



## **People's Panel: Food grading system**

**September 2015**

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## 1. Key Findings

There were 384 responses to this survey.

- Almost all respondents (98%) think the DCC should continue to grade food premises.
- Almost all respondents (99%) think food safety grades should continue to be displayed where customers can see them.
- Most respondents (90%) think food premises should be able to request a re-grade inspection before their next annual visit.
- The majority of respondents (88%) agree that a nationally consistent grading system would be better than having different systems throughout the country as is currently the case.
- Sixty-one respondents commented that the grading system/grading display works well and that they use it.
- Twelve respondents commented on the benefits of a national grading system, some suggesting that Dunedin's grading system could be used as a basis.
- Nine respondents suggested unannounced grading visits of premises would encourage good practice at all times.
- Eight suggested mandatory display of certificates at the entrance to premises.
- Eight suggested having more information publicly available on the grading criteria, premises grades, and the grading system, including how to make concerns known.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 Survey Background**

The Council's Food Safety Bylaw (bylaw) has been reviewed and changes are proposed in order to acknowledge the introduction of the new Food Act 2014. The only aspect of the bylaw that can be retained is the grading system. The purpose of this survey was to find out if people think this grading system should continue.

### **2.2 About the Dunedin People's Panel**

The Dunedin People's Panel aims to provide an opportunity for people in Dunedin to get involved with a range of Dunedin City Council issues, giving feedback by completing online surveys.

The Panel ideally supplements other research, using consultation to provide public perceptions to help inform decision-making processes. Panellists are recruited to be 'typical' members of the public – that is they come from a range of backgrounds and have a range of involvement with the DCC.

The People's Panel is not a statistically representative sample of the Dunedin population because panellists choose to sign up. The DCC encourages representation from a variety of groups on the Panel to obtain a wide range of views and continues to improve participation from groups that are under-represented. At the time of surveying, there were 1,464 people registered with the Panel including residents of each community board area and a range of age and ethnicity groups. Furthermore, the information provided by the Panellists is not verified.

For more information about the Dunedin People's Panel visit the Panel's website at [www.dunedin.govt.nz/peoplespanel](http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/peoplespanel).

### **2.3 Methodology**

This survey was open from 6 August to 14 August 2015. In total 384 completed surveys were received.

The feedback has been analysed in two ways:

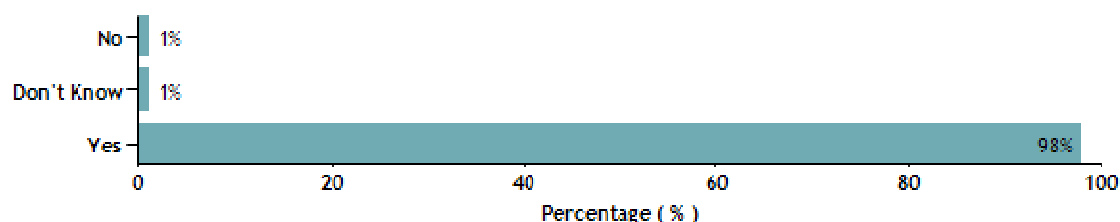
- For the tick box questions, responses to each option have been reported as proportions of the total sample and presented as charts.
- Responses to open-ended questions ranged from one-word answers to lengthy comments with several points and ideas. Key themes from these comments have been identified and ordered by frequency. A selection of comments has been included in the report, to illustrate these themes.

Please note that results in charts presented in this report may not sum to 100% because multiple responses were allowed for some questions and/or as a result of rounding.

### 3. Survey Results

#### 3.1 Grading food premises

The survey asked 'Should the DCC continue to grade Dunedin cafes, restaurants and food retailers?'

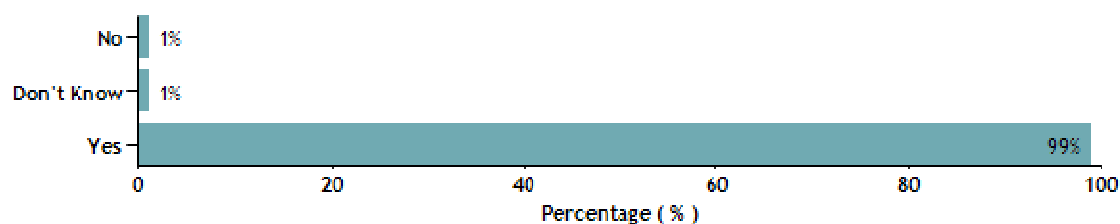


Almost all respondents (98%) think the DCC should continue to grade food premises.

