

Water is Food 101

One of the things that we in the Water industry often forget, is that we are basically in the business of providing a food to our customers. A liquid food and a fairly unique foodstuff, in that we pipe it into people's homes and serve it up for their consumption 24/7.

So, if we accept that we are in the food business, then our Water Treatment plants are our kitchens and our Distribution systems are the crockery.

Anyone who has watched *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares* knows there are some rather ordinary restaurant kitchens out there, with rat faeces, cockroaches, rotten or expired food in the fridge etc. etc. Luckily, most of these kitchens appear to be in the UK, but what if Ramsay came to visit our "Water kitchens"; would he be impressed? On the whole, I think he probably would be, as most Water Treatment plants look like places where the 'food' being produced is safe to consume.

But there are still some "kitchens" out there in Australia where you would be far less confident in the quality of the food being produced. Old chemical containers left lying about, spilt chemicals on the floor, slime on the walls of clarifiers and filters and general untidiness, which all leave the impression that the food being served may not be of the best quality.

Stretching the kitchen analogy further, our treated water storages could be seen as the crockery on which we serve our food. Again, many of them are fine and are suitable to eat off, but others have cracks and holes in the roofs, have animals roosting in them and leaving their faeces behind. This all increases the risk that our food will be contaminated prior to reaching the table.

It is appreciated that having a clean kitchen and clean crockery has a cost attached to it, but that is one of the overheads of running a healthy restaurant, whereas restaurants who make their customers sick don't last long in the industry. We wouldn't take our families to restaurants that had dirty kitchens and unclean crockery, so what impression would our customers have if they saw some of our Water 'kitchens and crockery'?