- 1.0 degrees Celsius.
Digital probe thermometers can be purchased on-line or from electrical retailers, supermarkets and catering suppliers for $10-$50.

The probe of the thermometer must be sanitized before each use using 70% alcohol or alcohol swabs.

To comply with your Food Safety Program, the probe thermometer must be calibrated every 6 months using either the ice point method (50% ice/water slurry) or boiling point calibration method. Records of each calibration result needs to be kept.

If your business also has an infra-red digital thermometer that has been calibrated, this can be used for your daily refrigerated/frozen temperature checks as long as the probe thermometer is used to measure the internal temperature of hot high-risk foods.

Booking Food Premises Inspections

The Environmental Health Team inspects each food premises at least once per year, with cafes, restaurants and other Class 2 food premises inspected twice each year.
Many of these premises are in domestic dwellings or are closed during normal trading hours, and are difficult for Environmental Health Officers to access for inspection.
If you are a proprietor of one of these food businesses we encourage you to contact your area Environmental Health Officer on phone 59 501 050 or e-mail food@mornpen.vic.gov.au to arrange a suitable appointment for the officer to inspect your premises.
Food Safety Tips For Summer

It is important to take extra care when preparing and storing food in the summer months. Temperature control is the most important factor in preventing food poisoning. Potentially hazardous foods are those that must be kept at certain temperatures to minimise the growth of food poisoning micro-organisms. These include meat, dairy, seafood, eggs, pasta and rice. Hot food must be stored at above 60°C and cold food below 5°C and frozen below -15°C.

The following tips will help you to keep food safe in summer:

• Use your probe thermometer to check deliveries of potentially hazardous foods as they arrive at your business
• As soon as deliveries of potentially hazardous foods arrive, move these foods into the fridge freezer
• When preparing food only take the amount of ingredients out of the fridge that you need at that time. This will eliminate having excess ingredients sitting at room temperature
• Defrost frozen foods in the fridge or cool room overnight and not at room temperature to minimise potential problems
• Food enters the danger zone (5°C - 60°C) much quicker during warmer weather, so keep food preparation times to a minimum
• Food stored in cold display fridges must be kept at 5°C or less, or use the 2/4 hour rule as detailed in your food safety program
• Keep your food safety records. Recording temperature checks of potentially hazardous foods is important to ensure food is stored at the correct temperature.

If there is a power failure you should:

Before and after a power failure -

• Try to keep cold and frozen food cold. If food is still cold to touch, less than 5°C, it is safe to use.
• Once cold or frozen food is no longer cold to touch, 5°C or above, it can be kept and eaten for up to 4 hours and then it must be thrown away or, if it is raw meat, it should be cooked and eaten.
• Eat hot food within 4 hours of it being hot or throw it away.
• If power is restored when frozen food is still solid the food is safe to refreeze.

Things I can do during a power failure -

• Move food from the fridge to the freezer.
• If available, put bagged ice under food packages and trays stored in freezers and fridges if power failure lasts more than 1 hour.
• Place an insulating blanket over cold or frozen food where possible.
• Only open fridge and freezer doors when absolutely necessary, this will keep the food and air temperature colder for longer.
2015 Best Bites Nomination Form

Each business must meet the requirements for Food Safety Certification before being eligible for Best Bites. The Best Bites Application Kit has information on each of the five program areas. Businesses who wish to nominate for the 2015 Bites Food Guide and Awards can simply choose which of the areas they wish to apply for on this nomination form and return it to the Shire’s Environmental Health Team. An Environmental Health Officer will then contact you for an assessment at your business. This form and the self-assessment checklists can also be accessed on-line at www.mornpen.vic.gov.au under Best Bites or via Mornington Peninsula Business On Line at www.mpbonline.com.au

Mornington Peninsula Shire - Best Bites Food Guide and Awards

Business Name and Address:________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Business Type (e.g. café, restaurant) ________________________________

Contact Person:________________________________________________________

Phone:______________ Web Site:______________________________________________

E-Mail:________________________________________________________

I wish to participate in the 2015 Best Bites Program and would like to nominate my food business for the Best Food Guide and Awards in the following area/s (please tick) –

☐ Nutrition and Healthy Eating ☐ Tobacco and Liquor Compliance

☐ Waste and Recycling ☐ Energy and Water Efficiency

☐ Access for All ☐ Innovation

I have assessed food safety at the business and believe that it complies with the requirements for Best Bites Food Safety Certification.

I agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the 2015 Best Bites Application Kit.

Signed________________________________________ Date________________________