Panellists who answered 'No' to this question were also asked 'Why not?' Of the four respondents who answered this question, three said they had not noticed the grades or the grades didn't matter, and one was concerned about compliance costs.

#### 3.2 Display of food safety grades

The survey asked, 'Should food safety grades continue to be displayed where customers can see them?'

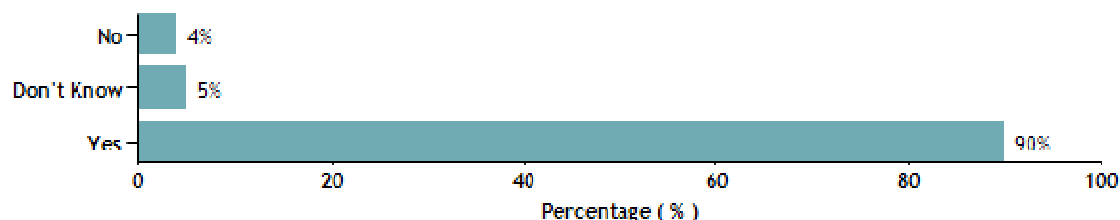


Almost all respondents (99%) think food safety grades should continue to be displayed where customers can see them.

Panellists who answered 'No' to this question were also asked 'Why not?' Two respondents commented that the grades did not matter.

#### 3.3 Re-grade inspections

The survey asked, 'Should food premises be able to request a re-grade inspection before their next annual visit (i.e. to improve their grade)?'

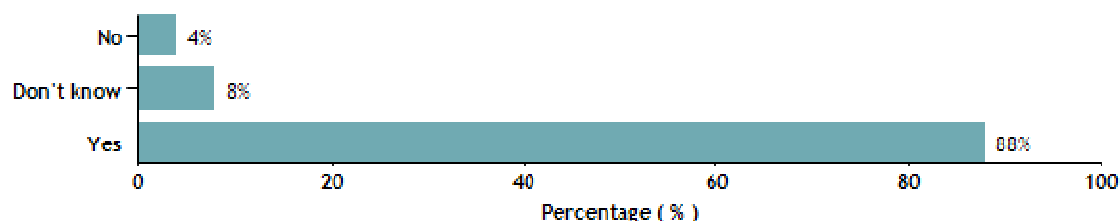


Most respondents (90%) think food premises should be able to request a re-grade inspection before their next annual visit.

Panellists who answered 'No' to this question were also asked 'Why not?' Nine respondents commented that premises should always be clean and safe, two were concerned about cost and two said having no re-grade opportunity would act as an incentive to keep premises to a high standard at all times.

### 3.4 Nationally consistent grading system

The survey asked, 'Do you think a nationally consistent grading system would be better than having different systems throughout the country as is currently the case?'



The majority of respondents (88%) agree that a nationally consistent grading system would be better than having different systems throughout the country as is currently the case. Four percent disagreed and eight percent did not know.

Panellists who answered 'No' to this question were also asked 'Why not?' Seven were in favour of keeping systems local because of regional factors and to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy. Two commented that having a system did not matter.

### 3.5 Comments and suggestions

The survey asked if they had any other comments or suggestions for improving the grading system.

