



FOOD STANDARDS
Australia • New Zealand
Te Mana Kounga Kai – Ahitereiria me Aotearoa



CORPORATE PLAN 2024-25

Acknowledgement of country

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past and present. FSANZ also acknowledges and respects ngā iwi Māori as the tangata whenua of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

About this plan

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

This Corporate Plan covers a 4-year reporting period 2024–25 to 2027–28, as required under Section 35 of the PGPA Act and in accordance with Section 16E of the PGPA Rule 2014.

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

We are pleased to present the 2024-25 Corporate Plan for Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

FSANZ is at the centre of the world-class bi-national food regulation system that helps protect public health and safety by assuring a safe food supply in Australia and New Zealand. Our vital work means people in both countries can be confident the food they buy is safe to eat and is what it says it is.

FSANZ develops evidence-based food standards for regulators and industry, monitors the safety of the food supply, supports consumers to make informed choices and coordinates food incidents and recalls in Australia. Our work cuts across health, agriculture, industry and trade portfolios. A safe food supply is essential for a healthy population, a strong domestic economy and access to international markets.

FSANZ is committed to maintaining a high degree of public and industry trust in food safety through the effective delivery of our essential functions and demonstrated excellence in public administration. We are making productivity improvements in a challenging funding and resourcing environment through targeted process improvements and digitisation initiatives. We continue to achieve efficiencies in our operations. In the last two years, the number of amendments made to the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code has increased annually by 27% and 56% respectively.

Efficiency gains like these are delivering system and public benefits, however we know more can be done with the right enabling environment. FSANZ remains focussed on preparing for the outcomes of the review of the *Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991*, recognising reforms can support modernisation and improve flexibility.

FSANZ will continue to work collaboratively with our valued stakeholders to do our job and meet their needs. We remain committed to maintaining a future-ready food standards framework to meet the challenges of today while enabling innovation for the opportunities of tomorrow. We are actively working to prepare for change and disruption driven by global trends including food security and sustainability, rapid advances in food and digital technologies, climate change and biosecurity and foodborne illness risks.

Food ministers shape the priorities of the food regulatory system. In considering the forward workplan for the system, ministers have identified nutrition labelling, infant and childhood food and toddler milk as areas of interest. Noting the expertise and role of FSANZ in the system, food ministers have referred some of these priorities to FSANZ to undertake work including consideration of potential mandating of the Health Star Rating (HSR) system and scoping a review of the Nutrition Information Panel. These pieces of work provide a unique opportunity to optimise nutrition labelling for consumers. FSANZ will draw on its expertise across the agency to inform this work.

Our vision – *World-leading standards, safe food for life* – demonstrates our continued commitment to ensuring a safe food supply for the people of Australia and New Zealand, now and into the future. We know a secure food system means consumers have physical and economic access to sustainably produced, nutritious and safe food. FSANZ will continue to support public and private sector efforts to maintain a safe and reliable food supply for both countries.

As the accountable authority of FSANZ, on behalf of the Board, we are proud to present the 2024-25 Corporate Plan, covering the period 2024-28, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.



Glenys Beauchamp AO PSM
Board Chair



Dr Sandra Cuthbert
Chief Executive Officer

OUR VISION AND VALUES

Our vision

**World-leading standards,
safe food for life**

Our strategic objectives



Food you can trust



Helping consumers make
informed choices



Supporting food
systems innovation

Our capabilities

Workforce

ICT and digital transformation

Regulatory science

Communication and engagement

Governance and risk management

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

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

FOOD STANDARDS AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND

Our purpose

Our purpose is to ensure a safe food supply and well-informed consumers in Australia and New Zealand.

We do this through the development of risk-based food standards and promotion of their consistent implementation by food enforcement agencies, underpinned by evidence. We also coordinate food recalls and food incidents in Australia, provide labelling and food safety information to the public and monitor consumer and industry practices.

FSANZ actively engages and communicates with stakeholders to develop standards while meeting statutory requirements for timeliness and effectiveness. Our standards setting is based on the latest evidence in an environment of rapid food systems change driven by evolving science, advancing technologies, globalised supply chains, climate change and shifting market and consumer needs.

