



Policy P3.3.3

NSW RFS Participation in Federal Government Work Experience Activities

Date of Issue 27 August 2011

Version Number 1.0

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements, processes and parameters surrounding the participation of the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) in Federal Government work experience activities such as Voluntary Work Placements and Work for the Dole programs.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Federal Government Work Experience Activity** or **Work Experience Activity** refers to a Federal Government program such as 'Work for the Dole', 'Voluntary Work Placement' and 'Community Work', where participants receive income support.
- 2.2 **Job Seeker** refers to a person participating in a Federal Government Work Experience Activity.

3. Policy

- 3.1 The NSW RFS supports participation in Federal Government Work Experience Activities that seek to improve opportunities for job-seekers.

Who manages Work Experience Activities

- 3.2 The Australian Government has contracted a range of organisations to provide employment services in more than 2,000 locations across Australia. Job Services Australia providers are a mix of large, medium and small for profit and not-for-profit organisations.

NSW RFS participation

- 3.3 From time to time, District Offices may be approached by Job Services Australia providers, volunteer members of the NSW RFS, or members of the public who are seeking unpaid work with the NSW RFS in order to fulfil their *work experience activity* requirements that, in turn, enables them to receive income support.

- 3.4** NSW RFS participation in Federal Government Work Experience Activities is permitted provided that the requirements of this Policy can be met.

Insurances

- 3.5** The individual (job seeker) participating in any Federal Government Work Experience Activity is required to be covered through their Job Services Australia provider for all appropriate insurances, regardless of the job seeker's membership with the NSW RFS.

Note, the NSW RFS maintains public liability insurance to cover the Services' liability.

Background check

- 3.6** The individual (job seeker) regardless of any existing NSW RFS membership is required to undergo a background check through the National Police Checking Service (NPCS). This is processed by the NSW RFS Membership Coordination Unit (MCU) and differs slightly from the normal membership application process. Refer to SOP P3.3.3-1.
- 3.7** Consistent with NSW RFS policy in relation to member transfers, rejoins and applications for dual membership, existing members of the NSW RFS are required to undergo a background check if they are to participate in a Federal Government Work Experience Activity (regardless of whether they have undergone a background check previously).

Type of work that can be performed

- 3.8** Duties to be undertaken by the job seeker must be *new and in addition* to the tasks that are currently being undertaken by volunteers in the District.

NSW RFS members participating in Work Experience Activities

- 3.9** In the event that the job seeker is also a member of the NSW RFS, tasks usually associated with their role as a volunteer, or tasks that would normally be undertaken by volunteers in the District, cannot be performed as a work experience activity.

Working with children

- 3.10** Job seekers who are not volunteer members of the NSW RFS are *not* permitted to undertake any child-related activities as described in NSW RFS Service Standard 1.1.9 Child Related Activities.

- 3.11** Job seekers who are also members of the NSW RFS may undertake child-related activities providing that:
- (a) A background check has been conducted and the MCU has formally advised the District Manager and the individual of a clear result.
 - (b) The tasks are new and in addition to the tasks that are currently being undertaken in the District.
 - (c) Participation has been authorised by the District Manager.

Conditions and approval

Conditions

- 3.12** A District Manager may enter into a Federal Government Work Experience Activity arrangement, provided that:
- (a) The District has the capacity to manage/supervise and task the job seeker appropriately and gainfully.
 - (b) The arrangement will bring actual benefit to the District.
 - (c) Relevant OHS responsibilities and requirements are considered.
 - (d) There is an avenue to terminate the arrangement, in the event this is necessary.
 - (e) The job seeker does not have any impediments that might prevent them from being able to undertake the allocated tasks.
 - (f) Access to emergency contact details are provided.
 - (g) Most importantly, consideration is given to how the participation in this scheme will be viewed by the broader volunteer workforce within the District. It is a requirement that the roles tasked to the job seeker are new and in addition to the roles that are undertaken by volunteers within the District.

Approval

- 3.13** An arrangement may only be entered into with the consent of the Regional Manager or Regional Business Manager.
- 3.14** Districts will need to become an approved community organisation for the purpose of participating in work experience activities. Refer to SOP P3.3.3-2.

Maximum hours of work

- 3.15** In many cases the job seeker will have a Work Experience Activity Requirement that outlines the minimum number of hours they need to work in order to meet the requirements for receiving income support. Despite any existing work experience activity requirements, the NSW RFS will only support participation to a maximum of *16 hours per week*

for any individual participating in work experience activities with the Service.

- 3.16** If the job seeker does not have a Work Experience Activity Requirement, the hours of work will need to be negotiated between the job seeker and the Job Services Australia provider. Occasionally, the Job Services Australia provider will ask the host organisation for input during this process.

Different types of work experience programs

- 3.17** There are a number of work experience programs that job seekers can participate in to obtain income support. Typically the NSW RFS might be asked to participate in the programs detailed in clauses 3.18 to 3.21 below.

