

# Corporate Plan 2020-21

Reporting period 2020-21 to 2023-2024

## About this plan

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is established for the Australian and New Zealand governments and is governed by a Board appointed under the Australian *Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991*.

This is our Corporate Plan for the first of the four annual reporting periods commencing on 1 July 2020 and ending on 30 June 2024. It is prepared for subsection 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act), in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 and is reviewed annually.

## Other planning documents

We also publish planning and framework documents.

Under section 20 of the *Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991* FSANZ publishes a three-year work plan for applications and proposals.

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## Introduction

We are pleased to present the 2020–21 Corporate Plan for Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

This plan underpins our purpose and objectives and sets out our strategic priorities, operating environment, and key enablers to achieve success in the coming years.

FSANZ is part of a world class food regulation system that involves all levels of government in Australia and New Zealand. The system reflects the many businesses and stakeholders in the food supply chain, providing a stable platform on which our food industries can operate, and a high level of confidence in the food we eat and choice for consumers.

Our work is important. We promote safe food for all Australian and New Zealand consumers and support a thriving food and beverage industry that contributes billions of dollars to these economies each year.

With a changing and increasingly complex environment, ensuring the food regulation system remains strong, robust and fit-for-purpose into the future is a key priority for FSANZ in the coming years. We have in recent years streamlined and adapted our operations in response to growing demand and

funding pressures to ensure we can meet the expectations of the wider community, industry and governments.

To support broader change, we welcome and look forward to playing a key role in the work being led by the Australian Department of Health to review the food regulation system, including a comprehensive review of the FSANZ Act and the opportunities to improve the wider food regulation system.

Our core work is developing and reviewing food standards, providing trusted advice and information and coordinating regulatory responses to food-related incidents. To this end, our ability to respond quickly to emerging food threats remains strong. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we worked alongside our regulatory partners nationally and internationally to develop and communicate clear and consistent advice to consumers and the food sector on COVID-19 and food safety.

This year we will continue to progress reviews of the food safety requirements and primary production and processing standards in Chapters 3 and 4 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code). Our objective is to modernise and provide a nationally consistent and contemporary approach to

through-chain food safety management. We have raised two Proposals to consider these issues: Proposal P1052–Primary Production and Processing Requirements for High-risk Horticulture, and Proposal P1053–Food Safety Management Tools Consultation with industry and other stakeholders has commenced to assess whether or not the Code should be amended to include greater regulation; we expect to finalise this work by the end of 2021.

The definitions in the Code for ‘food produced using gene technology’ and ‘gene technology’ are also being updated and revised to make them clearer and better reflect existing and emerging genetic technologies, including new breeding techniques.

Working in collaboration with food regulators, we will continue to provide advice and educational materials to industry and consumers to increase compliance and consumer awareness and confidence in labelling as a source of information about food safety and quality.

Guided by our regulatory science strategy published in 2019, we will build on our regulatory science capabilities, including in the area of public health nutrition, to support the policy decision making process and food

regulation priorities identified by the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation.

Our plans for the coming year will be delivered by our highly skilled, passionate and committed staff. Improving the workplace culture and developing our staff for the challenges of the future remain a high priority.

We look forward to meeting the challenges and opportunities that the agency will face over the life of this Corporate Plan.



Robyn Kruk AO  
Board Chair



Mark Booth  
Chief Executive Officer

## Our purpose

FSANZ is an independent statutory agency established by the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991 (FSANZ Act). FSANZ is part of the Australian Government's Health portfolio.

The object of the FSANZ Act is to ensure a high standard of public health protection throughout Australia and New Zealand. The FSANZ Act also sets out four goals for the agency, they are:

- (a) a high degree of consumer confidence in the quality and safety of food produced, processed, sold or exported from Australia and New Zealand
- (b) an effective transparent and accountable regulatory framework within which the food industry can work efficiently
- (c) the provision of adequate information relating to food to enable consumers to make informed choices
- (d) the establishment of common rules for both countries and the promotion of consistency between domestic and international food regulation measures without reducing the safeguards that apply to public health and consumer protection.

