

POLICY P2.1.4

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
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SOPs	> SOP P2.1.4- 1 Corporate Sponsorship
Owner	Executive Director, Finance and Executive Services
Contact	Manager, Corporate and International Relations
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1 Purpose

- 1.1. The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) will provide guidance for staff to ensure that the sponsorship process is well managed and opportunities for corruption do not develop.
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy is to articulate the processes required to address the probity issues involved in sponsorship and adhere to government guidelines for obtaining and managing sponsorship.
- 1.3. As the world’s largest volunteer firefighting agency and with strong community foundations, the NSW RFS maintains a highly desirable and marketable brand that attracts strong interest from the corporate sector. Many businesses consider being strategically aligned with the NSW RFS and its reputation, community standing and highly recognisable corporate identity as beneficial.
- 1.4. Sponsorship can involve benefits passing between the public and private sectors and is a subject that has the potential to create a lot of public discussion and controversy. Therefore, before entering into a sponsorship agreement, the NSW RFS must consider the potential relationship with the sponsor and make decisions about sponsorship on impartial, consistent and objective grounds, ensuring that probity and integrity are built into the process.
- 1.5. This policy protects NSW RFS assets by clearly stating the conditions and principles upon which any sponsorship arrangements are considered. This greatly reduces the risk of corruption, partiality or conflicts of interest arising and ensures the reputation and standing of the NSW RFS is protected.
- 1.6. This policy does not preclude suppliers of products or services from attending and/or contributing to the cost of NSW RFS events by way of sponsorship, and any such involvement is not to be regarded as an endorsement of their products or services.

2 Definitions

- 2.1. For the purpose of this policy document, the following definition applies:
 - a. **Sponsorship:** a commercial arrangement in which a sponsor provides a contribution in money or in kind support to a NSW RFS event/activity/project/enterprise in return for specified benefits. Sponsorship is not philanthropic and a sponsor can reasonably expect to receive a reciprocal benefit beyond a modest acknowledgement. Sponsorship is not the selling of advertising space, joint ventures, consultancies or the receipt of gifts or donations that receive a simple acknowledgment.

- b. **Responsible Officer:** a Cost Centre Manager tasked under P4.1.1 Financial Delegations, to monitor and record the progress of the sponsorship.

3 Policy

- 3.1 The NSW RFS recognises that its insignia (Crest, logo and imagery) are highly marketable commodities and hold significant commercial value. These Government assets must be valued accordingly under appropriate terms and conditions and must not be traded at the expense of the NSW RFS image or integrity.
- 3.2 The NSW RFS primary objectives in seeking sponsorship are to:
 - a. Provide professional development opportunities for NSW RFS volunteers and staff;
 - b. Promote the professional image of the NSW RFS as a leader in emergency management and showcase its skill sets both nationally and internationally;
 - c. Allow the NSW RFS to contribute to emergency management globally through the sharing of our knowledge and skills with the international community; and
 - d. Increase funding support for major strategic projects and events.
- 3.3 A sponsorship agreement will not impose or imply conditions that would limit, or appear to limit, the NSW RFS ability to carry out its functions fully and impartially:
 - a. All sponsorship arrangements will be documented in an agreement between the NSW RFS and the sponsorship provider; and
 - b. The sponsorship agreement will clearly state that the NSW RFS must and will continue to carry out its public functions fully and impartially regardless of the sponsorship arrangement. If an attempt is made by a sponsor to influence the organisation's functions, the sponsorship arrangement will be automatically reviewed and, if necessary, terminated.
- 3.4 There must be no actual conflict between the objectives and/or mission of the NSW RFS and those of the sponsor:
 - a. The sponsorship process will include checking the objectives, mission and activities of the sponsor, its parent company and/or subsidiaries for possible conflict and feature the inclusion of a documented assurance from the sponsor; and
 - b. Sponsorship agreements will include provisions for termination in the event of changes to a sponsor's corporate mission, objectives or functions causing a conflict with the values of the NSW RFS.
- 3.5 In general, the NSW RFS will not seek, or accept sponsorship from people or organisations, which are, or may be, subject to regulation or inspection by it during the life of the sponsorship. Where adhering to this principle would unduly limit sponsorship prospects, the NSW RFS will develop alternative strategies to ensure it can carry out its regulatory or inspection responsibilities in relation to sponsors in an open, fair, accountable and impartial manner.
- 3.6 It must be made clear in all negotiations and documentation that a sponsorship relationship must not and will not affect how the NSW RFS exercises its regulatory or inspectorial functions. It is important that this procedure is clearly articulated within the provisions of the sponsorship agreement.
- 3.7 Sponsorship agreements will not involve explicit endorsement of the sponsor or the sponsor's products:
 - a. As it is not possible to control the perception of an association between the NSW RFS and a sponsor implying endorsement of the sponsoring organisation and its products, the NSW RFS must be careful in its choice of sponsors and ensure it maintains its impartiality and its responsibility to deal independently with other commercial organisations and their products; and
 - b. The sponsorship agreement will set out the ways the sponsor can use the sponsorship relationship and include provision for the NSW RFS to review and approve each specific use prior to general release.

