

CORPORATE PLAN **2021–22**

Reporting period 2021–22 to 2024–25

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Foreword

We are pleased to present the 2021-22 Corporate Plan for Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

This Corporate Plan underpins our purpose and delivery of FSANZ's core functions. It sets out the strategic themes, performance areas and key enablers that will help us to succeed in the coming years.

Our operating environment is set to change. Work to reform the bi-national food regulation system and review the *Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991* is nearing its conclusion. Accordingly, this Corporate Plan seeks to foster agency stability and resilience while preparing FSANZ for potential system reform and any changes to our role.

The work of FSANZ is vital. The standards we develop and maintain ensure safe food for Australian and New Zealand consumers, help achieve positive public health outcomes and support thriving food, beverage and hospitality sectors that generate billions of dollars in economic activity each year.

We seek to underpin confidence in our food supply by helping industry and regulators mitigate food-related risk while fostering innovation, competitiveness and trade at an industry and global level.

International engagement will continue to play a central role in supporting our food safety and regulatory activities, and in achieving broader government policy objectives. We will

continue to build capacity and capability to strengthen international collaboration where there is mutual benefit. We will work closely with our partners in the Asia-Pacific region to achieve alignment with, or recognition of, food standards, and look for new opportunities for work sharing with other national food regulatory agencies.

In a time of reduced resources and increased workload, retaining corporate knowledge and regulatory science capability is a key priority.

Our Corporate Plan outlines the strategies in place to navigate the challenges of attracting a skilled workforce and managing the risks of staff turnover.

FSANZ will continue to productively engage and collaborate with our valued stakeholders to meet our objectives and key performance areas over the life of this Corporate Plan.



Stephen McCutcheon
Acting Board Chair



Dr Sandy Cuthbert
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Corporate Plan at a glance

Our vision

World-leading standards, safe food for life.

Our mission

We develop world-leading food standards for Australia and New Zealand that enable a wide variety of safe foods to be available to consumers. We achieve this by applying the talent of our highly skilled subject matter experts in collaboration with stakeholders to make informed decisions on food safety, public health and science that ensure consumers can trust the foods they choose.

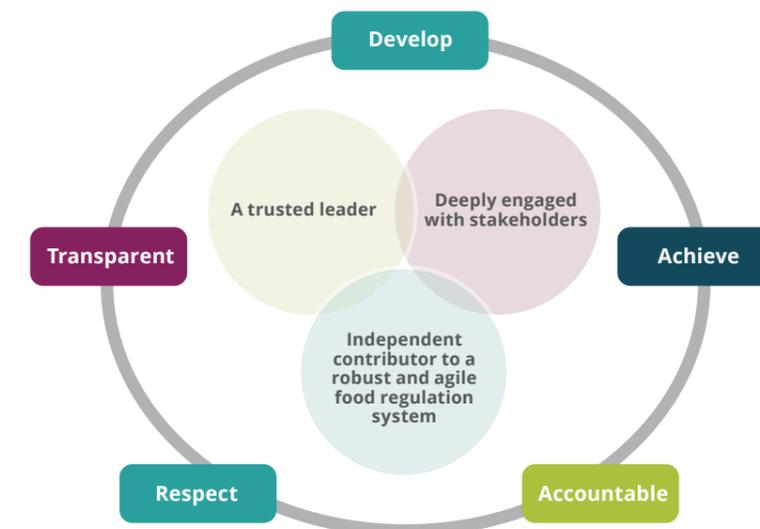
Our functions

Develop food standards informed by best available scientific evidence.

Coordinate regulatory activities across the food regulation system.

Provide advice to food regulators and food standards information to consumers.

Our strategic themes and agency values



Our performance areas

- › Consumer trust in food labels and the food regulation system
- › Regulatory science
- › Communication to stakeholders

- › Engagement with our stakeholders
- › Staff engagement and workplace culture

- › Management and completion of applications and proposals
- › Coordination of food recalls

Key enablers: People, Regulatory Science, Communication, Governance

Introduction

Under Section 35 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act), Commonwealth entities must prepare a Corporate Plan.

This Corporate Plan sets out the key activities for FSANZ for the period 2021–22 to 2024–25.

Progress towards meeting the goals of this plan will be reported each year in the FSANZ Annual Report.

We will review the Corporate Plan annually and make adjustments as necessary.