We contribute towards these goals by developing food standards that are informed by the best available scientific evidence, providing food standards information, and by coordinating aspects of the food regulation system.

The Board has adopted as a single overarching vision: Consumers have a high level of confidence in the safety of food.

## Our operating model

FSANZ uses risk analysis, an internationally accepted process, for standards development and many other situations where food-related health risks need to be assessed, managed and communicated. It consists of three parts: risk assessment, risk management and risk communication.

Risk assessment involves an evaluation of the best available scientific evidence to provide the technical basis of decisions. From this base, risk management is the application of law, policies and perspectives that enables sound judgement. Both processes are supported by a platform of risk communication to optimise information transfer between audiences.

Using the risk analysis framework is intended to ensure effective regulatory decisions. Its use encourages communication between all interested parties including consumers.

## Our operating environment

### The food regulation system

The Australian and New Zealand joint food regulation system is a strong system, employing 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. Different roles are met by local, state and national governments. International obligations are respected.

The system reflects 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.

We contribute to the following system objectives:

- › protect the health and safety of consumers by reducing food-related risks.
- › help consumers make informed choices about food by making sure they have the information they need and are not misled.

- › support public health by promoting healthy food choices, maintaining and enhancing the nutritional qualities of food and responding to specific public health concerns.

- › support a strong, sustainable food industry that offers a diverse, affordable food supply that also benefits the Australian and New Zealand economies.

The food regulation system that we are part of is a world class system that underpins a high level of confidence in the quality and safety of the food that Australians and New Zealanders eat.

To ensure we maintain this high level of confidence we must have ongoing vigilance around the state of the system. The capacity of the system is continuously tested by innovation in food production and manufacturing, the development of novel supply chains and increased community expectations.

In response to these challenges, the Board has led wide ranging discussions both internally and externally about our role within the wider food regulation system and how we can enhance it to build upon the world class expertise within the agency. FSANZ is uniquely positioned within this system to be able to see the results of the changing environment and to raise these with our key stakeholders. As FSANZ is 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.

Effective food regulation supports confidence that the food we buy is suitable and safe to consume and facilitates domestic and international trade by reducing uncertainty and commercial risk. This discussion has been had in cooperation with the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation (the Forum) as well as with all jurisdictions through the Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC).

The independently developed and scientifically based standards set by FSANZ establish a foundation for the food regulation system and

support a successful food industry in both countries, providing a clear set of laws for all food businesses. Our strong, effective and risk-based standards contribute to the economic success of food industries in both countries.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant issues globally. FSANZ has responded quickly to ensure it can maintain its primary functions of protecting public health whilst ensuring an ongoing safe food supply and a viable industry.

Our response includes:

- › working closely with jurisdictions, industry and other key stakeholders to ensure that communications and key messages regarding COVID-19 are fact based and accurate
- › prioritising our work programme to ensure we minimise the compliance burden on our stakeholders
- › being flexible with our consultations to reflect pressures being faced by many stakeholders – this includes extending consultation deadlines and working alongside submitters to help them meet the requirements
- › single, evidence based repository of factual information for consumers, industry and retailers on COVID-19 and food safety
- › modifying our operations so that staff are able to continue to work effectively from their homes.

We have ensured that our strong binational and international linkages remain current and use these channels to inform our work.

## Advancing our responsibilities within the food regulation system

### Review of the food regulation system

Following Forum endorsement, a review of the food regulation system has commenced to ensure it remains strong, robust and agile into the future. In addition, Minister Colbeck, in consultation with Minister O'Connor in New Zealand, agreed to a comprehensive review of the FSANZ Act, which has also commenced. The review of the FSANZ Act will be tightly connected to the review of the overall system and FSANZ is performing a central role throughout. Both reviews are being led by the Department of Health and reflect the need to ensure that the system is fit for purpose in a multifaceted operating environment, with changing consumer expectations and significant technological advancements.