3.8 Where sponsorship involves the sponsor providing a product to the NSW RFS, the NSW RFS will evaluate that product for its fitness for purpose against objective criteria and/or existing relevant operational standards.

A sponsor's product or services must not be accepted and used simply because they are offered free of charge. Procurement officers must assess the product or services as if it were being paid for. If the products are not appropriate or fit for purpose, the offer must be rejected.

3.9 Employees of the NSW RFS shall not receive a personal benefit from a sponsorship:

- a. The NSW RFS Code of Conduct clearly states all staff responsible for negotiating sponsorship arrangements, must be aware of the ethical issues involved and understand the importance of following the correct procedures. All potential sponsors must be provided with information about this policy;
- b. Any contributions from a sponsor must go directly to the NSW RFS, not to an individual, and must provide a benefit to the NSW RFS as an organisation; and
- c. As the NSW RFS is predominately a volunteer organisation, contributions from sponsors such as paying for food or accommodation at a conference or providing tickets to an event could be considered to provide benefit to the organisation in the form of improved morale. In case of such offers the benefits are to be provided to the NSW RFS and not to any individual. Should such offers be approved for acceptance the NSW RFS, not the sponsor, will select the members (staff and volunteers) who will receive the benefit.

3.10 The NSW RFS will utilise broad based, open processes that are not limited solely to invited sponsors, to seek out and grant sponsorships:

- a. Sponsorship opportunities are public assets with a monetary value and the NSW RFS must endeavour to get the best return possible. It is important that all businesses are offered an equal opportunity to access the potential benefits of a sponsorship agreement;
- b. If there is vigorous interest in a sponsorship opportunity the process should be via tender or expressions of interest. If interest is restricted to potential sponsors with highly specialised characteristics or where time is limited, the NSW RFS may use more direct methods. In these exceptional circumstances the reasons for doing so must be clearly documented; and
- c. In response to receiving an unsolicited proposal, the NSW RFS will carefully examine the offer to ensure it meets all requirements and standards, there is no conflict of interest and that better value for money cannot be obtained by other means. If such proposals are accepted the reasons for not conducting an open market process must be clearly documented.

3.11 The NSW RFS Sponsorship Advisory Group will assess sponsorship proposals against predetermined criteria which are readily available or which are circulated to organisations that submit an expression of interest:

- a. These criteria are defined within the NSW RFS Corporate Sponsorship Framework. For the process to be fair, the criteria must be circulated to all organisations that submit an expression of interest; and
- b. When assessing proposals the criteria must be applied in a consistent and impartial manner. The assessment process must be fully documented, capturing the reasons for the decisions made.

3.12 Sponsorship arrangements are a contract and will be described in a written agreement between the sponsor and the NSW RFS:

- a. A sponsorship agreement is a contract and must be administered by staff from Corporate Communications who are experienced in basic contract administration and commercial dealings with the private sector; and
- b. A sponsorship agreement formally defines and records the exact nature of the event/activity/project/enterprise and the associated benefits to the sponsor and the NSW RFS. It serves as an important mechanism in ensuring that the full extent and nature of the sponsorship arrangement, including any exchange of benefits, is visible to the public.

