

Tuesday 21 June 2011

Less 'red tape' for mobile food operators

Life will be made easier for hundreds of temporary and mobile food operators across Indigo Shire when changes to the *Food Act 1984* come into effect on 1 July.

The changes will introduce a state-wide registration system for temporary and mobile food premises, and will affect people who run food market stalls, coffee vans, sausage sizzles and cake stalls and the like.

Indigo Shire Council Environmental Health Officer Sally Cronin said the new laws have simplified the procedures to serve food at different locations across the state. "In the past, the laws were confusing because food operators had to register with every Council area they were operating in," Ms Cronin said.

"The changes mean that if you are located in Indigo Shire, but serve food in other areas from time to time, you only need to be registered with Indigo Shire, and this registration will apply across the state. All that food operators need to do is lodge a 'statement of trade' with any other Council they will be operating in to let them know what they will be doing and when," Ms Cronin said.

"If you have already registered for this year, you do not have to register again this year, but if you are unsure please give us a call. We encourage anyone to contact us if they have any queries, or are unsure of how these changes might affect them," Ms Cronin said.

The new system, called *TempLink*, is an on-line registration system that not only makes it easier for food operators, but also allows Councils to access up-to-date information from around the state about the registration and inspection histories of food operators.

It is mandatory for temporary food operators, including businesses, community groups and charities to register with *TempLink*, even if they are only operating for one or two days at an event. There is no charge for registration for charities in Indigo Shire.

The new system is the third change to come into effect after the *Food Act 1984* was amended by the Victorian State Government. From March 2011, Councils have more powers to work with businesses and groups to make sure that the food they serve is up to health and hygiene standards, and from July 2010, food operators have been classed according to their food safety risk. The three changes are aimed at creating more flexibility for food businesses and community groups while maintaining high food safety standards across the state.

For more information, please contact Indigo Shire Council Environmental Health Officers Sally Cronin and Kim Felton on 1300 365 003 or 02 6028 1100, or visit <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/> for more details.

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