

# Local Health Authority Analytical Committee



## Strategic Directions

2010 - 2015

Stoneham and Associates

### List of Abbreviations

DoH	Department of Health
DEH	Director Environmental Health
EDPH	Executive Director Public Health
EIP	Early Identification Process
EO	Executive Officer
FIA	Food Industry Association
FRSC	Food Regulation Standing Committee
ISC	Implementation Steering Committee
KPI	Key performance indicators
LHAAC	Local Health Authorities Analytical Committee
LGs	Local governments
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
PD	Position description
PH	Public health
PHAIWA	Public Health Advocacy Institute WA
SD	Strategic Directions
S&A	Stoneham and Associates
SoP	Standard operating procedures
ToR	Terms of reference
WA	Western Australia

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## ABOUT LHAAC

The Local Health Authorities Analytical Committee (LHAAC) is established under Part VIII A of the *Health Act 1911* to formulate and operate a Scheme to provide analytical services for use by Local Governments (LGs) in Western Australia. LHAAC employ contracted food analysts and set fees for Local Governments participating in the Scheme. Currently, LHAAC has a manufacturer based sampling scheme which aims to improve food safety in Western Australia by the monitoring of food composition.

This document, Strategic Directions 2010–2015, will guide LHAAC's actions until 2015. Stoneham and Associates was contracted to review LHAACs service provision and develop this document. It is informed by data gathered from a local government survey, through a LHAAC Committee Member survey, key informant interviews and a literature review.

In all its actions, LHAAC will demonstrate good governance, sustainable practice, consultation with and involvement of its members, transparency and accountability, and respectful and timely interaction at all levels.

This document has been purposely written to be sufficiently flexible to respond to changing food safety environments, unexpected challenges and new opportunities. It includes LHAACs primary strategic goals and targets and outlines the values that underpin our work. The implementation plan provides additional detail including timeframes and key performance indicators (KPIs).

## VISION

Promote, protect and enhance public health in Western Australia to ensure a high quality assurance of food safety.

## MISSION

LHAAC will advance a risk based sampling scheme to ensure food safety and quality.

LHAAC will have strong corporate governance, leadership and effective partnerships.

LHAAC will maintain a sustainable and cost effective service for all clients.

## VALUES

LHAAC's values that guide all actions include competence and integrity, basing action on evidence, ensuring continuous improvement, credibility, innovation, collaboration, flexibility, accessibility, sustainability, accountability and cost effectiveness.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2010 – 2015

Key focus areas within LHAAC’s Strategic Directions are identified below and expanded on the following pages.

## Key issues

SH: An evidence based process  
LHAAC to contribute to PH  
LHAAC: Effective & efficient sampling scheme that clearly contributes to PH

SH: Leadership and guidance  
LHAAC: Clear direction and consensus  
Improved governance of Committee  
Evaluation

SH: Better partnership between DoH & LHAAC  
New analyst  
LHAAC: Improved partnerships

SH: Engagement with LHAAC  
LHAAC: Meet industry needs – LGAs, food industry  
Improved communication  
Recognised

SH: Financial contributions need reviewing  
LHAAC: Longevity

## Key themes

Science based scheme

Leadership

Partnerships

Communication

Financial sustainability

SH = Stakeholders views

LHAAC = Committee members views

## SCIENCE BASED SAMPLING SCHEME

### **Consistency**

- LHAAC is seeking a consistent approach to sampling across WA regardless of where food is manufactured.
- LHAAC recognise there is a need for a flexible, risk based sampling scheme.
- LHAAC recognise there is a need to reallocate the distribution of Units based on all food manufacturers, whether they are selling locally or exporting food outside of their local government boundary.

### **Sampling based on sound evidence and proportionate to risk**

- LHAAC will ensure decisions are made, and action taken, in a way that is proportionate to the associated risk.
- Where there is a risk of serious damage to public health, LHAAC will act quickly to implement necessary measures to reduce health risks.

### **Flexible and responsive to the food challenges of the future**

- While needing to be predictable, LHAAC also needs to be flexible in order to anticipate and respond to safety and nutrition challenges of the future.
- LHAAC will align our work with the priorities of Implementation Subcommittee (ISC) and recognise that the Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC) Food Safety Management Working Group has identified high risk industry sectors. These will, wherever possible, be considered in LHAAC sampling frame.
- LHAAC will deliver targeted food sampling and nutrition projects with stakeholders including the WA Food Monitoring Group, Heart Foundation, PHAIWA, FIA and Healthway.

## **Trend Analysis**

- The current software database used to capture food sampling data does not allow accurate data to be extracted for the generation of summary reports, trend analysis and feedback. LHAAC will address this in the tender development processes for the analyst.
- LHAAC will make additional efforts to improve analysis and communicate the results of the food sampling activities to stakeholders.

### **Building LHAAC's role as a leading authority in food safety**

- LHAAC will promote its new Strategic Directions to peak bodies, professional associations, government officials, stakeholders and the food industry.
- LHAAC will offer an advisory service to industry and stakeholders (information and advice, EHOs to sample where resources are inadequate, etc).
- LHAAC will develop and maintain innovative communication channels (please refer to section 4 for more detail).
- LHAAC will investigate representation on appropriate Federal, State and local committees that affect food safety.
- LHAAC will increase its capacity to identify and strategically respond to emerging issues relevant to food safety.

### **Taking control of the future**

- LHAAC will develop a proactive advocacy document to take to the Minister for Health to ensure the longevity, structure and sustainability of the Committee following the adoption of the Public Health Bill.
- LHAAC will investigate broadening the scope of the sampling scheme and report back to local governments and stakeholders.
- LHAAC will work with the Department of Health to identify options around mandating involvement by local governments (opt in/opt out/mandated).



