

New Minister sworn in

The industry has a new Minister for Gaming and Racing, Central Coast MP Grant McBride.



*The Hon.
Grant McBride*

Mr McBride was elected to parliament in 1992 as Member for The Entrance and has since served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Roads and Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Staysafe Committee.

Prior to entering parliament Mr McBride worked in a variety of fields including engineering, building, contracting, TAFE teaching and running a small coffee shop in Wyong with his wife.

Is your club charging enough for its food?

As the drought continues to impact on food prices the question arises as to whether food outlets, and particularly clubs, are charging enough for their food.

Respected food and wine writer, Peter Howard, say he would like a quid for every time he has procrastinated about price increases on the menu and maintains he would be very wealthy.

As Mr Howard explains, increasing prices is one of the many things you find out as a self employed restaurateur – it is not anything that is addressed at Catering College, or at least when he went to College.

“We fear the consequences of lifting the price points and wait for a well publicised increase in say bread...or milk. Why is it we loose money willingly and do not increase our prices?”

“In my business now, I still have to address the increase of my fees, but know that the cost of living is not going down and business operational costs still keep increasing – so my fees have to increase to cope,” he says.

“Clubs are fast reaching the point when the days of subsidized food and beverage prices are disappearing. As tougher gaming legislation takes hold and the impact of moving to virtually a smoke free environment impacts of the bottom line, management is being faced with some hard and challenging decisions”, he says.

The combination of these two factors alone will force clubs, and pubs for that matter, to look very closely at these operational components of a club’s operations and see whether they can make then ‘pay their way’ while at the same time not alienating a vast number of members who have come to rely on this very important facet of clublife”.

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The SCA would like to acknowledge the following sponsors and encourage your support:



From the CEO

Graeme Carroll

New Sponsors

The Association has two new sponsors – Keno and International Gaming Technology (IGT).

As with all our sponsors your club is encouraged to consider these companies when purchasing the products and services they have on offer.

The commitment they have provided to the Association – both financially and ‘in kind’ – has been generous and vital to the Association’s development and assists in enabling it to meet its objectives on behalf of members.

Reciprocal rights

A number of clubs are moving to introduced reciprocal rights with other member clubs in the Associations and discussions have been held with several card companies to determine whether there is a common ‘track’ on proprietary cards which can be used to register purchases by visiting patrons.

However, as member information is not actually contained on a card and is linked to a club’s back office database rather than contained on the card such a system is not yet available. For simplicity, it will therefore be a decision of individual clubs as to how they record the transaction of visiting members of other Association clubs.

There are expectations that a so-called ‘smartcard’ will be available extensively within the community in the near future which may provide a longer term solution. Further information will be sent to participating clubs shortly.

Anzac Day exemption

Hope is fading for any change to the three hour gaming shutdown this Anzac Day.

A large number of clubs have added their support to the Association’s call for an exemption from the shutdown by writing to local members of parliament and seeking their support in representations to the Premier.

However, the recent election campaign has placed a number of issues on the “backburner” and even given that there was a will on behalf of the government to make the appropriate amendments there is very little opportunity for the parliament to pass any changes before Anzac Day. Efforts though are continuing in the slim hope that changes may be possible if it is shown that there is sufficient support.

Advisory panels established

Member clubs are strongly encouraged to use the Industry Advisory Panels to assist them with advice on a range of club operations.

The Association has assembled panels of industry ‘experts’ on range of areas including administration, gaming, occupational health and safety, licensing, food and beverage, finance, amalgamations, information technology, training, entertainment, legal, marketing and asset valuations.

The Advisory Panels are not designed to provide definitive advice, but are designed to assist member clubs in focusing a club quickly on either addressing or identifying particular problem areas or assisting with advice on new business opportunities. The fact that the panel members operate ‘like’ clubs is seen as an advantage in assisting other member clubs.

For assistance, simply ring the Association on (02) 9255 7900 and you will be directed to the most appropriate panel member.

SCA Conference date

Don’t forget to pencil the 6-9 November 2003 in your diaries for the next SCA Annual Conference.

The event will again be staged at the Hyatt Hotel Canberra and program planning is underway.

The conference will feature a number of high-profile speakers focusing on key management issues facing the industry.

Block bookings of accommodation have been secured and will be available when registrations open.

Implementing a food safety program

By Isobel Kidd*

In the February edition of the newsletter, Isobel Kidd examined the new food safety laws impacting on the industry. In this edition, she looks at how a club can implement a Food Safety Program.

There are no hard and fast rules about what a Food Safety Program looks like. It can be as simple or as complex as required.

Written programs can vary in length from ten pages through to sixty. The only criteria for what is possible is that the program objectives have been met, namely, that all relevant hazards have been identified and are controlled through the system.

What are the Benefits?

