



## Service Standard 2.1.6

# Joining the NSW RFS as a Volunteer Member (including Transfer Applications)

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**Date of Issue** 4 August 2014

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**Version Number** 3.1

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### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Members of the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) occupy a position of trust in the community because:
- (a) the *Rural Fires Act 1997* (the Act) confers extensive powers on members of the NSW RFS which, for example, allow them unsupervised access to private property;
  - (b) members of the NSW RFS may be required to work with the community, including children, when they are at their most vulnerable, under great stress, injured or in hazardous conditions; and
  - (c) members of the NSW RFS may be entrusted with the care and use of valuable community assets or public resources.
- 1.2 The NSW RFS values the principles of flexible membership. The key aims of flexible membership are:
- to attract a wider variety and greater number of valuable members
  - to retain those members more effectively
  - to provide many and varied pathways of involvement and advancement for members
  - for membership to better reflect the profile of our communities
  - to place equal value on all membership roles.
- 1.3 Flexible membership provides the opportunity for members to participate in the NSW RFS in a variety of ways:
- (a) Operational: members have firefighting qualifications and/or recognised experience. Roles include firefighter, air base operations and field communications;

- (b) Operational support: members do not require firefighting qualifications or experience. Roles include catering, communications, community engagement, chaplaincy and junior members;
  - (c) Administration: members do not require firefighting qualifications or experience. Roles include brigade administration, fundraising and social secretaries;
  - (d) Reserve: a member whose participation is infrequent but is available for operations and operational support roles during major incidents. Depending on the role firefighting qualifications and experience may be required;
  - (e) Cadet: a member of a dedicated Cadet Brigade who is aged between 12 and 18 years of age;
  - (f) Community fire unit (CFU): a community fire unit member. CFU personal protective clothing and equipment (PPC/PPE) is required.
- 1.4 The work undertaken by the NSW RFS is demanding both physically and mentally. It can also be dangerous. It is therefore imperative that members of the Service are capable of carrying out their duties without endangering their own safety, the safety of other members of the NSW RFS or the public.
- 1.5 Members of the NSW RFS, their families and the community are entitled to expect that those who serve alongside, or for them, are of good character and will not pose a risk to their safety.
- 1.6 Members of the NSW RFS are required to meet the obligations and requirements of the Service, their Brigade and its Constitution.
- 1.7 Every application will be considered for suitability for membership of the NSW RFS.
- 1.8 Residency status is not a criterion for the consideration of membership applications.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 For the purpose of this Service Standard the following definitions apply:
- (a) **Additional brigade:** as nominated by the member on their application form;
  - (b) **Brigade:** a rural fire brigade formed under the Act, however named or described;
  - (c) **Brigade Executive:** as defined in the Brigade constitution.
  - (d) **Cadet:** a member of a Cadet Brigade, or participant in a specific Cadet or youth development program (i.e. Secondary Schools Cadet Program), aged between 12 years and up to 18 years of age;
  - (e) **Dual member:** a member who has applied for and been accepted as a member of both an existing and additional brigade;

- (f) **Existing brigade:** as nominated by the member on their application form;
- (g) **Junior member:** a member of a Brigade (other than a Cadet Brigade) aged between 12 years and up to 18 years of age who is not an Ordinary or Probationary Member;
- (h) **Member:** any member of the NSW RFS, either volunteer or salaried, who has met all joining criteria;
- (i) **Ordinary member:** a NSW RFS volunteer member who has met their brigade's constitutional requirement for membership;
- (j) **Probationary member:** a member who has been accepted by the Brigade but who has not yet met the criteria for attaining ordinary member status;
- (k) **Salaried member:** a member of the NSW RFS staff employed under the *NSW Government Sector Employment Act 2013*.

### 3. Policy

3.1 This Service Standard specifies:

- (a) the requirements that must be satisfied by a person (applicant) before attaining volunteer membership of the NSW RFS; and
- (b) the procedure to be followed by a person who is considering:
  - i. joining a brigade;
  - ii. joining a second brigade;
  - iii. transferring from one brigade to another;
  - iv. as a junior member who has reached the age of 16, becoming an ordinary member of a brigade; or
  - v. rejoining the NSW RFS after having previously resigned.