- 3.13 All sponsorship arrangements must be approved by the Executive Director, Finance and Executive Services.
- 3.14 The amount of information included in the annual report will be decided by the Executive Director Finance and Executive Services and will be based on the significance of the sponsorship and the level of funds involved.
- 3.15 All sponsorship arrangements must have sufficient resources available to enable the promised sponsor benefits to be delivered:
- a. Benefits should be directly related to the level of sponsorship and be consistent with other similar sponsorship arrangements; and
 - b. The Executive Director, Finance and Executive Services, through the office of the Director Corporate Communications, will assign a responsible officer to monitor and record the progress of the sponsorship arrangement. This officer will also be responsible for ensuring that both parties are given the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of the agreement at the expiry of the term and prior to any renewal.

4 Related Documents

- > [Rural Fires Act 1997](#)
- > [Sponsorship in the Public Sector, ICAC, May 2006](#)
- > [Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics](#)
- > [Service Standard 1.4.2 NSW RFS Brand](#)
- > [Policy P1.1.4 Gifts and Benefits](#)
- > [NSW RFS Organisational Values](#)
- > [NSW RFS Corporate Sponsorship Framework](#)

5 Amendments

AMENDMENT DATE	VERSION NO	DESCRIPTION
5 December 2000	1.0	> Initial release as policy 5.1.2 Corporate Sponsorship
2 June 2011	1.0	> Repealed and remade policy 5.1.2 v1.0 > Renumbered to P2.1.4 to align with new format > Updated to reflect current practices > Addition of new clause 1.7
26 February 2019	2.0	> Repeals and remakes P2.1.4 > Reviewed and updated to align with changes in reporting structure following introduction of GSE Act 2013, and to align with the Corporate Sponsorship Framework 2017.

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Corporate Sponsorship

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This SOP details the process of the management of corporate sponsorship for NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) staff.

2 Procedures

- 2.1 Any staff of the NSW RFS seeking or intending to seek sponsorship must prepare a sponsorship prospectus, incorporating:
 - a. The objective of the sponsorship;
 - b. a full description of the event/activity/project/enterprise being offered;
 - c. the benefits the NSW RFS is seeking under the sponsorship;
 - d. the benefits the NSW RFS is offering under the sponsorship;
 - e. a list of the NSW RFS resources required to deliver the promised benefits;
 - f. the criteria under which potential sponsors will be assessed; and
 - g. the criteria under which a Sponsorship Agreement's success would be evaluated;and submit it to the Sponsorship Advisory Group for review and support before being submitted for approval to the Executive Director, Finance and Executive Services.
- 2.2 Each approved prospectus will be consolidated into the annual NSW RFS Sponsorship Prospectus and promoted in line with clause 3.10 of Policy P2.1.4 Corporate Sponsorship.
- 2.3 Any potential sponsors must respond by filing a [Sponsorship Expression of Interest Form](#) (SEOI).
- 2.4 A [Sponsorship Agreement Checklist](#) (SAC) must be completed for each SEOI.
- 2.5 Completed SEOI and SAC must be submitted to the Sponsorship Advisory Group through the office of the Director Corporate Communications, who will:
 - a. assess each SEOI;
 - b. endorse the favoured SEOI, if one is appropriate;
 - c. appoint an officer to oversight and record the progress of the sponsorship arrangement;
 - d. arrange appropriate legal advice;
 - e. prepare legal agreements, which should clearly set out;
 - i. A description of the event/activity/project/enterprise being sponsored,
 - ii. the term of the sponsorship and any conditions affecting renewal,
 - iii. the costs and benefits, including economic, agreed to by each party,
 - iv. the obligations, rights and responsibilities of each party,
 - v. reporting requirements, including format, frequency and standard of reporting,
 - vi. the acceptable use of the sponsorship relationship,
 - vii. the consequences of changes which may occur over time, such as a shift in the relationship, new policies, new corporate missions or objectives,
 - viii. financial accountability requirements,
 - ix. provisions for terminating or suspending the agreement,
 - x. any special conditions which may apply;
 - f. submit to the Executive Director, Finance and Executive Services for approval and to the Commissioner for consideration and execution.

3 Related forms

- > [Sponsorship Expression of Interest Form](#)
- > [Sponsorship Agreement Checklist](#)