Voluntary Work Placements

- 3.18** Voluntary Work Placements provide opportunities for job seekers to gain skills and experience by assisting approved community organisations with work which is of benefit to the community. Job seekers from the age of 18 years are eligible, and can elect to participate in this scheme.

Work for the Dole

- 3.19** The Work for the Dole program is a compulsory program for some job seekers that have been looking for work for an extended period of time. Work for the Dole places more emphasis on structured training and opportunities that will assist the job seeker to find employment, such as work experience that will develop or enhance a job seeker's ability to work as part of a team, be guided by a supervisor, work independently, communicate effectively and improve motivation and dependability.
- 3.20** Job seekers can participate in the Work for the Dole program on a part-time or full-time basis; this will be determined by an assessment process and can be advised by their Job Services Australia provider (*note that the NSW RFS will only support a placement up to a maximum of 16 hours p/week*).

Unpaid Work Experience

- 3.21** Unpaid work experience is a voluntary placement that provides job seekers with an opportunity to gain specific vocational skills and experience in a work-like environment. Placements can only take place for a period up to four weeks.

4. Links

- Service Standard 1.1.9 Child Related Activities
- Service Standard 2.1.8 Criminal History and Disciplinary Records Checks for NSW Volunteers
- SOP P3.3.3-1 National Police Checks for Federal Work Experience Applicants
- SOP P3.3.3-2 Becoming an Approved Community Organisation
- Job Services Australia
- Centrelink

5. Who is responsible for implementing the Policy?

Director Membership and Strategic Services

6. Amendments

- Initial release 27 August 2011



SOP P3.3.3 - 1

National Police Checks for Federal Government Work Experience Applicants

This SOP forms part of	P3.3.3 NSW RFS Participation in Federal Government Work Experience Activities
Related forms	Consent to Obtain Personal Information and 100 Point Identification (Federal Government Work Experience Activities) Form

1. Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to:

- 1.1 Outline the National Police Checking Service (NPCS) process for job seekers applying to participate in a Federal Government Work Experience Activity with the NSW RFS.
- 1.2 Provide information about Resource Management System (RMS) record keeping.

2. Procedures

National Police Checking Service (NPCS)

- 2.1 Individuals seeking to participate in any Federal Government work experience program will be required to undergo a background check. This check will be conducted by the Membership Coordination Unit, (MCU) even in instances where a background check has been completed through a Job Services Australia provider or by the NSW RFS previously.

Whilst the principles of NSW RFS Service Standard 2.1.8 *Criminal History and Disciplinary Records Checks* apply, there are exceptions in relation to the process for initiating a background check for individuals seeking to participate in Federal Government Work Experience Activities with the NSW RFS such as:

- (a) The 'Consent to Obtain Personal Information and 100 Point Identification Form (Federal Government Work Experience Activities)' must be completed.
- (b) 100 Point Identification Check must be sighted and verified by the District Manager or delegated staff member.

- (c) The form must be forwarded to the Regional Manager (RM) or Regional Business Manager (RBM)/Regional Membership Services Manager (RMSM) who must subsequently endorse (or otherwise) the participation in the work experience activity.
- 2.2 If supported, the RM/RBM/RMSM must forward the form to the MCU to conduct a background check through the National Police Checking Service (NPCS).
- 2.3 The MCU will advise the individual and the District Manager of the result.

RMS records

- 2.4 For the purpose of RMS records, individuals participating in Federal Government work experience activities will be categorised as 'work experience' and designated to the relevant Fire Control Centre within RMS, so as not to affect volunteer membership numbers. This will be completed by the MCU if the job seeker is approved following the background check.
- 2.5 Where an individual is an existing member of the NSW RFS, dual records will apply – i.e. their volunteer (brigade) membership records will not be altered.



SOP P3.3.3 – 2

Becoming an Approved Community Organisation

This SOP forms part of P3.3.3 NSW RFS Participation in Federal Government Work Experience Activities

Related forms Job Services Australia Application Form

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this SOP is to provide information that will assist Districts to become an approved community organisation for the purpose of participating in Federal Government Work Experience Activities.

2. Procedure

- 2.1 Job Services Australia providers may request a District to complete paperwork in order to become an approved community organisation for the purpose of participating in Federal Government Work Experience Activities.
- 2.2 The Job Services Australia provider will supply the relevant form which is to be completed on a District-by-District basis due to the nature of the information that is required.
- 2.3 The form requests some specific organisational questions surrounding NSW RFS insurance provisions and the information below will assist you in this regard:
- (a) The NSW RFS is a 'not-for-profit' organisation.
 - (b) The NSW RFS holds public liability insurance that covers volunteers (more than \$5M).
 - (c) The NSW RFS holds personal accident insurance which covers volunteer workers.