3.2 An application may be refused if the requirements of clause 3.4 have not been met.

3.3 The procedures to be followed are set out in the accompanying Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

3.4 An applicant who is not already of a member of a NSW RFS brigade and is seeking probationary membership must:

- (a) be:
  - i. 18 years of age and not a current member of the NSW RFS; or
  - ii. 16 years of age if they have the written permission of a parent or guardian to join the brigade;
- (b) consent to the NSW RFS utilising the services of the National Police Checking Service for the purpose of criminal record checking;
- (c) consent to the NSW RFS conducting service disciplinary record checks;

- (d) agree to abide by Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics and other NSW RFS Service Standards;
- (e) be capable of and reasonably available, to perform the functions of the brigade they wish to join, or the role they wish to obtain, without endangering their own safety or the safety of others;
- (f) be a fit and proper person to be a member of the NSW RFS; and
- (g) in the case of an applicant for junior membership, be between 12 and 18 years of age and have the written permission of a parent or guardian to join the brigade.

**Note:** junior members must comply with the requirements of Service Standard 2.1.5 Child and Youth Participation in NSW RFS Activities and other NSW RFS Service Standards.

### **Commencement of Membership**

- 3.5** The applicant's probationary membership of the NSW RFS is deemed to have commenced from the date the application form is validated by the District Manager. The applicant may then participate in limited activities as detailed at clause 3.8 below, until such time as clearance from the Membership Coordination Unit (MCU) is received.
- 3.6** The Director Membership and Strategic Services may, at their absolute discretion, enter the name of an applicant who is not a current member of the NSW RFS and whose application has been validated by a district manager, on the brigade register as a probationary member.
- 3.7** The probationary member is deemed to be an ordinary member upon:
- (a) satisfying the requirements of the Brigade's Constitution for ordinary membership; and
  - (b) acceptance by the Brigade as an ordinary member; and
  - (c) receiving formal clearance from MCU

### **Probationary members**

- 3.8** Prior to receiving clearance from the MCU a probationary member may, under the supervision of an ordinary or life member:
- (a) Undertake the NSW RFS safety and volunteer induction programs;
  - (b) Participate in brigade or district orientation programs;
  - (c) Attend brigade meetings as an observer;
  - (d) Participate in NSW RFS training programs.
- 3.9** Prior to receiving clearance from the MCU a probationary member must not:
- (a) Drive any NSW RFS vehicle, appliance or boat;
  - (b) Have unsupervised access to any NSW RFS premises or equipment;
  - (c) Have access to brigade funds or participate in unsupervised fundraising activities on behalf of the brigade or NSW RFS;

- (d) Participate in any NSW RFS activity that directly involves children, junior or cadet members; or
- (e) Participate in any operational activity, including hazard reductions.

**3.10** Prior to receiving clearance from the MCU a probationary member shall not be issued with any personal protective clothing or equipment (PPC/PPE), uniform or other brigade equipment other than on a temporary loan basis for the purpose of participating in a NSW RFS training program.

**3.11** If, at the expiration of six months from the date upon which the probationary member's application was validated by the District Manager, the applicant has not received clearance from the MCU, the District Office shall remove his or her name from the brigade register.

### **Commencement of Training**

**3.12** A probationary member must successfully complete the NSW RFS safety induction prior to commencement of training and assessment if it is not integrated into their initial training program, ie Bush Firefighter (BF).

### **Junior Membership**

**3.13** An applicant under the age of 18 must not participate in any brigade activities until the completed application form has been validated by the District Manager.

**3.14** Applicants under the age of 16 years applying for junior membership are not required to complete the National Police Checking Service Application/Consent form.

**3.15** Any brigade that is unable to accommodate the requirements of junior members shall refer all such enquiries to the District Office.