We identify and monitor emerging food safety issues and trends while seeking to enhance our business activities through digital transformation of systems and processes. Together these approaches help us set effective standards that achieve health outcomes and maintain our capacity to respond to challenges and opportunities.

Innovation plays a critical role in driving growth in the food sector and international trade. In developing food standards, FSANZ considers the impact of food regulatory measures on innovation and trade. Our high-quality standards protect our shared bi-national reputation for safe food, while enabling industry to innovate quickly and cost effectively to remain competitive in the global market and meet consumer demands.

All levels of government – local, state and national – play a vital role in the food regulatory system, engaging with industry, public health organisations, government and consumers to provide a stable platform on which the food sector can operate. This work extends internationally. Sharing food standards across Australia and New Zealand and harmonising with international regulations provides consistency for consumers, supports export opportunities and reduces trade barriers.

FSANZ's role in the bi-national food regulatory system is shown at Figure 1.

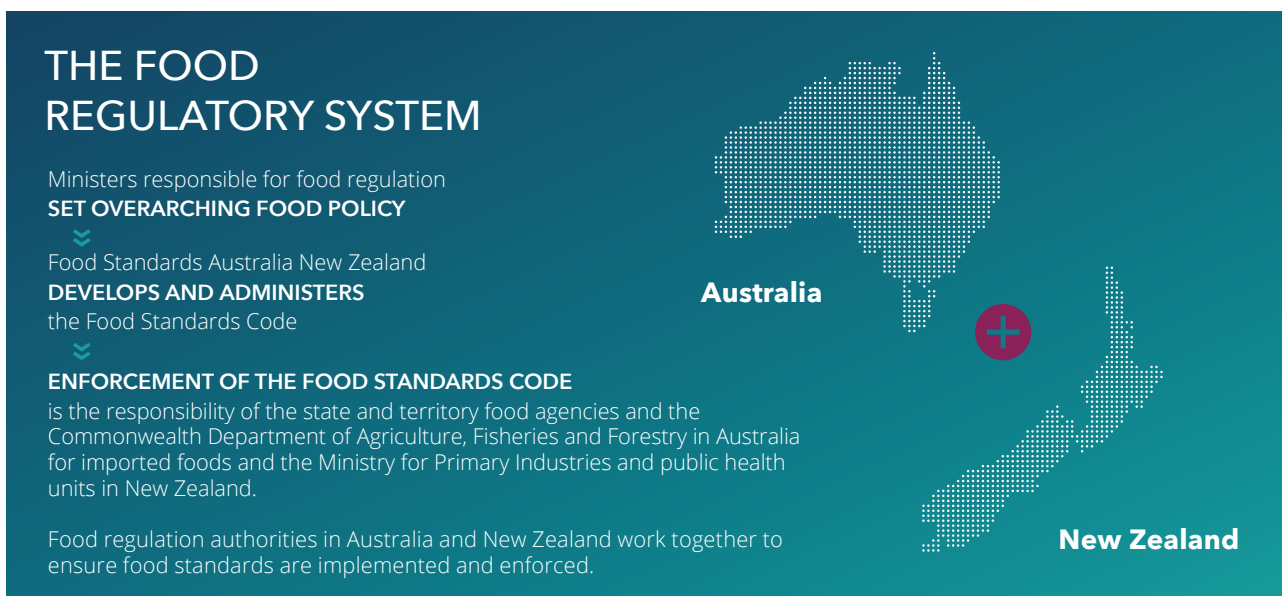


Figure 1: The food regulatory system.

Our goals

Within the system, FSANZ supports implementation of the Food Regulation Agreement (a partnership agreement with Australian states and territories) and the Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand Concerning a Joint Food Standards System (the Treaty). The object of the *Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991* under which FSANZ is established is to ensure a high standard of public health protection throughout Australia and New Zealand to achieve the following goals:

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

Our strategic objectives

The FSANZ Board has established 3 strategic objectives to guide the agency in meeting the opportunities and challenges of today and tomorrow. These themes inform our day-to-day activities as we work to achieve our purpose and goals. They are:

- » **Food you can trust** – the food supply is safe, helping protect public health now and into the future
- » **Helping consumers make informed choices** – consumers are provided with clear and correct information about food to support healthy dietary choices
- » **Supporting food systems innovation** – food systems are sustainable, equitable and provide for a healthier future.

