

ADDRESSING FOOD ALLERGY IN FOOD SERVICE – THE NATIONAL ALLERGY STRATEGY FOOD SERVICE PROJECT

ABSTRACT

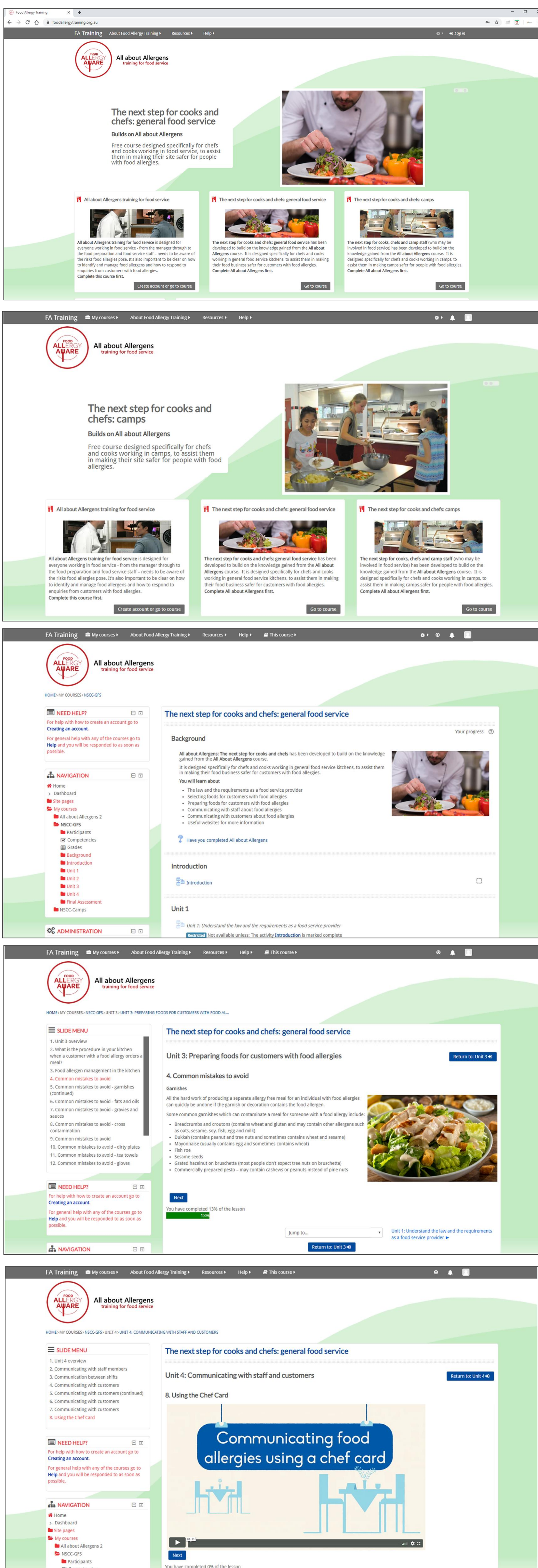
Background
The National Allergy Strategy All about Allergens online training, released in 2017 provided basic, standardised online training, freely accessible to all food service staff. Recent engagement with key stakeholders identified the need for additional food allergy training for chefs and cooks. This current project aims to engage with the food service sector, particularly chefs and cooks to identify education needs and develop appropriate resources, free of charge.

Method
Key issues in food allergen management when preparing foods in food service were identified by consultation with the food service sector and other key stakeholders via a Food Allergen Management Roundtable and a chefs and cooks focus group. Guidance as to what resources and strategies are required to support cooks and chefs was also obtained.

Findings
Outcomes from the Roundtable included recommendations to develop a follow up to the All about Allergens training that is more tailored to back of house staff in food service settings (e.g. general food service, hospitals, camps). Additional supporting resources to help cooks and chefs to implement practical strategies are also required. In addition, a communication strategy focussed on the shared responsibility of consumers, food service providers, legislators and authorised officers, was an identified need.

Conclusion
The National Allergy Strategy engaged with key stakeholders, cooks and chefs to develop *All about Allergens: The next step for cooks and chefs*, a freely available online course. Supporting resources were also developed as freely downloadable resources. A communication strategy with the message “Food allergy aware: Managing food allergies. It’s everyone’s responsibility” was developed.

Training for cooks and chefs



The Food Service Round Table provided an opportunity to engage with key stakeholders in the food service sector and identify current issues in food allergen and allergy management. The meeting identified the following requirements:

- Minimum standards for food allergen management training in food service would help improve existing training
- Additional training specifically for cooks and chefs is required – *All about Allergens: The next step for cooks and chefs* was developed
- Training needs to be more specific to the type of food service – general food service and camp versions were developed and a hospital version is in development
- Supporting resources are needed to help them put appropriate strategies in place – these have been developed and are available from the training site
- A communication strategy that focuses on the shared responsibility of the consumer, food service provider, authorised officer (e.g. environmental health officer), health professionals and legislators is needed

www.foodallergytraining.org.au

Communication strategy

To communicate the shared responsibility of food allergen management in food service, the National Allergy Strategy is commencing a communication strategy which will include the following:

- Food Allergy Aware logo and branding developed in consultation with cooks and chefs
- Food Allergy Aware resource hub that provides links to information for food service providers, consumers, health professionals, hospitals and other institutions and schools and early childhood education services
- The resource hub provides links to National Allergy Strategy, ASCIA, Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia resources as well as other resources developed by key stakeholder organisations such as Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)
- A social media strategy is being developed and will feature key messages to help increase awareness around food allergen management

www.foodallergyaware.org.au

