



Hon Michaela Settle MP

Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture

PO Box 500, East Melbourne
Victoria, 8002 Australia

MBR-260500148

Luke Wilson PSM
Chairperson
Safe Food Victoria
PO Box 8221
CAMBERWELL NORTH VIC 3124

lwilson@dairysafe.vic.gov.au

Dear Luke Wilson

Statement of Expectations for Safe Food Victoria

I am pleased to provide you with my expectations for Safe Food Victoria (SFV) to guide the regulator's business planning processes.

As Minister for Agriculture, I am responsible for administering the *Safe Food Victoria Act 2026* and other food safety legislation. This statement should be read in the context of the objectives, obligations and functions outlined in these Acts. This guidance should also be read in the context of any other legislative and non-legislative obligations on SFV.

Change can be challenging and I am grateful for your leadership in transitioning to SFV. I understand that new arrangements have been established in a collaborative and engaged manner, and I ask that you pass on my thanks for the way staff have conducted themselves throughout this process.

I would like to acknowledge the essential role SFV plays in Victoria's strong, profitable, safe and productive food and agriculture systems. The expectations I outline below focus on ensuring SFV delivers on government priorities, meets stakeholder expectations, addresses emerging food safety risks and supports new opportunities for the sector.

My expectations are that SFV deliver on the following 4 themes:

1. Provide continuity of regulatory services
2. Drive efficiency and regulatory burden reduction
3. Build a strong and positive organisational culture and capability
4. Enhance stakeholder engagement.

The initiatives and actions outlined below describe how I expect SFV to address these priorities:

1. *Provide continuity of regulatory services*

I expect SFV to maintain and improve Victoria's food safety regulatory system, to reduce the impact and risk that unsafe and unsuitable food has on the public, and provide regulatory assurance for the community, businesses and trade markets.

Specifically, I expect SFV to:

- Ensure the continuity of risk based, cost effective food safety regulatory services, consistent with the *Safe Food Victoria Act 2026* and other food safety legislation.
- In support of SFV's new role at the centre of food safety regulatory operations, provide system stewardship – particularly with local government, the Department of Health and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) – and system wide risk management.
 - Support the delivery of food regulation across local government, including by providing information and guidance for consistent administration of food safety legislation.
- Work with the Department of Health to support its efforts to reduce food and diet-related chronic disease, particularly in the implementation of food standards for labelling and composition.
- Establish clear protocols to support, respond and prepare for food safety incidents, including data sharing with the broader public health infrastructure in conjunction with the Department of Health.
- Adopt a proactive and engaged presence in the bi-national food regulatory system, including as Victoria's representative on the Implementation Subcommittee for Food Regulation, in important export market committees and other groups as appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to maintain access for industry to export markets.
- Develop and implement a coherent regulatory culture and posture that recognises the role of regulatory and food safety culture for both SFV and the businesses it regulates, and how these impact and change the approach to compliance.

2. Drive better regulation, regulatory efficiency and regulatory burden reduction

Without compromising food safety outcomes, I ask that you explore how regulation can be better delivered in partnership with industry, while still maintaining a strong regulatory posture.

I expect SFV to:

- Continue to develop a regulatory system that expects and acknowledges a mature food safety culture as key to achieving food safety outcomes.
- Encourage food safety education and outreach as a core regulatory tool.
- Seek opportunities to reduce the regulatory burden on industry where it can be done without compromising food safety outcomes – particularly through the recognition of industry programs and co-regulation opportunities.
- Drive a program of internal efficiency measures to lower the overall cost of delivering regulatory services.

- Maintain a sustainable internal budget position to ensure SFV can respond to emerging risks, make critical investments in the regulatory environment, and balance cost recovery in line with the government's Pricing for Value Guidelines.
- In the context of a sustainable budget, work with DEECA to conduct a fee review to inform the overall fee settings ahead of the 2027-28 financial year.
 - As part of this review, and in future budget decisions, I ask that you closely consider the calibration of fee setting to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of costs across your licence base.
- Report to me by the end of 2027 and annually in your annual report on SFV's efforts to reduce regulatory burden for industry and increase regulatory efficiency within SFV as part of a program of continuous improvement.
- Ensure regulation is appropriately calibrated, communicated and implemented to support small and emerging businesses.

3. *Build a strong and positive organisational culture and capability*

I expect SFV to work with DEECA to help ensure Victoria's food safety system is able to manage risk and respond to new challenges, as well as support the food and agriculture sectors to seize emerging opportunities.

Specifically, I expect SFV to:

- Collaborate actively on further reforms to the food regulatory system ('stage 2' reforms) as outlined in the second reading speech for the Safe Food Victoria Bill 2026.
- Maintain strong Board and organisational governance, leadership and culture, with clear accountabilities, sound decision making frameworks, and effective oversight of performance, risk, integrity, staff wellbeing and safety and regulatory independence.
- Sustain and build a capable, professional workforce with the technical, scientific and regulatory expertise required to deliver risk-based food regulation.
- Work with DEECA to review, update and transfer the regulatory functions associated with eggs, poultry, horticulture and seed sprouts to SFV.
- Provide regular updates on SFV's progress and efforts to use digital tools and analytics within regulatory activities, including opportunities for co-investment or partnerships with industry and broader government. This includes working with the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department of Government Services to identify and develop digital solutions.

4. *Enhance stakeholder engagement*

I expect SFV to consider the industries you regulate and co-regulators you work with, as partners in mitigating the risks associated with the consumption of food. Regulation should be in the first instance a collaboration with these groups.

I expect SFV to:

- Establish consultative committees with representation from key industry, local government and public health groups to inform regulatory outcomes.
 - As part of these committees, I ask that SFV consider how to ensure the dairy, meat and seafood industries – who have had long standing relationships with Dairy Food Safety Victoria and PrimeSafe – continue to be well represented; and to encourage new and emerging sectors to engage with SFV.
 - Committees should include broad representation and provide opportunities for perspectives from large and small-scale food businesses and regional areas.
- Engage in open and regular discussion with DEECA and other food safety regulators on emerging issues, priorities and approaches to regulation.
- Identify opportunities and collaboratively support DEECA to manage the risk of biosecurity, emergencies, animal and plant diseases.
- Advance Treaty readiness and respectful engagement with First Peoples, including embedding principles of self-determination, cultural safety and partnership in engagement practices and regulatory approaches.

I request that SFV incorporates the 4 priorities identified in this statement into the current work program and in strategic planning, identifying milestones and appropriate review points for this work.

Please advise me when the statement needs to be updated or reviewed.

Thank you again for your leadership, collaboration and engagement.

Yours sincerely



Hon Michaela Settle MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture

08/06/2026