### **Dual Membership**

**3.16** A member may hold dual membership with the following considerations:

- (a) a member may not be a member of an additional brigade in the same rural fire district or zone as their existing brigade unless they have written permission from the District Manager;
- (b) a member may be a member of another brigade in another rural fire district;
- (c) a member may not hold office as a field officer in more than one brigade unless they have written permission from the District Manager or District Managers;
- (d) An applicant who has applied for membership of an additional brigade and whose application meets the criteria for probationary membership of that brigade may, at the discretion of the District Manager:
  - i. drive a NSW RFS vehicle, appliance or boat, provided they are qualified to do so;

- ii. have access to NSW RFS premises or equipment; and be issued with PPC or PPE, uniform or other brigade equipment; and
- iii. participate in operational activity, including hazard reductions, provided they are qualified to do so.

**3.17** Prior to receiving clearance from the MCU a member who has applied for membership of an additional brigade, may not:

- (a) Participate in any brigade activity that directly involves children, junior members or cadets; or
- (b) have access to brigade funds or participate in unsupervised fundraising on behalf of the brigade

until such time as the member has been accepted as a probationary member of the brigade they are seeking to join.

### **Transfer of Membership**

**3.18** An applicant applying to transfer from one brigade to another will cease to belong to their original brigade once they have been accepted as a probationary member of their new brigade.

**3.19** Service records (including disciplinary checks) will accompany the application documents of a member transferring between brigades.

**3.20** An applicant who has applied for membership of another brigade and whose application meets the criteria for probationary membership of that brigade may, at the discretion of the District Manager:

- (a) drive a NSW RFS vehicle, appliance or boat, provided they are qualified to do so;
- (b) Have access to NSW RFS premises or equipment and be issued with PPC or PPE, uniform or other brigade equipment
- (c) Participate in operational activity, including hazard reductions, provided they are qualified to do so.

**3.21** Prior to receiving clearance from the MCU a member who has applied to transfer to another brigade, may not:

- (a) Participate in any brigade activity that directly involves children, junior members or cadets.
- (b) Have access to brigade funds or participate in unsupervised fundraising on behalf of the brigade

until such time as the member has been accepted as a probationary member of the brigade they are seeking to join.

## **4. Links**

- NSW RFS Membership Application Kit
- NSW RFS Flexible Membership Model

- SS 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics
- SS 1.1.9 Child Related Activities
- SS 1.1.14 Personal Information and Privacy
- SS 1.1.21 Stand Down, Removal from Membership and Notification of Criminal Charges and Convictions
- SS 2.1.2 Brigade Constitution
- SS 2.1.5 Child and Youth Participation in NSW RFS Activities
- SS 2.1.8 Criminal History and Disciplinary Record Checks for NSW RFS Volunteer Members
- *Rural Fires Act 1997*
- Rural Fires Regulation 2013
- *Criminal Records Act 1991*
- *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*
- *Financial Transactions Reports Act 1992*

## **5. Who is responsible for implementing the Service Standard?**

- Director Membership and Strategic Services

## **6. Amendments**

- General review to ensure compliance and updated to reflect current organisational alignment and practice 4 August 2014

# SOP 2.1.6 - 1

## Applying for Volunteer Membership

<b>This SOP forms part of</b>	2.1.6 Joining the NSW RFS as a Volunteer Member (including Transfer Applications)
<b>Related Form(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Volunteer Membership Application form including:</li><li>▪ National Police Checking Service Consent form</li></ul>