Our key activities

FSANZ undertakes 3 key activities to achieve our purpose:

- » developing food standards informed by the best available scientific evidence
- » coordinating regulatory activities across the food regulation system, including coordination of food incident responses and food recalls
- » providing advice to food regulators and food standards information to consumers.

We also fulfil our obligations as an Australian government agency, delivering on planning, performance and reporting as required by legislation including the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Delivering our work and key activities

Our work ensures consumers can be confident the food they buy is safe to eat and is what it says it is.

Trust in the food supply is a cornerstone of a healthy population and a strong economy. FSANZ develops standards that 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 and export activity for both countries each year.

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 assure the quality of domestic and export food production and manufacturing, and ensure imported foods meet mandated safety requirements.

Our 3 key activities are delivered under complementary work streams measured through 7 performance areas.

Key activity 1: Developing food standards informed by the best available scientific evidence

FSANZ uses the best available scientific evidence, Ministerial Policy Guidelines and the expertise of our people to inform standards development work. We are recognised globally as an independent, respected and trusted standards agency.

Food standards are a central component of the bi-national food regulation system, underpinning policy work, industry guidance, compliance and enforcement. We ensure standards are risk proportionate, fit-for-purpose and well designed to support balanced regulatory settings, maintain essential safeguards and reduce compliance costs.

We contribute expertise and advice to support domestic policy, lead international food regulation harmonisation and standards development, and contribute to advancing food safety knowledge. We share work with other international food standards setting agencies, building synergies and aligning standards to support trade and deliver public health and safety benefits.

We undertake surveillance and monitoring of the food supply to ensure it is safe and that foods meet standards for microbiological contaminants, pesticide residue limits and chemical contamination. We gather intelligence on potential food safety risks and emerging opportunities. Our intelligence and surveillance work accounts for global megatrends and disruptions, and considers opportunities and challenges presented by rapid change in food systems.

We seek to work with First Nations peoples to bring their traditional knowledge to our assessments of Indigenous foods. FSANZ aspires to better understand the history of safe food use, build more proportionate risk processes and facilitate access to new markets for these foods.

Performance areas for key activity 1

Management and completion of applications and proposals

Developing effective food standards in consultation with our stakeholders is our core business, providing the foundations for a robust and agile food regulatory system. Standards work includes progressing applications to change the Code and proposals requested by food ministers or identified by FSANZ. We do this in a transparent, consultative and responsive manner. Any new or amended standards are underpinned by strong evidence and rigorous risk analysis, including consideration of regulatory impacts, and opened for public consultation. FSANZ strives to complete all applications to change the Code within statutory timeframes.

Regulatory science

Our regulatory science expertise and internationally aligned risk assessment and management approaches are the foundation of our world-leading standards development, food surveillance and food safety response services. High-quality regulatory science is based on independence, access to the best available evidence and input from multiple disciplines. FSANZ continues to build its regulatory science capability through staff development, workforce management and domestic and international partnerships with government, research and sectoral organisations.

Participation in international fora, initiatives and projects

FSANZ has well established consultation processes and diverse and valued stakeholder relationships at bi-national, regional and international levels. We continue to foster strong, mutually beneficial networks and partnerships across the global food regulatory sector, including by seeking to harmonise standards and leading and contributing to international fora, initiatives and projects. This work supports harmonisation with international standards and adoption of leading-practice regulation.

Key activity 2: Coordinating regulatory activities across the food regulation system, including coordination of food incident responses and food recalls

FSANZ develops food standards to ensure the safe production, manufacture and sale of food. We also support the food regulatory system to respond effectively when unsafe food makes it into the Australian market. Our national food recall and incident response functions ensure unsafe products are quickly removed from sale in Australia and consumers are provided with the information they need to stay safe and well. Food recalls and incidents in New Zealand are managed by the Ministry of Primary Industries.