Although not currently mandatory, many clubs have implemented HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) based Food Safety Programs and have found them to be useful business tools for managing their food service operations. Some of the advantages that have been cited by a range of services clubs include:

- Having standard operating procedures for all elements of food and beverage operations, which reduce the likelihood that standards will vary if a key staff member is absent or leaves;
- Being able to document risk management practices for insurance purposes;
- Having scheduled, regular monitoring activities which ensure that food safety hazards are being eliminated, controlled and minimised;
- Providing the club board, management and club patrons with the assurance that the risks associated with the production and service of food are being effectively managed;
- Having a system that monitors and audits a range of procedures in food and beverage operations;
- Implementation of a supplier program which enables the club to “transfer” a degree of food safety risk to food suppliers;
- Streamlining human resources and stock control;
- Reduction of waste; and
- Assisting in the management of contract caterers who are required to operate a Food Safety Program at the club.



Typical club bistro

Are there any Negatives?

There are of course also a number of disadvantages of implementing a Food Safety Program, but generally they are outweighed by the longer term advantages. They include:

- The initial financial and operational costs involved in setting up the program (which can range from \$5000 through to \$20 000);
- Additional food safety monitoring responsibilities placed on senior catering personnel and management;
- Resentment from longer term or older more traditional staff members who may see the program as threatening and unnecessary;
- Supervisory personnel, if not adequately trained and informed about the program may pass on their duties and responsibilities to junior staff members who may be unable or unwilling to follow and implement procedures; and,
- The difficulties of impressing on the board the need for increased expenditure by food service facilities on equipment and premises maintenance, staff training and so on.

Food safety programs are easy to implement in-house, but it can help to have the assistance of external specialist advice. The normal process for the development of the program is as follows:-

Step 1 - Hazard Analysis

Conduct a hazard analysis of all food and beverage facilities.

Step 2 - Food Safety Team

Create a food safety team – consisting of key representatives from food and beverage operations (F&B Manager, Head Chef, Sous Chefs, Bistro and Restaurant Supervisors etc.), senior club management (GM, Operations Manager, Human Resources/ Training Manager) and an external specialist.

Train the club's food safety team (an accredited course is recommended in Certificate III in Hospitality, Catering Operations, BCC11 Implement Food Safety Procedures).

Step 3 - Develop the Food Safety Program

Develop the Food Safety Program – consisting of procedures, policies, records, checklists and a food safety plan.

Step 4 - Training

Train all food and beverage personnel in the application of the program (Certificate II in Hospitality, Catering Operations, THHGS01 Follow Workplace Hygiene Procedures).

Step 5 - Verification

Once the program has been implemented it is essential to check that it is working in day-to-day operations. This can be done through the use of simple checklists that ensure that each area of food and beverage operations within the club is effectively implementing the program and controlling hazards. Another option for verifying that the system is working is through physical testing, eg. using protein check swabs to check that cleaning and sanitising procedures are effective and microbiological testing of foods. These testing methods can be used, but a good Food Safety Program is based on in-built mechanisms and checks for monitoring that procedures are being followed.

**Isobel Kidd is a catering and risk management consultant to the hospitality and retail industry and through her company, FISHER:KIDD & Associates (phone: 0413 739 683) provides complete business solutions to the club movement.*

Privacy Act now enforced

Businesses using personal information now face greater scrutiny as the federal privacy commissioner moves into enforcement mode.

In a recent article in *The Australian* Privacy Commissioner Mr Malcolm Crompton warned that all businesses covered by the Act should have had their privacy policies and practices in place by 21 December last year.

While Mr Crompton has to date been focused on educating businesses about compliance, there is now a shift towards enforcement.

In the article, privacy law expert Tim Dixon, of Baker & McKenzie said that looking at the complaint levels there's no question that there are real concerns about privacy.

"The number of complaints to the commissioner has quadrupled. I suspect the commissioner will have to begin enforcing the law, otherwise people will say he's just a paper tiger", he said.

Businesses with an annual turnover of more than \$3 million and health service providers have been subject to the law changes since December 2001. Small businesses that trade in personal information are related to larger businesses or are contractors to Commonwealth agencies are now obliged to comply.

"Getting privacy right is essentially about collecting only the information you need to complete a transaction and letting people know how you will use it," Mr Crompton said.

Cont'd from p1

Getting food pricing right

Mr Howard says clubs will never find a better time than now to increase price points across the board – very simply because everyone knows that food costs have gone up because of the drought.

"Surprisingly, it was mooted that beef and lamb would go through the roof and while that has not happened to the extent predicted, it is going up and these items will increase accordingly because supply will be very short very soon. Any club that simply ignores this cost input and continues to struggle along without increases its prices is simply putting its bottom line at risk", he says.

"Price increases must reflect the increases in food cost and if your business runs on percentages – and it must – you must pass on the costs to your members. Even though the price of raw product may fall again following the drought, your new 'over the counter' prices are easier to maintain.

"Suppliers have no trouble in passing on the increases to you but they are also looking at ways to make it easier for you to use other cuts of meat say, that are of the expensive type. There are many ways around the use of expensive cuts and now as we come into the cooler time of the year, the "stewy" type meals are acceptable and appreciated. For operators, the cost of the raw product is cheaper at this stage.

Mr Howard says it is however, the time to maximize as everyone is aware that food costs are increasing and the change that brings to club menus is unfortunate, but essential – that is if you want to stay in business and maintain the service to your members.