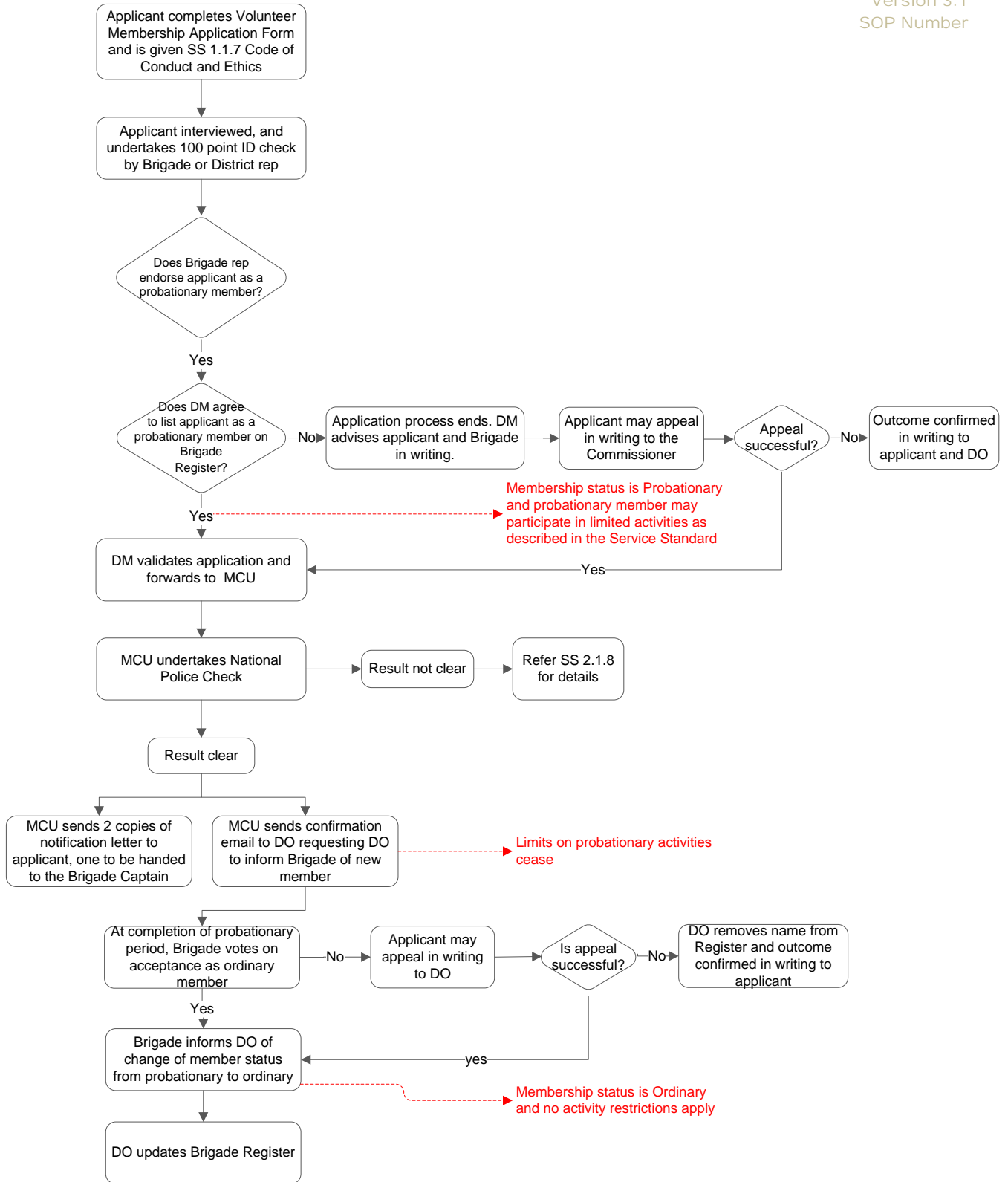
### 1 Purpose

1.1 This SOP provides guidance on the process for membership applications.

### 2 Procedures

2.1 The flowchart below illustrates the membership application and approval process.





DM - District Manager  
 DO - District Office  
 MCU - Membership Coordination Unit