Our legislative framework

FSANZ is an independent statutory authority in the Australian Government Health portfolio. It is established by the *Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991* (FSANZ Act). Our functions are set out in Section 13 of the FSANZ Act.

We also operate under a treaty-level agreement between the Governments of Australia and New Zealand that establishes FSANZ's role in setting and maintaining trans-Tasman food standards.

FSANZ is a corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Our Purpose

Our broad purpose is to contribute to the cooperative food regulation system by developing science and evidence-based standards, coordinating regulatory responses and providing information to the public about food standards. The object of the FSANZ Act is to ensure a high standard of public health protection throughout Australia and New Zealand. Under the Portfolio Budget Statements 2021–22, FSANZ's outcome is a safe food supply and well-informed consumers.

Our Vision

World-leading standards, safe food for life.

Our Mission

We develop world-leading food standards for Australia and New Zealand that enable a wide variety of safe foods to be available to consumers. We achieve this by applying the talent of our highly skilled subject matter experts in collaboration with stakeholders to make informed decisions on food safety, public health and science that ensure consumers can trust the foods they choose.

Our Values

As a public service agency, we are required to adhere to the Australian Public Service values as set out in section 10 of the *Public Service Act 1999*. The APS Values require that we are: committed to service; ethical; respectful; accountable; and impartial.

To ensure we maintain a service delivered in line with our legislation, as an organisation we have developed the following set of values to promote a constructive work culture:

- › **Develop:** support our people to grow and develop
- › **Achieve:** collaborate to achieve a common goal
- › **Accountable:** responsible for commitments, behaviours and actions
- › **Respect:** build open and supportive relationships
- › **Transparent:** build trust by being genuine, clear and consistent

Our core functions

FSANZ core functions align with our PBS program objective to provide food regulatory activity and services. Our core functions are to:

- › Develop food standards informed by the best available scientific evidence
- › Coordinate regulatory activities across the food regulation system
- › Provide advice to food regulators and food standards information to consumers.

Together these functions contribute to public health protection by assuring a safe food supply for Australia and New Zealand. We work in collaboration with government, industry and the community to deliver our functions, support food system innovation and facilitate trade with other countries.

Australia and New Zealand share an international reputation for producing safe and nutritious food, underpinned by our robust bi-national food regulatory system. The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code is at the heart of this system, delivering the standards that quality-assure domestic and export food production and manufacturing, and ensure imported foods meet mandated safety requirements.

Innovation plays a critical role in driving international trade and growth in the food manufacturing sector. In developing food standards, FSANZ considers the impact of food regulatory measures on innovation. We will focus on developing high quality standards which achieve health outcomes and protect our shared bi-national reputation for safe food, whilst enabling industry to innovate quickly and cost effectively to remain competitive in the global market.

FSANZ operates within stakeholder expectations for timeliness and efficiency, while accounting for rapid change driven by evolving science, advancing technologies, globalisation of supply chains and shifting market and consumer needs. We strive to identify new and improved ways to do our work so we can continue to build a framework which delivers strong and sustainable performance and maintains our capacity to respond to challenges and opportunities.

We have developed strategic themes for the agency which set the direction for the work we do within our core functions. We have outlined goals under each strategic theme which will help us deliver against our purpose, strive towards achieving our vision and mission and respond to the challenges and opportunities of our current environment.

In addition, we will continue to make strong contributions to the three Ministerial priorities for 2017–21: reducing foodborne illness particularly due to *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*; reducing chronic diseases related to overweight and obesity; and maintaining a strong, robust and agile food regulation system.

Strategic theme 1: A trusted leader

A trusted source of advice on food safety and food-related public health

FSANZ will build on its reputation for providing rigorous, evidence-based advice as it works toward an increased role in the food regulation system.

A leader in its areas of expertise

FSANZ has the largest government concentration of specialist food regulation experts across Australasia. It is internationally recognised for the quality of its scientific work and is continuing to build its capability in economics and social sciences.

Global leader in regulatory science

Science is a critical core competence that underpins FSANZ's ability to achieve its purpose. High quality regulatory science is based on being independent, accessing the best available evidence and incorporating information from numerous disciplines. It forms the basis of world-leading standard setting.

A source of wisdom on emerging issues

We publish an annual Report on Emerging and Ongoing Issues which describes potential and emerging food safety risks. We have also established extensive relationships and networks to assist in building a capability system that anticipates future issues for the agency and the food regulation system as a whole.

