



**PRIME**SAFE

# Corporate Plan

2025–2030

Food Safety is Everybody's Business

# About Us

PrimeSafe is the statutory authority responsible for regulating the production in Victoria of red meat, game meat, poultry and seafood for human and pet consumption. Its functions form part of a coherent national food safety regulatory system with the overarching purpose of ensuring that food produced in Victoria is safe to consume.

The law in Victoria requires that those involved in the production of meat and seafood for consumption be licensed by PrimeSafe. Licensees are required to comply with the Australia and New Zealand Food Standards Code and with industry-specific standards, and must implement quality assurance programs so that food safety, market access and consumer confidence are maintained. Independent auditing and unannounced inspections ensure that high standards are maintained.

PrimeSafe values its strong partnerships with industry stakeholders and licensees. We are committed to streamlining the regulation of the meat and seafood sectors, and supporting industry to identify and pre-empt food safety challenges by providing timely information and support services directed at promoting a food safety culture.

PrimeSafe continually monitors compliance and is focused on:

- Maintaining community confidence in PrimeSafe's ability to set standards that minimise as far as possible the risk of food safety incidents;
- Targeting high risk activities and non-compliance with measured and proportionate responses;
- Monitoring consumer, industry, legal and government requirements and trends to ensure a contemporary regulatory framework;
- Building effective engagement and collaboration with all levels of industry and government;
- Streamlining regulation to minimise regulatory burden and duplication on industry;
- Digitisation of administrative systems which benefit industry, licensees and PrimeSafe; and
- Continuous improvement in governance, technology, knowledge and skills to respond to challenges, emerging technologies and industries.

# PrimeSafe Functions



## Functions

The functions of PrimeSafe are set out at section 44 of the *Meat Industry Act 1993*



To control and keep under review the standards of meat, poultry meat and game meat produced for consumption or sale within the State



To approve quality assurance programs and to monitor the implementation of those programs



To control and keep under review the standards of the construction and hygiene of plant and equipment in a meat processing facility



In consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Health or a municipal council, to protect public health



To control and keep under review the standards of construction, maintenance, cleanliness and hygiene of meat transport vehicles



To fix and charge fees in respect of the carrying out of any of its functions or the exercise of any of its powers



To ensure that appropriately qualified persons are authorised as inspectors



To carry out the functions conferred on the Authority by the *Seafood Safety Act 2003* or the regulations made under that Act



To license meat processing facilities



To carry out any other function that is conferred on the Authority by the *Meat Industry Act 1993* or the regulations or by any other Act or the regulations made under any other Act



Subject to the Regulations, to determine categories of licences

# Vision, Mission & Values

## Vision



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To promote an efficient, responsive and digitally enabled food safety system that contributes to consumer confidence in meat and seafood products.

## Mission



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To advance and regulate food safety in Victorian meat, poultry, seafood and pet meat industries.

## Values



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Responsiveness, Integrity, Impartiality, Accountability, Respect, Leadership and Human Rights.

# Strategic Pillars



PrimeSafe’s strategic pillars are designed to focus our people, activities, budget and resources to help maximise our operational effectiveness. PrimeSafe has considered the following when setting the core pillars it will focus on for the next five years, including:

- Statement of Expectations as set by the Minister for Agriculture
- Best Practice Principles as set by Better Regulation Victoria
- Feedback from government stakeholders such as Agriculture Victoria, Victorian Fisheries Authority, Dairy Food Safety Victoria, Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and more
- Feedback from industry stakeholders such as Australian Meat Industry Council, Australian Chicken Meat Federation, Seafood Industry Victoria, Meat & Livestock Australia, Victorian Farmers Federation and Australian Pork Limited
- Feedback from PrimeSafe licensees
- Understanding of relevant trends, risks, threats, and opportunities

## Food Safety Expertise



- Minimise food safety risks
- Use information and data to inform decision making
- Enforcing food safety standards
- Develop and implement strong quality assurance programs
- Transparency and accountability for regulatory outcomes
- Investing in timely and segmented communications

## Regulatory Modernisation



- Collect data and invest in internal skills for analytics
- Develop strong ICT systems
- Invest time and resources in verification innovation
- Design and implement new reduced audit program
- Easily accessible and high-quality education & information
- Strong commitment to implementing efficient practices

## Trusted Regulator



- Ensuring strong organisational governance
- Creating purposeful partnerships
- Support industry innovation
- Strong stakeholder engagement
- Investing in people & skills development
- Maintaining and diversifying financial sustainability
- Taking strong regulatory action when required

# Operating Environment



PrimeSafe expects that the environment in which its licensees operate will continue to change over the five years to 2030. Such a dynamic environment is expected to bring opportunities for innovation, added value and growth, and require agility and adaptability on the part of both PrimeSafe and the businesses it regulates.