Food recalls can happen for a range of reasons, including contamination, undeclared allergens or labelling errors. When recalls occur, we work closely with businesses and regulatory system partners to respond quickly and effectively to protect public health and safety. We work with individual businesses, supporting them to have food recall plans before incidents happen. We publish data on recalls and provide real-time advice to consumers.

Performance area for key activity 2

Coordinating food recalls and national food incidents

FSANZ coordinates food recalls and national food incidents in Australia. This work is essential to the maintenance of a safe food supply. We work with our stakeholders to continuously improve our systems and processes, ensuring consistency and effectiveness in food recall and incident responses to protect public health and safety. FSANZ supports broader food regulation system work to prevent foodborne illness, including through standards development, education and awareness about food handling and early detection of hazards.

Key activity 3: Provide advice to food regulators and food standards information to consumers

FSANZ's independence is essential to maintaining community and stakeholder confidence in the food supply and the regulatory system. Effective, efficient and collaborative delivery of our key activities ensures FSANZ maintains its reputation as a dependable source of advice and expertise on food standards, food safety and food related public health.

We provide independent, rigorous and evidence-based advice to consumers, stakeholders and food regulatory system partners to ensure efficient application and enforcement of food standards. FSANZ stakeholders include public health bodies, consumer groups, government (local, state and federal), industry and academia. FSANZ is transparent and open in our consultations and engagement and strives to provide accurate, accessible and useful food standards and safety information.

Performance areas for key activity 3

Engagement with stakeholders

FSANZ engages with our stakeholders through formal, informal and project channels. Our well-established industry, public health and jurisdictional committees give us a strong foundation for cooperative and collaborative work and information sharing. Our transparent and open consultation processes provide the public and stakeholders with the opportunity to have their say in standards development.

Communication to our stakeholders

Clear and effective communication is vital to delivering our key activities, promoting the important work of the agency and engaging with consumers and stakeholders. We are focussed on improving and better utilising our digital communication channels, developing dynamic and engaging communication products and leveraging our relationships and expertise to provide our stakeholders with targeted information and advice, when they need it.

Consumer trust in food labels and the food regulation system

Consumer trust in the food regulation system is critical to its continued effectiveness. We undertake regular surveys and consultations to better understand the needs and concerns of consumers and our stakeholders. This work helps us more effectively engage with stakeholders and provide consumers with the information they need to make informed choices about the food they buy. We strive to raise community awareness of and confidence in all facets of food regulation.

OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Food safety is our business. We work with government, industry, consumer, academic and public health partners to keep the food supply safe. The fundamentals of our work – setting food standards, monitoring the safety of the food supply, supporting consumers to make informed choices and coordinating food incidents and recalls in Australia – remain constant. The environmental factors influencing our operations, however, are rapidly changing.

FSANZ continues to prepare for the outcomes of the FSANZ Act Review. Led by the Department of Health and Aged Care, the review presents an exciting opportunity to modernise the legislation which underpins the work of FSANZ and supports a strong, robust and agile food regulation system. Public consultation on the review and reform concepts has closed, with a Final Impact Assessment and Review report expected in the 2024–25 financial year. FSANZ recognises Act reform can provide us with the flexibility to meet the food systems challenges of today while preparing for the opportunities of tomorrow, provided expanded functions and legislative changes are accompanied by new investment and appropriate resourcing.

The Act review is timely. The food systems landscape has evolved rapidly in recent years. New technologies, globalised supply chains, shifting dietary patterns and changing consumer trends are driving innovation and the pursuit of new sources and forms of nutrition. These shifts are happening as food systems face increasing pressures from growing populations, climate change, supply disruptions and a changing workforce. We recognise a secure food supply means consumers have physical and economic access to sustainably produced, nutritious and safe food. FSANZ will continue to contribute to shared efforts to reshape food systems towards a more sustainable, equitable and healthier future.