Over the next four years, FSANZ will:

- › position ourselves, in consultation with other agencies who have statutory responsibilities in this area, as the trusted face of food safety and embrace this community expectation
- › build upon and enhance our capability in economics and social sciences through strategic alliances with other government agencies and key research institutes in the academic and private sectors
- › through our Regulatory Science Strategy 2019–23, ensure we remain prepared to respond to the challenges of global trends and emerging risks in a dynamic food system
- › enhance our existing and highly-effective domestic and international networks and seek to anticipate immediate risks as well as looking at potential issues over 2, 5 and 10 year time horizons.

Strategic theme 2: Deeply engaged with stakeholders

Engage with our domestic and international stakeholders

We have extremely well established consultation processes and a wide number of trusted stakeholder relationships in both Australia and New Zealand, as well as internationally. As a result, we have developed mutually beneficial, deep and rich contacts across the sector and are seen as a trusted and independent source of expertise and advice.

Enhance international engagement

We will continue to take up opportunities for work-sharing with other international food standard setting agencies that will allow important synergies to be achieved. This will produce efficiencies in work areas as well as improving timeliness.

Over the next four years FSANZ will:

- › ensure that our engagement with stakeholders will continue to form a major part of our activities
- › further our relationships with indigenous peoples of both countries by exploring and undertaking structured engagement activities and collaborative projects
- › take up the opportunity for synergistic work-sharing with other international food standard setting agencies
- › seek greater leverage of Codex standards with a view to strengthen adoption into the Code
- › enhance our work with APEC economies and continue to provide leadership in food safety and regulation within the Asia-Pacific region.

Strategic theme 3: An independent contributor to a robust and agile food regulation system

Effective and efficient

FSANZ has in recent years streamlined and adapted its operations in response to funding pressures. It is critical that FSANZ has an adequate resource base to appropriately support the role and functions of a world-class, independent regulatory science leader operating in an environment of rapid change, increasing workloads and complex emerging issues.

Provide expert evidence into policy making processes

We will participate in and, as appropriate, lead domestic and international food regulatory framework and standards development work and the advancement of food-related knowledge.

Maintain our role in national food incident and recall response within Australia

FSANZ plays a central role in food recalls and incidents by coordinating activities, collating and sharing information and, in many cases, managing communications. By working together with stakeholders, we can ensure consistent responses are achieved.

Over the next four years, FSANZ will:

- › identify new and improved ways of doing our work to ensure we can meet the expectations of the wider community, industry and governments
- › increase our input into policy development processes and look to enhance this in a way that plays to our strengths, in particular in the areas of technical expertise and trusted stakeholder relationships
- › play a key role in the coordination of food recalls and food incidents.

Operating Context

FSANZ plays a vital role in the food regulation system, a complex and cooperative bi-national system that protects the 'safe food' brand for both countries.

The joint Australian and New Zealand food regulation system is a strong, world class system that underpins a high level of confidence in the quality and safety of the food that Australians and New Zealanders eat. The system employs risk management principles based on scientific evidence and expertise that protects the health and safety of consumers. It is a comprehensive system that involves all levels of government in Australia and New Zealand, with different roles being met by local, state and national governments.

The system engages the many businesses and stakeholders in the food supply chain, providing a stable platform on which our food industries can operate, and enables choice for consumers.

External Environment

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic remains a significant issue globally. Through the course of the pandemic, FSANZ has effectively maintained its primary functions of protecting public health whilst ensuring an ongoing safe food supply and a viable industry. While external factors are beyond our control, we have capable business continuity plans and enabling technologies in place to ensure our operations continue with minimal disruption.

We will continue to:

- › work closely with jurisdictions, industry and other key stakeholders to ensure that information is available and communications and key messages regarding COVID-19 in relation to food safety are fact-based and accurate
- › maintain the FSANZ website as a single, evidence-based repository of factual information for consumers, industry and retailers on COVID-19 and food safety
- › ensure flexibility in the FSANZ workforce so that staff can continue to work effectively from home.

We have ensured that our strong bi-national and international linkages remain current and we will continue to use these channels to inform our work.

Modernisation of the Food Regulation System

In November 2019, the Food Ministers' Meeting endorsed an ambitious plan to reform the bi-national Food Regulation System to ensure it remains strong, robust and agile into the future. This reflects that the system is operating in a complex environment with changing consumer expectations and significant technological advancements.