Globalisation and new trade deals are expected to increase food imports into Australia, and the domestic industry will seek to remain competitive through innovation and cost minimisation.



Climate change and its potential to bring extreme weather events will continue to challenge many businesses, which in turn may be expected to develop innovative production and processing practices and a reorganisation of supply chains.



Consumer interest in information about provenance and production techniques are also expected to continue to increase, and this may require the integration of new requirements into PrimeSafe's risk and regulatory frameworks.



In the face of these challenges, PrimeSafe will continue to work with licensees to minimise regulatory overlay while ensuring that food safety is not compromised. Over the life of its last corporate plan, PrimeSafe digitised its licensing processes and in so doing reduced price pressures on the administration of the licensing scheme. In addition, a recalibration of the independent auditing system saw further efficiencies to licensees. Combined the measures are estimated to produce more than \$4 million in savings to the industry annually. This represents a significant boost to the competitiveness of Victorian businesses and related agricultural industries.



PrimeSafe is committed to a process of continual review and evaluation of how it does business so that it can continue to deliver its services in the most cost effective way possible.



PrimeSafe's licensees know that effective regulation is good for industry: it ensures that consumers – both locally and overseas – have confidence in the food produced in Victoria, and that competition within the local industry is fair. Effective regulation serves to alleviate the burden on public health resources by minimising foodborne illness and promoting healthy dietary choices.

## Minister for Agriculture



The Minister for Agriculture establishes priorities and expectations for PrimeSafe in the Statement of Expectations.

PrimeSafe's achievement of the targets set out in the Statement of Expectations is reported each year in its annual report and on its website.



This Corporate Plan for 2025–30 is also delivered within the broader context of the Victorian Government's Agriculture Strategy and PrimeSafe is committed to the implementation of aspects of government policy related to its responsibilities.

# Drivers of Change



## Food Safety

### Fit for Purpose Meat and Seafood Regulatory System

#### Consumer Demands

Provenance, community and cultural diversity, public interest in food production techniques and incidents. Increasing consumer expectations for the management of animal welfare.

#### Market Consolidation

Decreasing the number of abattoirs since 1993 can be attributed to industry rationalisation achieved by growing economies of scale.

#### Industry

Consultation & engagement, market access, regulatory burden reduction, integrity of imported products.

#### Traceability

International standards & audit requirements, assurance & verification resources, technology & skills for implementation.

#### Technology

Digitisation, robotics, artificial intelligence, bioscience technologies, food innovation, food security, alternate food supply chains.

#### Licensees

Integration & consolidation, logistics & just-in-time supply, culture & commitment to QA, information and support, compliance, regulation.

#### Stakeholder Needs & Expectations

Government policy, transparency, partnerships, engagement & communication.

# The Victorian Government Economic Statement

Victoria is ranked number one in Australia for total agribusiness exports, making up almost half of Victoria's total goods exports and valued at over \$15 billion annually.

As part of a broader economic growth statement, the Victorian Government has committed to reducing the number of business regulators by half - combining regulators and streamlining systems for industry. Victoria currently has 37 regulators - the Government will reduce it to at least 18 meaning Victoria will have the lowest number of business regulators of any state.

This will make it easier for businesses to interact with government by offering clearer points of contact, fewer processes and forms to deal with, and fewer interactions with regulators.

The Government aims to reduce regulatory burden of \$500 million by 2030. This \$500 million target will be achieved by reducing regulatory duplication, speeding up and digitising application processes, removing unnecessary permits, and updating regulations to be smarter and simpler - all of which saves businesses time and money.

The Government will start by focusing on regulators that businesses in the construction and food industries interact with.

PrimeSafe is committed to working with Government in relation to the consolidation of food regulation as part of the delivery of the economic growth statement.

The Government will publish a roadmap in 2025 showing the path to halving the number of business regulators by 2030.





# Risk-based Regulation



The importance of food safety demands that PrimeSafe respond robustly (but proportionately and fairly) when responding to instances of non-compliance.

PrimeSafe has a risk-based approach to fulfilling its obligations under the laws it administers, and directs its resources at those activities and industry participants that present the greatest risk of causing harm to public health or to the viability of industry.

To this end, and guided by a risk management framework, PrimeSafe monitors the industries it regulates by:

- auditing licensees at regular intervals for compliance with quality assurance programs and conditions of licence;
- conducting unannounced inspections;
- encouraging members of the public to report concerns about meat and seafood handling directly to PrimeSafe, and investigating those concerns;
- collaboration with municipal councils, the Department of Health, Commonwealth counterparts and other stakeholders in relation to potential food safety issues.