Table 1 – Comments and suggestions about food grading system	Number of responses
Grading system is good/grading display is good/use the system	61
A national grading system would be good/base it on Dunedin	12
Have unannounced spot checks of premises	9
Ensure grading is visible before entering premises/consistent location	8
Publicise the grading system/criteria more	8
Have maximum of one re-grade request per year	3
Grades required within certain period so not ungraded too long	3
More consistent use of grading	3
National scheme too bureaucratic	3
Not noticed grading system	3
Cost of re-grades should be paid by businesses	3

Other comments or suggestions included:

- Listing premises with grades on website\*
- Get rid of the 'U' grade as it's confusing
- 'D' grade premises should be closed
- 'A' grade premises should pay less fees
- Advertise how to make a complaint
- Include date and reasons for grades on grading certificates

- Have star system
- Concern small businesses must comply with same rules as larger businesses

Selection of comments:

- *"This is an important service to the public to provide oversight of food safety."*
- *"This grading system is extremely important and valuable for both provider and customer so standards can be met and maintained."*
- *"It is an excellent system and I always note the grade when I see a certificate in a café."*
- *"I always check the grading before we buy there."*
- *"I think it is fantastic and I always look for the letter."*
- *"The food safety grade system that the DCC currently uses is excellent."*
- *"I always look for the food safety grade certificate in every food premise I go into to. Keep up the good work - I am proud of the standard we have set here in Dunedin."*
- *"A good service to citizens that seems to work well."*
- *"Should be consistent throughout NZ."*
- *"Surprised to hear there isn't a national standard."*
- *"Making cafes, restaurants and food retailers display their certificates on the outside of their premises – this way people can decide whether they want to eat there or not before they go in. Also, for those with lower grades, make it clear why they have failed."*
- *"The grade should have to be prominently displayed outside the shop."*
- *"More frequent and sometimes unannounced visits would help the tricky ones."*
- *"They need to be clean all the time, not just when the inspector turns up. Are there regular spot checks?"*
- *"Give clear guidance about where to make complaints and flag food safety concerns."*
- *"Publish the results so they are easily found when choosing a food outlet to use."*

#### **4. How will the results be used?**

The People's Panel findings will be reported to Council for their consideration as part of the food grading system review. Council will decide whether to adopt a draft food grading policy and bylaw.



## Appendix 1: Respondent Profile

	All Respondents n = 385	Percentages (%) n = 100	Census 2006 Data (%)
<b>GENDER</b>			
Female	210	54.5%	52%
Male	169	43.9%	48%
Prefer not to say	6	1.6%	
<b>AGE</b>			
15-24 Years	12	3.1%	26%
25-34 Years	35	9.1%	14%
35-44 Years	65	16.9%	16%
45-54 Years	84	21.8%	16%
55-64 Years	75	19.5%	12%
65 Years or older	110	28.6%	16%
Prefer not to say	4	1%	
<b>ETHNICITY</b>			
European	343	89.1%	74%
Maori	16	4.2%	6%
Pacific Island	4	1%	2%
Asian	4	1%	5%
Other	24	6.2%	13%
Prefer not to say	14	3.6%	
<b>GEOGRAPHIC AREA</b>			
Andersons Bay/Waverley	27	7%	5%
Blueskin Bay	9	2.3%	1%
Caversham	12	3.1%	3%
Concord/Corstophine/Kew	11	2.9%	4%
Fairfield	5	1.3%	2%
Green Island/Abbotsford	10	2.6%	4%
Helensburgh/Balmacewen	0	0%	1%
Inner City	30	7.8%	6%
Leith Valley	3	0%	1%
Maori Hill	23	6%	3%
Mornington	20	5.2%	5%
Mosgiel	24	6.2%	8%
Musselburgh/Tainui	13	3.4%	3%
North East Valley	20	5.2%	5%
Outer Peninsula	9	2.3%	1%
Outram/Momona	9	2.3%	3%
Peninsula	21	5.5%	2%
Pine Hill	11	2.9%	2%
Port Chalmers/Purakanui	10	2.6%	2%
Roslyn/Belleknowes	26	6.8%	3%
South Coast	9	2.3%	3%
South Dunedin	6	1.6%	3%
St Clair	18	4.7%	3%
St Kilda	11	2.9%	3%
Strath Taieri	0	0%	1%
Taieri	2	0.5%	2%
Three Mile Hill	9	2.3%	5%
University	4	1%	7%
Waikouaiti/Karitane	8	2.1%	1%
Wakari	9	2.3%	3%
West Harbour	14	3.6%	3%
Outside Dunedin	1	0.3%	
I'd prefer not to say	1	0.3%	

Note – the demographic information provided by the Panellists has not been verified.