

SERVICE STANDARD 1.5.3

RFS/RFSA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Version Number	v1.4
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Contact	Manager, Ministerial Services & Committees
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1 Purpose

- 1.1 The Commissioner relies on a range of advice on the operations and management of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), including from statutory, agency and consultative committees.
- 1.2 This Service Standard covers the Consultative Committees that operate between the RFS and the Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA).
- 1.3 Following an organisational restructure in 2021, the committees have been realigned in line with the four key RFS pillars of the RFS Strategic Direction 2019-24. They are now the:
 - Vibrant & Sustainable Membership Consultative Committee;
 - Research, Innovation & Technology Consultative Committee;
 - Resilient Communities & Valued Partnerships Consultative Committee; and
 - Service Delivery, Readiness & Agility Consultative Committee.
- 1.4 The Young Members Group is a sub-group of the Vibrant & Sustainable Membership Consultative Committee.
- 1.5 This Service Standard provides information on the management, membership and Charter of the RFS Consultative Committees.

2 Policy

- 2.1 The management of the Consultative Committees will be coordinated by the Office of the Commissioner.
- 2.2 The membership of each Consultative Committee will be as follows:
 - a. An RFS Executive Director (Chair);
 - b. An RFSA Director (Deputy Chair); and
 - c. Eight RFSA members.

- 2.3 Each committee will be supported by an Executive Officer nominated by the relevant RFS Executive Director.
- 2.4 Committee membership will be sought through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process managed by the RFSA. The eligibility criteria and accessibility to the EOI process will be determined by the RFSA but will aim to ensure each committee has at least one member representing each of the seven RFS Areas and a broad representation of genders, age groups and RFS experience.
- 2.5 The RFSA will maintain a pool of four alternate delegates, identified through the EOI process, to represent members unable to attend a committee meeting.
- 2.6 Committee members' term of appointment will be two years, after which time a new EOI process will determine committee membership for the coming two years. If a member is unable to complete their term, a replacement will be selected by the RFSA from the pre-determined pool of alternate delegates.
- 2.7 Members may sit on only one Consultative Committee at a time.
- 2.8 At the conclusion of each committee's membership, a summary of business and any outstanding items is to be handed over to the incoming committee.
- 2.9 To contribute to continuous improvement of the Consultative Committee arrangements, wherever possible, an after action review is to be conducted with the outgoing committee and the results communicated to the Director, Office of the Commissioner.
- 2.10 The RFSA will maintain a register of business papers to facilitate the timely resolution of committee matters.
- 2.11 Committees may form working groups as the need arises and will provide such working groups with relevant terms of reference.
- 2.12 Committees will provide advice to the Commissioner on issues falling within their Charter or on matters incidental to that Charter. The Commissioner may invite any committee to provide advice on any matter.
- 2.13 Committee members are bound by this Service Standard to observe confidentiality on matters which the Chair of the committee or the Commissioner declares to be confidential. Such matters must not be communicated outside of the committee except in a form approved by the Committee Chair or the Commissioner.
- 2.14 Committee members are expected to carry out the responsibilities of membership, including attendance at meetings and other tasks assigned by resolution of the committee.
- 2.15 The Commissioner may rescind the membership of a member of a committee for non-compliance with this Service Standard.
- 2.16 Consultative Committee meetings generally will be held on the same day at (or at a location near to) RFS Headquarters at Sydney Olympic Park. Alternative arrangements may be made from time to time, including to hold online meetings, with the agreement of the Commissioner and the RFSA. Online meeting access will be routinely provided via Teams.
- 2.17 RFS subject matter experts may be invited to attend and present to committees as needed, at the discretion of the relevant Executive Director.
- 2.18 The Director, Office of the Commissioner is responsible for the reporting of the business of the Consultative Committees to the Corporate Executive Group, Audit and Risk Committee or any other relevant bodies and in the Annual Report and other relevant documents.