Australia and New Zealand play an important part in driving innovation and change which can benefit food systems globally. FSANZ is expecting an increase in applications for novel and genetically modified foods as manufacturers look to bring new products to market. Use of food technologies such as new breeding techniques and cell-based agriculture is growing, as is interest in traditional and alternative foods such as insects, algae and fungus. We seek to continuously improve our systems and processes to ensure FSANZ is well placed to undertake rigorous assessments for these foods.

Food ministers are reforming the bi-national food regulation system to ensure it remains strong, robust and agile. FSANZ is uniquely positioned within the system to identify sectoral changes, emerging issues and global trends. We will continue to play a key role in supporting food ministers by actively considering and contributing to reform work and engaging with our stakeholders to address challenges and opportunities as food systems evolve.

Capability

FSANZ requires a high level of expert capability to deliver our key activities. Our 5 capability pillars have been developed to ensure the agency has the human capital, scientific expertise, technical platforms, relationships and governance frameworks needed to achieve its purpose. The pillars ensure our operations are effective, efficient and in keeping with public expectations of integrity, accountability and stewardship.

Workforce

Our people are FSANZ's most important asset. The high-quality work we achieve is a testament to our highly skilled, qualified and diverse workforce.

FSANZ implements planning and strategies that maintain the workforce capability needed to deliver the agency's key functions and priorities. Planning assists us to manage our workforce size, structure and capabilities. This ensures we remain responsive to stakeholder expectations and opportunities in the food regulatory environment.

Our Workforce Strategy supports a constructive workplace culture and equips us to meet the ongoing demands of a challenging operating environment. It is focused around 4 priority areas: creating a values-based and people centred culture, developing good leaders, attracting and retaining the best people and building a future-proof workforce capability. The People and Culture Committee assists the FSANZ Board in fulfilling its governance responsibilities relating to organisational culture and workforce matters.

Regulatory science

Regulatory science underpins our world-leading food standards, effective responses to food safety incidents and proactive protection of food-related public health.

FSANZ's work is delivered by an array of specialists and professionals, including social scientists, nutritionists, toxicologists, food technologists, food regulatory scientists, microbiologists, project managers, standards specialists, risk experts and communications specialists, supported by a team of corporate professionals.

Our Regulatory Science Strategy sets out how we develop and maintain our scientific evidence base and risk assessment methodologies, expand our scientific 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 our risk analysis framework remains appropriate to respond to the challenges of changing food systems.

Maintaining and expanding our regulatory science capabilities will enable us to remain flexible and agile in meeting the needs of a constantly evolving food sector, benefiting food producers, manufacturers and consumers. Our food safety risk analysis approach will continue to evolve to ensure that it is fit for purpose and effective, supporting FSANZ to 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.

ICT and digital transformation

The FSANZ ICT Strategy (2024–2026) will deliver flexible and scalable technology that enables FSANZ to provide digital, enterprise and data platforms required to deliver on our future-ready remit. In 2024–2025 targeted improvements to information management and enterprise security will be prioritised. Technology improvements will include the replacement of the dietary exposure system data platform, finalising delivery of the Branded Food Database and working closely with the Office of the National Data Commissioner to register as a data provider.

FSANZ will contribute to advancing digital regulation including digitising the Code and updating our website, and has established a Board sub-committee to consider approaches. Options to use emerging technologies to improve digital engagement with stakeholders and accessibility of the Code will be considered by the sub-committee alongside broader regulatory reforms.

Communication and engagement

Effective communication and stakeholder engagement is at the centre of our efforts to keep the food supply safe and consumers informed.

FSANZ has an extensive network of stakeholders who play a crucial role in guiding and supporting the work we do. Our stakeholders include public health bodies, consumer groups, government (local, state and federal), industry and academia. We also maintain collaborative relationships with food regulatory bodies both domestically and overseas.

FSANZ values the strong relationships and partnerships we have developed with our stakeholders and our community. We will continue to interact formally and informally with stakeholders to ensure we meet their evolving needs and expectations. By doing so, we ensure FSANZ remains a trusted agency, recognised as a leader domestically and internationally.

