

# Scores on doors for Coast eateries

**COUNCIL**  
**MELINDA MARSHALL**  
marshallm@goldcoast.com.au

GOLD Coast restaurants could soon be forced to display their food hygiene credentials on their front doors.

The Gold Coast City Council is considering falling in line with 'score on the door' schemes being introduced in Brisbane, Sydney and Logan.

A scheme begun by the NSW Government this week requires eateries to display a cleanliness score of A, B, or C.

Brisbane City Council will later this year introduce a five-star rating, with eateries achieving three or more stars invited to display the score, while Logan City Council is preparing its own rating system.

The proposal has divided the city's restaurant owners, with some enthusiastic about bringing the scheme here while others described it as over the top.

Marina Mirage restaurateur Maria Parente said food safety was paramount but public shaming could force struggling eateries out of business.

"First it will be a 'C' and then it will be an 'S' for Sale on the end of it," said the Saks Italian Restaurant and Bar owner.

"I just think maybe the council should do what they're doing at the moment and really clamping down themselves. They don't need to publicly display it."

But Andrew McElhone, who owns Sage Cafe Restaurant and two other Broadbeach restaurants, said the public deserved to know the food they were eating was safe.

"It will weed out the worst performers and highlight the better performers in terms of health and hygiene," said Mr McElhone.



Manager Lisa Lynch and head chef Charlie Dicello from restaurant and bar 1two3 Photo: BRENDAN RADKE

Lisa Lynch, manager of Mediterranean restaurant 1two3 in Broadbeach, also welcomed the move.

The council has prosecuted four restaurants and issued 58 penalty notices in the past year, out of more than 4000 inspections.

A council spokesman said environmental health compliance officers conducted inspections in response to complaints as well as

routinely inspecting outlets at least once a year.

Surfers Paradise councillor Susie Douglas said the ratings system would give dodgy operators nowhere to hide.

"I think it's got merit and a lot of operators would really lift their game, I think, if they thought that that would affect their business," said Cr Douglas.

But Southport councillor Dawn Crichlow rubbished the system, saying patrons would vote with their feet if a restaurant was unclean regardless, adding 'live and let live'.

Cr Crichlow questioned the expertise of council inspectors, saying she had visited some 'filthy' restaurants that did not appear to have been inspected.

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