## **Priority Setting**

- LHAAC acknowledge that appropriate mechanisms are not in place to allow for priority setting among sampling plans or between proactive and reactive samples. This constrains the ability to prioritise sampling plans.
- LHAAC will engage with local governments and Department of Health to establish priorities for sampling.
- LHAAC will increase efforts to ensure food sampling plans meet industry and stakeholders needs.

## **Good Governance**

- Although currently constrained by legislative processes, LHAAC will investigate new models for representation on LHAAC.
- LHAAC will ensure clarity around the role and responsibilities of the Coordinator. LHAAC will review the Coordinator's PDF and contract to ensure these documents reflect the Strategic Directions and have measurable KPIs. LHAAC will investigate additional administrative support for the Coordinator.
- Roles and responsibilities of LHAAC members will be clearly articulated and valued, through the development of a member's manual, improved meeting processes and enhanced communication to stakeholders (following each meeting).
- LHAAC will formalise meeting processes and Committee roles (agenda setting, Chair, role of observers, etc).
- Policies will be developed to improve the transparency, rigor and timeliness of food sampling scheme and reporting processes. These policies will be reviewed every two years.
- Analyst services will be tendered with input from stakeholders on tender criteria (including new IT processes).
- LHAAC will utilise consultants where appropriate to assist with the implementation of the Strategic Directions Plan.

- LHAAC will review performance of Strategic Directions annually, and contract an independent evaluation in 2013.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Critical to the achievement of our Strategic Directions will be promoting collaboration, partnerships and consultation with the myriad stakeholders involved in food regulation and safety.

### **Identifying Partners**

- LHAAC will map all key stakeholders and identify the nature of each partnership. This partnership matrix will be reviewed annually.
- LHAAC will clarify the role of the Department of Health in the sampling scheme to ensure maximum benefits to LHAAC and its members. This will be formalised through a revised MOU and communicated to stakeholders. The MOU will address intellectual property issues and accessibility of sampling scheme data.

### **Working with Partners**

- LHAAC will aim to conduct joint projects with partners in the areas of research, proactive sampling projects and input to tertiary education curriculum.
- LHAAC will endeavour to develop links with appropriate international and national food safety programs and monitoring schemes.
- LHAAC will work with LGAs to promote a proactive approach to using sampling results. LHAAC will address the perception that the sampling scheme's primary purpose is to support prosecutions.

### **Guidance for Partners**

- LHACC will improve the dissemination of sampling results to the community and amongst Elected Members through trend analysis reports available on the website and media statements.
- LHAAC will provide a weblink to a guidance document on sampling processes.

### **Maintaining Active Partnerships**

- LHAAC will evaluate key partnerships every 2 years.
- LHAAC will align Committee members with key partners and ensure partnership maintenance is provided and reported.
- LHAAC will endeavour to engage LGAs, peak bodies and industry in all stages of the sampling process and will develop a system to engage with partners throughout the planning, prioritisation and reporting stages.

## COMMUNICATION

- LHAAC will develop an innovative communication and advocacy plan to ensure all stakeholders are kept informed. A key priority will be enhancing the effectiveness of our risk communication for food safety and nutrition risks through:
  - An interactive website, regular newsletters, fact sheet series, media releases;
  - Regular meetings with the Executive Director of Public Health, the Minister for Health and the Director of Environmental Health;
  - Attendance and presentations at regional meetings and conferences (not just EHOs focus);
  - Dissemination of clear terms of reference and philosophy for the sampling scheme, and
  - The availability of regular trend analysis and/or statewide data on the website.
- LHAAC will investigate the legalities of establishing a new name and brand.
- LHAAC will review the Annual Reporting framework with a view to establishing a more user friendly and evidence based report that aligns with the Strategic Directions, is understandable and clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

## **Consultation**

- LHAAC will establish a consultation framework aiming to consult widely on our activities, ensuring that our processes are simple and accessible and allowing all relevant parties an opportunity to make their views known.
- LHAAC will ensure the sampling scheme and trend analyses are open, transparent and accountable. Decisions and the information on which they are based will be recorded and accessible, so that any organisation or individual can make informed judgments.

## **Professional Excellence**

- LHAAC will develop and disseminate a guidance manual for local governments to explain and support the risk based approach to sampling and appropriate use of results.
- LHAAC will partner with key stakeholder to provide regular information, training and education and ongoing professional development opportunities.
- LHAAC committee members (including Coordinator) capacity building needs will be identified and addressed.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- LHAAC will provide transparent and regular financial overview statements on our website.
- LHAAC will develop a five year financial plan to guide its work program.
- LHAAC recognise that without appropriate financial accountability frameworks in place, it is difficult to assess the results of the program. LHAAC will develop a financial plan in addition to the annual budget using appropriate and modern technologies.
- It is acknowledged that a revised scheme may provide a more equitable system and enhance participation in the scheme. LHAAC will provide clear information to local governments about the cost effectiveness of sampling schemes.

## LOOKING AHEAD

LHAAC will as a priority over the next five years consider the following:

- What principles should guide the choice of a mechanism for local governments to participate in scheme?
- How can the mechanism be transparent so that local governments clearly understand how the scheme benefits the public good?
- How can the mechanism be simple so that administration of the fee(s) is not complex and costly to local governments?
- Broadening sampling framework and scope to be inclusive of areas other than food.
- Benefits of national benchmarking and how to better engage with ISC and FRSC\*.

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\*ISC – Implementation Sub-Committee (National sub-committee of Food Regulation Standing Committee)

FRSC - Food Regulation Standing Committee (Membership of FRSC comprises senior officials of Departments for which the Ministers represented on the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Council have portfolio responsibility, as well as the President of the Australian Local Government Association)



