

FOOD LICENSING FOR DOMESTIC KITCHENS

Domestic kitchens are not usually designed to the structural standards of a commercial kitchen. As such they are typically only approved for minor and infrequent food preparation activities. Examples of minor food preparation activities include bed and breakfasts, farm stays and the preparation of low risk foods for sale at the markets. Low risk foods are foods that don't require refrigeration to prevent the growth of micro-organisms and include cakes (without fresh cream), biscuits and confectionary.

Council Town Planning and Trade Waste approvals may also affect the feasibility of establishing a home-based food business. Contact should be made with these departments to discuss their requirements prior to lodging an application for Food Licence. You can submit an outline of your proposal to enable Council to provide further advice on the requirements and the likelihood of the home based food business being approved.

You may also wish to consider utilising an existing, approved commercial kitchen to avoid having to go through the entire approval process. Keep in mind you will still be required to obtain your own food licence.

It should be noted that domestic kitchens can still be used for one-off fund raising events by charities and other non-profit organisations. Further information relating to the preparation and sale of food for fund raising activities is available on request.

The nature of food preparation activities carried out at a home based food businesses may be restricted because;

- No designated hand wash basin in the kitchen.
- Kitchens may not be adequately sealed to prevent access for pests.
- Presence of harbourage areas for pests (eg. cracks, crevices or false bottoms in cupboards, heavy equipment not easily moveable, etc)
- Domestic range hoods do not comply with Australian Standards for mechanical ventilation (AS 1668).
- The combined use of a kitchen for domestic and commercial food preparation purposes can increase the risk of food contamination.
- Domestic dishwashers may not be capable of effectively sanitising equipment and utensils.
- Limited storage space (dry storage, refrigerator / freezer).
- Domestic refrigerators may struggle to maintain adequate temperature control when opened frequently.

For further information on food business requirements please contact your local Environmental Health Officer at the Council's Public Health Unit. You can contact a Planning Officer or Trade Waste Officer to discuss their requirements by phoning 4044 3044. Further information can also be found on the Cairns Regional Council website (See www.cairns.qld.gov.au).