



Australia has a food allergy challenge. Could software help?

Australia's food allergy rates are some of the highest in the world,¹ posing a critical challenge to those serving meals to the nation. But the right software could help caterers more accurately track allergens from field to fork, letting them meet diverse dietary needs and preventing tragic mistakes from ever happening.

Food allergies are a rising problem worldwide. In Australia, one in five people live with a food allergy or intolerance,² which means anyone in catering has to cater to special dietary requirements every day.

Reactions can range from mild symptoms to life-threatening anaphylactic shock. In addition, dietary preferences increasingly mean that many people without allergies are looking to exclude certain food groups and ingredients.

For the people who feed Australia for a living, such dietary requirements present a tricky problem. How can you be sure that you're accurately tracking and communicating which allergens or restricted ingredients are in which dishes? How can you ensure that emergencies are avoided, while offering safe, suitable and delicious choices for every customer?

It's a problem that could turn menu management into a minefield, especially in large scale catering operations in schools, universities, hospitals and aged care homes.

From the cloud to the consumer

Fortunately, software tools can help make it simpler for catering teams to implement robust food allergy policies – even in the context of varied community needs, busy kitchens across multiple sites, and budget pressure.

Saffron, from Civica, features a Wellbeing module that tracks, manages and communicates accurate allergen and nutritional info. It helps caterers feel certain that they're meeting their legal duty to communicate correct allergy information about every dish.

And it can help avoid the risk of inaccurate menu info or miscommunications between servers and consumers, which could potentially lead to health incidents, reputational damage and fines.



A single hub for dietary requirement data

Kitchen staff and suppliers can easily access the Saffron portal on any device they choose. It brings together data from suppliers and other sources in one place, with any changes to ingredients automatically flowed into every meal and recipe so that displayed info is always up-to-date.

It means you have a live repository of information, detailed enough to help you meet the needs of diverse consumers – from those who are vegetarian, vegan or pregnant to those who are gluten intolerant or coeliac, through to people on a paleo or a ketogenic diet or following religious dietary restrictions.

Civica tracks every allergen including tree nuts, peanuts, fish and shellfish.

Consumers, too, can access live, intuitively presented allergen and nutritional profiles of dishes online. Plus, data from Saffron feeds through to systems such as point-of-sale displays or food ordering apps, so consumers can decide what to have without needing to ask for assistance.

Not just safer but more nutritious

Tracking nutritional value, as well as allergens, is vital at a time when food served in public institutions is under the spotlight across Australia.

The recent Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety,³ for example, led to a national push to improve the quality, nutritional content and value for money of food served in aged care homes.

Meanwhile in Australian schools, programs like Live Life Well at School and Crunch and Sip (a set time to refuel on fruit, vegetables and water) have highlighted the importance of nutrition for the development of young minds.⁴

The recently published 2022-23 budget reflected Australia's focus on nutrition.⁵ It includes investment in a whole-of-government National Nutrition Policy Framework that will drive healthy eating in Australia as well as support a study into unhealthy food and drink advertising aimed at children.

The country is looking to caterers to provide food that supports students to learn well; patients to recover quickly; and aged care home residents to get the most from life.

Saffron helps meet these wider food priorities. It creates a complete picture of each meal including cost, profitability, nutrition and allergen information, enabling catering teams to build menus that meet varied dietary requirements and allergy needs.

All while maximising revenue and minimising food waste.

Food allergies and dietary restrictions are part of an array of considerations large-scale caterers face. The right software could help you offer delicious, wholesome and safe options that tick all the right boxes for everyone.

[Click here](#) to learn more about Civica Saffron and how it can help you manage allergies.

References:

- ¹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-02-12/what-can-be-done-about-food-allergy-increases-in-australia/10799390>
- ² <https://www.eatfirst.com/en-au/c/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-special-diet-catering>
- ³ <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/>
- ⁴ <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/health/schools/Pages/default.aspx>
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