The risk management framework ensures that PrimeSafe addresses non-compliance in a way that is proportionate, consistent and credible, and that ensures licensees are treated equally and fairly. Its options include:

- issuing warnings, together with guidance as to improvements that must be made;
- prohibiting a licensee from performing certain activities unless and until non-compliance is rectified, and if necessary, obtaining Supreme Court orders to enforce the prohibition;
- varying the conditions of licence to manage key risks;
- varying the frequency with which the licensee is required to be audited;
- suspending a licensee's licence;
- bringing a criminal prosecution for non-compliance with a licence condition or other breach of the law; and
- cancelling the licence.





PrimeSafe reserves the most serious responses – criminal prosecution and licence cancellation – for conduct that it considers to be a serious breach of a licensee's obligations, and where it considers the response necessary to deter others from engaging in the same conduct.

# PrimeSafe Corporate Plan 2025–2030



## Food Safety is Everybody's Business

PrimeSafe sets for the period 2025–2030 the following corporate objectives, strategies for meeting these objectives, performance indicators against which it may be measured:

 Objectives	 Indicators and Targets	 Collaborative Strategies	 Indicators and Targets
Meat, game meat, poultry, and seafood are safe for human consumption	<b>Indicator:</b> Number of food borne disease outbreaks attributed to a licensee  <b>Target:</b> 0	Licensee compliance with statutory and other obligations relating to meat and seafood processing for human consumption is assured through risk-based regulation	<b>Indicator:</b> Compliance Confirmed  <b>Target:</b> 100%
Pet meat is safe and fit for purpose	<b>Indicator:</b> Number of pet meat incidents attributed to a licensee  <b>Target:</b> 0	Licensee compliance with statutory and other obligations relating to pet meat processing is assured through risk-based regulation	<b>Indicator:</b> Compliance Confirmed  <b>Target:</b> 100%
PrimeSafe is respected as an effective and efficient industry specialist regulator	<b>Indicator:</b> Stakeholder satisfaction survey  <b>Target:</b> Between 80-85%	Continuous improvement through corporate and business planning, engagement and feedback with stakeholders, and evaluating performance with reporting	<b>Indicator:</b> Cost Recovery Ratio <sup>1</sup>  <b>Target:</b> Between 100%  <b>Indicator:</b> Licensee feedback  <b>Target:</b> 80%-85% satisfaction

<sup>1</sup> The cost recovery ratio measures the extent to which revenue generated by PrimeSafe covers the costs of operating PrimeSafe. Our target includes a minor contingency to allow for investments to improve operations.

# Engagement and Feedback



PrimeSafe’s engagement promise is set on the basis of an assessment of the organisation’s legislative responsibilities for food safety and resource capacity.

Constructive engagement, strong working relationships and partnerships in developing food safety culture will improve compliance, and underpin consumer confidence in Victorian meat, game meat, poultry and seafood.

Engagement will:

- support stakeholders and licensees to foster a food safety culture and facilitate safe and sustainable innovation and growth in the sector;
- enhance PrimeSafe’s capacity to monitor and respond to food safety risk, and inform improvements to regulatory requirements;
- foster PrimeSafe’s capacity to identify industry trends, changes and disrupters, and respond effectively to maintain food safety and consumer confidence.

PrimeSafe has consulted with key stakeholders during the development of this Corporate Plan 2025–2030, including:

- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry;
- Australian Meat Industry Council;
- Australian Chicken Meat Federation;
- Seafood Industry Victoria;
- Pet Food Industry Association Australia;
- Australian Renderers Association;
- Australian Industry Group;
- Australian Pork Limited;
- Agriculture Victoria;
- Dairy Food Safety Victoria;
- Victorian Fisheries Authority; and
- Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance

Engagement and consultation will continue with licensees and stakeholders during delivery of the Corporate Plan 2025–30.

# Evaluation and Reporting



PrimeSafe will evaluate its performance and the performance of its licensees by:

- analysing information about foodborne illness trends in Victoria;
- monitoring the effectiveness of its compliance and enforcement program;
- seeking feedback from stakeholders and licensees as to their views on the performance of the regulatory system;
- tracking national and international reviews of food safety standards;
- conducting annual internal reviews of the performance of PrimeSafe's own Board members and staff; and
- benchmarking operational requirements and performance with similar regulatory bodies to ensure Victoria remains competitive.

PrimeSafe will report on the progress of the Corporate Plan 2025–30 in each Annual Report.

Stakeholders will be consulted and invited to provide feedback on the progress of the Corporate Plan 2025–30. Updates and refinements will be made through PrimeSafe's annual business planning process.

PrimeSafe will monitor and evaluate the achievement of the objectives outlined in this Corporate Plan 2025–30 using the following evaluation questions:

- Are the objectives relevant and aligned?
- Do the objectives address the operating environment and drivers of change?
- Are the assumptions, inputs and participants relevant, and have these informed or contributed to the delivery of activities?
- Can the indicators and measures be assessed and is data available or able to be collected?
- Has data for the indicators and measures been collected and reported?
- What is the evidence that undertaking the strategies have supported the delivery of objectives?







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