FSANZ has access to a wide range of industry, consumer, public health, government and international stakeholders, making it uniquely positioned within the system to be able to identify environmental changes, emerging issues and global trends and to raise these with our key stakeholders.

As the best placed agency to deal with these new challenges, we are increasingly called upon to address any gaps in the food regulation framework, a task which requires significant additional resources.

We will continue to play a key role in supporting Ministerial Priority 3: maintaining a robust and agile food regulation system, and will engage with all stakeholders in exploring the challenges and opportunities for enhancing the food regulation system.

FSANZ Legislative Review

A review of the FSANZ Act forms a key component of the work to reform of the bi-national Food Regulation System. This includes a broad review of the Act as well as the operations and responsibilities of the agency. The review provides an opportunity for positive reform for FSANZ and the food regulation system.

The food regulatory system in its current form has not changed substantially since it was established in 2000. The last significant review of the *Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991* (FSANZ Act) was undertaken in 2007. In contrast, the landscape in which the food sector operates has changed considerably over the same period.

FSANZ must be well placed to respond to current and emerging opportunities, challenges and risks in both standards-setting and regulation. Equally, Australian and New Zealand governments at all levels must ensure the bi-national regulatory system is as robust and future-ready as possible. Reviewing FSANZ's enabling legislation will help ensure the agency and broader regulatory system are well placed to meet the contemporary needs of consumers and industry while preparing for the future.

The food regulatory system has solid foundations, however, it does need to be updated to support innovation, maintain confidence in the safety of the food supply and drive regulatory efficiency. Measures must be put in place to ensure FSANZ is effective and efficient in delivering its functions into the future to keep pace with rapidly evolving food systems and technologies, safeguard consumer health and safety, support trade and economic growth by reducing regulatory burden, and support industry innovation.

We will continue to actively engage in the process by providing input into the review, legislative drafting and ministerial/parliamentary processes, where appropriate.

We will also work to ensure that the agency maintains its solid base and is ready to evolve and take on any changes in its operating context which may come from the review.

Internal Environment

FSANZ has identified four key enablers and developed supporting strategies and frameworks to focus our activities under this plan. Our key enablers support the Board by creating an environment for high quality decision making and communication with all stakeholders, including consumers and industry.

Workforce

The high quality of the work we achieve is a testament to our highly skilled, qualified and diverse workforce.

The Board continues to fully support the agency's culture work. The People and Culture Board sub-committee will specifically look at how the Board can best link in with ongoing activities in this area. We will continue to build on the positive results achieved in the 2020 APS Census which are a testament to the culture change work the agency has undertaken in recent years.

Our Workforce Strategy supports a constructive workplace culture and equips us to meet the ongoing demands of a challenging operating environment.

Regulatory Science

Our Regulatory Science Strategy 2019–23 sets out our plan to develop and maintain our scientific evidence base and risk assessment methodologies, expand our capabilities, leverage resources through strategic partnerships, and communicate our science to meet stakeholder needs.

It positions us as a recognised leader of food regulatory science in our region and the trusted coordinator of credible information on food safety, ensuring that the risk analysis framework remains appropriate to respond to the challenges of a changing food system.

Maintaining and expanding our regulatory science capabilities will enable us to remain flexible and agile in meeting the needs of a constantly evolving food production system, for the benefit of food producers, manufacturers and consumers. We will continue to undertake public health nutrition analysis to assess the impact of our work upon our population health status.

Communication

All staff have a role in communication and stakeholder engagement. Our Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy aims to manage the different ways we communicate and make the best use of our extensive networks. Communications activities are aimed at explaining our use of evidence and the regulatory and non-regulatory objectives of our decisions while maintaining confidence in the safety of the food supply.

The Strategy identifies a growing reliance on our website and social media to communicate efficiently with diverse audiences and the importance of more clearly engaging with audiences during risk analysis processes. It also highlights the need for further stakeholder research and liaison to extend our reach into the broader community.

Governance

In a world in which food risks can emerge quickly and advances in knowledge or innovation can change our understanding of a hazard, we must be able to respond promptly and proportionately. Our Governance Framework contributes to strong and sustainable performance and builds confidence in our capacity to respond to challenges.

Our risk analysis approach and governance mechanisms ensure that we can effectively identify, monitor and respond to food safety and food-related public health issues in a transparent and coordinated manner that applies an internationally recognised methodology. In day-to-day operations, we manage risk using an emerging risk framework and through strategic communication activities.