The Terms of Reference for the Review of the FSANZ Act supports a comprehensive wide ranging review of the Act. It recognises that there is general broad acknowledgement that the underpinning principles and foundations of the Act, FSANZ's operations, and the broader food regulation system are highly regarded and remain sound. The Review will ensure that FSANZ is governed and able to operate in a fit for purpose manner in the context of a global food supply that is experiencing significant change as a result of both innovation and consumer demand.

Prior to and in tandem with the Review, FSANZ has been working with key stakeholders on improving its current activities within the scope of the Act and in the context of the wider food regulation system with the objective of providing a streamlined approach to current practice.

### Developing food standards

Our functions are comprehensively outlined in Section 13 of the FSANZ Act. One of these functions, which comprises a significant proportion of our workload, is to develop food standards and variations to standards. These standards, which become part of the legislation in the jurisdictions, provide confidence in our food supply that complying foods are safe and suitable, and ensure information is provided to enable informed choice.

We will continue to progress reviews of food safety risk management for the food service and closely related retail sectors, and of primary production and processing standards for high-risk horticulture as part of the broader review of Chapters 3 and 4 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code). Our objective is to modernise and provide a nationally consistent and contemporary approach to through-chain food safety management. As a first step, we have commenced proposals to consider primary production and processing requirements for high-risk horticulture and additional food safety requirements in the food service and related retail sectors.

The definitions in the Code for 'food produced using gene technology' and 'gene technology' are also being updated and revised to make them clearer and better reflect existing and emerging genetic technologies, including new breeding techniques.

These pieces of work are large and complex and require significant resources, which is challenging in an environment of ongoing reductions in funding.

### Providing advice and coordinating regulatory responses

Confidence in our food supply is also a product of effective response systems that remove unsafe food from sale quickly and ensure a rapid response to food-related incidents. Strong and cooperative relationships between the incident response coordinator, the enforcement agencies and food businesses are essential to an effective system.

To drive continued improvement in this cooperative system, we have developed a food safety culture partnership. This partnership brings industry, enforcement agencies and FSANZ together to promote effective food safety culture in food businesses. In 2020-21 we will continue working on the partnership and promoting resources to businesses.

This year we will also continue to play a leading role in developing work to reduce the level of foodborne illness in Australia<sup>1</sup>.

### Providing information about food standards

We live in an information rich society that demands accurate information to enable personal choice. We have a critical role as a provider of food information that our communities trust and will continue to provide information on food standards through a variety of different platforms. We will also adopt a supporting role in public health efforts to promote healthy eating<sup>2</sup>.

We will participate in, and, as appropriate, lead domestic and international food-related policy development and the advancement of food-related knowledge. We will enhance FSANZ's international engagements in order to contribute towards Australia's broader government interests and objectives, and ensure that our work is at the forefront of international best practice.

We will continue to work with food regulators to better explain the food regulation system and provide the accurate information required by consumers. This work will help build industry compliance and consumer awareness and enhance confidence in labelling as a source of information about food safety and quality.

<sup>1</sup> Forum meeting held on 28 April 2017 identified three priority areas for 2017 – 2021: Ministerial Priority 1: To reduce foodborne illness, particularly related to *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*

<sup>2</sup> Forum meeting held on 28 April 2017 identified three priority areas for 2017 – 2021: Ministerial Priority 2: To support the public health objectives to reduce chronic disease related to overweight and obesity

## Our strategies

We have mapped out some strategic directions for the agency in 2020-21. These directions are described below under three broad and interdependent themes: a trusted leader; deeply engaged with stakeholders; and an independent contributor to a robust and agile food regulation system. These strategic directions will help us deliver against our purpose, strive towards achieving our vision and respond to the challenges of our current environment.