Conflicts of Interest

- 2.19 A committee member with an actual or perceived financial or other conflict of interest in a matter before a committee must declare that interest to the Chair of the committee and, if requested, must disqualify themselves from discussion of and voting on that matter. The minutes of the meeting will reflect the declaration of the conflict of interest.
- 2.20 The Executive Officer of each committee will maintain a Conflicts of Interest Register.
- 2.21 The onus is on the committee member to declare a conflict of interest.
- 2.22 Cases where a conflict of interest is in doubt, or in question, may be referred to the RFS Performance & Conduct section for advice.
- 2.23 For more detail, refer to RFS Policy P1.1.3 Conflicts of Interest.

Recordkeeping

- 2.24 All records pertaining to committees will be maintained in the approved RFS recordkeeping system.

Financial arrangements

- 2.25 The cost of travel arrangements for committee members is met by the RFS and is to be recorded against the specific Committee internal order numbers.
- 2.26 The RFS will fund one night's accommodation for each Committee member and an additional night for members who are unable to travel home on the day of the meeting.
- 2.27 These accommodation expenses will be met by the Office of the Commissioner from its cost centre.
- 2.28 Decisions on appropriate same day travel will be made on a case by case basis, in line with the RFS' non-prescriptive approach to the management of fatigue, as outlined in Service Standard 3.1.14 Fatigue Management.
- 2.29 The cost of venue hire and catering is met by the Office of the Commissioner from its cost centre.
- 2.30 The cost of incidentals such as taxi vouchers, parking and meals not provided by the RFS or RFSA is met by the Office of the Commissioner cost centre. Requests for reimbursements and other payments are to be forwarded to the Committees team by the relevant Committee Executive Officer.

Review of this Service Standard

- 2.31 This service standard will be reviewed every two years in line with the committee membership cycle.

3 Links

- > [Rural Fires Act 1997](#)
- > [Government Sector Employment Act 2013](#)
- > [P1.1.3 Conflicts of Interest](#)
- > [Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics](#)
- > [Service Standard 1.5.1 Management of RFS Policy Documents](#)
- > [Service Standard 3.1.14 Fatigue Management](#)
- > RFS/RFSA Consultative Committee Charter
- > Renton, N.E., (2005) *Guide for Meetings and Organisations*, Vol 2, 8th Ed, Thomson Lawbook Company, Australia

4 Amendments

AMENDMENT DATE	VERSION NO	DESCRIPTION
17 October 2001	1.0	Initial release as Service Standard 1.1.18 RFS Consultative Committees
23 April 2004	1.1	> Repeals and remakes SS 1.1.18 v1.0

AMENDMENT DATE	VERSION NO	DESCRIPTION
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Amends clauses 1.1, 2.10.1(a) and 2.10.7(e)
1 September 2004	1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Repeals and remakes SS 1.1.18 v1.1 ➤ Amends Heading "Issue" to include RFSAC endorsement 18 August 2004
29 May 2009	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Repeals and remakes SS 1.1.18 v1.2 ➤ Complete review and adoption of new format ➤ Replaces references to "Non Statutory Standing Committee" with "Consultative Committee"
1 July 2014	2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Repeals and remakes SS 1.1.18 v2.1 ➤ Reflects current committee structure
1 August 2016	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Repeals and remakes SS 1.1.18 v2.1 ➤ Renumbered as Service Standard 1.5.3 v1.0 to align with Service Standard Index categories ➤ Retitled to RFS/RFSA Consultative Committees ➤ Complete review ➤ Updates current position titles
19 July 2019	1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Repeals and remakes SS 1.5.3 v1.0 ➤ Comprehensive review of Service Standard and Charter
20 August 2019	1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Repeals and remakes SS 1.5.3 v1.1 ➤ Clause 3.2(c) of the SS, and clause 3.1(c) of the Charter – to align with the Area Management model
June 2022	1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Align committee structure to four RFS pillars (1.3) ➤ Aim for broader committee structure (3.4) ➤ Remove volunteer to staff ratio (3.8) ➤ Detail financial arrangements (3.25)
February 2023	1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recognise new meeting structure ➤ Determine new committee purposes ➤ Clarify Executive Officer & Secretariat roles ➤ Streamline administrative processes