



OSCAR Hospitality Food Safety Auditor, Geoff Ramsden

“Hello all, my name is Geoff Ramsden, Food Safety Auditor, and I have been invited to share with you my many and varied experiences in the catering and food service industry. From my early days in various managing positions, to a chef, here and overseas, I am keen to reflect on changes in the Aged Care sector over the last 30 years. I am keen to stir the pot on issues still existing in our Food Catering and Care sector, with a few old chestnuts to throw in the fire. I hope you enjoy this article I wrote.”



Food Safety: An open book with many thoughts to air

Food safety in the aged care sector demands consistent commitment. It is the Aged Care facility's responsibility to ensure all food service and kitchen staff are fully knowledgeable of all aspects of safe food handling.



This can only be achieved by regular catering meetings, forums, proper inductions, refresher courses and having the chef's food safety performance genuinely recognised for their participation, interest and greater knowledge.

To underpin a real investment in food safety involvement, staff must have recognition, be encouraged to give feedback and be awarded for achievements within the facility.



There are practices in place that can help food service staff be more involved in food safety.

The five fundamental food safety rules to keep your food safe include:

- (a) Potentially Hazardous Foods stored at right temperature
- (b) cook food thoroughly and quickly
- (c) don't cross contaminate
- (d) clean all equipment
- (e) use good hygiene practices, i.e. wash hands after each task.



Furthermore, food safety practices must be maintained at every level of each facility, from checking the temperature of the food supply truck storage to proper labelling of all food containers.

Having one refresher course a year, I believe, does not ensure that those involved in catering for the aged would be up to date and fully aware for all that is required for proper food safety practices. It should be more appropriate and beneficial if every month a fully convened meeting of catering staff includes such things as brainstorming, quizzes and awards.

Complete involvement of all staff will ensure that food safety continues to evolve within the facility and its food safety requirements.