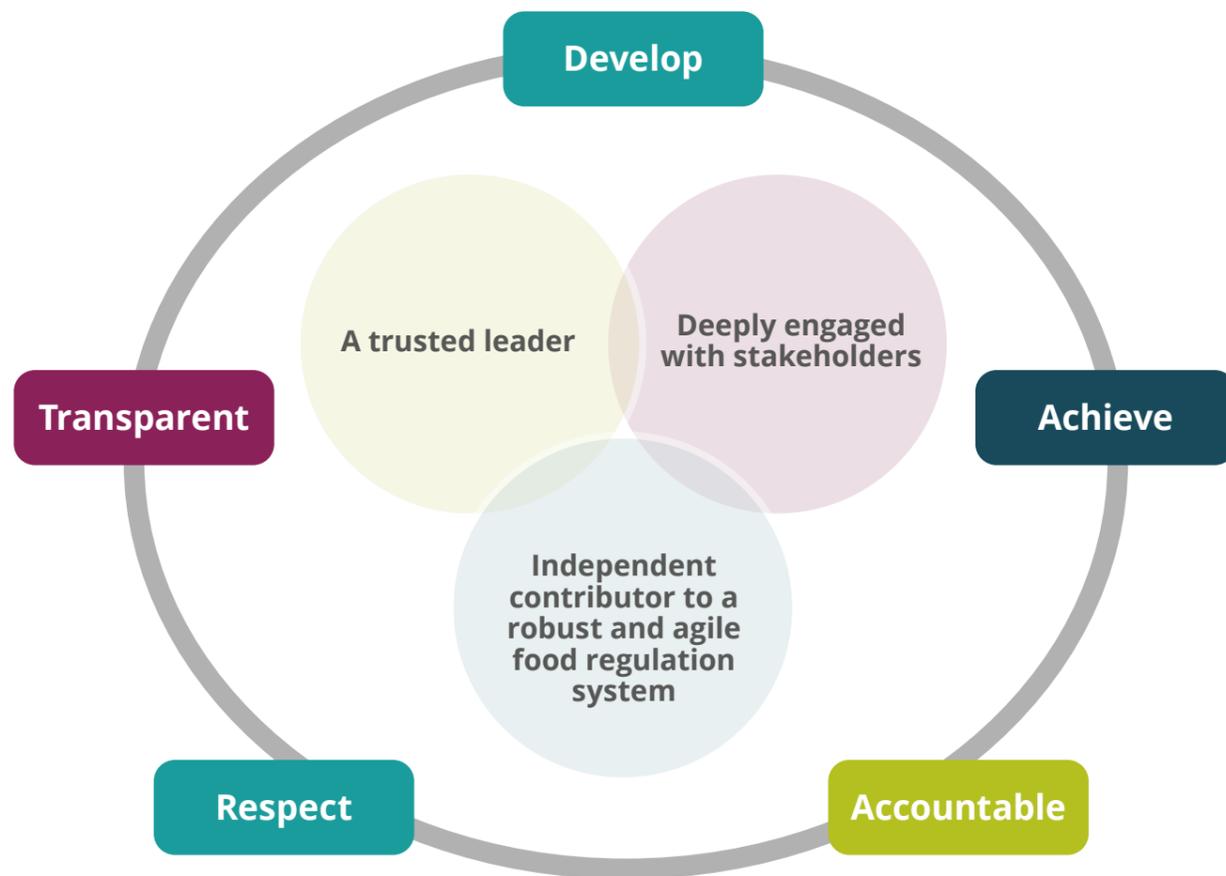


Figure 1 Strategic directions of the Corporate Plan, supported by FSA NZ values

### Theme: A trusted leader

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

Many people in Australia and New Zealand believe that FSANZ can play an increased role in responding publicly as the face of the food regulation system. Media and industry often seek us out as the first and single point of contact on food safety and food regulation issues. FSANZ will, in consultation with other agencies who have statutory responsibilities in this area, embrace this community expectation and continue to position ourselves as the trusted face of food safety.

#### 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. This will be built upon and enhanced through strategic alliances with other government agencies and also key research institutes in the academic and private sectors.

#### 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 standard setting. Our forward looking Regulatory Science Strategy 2019-23 ensures we remain prepared to respond to the challenges of global trends and emerging risks in a dynamic food system.

#### A source of wisdom on emerging risks

We publish an annual Report on Emerging and Ongoing Issues which describes potential emerging food safety risks. We have also established extensive relationships and networks to assist in building a capability system that anticipates future issues for us and the food regulation system as a whole. This will enhance our existing excellent networks both domestically and internationally and will seek to anticipate immediate risks as well as looking at potential issues over 2, 5 and 10 year time horizons.

### Theme: Deeply engaged with stakeholders

#### Engagement 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 of this we have mutually beneficial deep and rich contacts across the sector and are seen as a trusted and independent source of expertise and advice. This engagement will continue to form a major part of our activities.

#### Enhancing international engagement

We will take up the opportunity for work-sharing with other international food standard setting agencies that will allow important synergies to be achieved. This should produce efficiencies in work areas as well as improving timeliness. We will seek greater leverage of Codex standards with a view to strengthen adoption into the Code. FSANZ will also continue to enhance its work with APEC economies.

## Theme: 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. We will continue to 'work smarter' to ensure we can meet the expectations of the wider community, industry and governments.

### Provider of expert evidence into policy making processes

We will continue to increase our input into policy development processes and will look to enhance this in a way that plays to our strengths, in particular in the areas of technical expertise and trusted stakeholder relationships.

### Maintaining our role in national response within Australia

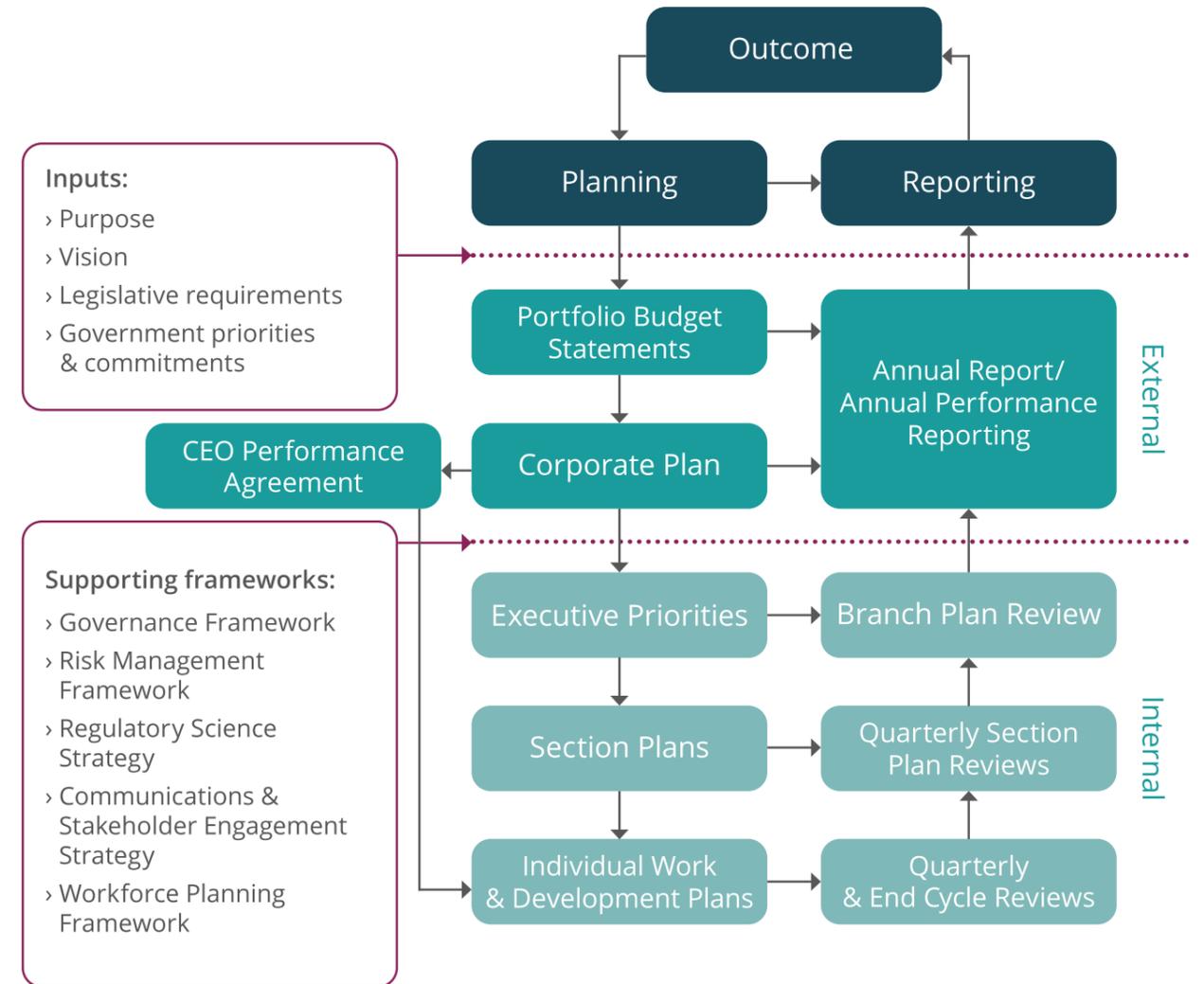
The coordination role that we play in food recalls and food incidents is a key one that will be maintained.

Work in regard to the above three strategic themes will enhance our capacity to continue delivering on our core functions which are set out in the FSANZ Act, namely—developing food regulation measures, also known as food standards and codes of practice; providing advice to food regulators; coordinating some regulatory activities across the system and providing information to consumers about food standards.

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.

## Key enablers to achieve performance

This Corporate Plan provides the Board's overall strategic direction for the agency. These directions are reflected in key managerial and corporate documents of the agency as shown in the following diagram:



Our key enablers support the Board by creating an environment for high quality decision making and communication with all stakeholders, including consumers and industry.

## People

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 and the People, Culture and Remuneration Board sub-committee will specifically look at how the Board can best link in with the staff on its ongoing work in this area. A constructive culture will equip us to meet the ongoing demands of a challenging operating environment.

### 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; being impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful and ethical.

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

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

## 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, the trusted coordinator of credible information on food safety, and ensures 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 recognise the importance of public health nutrition analysis to assess the impact of our work upon population health status. We will build our strong public health focus that inputs into policy decision making processes.

## Communication

All staff have a role in communication and stakeholder engagement. Our Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy aims to manage the different ways of communicating and making 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 and providing confidence in the safety of the food supply and food safety related information.

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 also manage this 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 and collaboration and transparent decision making.

## Risk management and risk appetite

### The risk context

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.

### Overall strategy

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.

### Shared food-related public health and safety responsibilities

Food-related public health and safety is a shared responsibility of the Australian, New Zealand and state and territory governments, industry and consumers. As set out under the heading "Our purpose" above, we are the body responsible for developing, amending and setting food standards.

In the context of the shared responsibilities for food-related public health and safety, we have a low appetite for risk.

## Financial

We have a low risk appetite for any activities that could materially damage our financial position and we also for any activity which may result in a lack of appropriate resources to achieve our roles as set out in the FSANZ Act.

### Delivery of services and capabilities

We have a low risk appetite for business interruption at critical periods of operations impacting staff, and for activities that will compromise the reputation of the agency.