Experienced alumni serve as academic fellows to FSANZ, providing expert perspectives through our advisory groups. These include the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods, Scientific Advisory Group on Eggs and the Antimicrobial Resistance Expert Scientific Advisory Group.

Our Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy aims to manage the ways we communicate with our audiences and make the best use of our extensive stakeholder networks. It is structured around themes of connection, engagement and trust. Communication activities are aimed at clearly explaining our evidence base and the regulatory and non-regulatory objectives of our decisions, while building confidence in the food supply through provision of accurate food safety information. We look for ways to make information more accessible to consumers, stakeholders and the food regulatory system using initiatives such as digitising the Code, updating our website, modernising how we conduct consultations and dialogues with key stakeholder groups. FSANZ uses its digital channels to communicate effectively with the public and productively engage stakeholders in standards development processes.

Governance and risk management

Our Governance Framework enables strong and sustainable performance and provides the foundation to meet challenges and take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

The principal elements of FSANZ's governance system are leadership, compliance, collaboration, risk management, accountability, planning and value for money. Our governance systems ensure we make consistent decisions and have a high level of accountability for all our activities through active consultation, both internally and with our stakeholders, collaboration and transparent decision making.

FSANZ's approach to risk aligns with the Commonwealth Risk Management policy, the PGPA Act and ISO 31000:2018 – Risk Management and our Risk Management Framework (the Framework). The Framework sets out the organisational arrangements for designing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing and continually improving risk management within FSANZ.

Our Board, supported by its Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee, oversees our system of risk management. Committee observers include the Australian National Audit Office and an independent representative from another Australian Government department. The Board's [Risk Appetite Statement](#) supports effective risk management and decision making through clear articulation of the level of risk the Board and agency is prepared to accept in achieving our objectives, including on matters of policy and of resourcing.

Integrity

Integrity is fundamental to maintain trust and confidence in everything we do. We are committed to upholding our reputation for high levels of professionalism, accountability and ethical behaviour.

FSANZ prides itself on being a trusted and independent organisation that provides sound and scientific evidence-based advice. We will continue to invest in a pro-integrity culture that upholds both the APS and FSANZ values through reviewing and updating our policies, guidelines and procedures, investing in building staff capability and awareness, and effectively managing our risks.

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 Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS), which describes the allocation of resources, outcomes and our planned performance. We report on our performance in our Annual Report.

To ensure we meet our expected outcomes, we have developed a performance planning and reporting framework that enables us to actively monitor and measure our performance and report publicly on our results.

Performance planning and reporting framework

PBS key activity 1: Developing food standards informed by the best available scientific evidence

PBS performance measure	Planned performance results 2024–25 (and outyears)	FSANZ performance areas
Applications to amend the Food Regulatory Measures are considered within statutory timeframes.	Applications to amend Food Standards Codes are assessed within 12 months, as required by the <i>Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and completion of applications and proposals • Regulatory science.
Strengthen Australia and New Zealand's food regulation system through influencing the development of evidence-based international standards and adopting international best practice.	FSANZ demonstrates engagement in international food standards development activities, including by leading and participating in bilateral, multilateral and global fora, initiatives and projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to international fora, initiatives and projects.

PBS key activity 2: Coordinating regulatory activities across the food regulation system, including coordination of food incident responses and food recalls

PBS performance measure	Planned performance results 2024–25 (and outyears)	FSANZ performance areas
Coordinate food recalls and incidents in participation with jurisdictions, including under the National Food Incident Response Protocol (the Protocol).	Deliver efficient and timely food recalls and food incident management, including under the Protocol when appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of food recalls and national food incidents.

PBS key activity 3: Providing advice to food regulators and food standards information to consumers

PBS performance measure	Planned performance results 2024–25 (and outyears)	FSANZ performance areas
Australian and New Zealand consumers are confident in the safety of the food supply.	The annual Consumer Insights Tracker indicates around 70% of consumers are confident in the safety of the food supply within Australia and New Zealand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with our stakeholders • Communication to our stakeholders • Consumer trust in food labels and the food regulation system.