# SOP 2.1.6 - 2

## Applying for Junior Membership

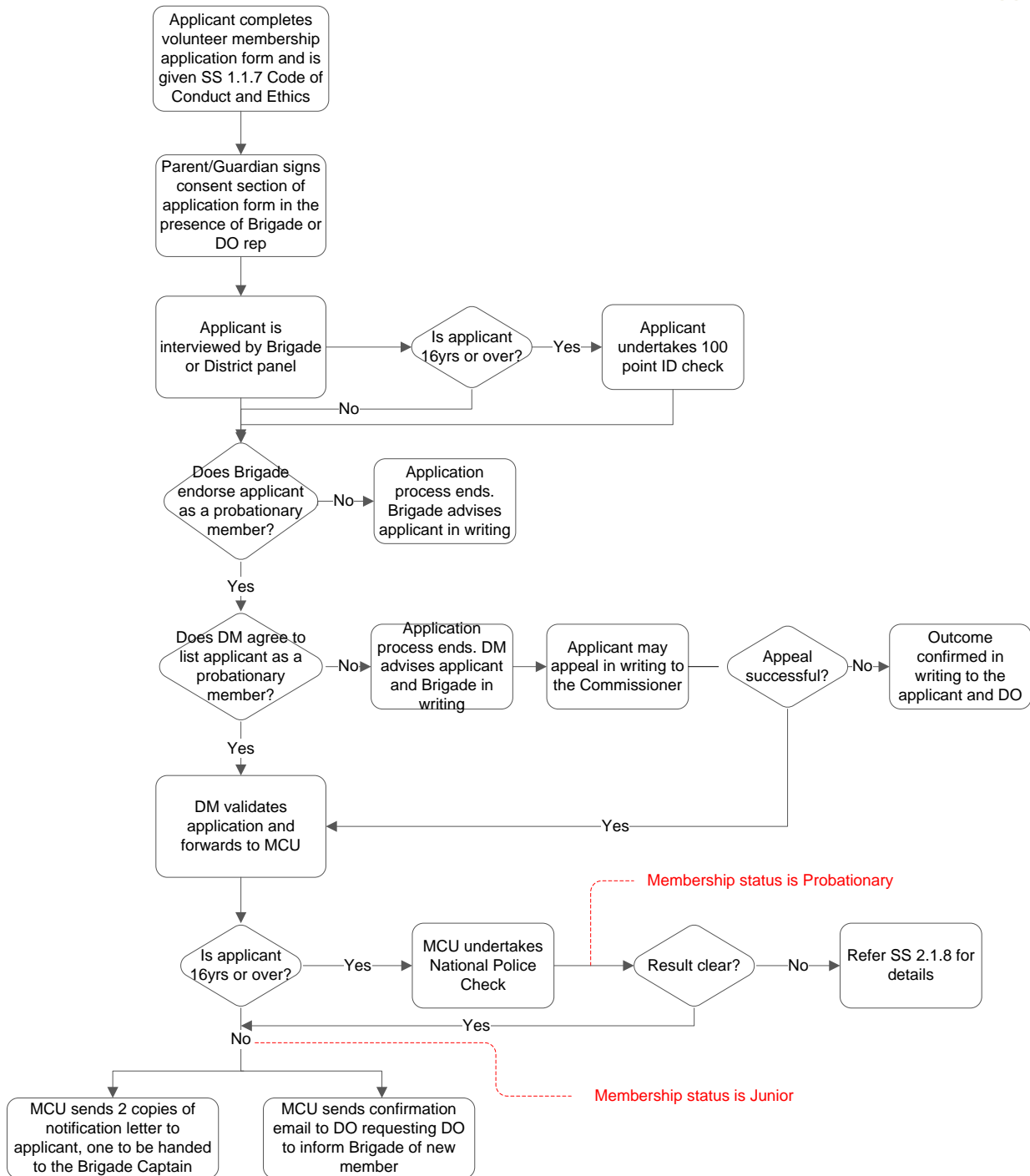
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### 1 Purpose

1.1 This SOP provides guidance on the process for junior membership applications.

### 2 Procedures

2.1 The flowchart below illustrates the junior membership application and approval process.



DM = District Manager  
 DO = District Office  
 MCU = Membership Coordination Unit

Note  
 Applicants may *not* appeal if the Brigade they are seeking to join does not contain a provision for junior members in that Brigade's Constitution