### Health, safety and wellbeing

Whilst FSANZ strives for zero risk in relation to the workplace health and safety of its staff, the willingness to accept risk in this area is low. We have a moderate to high risk appetite for introducing processes which enhance the wellbeing of staff in the agency

### Governance and compliance

Whilst FSANZ strives for zero risk in relation to misconduct, fraud, harassment or discrimination and non-compliant behaviour that undermines our reputation, the willingness to accept risk in these areas is low.

### Organisation and culture

FSANZ staff are expected to conduct themselves with a high degree of integrity, respect and excellence in the work they perform and the outcomes they achieve. We have a low risk appetite for behaviours which do not meet these standards. FSANZ takes any breaches of the APS Code of Conduct very seriously.

FSANZ has a moderate to high risk appetite for introducing processes which enhance the culture of the agency.

### Innovation

We have a moderate to high risk appetite for innovation and the value it will bring to FSANZ as well as our stakeholders. However, we have a low appetite for activities that deter the pursuit of innovation and growth.

## Measuring up for the future

Our Corporate Plan is the primary planning document reflecting the strategic directions of the agency, as agreed by the Board. It is aligned with the FSANZ 2020-21 Portfolio Budget Statement which describes the outcomes, proposed 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 enables us to better tell our performance stories and focus our efforts. These have been developed under seven broad areas and explicitly link into the three interdependent themes identified earlier in the document. The table below describes the performance areas and how they relate to the three themes.

Strategic theme	Performance Criteria (as set out in the PBS)	2020-21 Target	Performance areas
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> <sup>3</sup>	› Management and completion of applications and proposals
	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
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
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

<sup>3</sup> Part 5, Section 11 of the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994

## FSANZ on a page

### Our vision

Consumers have a high level of confidence in the safety of food

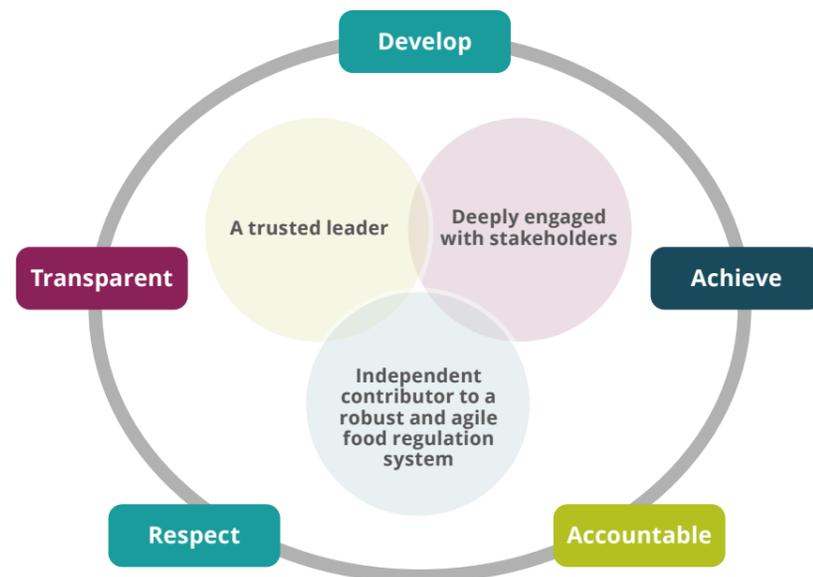
### Our functions

Develop food standards informed by best available scientific evidence

Coordinate aspects of the food regulation system

Provide food standards information

### Our themes



### Our performance areas

Consumer trust in food labels and the food regulation system

Regulatory science

Communication to stakeholders

Management and completion of applications and proposals

Coordination of food recalls

Engagement with our stakeholders

Staff engagement and workplace culture

**Key enablers: People, Regulatory science, Communication, Governance**

**Our values: Develop, Achieve, Accountable, Respect, Transparent**



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