Our governance systems also ensure that we make consistent decisions and have a high level of accountability for all of our activities, through active consultation, collaboration and transparent decision making.

Risk management and risk appetite

We manage risk through our Risk Management Framework. The framework sets out the organisational arrangements for designing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing and continually improving risk management within FSANZ.

Our Board, supported by the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee, oversees enterprise risk management. Risk appetite is the level of risk the Board and agency is prepared to accept in achieving their objectives and before action is deemed necessary to reduce the risk. We recognise the importance of the overall risk appetite of the Board and the relationship between this and the activities of the organisation. In addition, the relationship between strategic and operational risk is recognised as well as links with organisational culture.

We have a moderate appetite for risks associated with achieving our overall strategy given the importance of food safety, and we have a low willingness to accept risks which have no alignment with our strategies or have the potential to damage FSANZ's reputation.

The full risk appetite statement can be found [here](#).

Measuring our performance

Our Corporate Plan is the primary planning document reflecting the strategic direction of the agency, as agreed by the Board. It is aligned with the FSANZ 2021–22 Portfolio Budget Statement which describes agency outcomes, allocation of resources, and our performance. Results of our performance are provided in our Annual Report.

To ensure we meet our expected outcomes, we have developed a suite of measures that enable us to better tell our performance stories and focus our efforts. These have been developed under seven broad performance areas which explicitly link to our three strategic themes.

The table below describes the performance areas and how they relate to the three themes.

Strategic themes	Performance Criteria (as set out in the Portfolio Budget Statement)	2021-22 Target	Performance areas	Performance Measure
An independent contributor to a robust and agile food regulation system	Applications to amend the Food Regulation Measures are considered in a timely manner	Decisions on applications for standards or variations are considered within statutory timeframes as required by the <i>Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994</i> ¹	Management and completion of applications and proposals	% applications completed within the statutory timeframe % of applications completed ahead of the statutory timeframe % of proposals that meet agreed progress timeframes % of accepted applications that used draft application process % of accepted applications that the draft process included meetings (F2F or VC) with FSANZ
	Coordinate major food incidents under the National Food Incident Response Protocol (the Protocol)	Deliver efficient and effective food incident management through the Bi-National Food Safety Network and, when appropriate, the Protocol	Coordination of food recalls	% of recall sponsors satisfied with FSANZ information and assistance % of Bi-National Food Safety Network agencies satisfied with FSANZ role in incident response. Coordinate major food incidents under the NFIRP (measure = number of recalls in the FY)

¹ Part 5, Section 11 of the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994

Strategic themes	Performance Criteria (as set out in the Portfolio Budget Statement)	2021-22 Target	Performance areas	Performance Measure
A trusted leader	FSANZ is recognised as the primary source of information about food standards and food regulation in Australia and New Zealand	Stakeholders consistently report a high level of satisfaction with FSANZ and the information it provides	Consumer trust in food labels and in the food regulation system Regulatory science Communication to stakeholders	% of respondents who respond positively about trust in the information on food labels % of respondents who respond positively about ability of FSANZ current food system to address consumer issues New data and analysis generated or shared to support food safety and standards development Skill development in, or application of risk, assessment methods Collaborations and joint projects Leveraging external scientific expertise Number of new topics/ publications developed and published on the website (i.e. proportion of gaps filled) Number of existing topics reviewed and updated Number of media enquiries to FSANZ % of responses provided by the deadline (aim for >99%) Number of visits to the FSANZ website Number of social media followers and interactions Number of messages/ enquiries managed via social media

Strategic themes	Performance Criteria (as set out in the Portfolio Budget Statement)	2021-22 Target	Performance areas	Performance Measure
Deeply engaged with stakeholders	Encourage stakeholder engagement through current information on FSANZ's website and social media interactions	More than 950,000 unique website visitors More than 250,000 social media interactions	Engagement with our stakeholders Staff engagement and workplace culture	% of respondents that indicate satisfaction with FSANZ performance % of respondents that indicate understanding of the FSANZ roles and responsibilities in the FRS % of respondents that use our website to obtain information about food and food standards Number of stakeholder forum attendees, reported by total and by sector % of stakeholder forum attendees that give positive feedback, reported by total and by sector Regulatory and food safety fora attended by FSANZ staff % of eligible staff with completed IWDP % of eligible staff with mid-year reviews undertaken

Linkages between FSANZ's statutory and corporate planning and reporting are shown in the following diagram:

