ONE NSW RFS

Communication and Engagement Strategy

Contents

1   Introduction

Effective communications and engagement are essential in fostering a unified NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) for all members – **One NSW RFS**. They are also integral to the professional operations, service delivery and reputation of the NSW RFS.

To deliver best practice communications and stakeholder engagement we need a clear framework. As such one of the 2012/13 key milestones identified in the NSW RFS Corporate Plan 2011-2015 was the implementation of a communication and engagement strategy.

The **One NSW RFS Communication and Engagement Strategy** was developed by the Corporate Communications Group in consultation with members through workshops, volunteer forums and committees, and quantitative and qualitative interviews and surveys.

It outlines our communication and engagement principles, key messages and current activities and provides a communication and engagement framework, including strategic objectives, initiatives and strategic outcomes, to ensure we are all focusing our energies in the same direction.

The aim is to ensure our communication and engagement activities are coordinated and focused, that they reach the targeted audiences in a consistent, timely and professional manner and that feedback and information sharing is encouraged to improve, refine and validate future directions.

We also want to be recognised as a consultative, participatory and transparent organisation and to provide the community with accessible government information to the fullest possible extent.

To supplement the Strategy we have developed the **One NSW RFS Tool Kit**. This includes a suite of easy-to-use templates and useful resources to assist our members in their communication and engagement activities.

We encourage NSW RFS members to read, embrace and use the Strategy and Tool Kit and participate in delivering best practice communications and engagement in our offices, regions, districts and brigades and with our communities, operational partners and external stakeholders.

2 One NSW RFS

Throughout the Strategy you will see the term **'One NSW RFS'**. We are using this to reinforce our unity, common direction, consistency and professionalism in everything we do.

Although we are geographically dispersed, from a range of cultures and backgrounds, performing a variety of roles and offering different skill sets, opinions and perspectives we are united as NSW RFS members. We are **One NSW RFS**.

We share our vision *to provide a world standard of excellence in the provision of a community-based fire and emergency service.*

We believe in the values of mutual respect; adaptability and resourcefulness; one team, many players, one purpose; integrity and trust; support, friendship, camaraderie; community and environment; and knowledge and learning.

Together we also share a responsibility to improve the quality of our communication and engagement activities for the benefit of our members, operational partners and external stakeholders including the NSW community, government, employers, peak organisations and the media.

3   Purpose

The purpose of the One NSW RFS Communication and Engagement Strategy is to ensure our communication and engagement activities are coordinated and focused, that they reach the targeted audiences in a consistent, timely and professional manner and that feedback and information sharing is encouraged to improve, refine and validate future directions.

The Strategy is primarily targeted at NSW RFS members by providing a best practice framework for how we communicate and engage. The Strategy outlines roles and responsibilities for all members including volunteers, senior brigade members and members in districts, regions and Headquarters.

The Strategy also gives our operational partners and external stakeholders an insight into our strategic objectives, communication and engagement principles and key messages and provides transparency about how we communicate and engage. We aim to provide opportunities for genuine collaboration and engagement and to meet the needs and expectations of the broader community.

Through specific communication and engagement activities, this Strategy seeks to:

> enable effective communication and engagement across all areas of the organisation and with our operational partners and external stakeholders

> ensure all stakeholders understand and support the communication and engagement direction and initiatives of the Service

> ensure all feedback is received and incorporated where appropriate

> ensure expectations are managed and that stakeholders understand clearly the purpose of our communication and engagement activities

> use and build on existing communication and engagement activities

> inform stakeholders of changes and Service initiatives and obtain their involvement

> ensure stakeholders have sufficient contextual/background information to communicate and engage internally and externally

> resolve issues through effective communications and engagement.

4 Strategic objectives

The process and preparation of the One NSW RFS Communication and Engagement Strategy should achieve the following strategic objectives and provide measurement of the effectiveness of communication and engagement activities.

1. **Consistent, accessible and effective communications.**

2. **Improved use of technology to meet communication needs and expectations.**

3. **Empowering stakeholders.**

There is more detail about these objectives, related initiatives to deliver on them and strategic outcomes in the One NSW RFS Communication and Engagement Framework in Section 12.

5 Challenges

The NSW RFS operates within a complex and dynamic environment and culture. Some key aspects will either impact communication and engagement activities and/or need to be taken into account in this Strategy. They include:

› Geographic spread of more than 70,000 volunteers operating in differing capacities in over 2,000 brigades across NSW combined with around 900 staff working mainly outside of Headquarters in districts and regions. This puts limitations on the general communication reach and on face-to-face communication and engagement activities.

› NSW RFS internal and external stakeholders are generationally, culturally and linguistically diverse and may not have the same access to communication channels.

› NSW RFS faces increasing demands as an emergency service agency both operationally and as a communicator with internal and external stakeholders with the community expecting high level and frequent information.

› NSW RFS is a unique public service agency given that 99 percent of our members are volunteers. We encompass both the community-based approach through volunteers and government organisation approach through our public service staff. The NSW RFS must support our volunteers while delivering essential services. This creates an added complexity.

› NSW RFS members have differing communication preferences – for example email, post, face-to-face, internet, extranet etc. Some members do not use or do not have access to technology such as email and the internet. We need to ensure relevant communication messages reach the target audiences via a variety of communication channels. Currently we do not have a centralised email distribution list for all members.

› All NSW RFS members are responsible for communicating and engaging within the organisation and must ensure information filters up and down.

› NSW RFS must ensure consistent and appropriate communications across all areas of the Service.

› NSW RFS terminology is highly specialised. Members need to be aware of their audience and use plain language when interacting with the community.

6 Stakeholders

We have a diverse range of stakeholders. We communicate and engage with the NSW community, government, employers, peak industry groups, operational partners, the media and our members. We monitor our communication and engagement activities through surveys, research, feedback and consultation.

Our stakeholders assist us to identify emerging issues, create new partnerships, and draw on the knowledge and expertise of individuals and groups who can assist us to protect the community and our environment and minimise the impact of fire and other emergencies.

Internal	External	Operational partners
NSW RFS members – volunteers and staff	Community (general, at risk, travellers, potential volunteers)	Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW)
Senior brigade members	Planners and developers	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
Group Captains and District SMTs (Senior Management Teams)	Media	Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC)
District staff	Minister for Police and Emergency Services	Forestry Corporation of NSW
District Managers	Ministry for Police and Emergency Services (MPES)	NSW Police Force
Regional staff	Department of Attorney General and Justice	NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES)
Regional Managers	MPs - State and Federal	NSW Ambulance
HQ staff	Local Government NSW (LGNSW) and local councils	NSW Health
HQ Managers	Other State and Territory Governments	Defence
Group Managers	Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA)	Transport for NSW
Directors	NSW RFS member representative groups	Bureau of Meteorology
Commissioner	Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC)	Ministry of Police and Emergency Services Recovery Function
	Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC)	Functional areas (St Johns, energy, telecommunications etc)
	Consultative Committees (Community Engagement, Membership Services, Regional Services, Infrastructure Services and Operational Services)	
	Emergency Service peak groups	
	Insurance industry	
	Peak industry groups	
	Tourism industry groups	
	NGOs and service providers (Red Cross, Anglicare etc)	
	Other government authorities	
	Employers of volunteers	
	Other associations (Farmers Association, Country Women's Association etc)	
	Charities and sponsors	

7 Participation Spectrum

The level of stakeholder participation depends on the impact our communication and engagement activities has on them organisationally or personally. Participation of and by stakeholders may range from informing to partnering and empowering.

Those who have most interest or the greatest stake in our communication and engagement activities are encouraged to partner with us to develop appropriate strategies, activities and resources and to assist with our strategic objectives to benefit members and the community.

We use the following participation spectrum to outline the kinds of activities we undertake to address the needs and responsibilities of stakeholders. This has been developed for the NSW RFS context from the International Association for Public Participation's IAP2 Participation Spectrum.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Aim: Keep stakeholders informed by providing clear, and accurate information	**Aim:** Keep stakeholders informed and obtain feedback and input	**Aim:** Work with stakeholders to ensure issues and aspirations are reflected in communication and engagement strategies, activities and resources	**Aim:** Partner with stakeholders in decision-making and development of communication and engagement strategies, activities and resources and incorporate advice and recommendations	**Aim:** Stakeholders take on their role and responsibility in communicating and engaging so it becomes business as usual and community members are supported to implement their decisions
Methods: Annoucements via public website, social media, internal communication channels, media releases, Bush Fire Information Line, and through community events, street meetings	**Methods:** Evaluation surveys, stakeholder meetings, social media and online forums	**Methods:** Stakeholder meetings, workshops, committees, sharing learnings, stakeholder surveys, risk management planning, fireground networking, phone trees, pager network, SMS, letterbox drops	**Methods:** Meetings, After Action Reviews, fireground networking, sharing learnings, working groups, project representation, consultative committees	**Methods:** Debriefs and After Action Reviews to share lessons learned and highlight key issues, deliverables and initiatives. Using One NSW RFS Tool Kit for members and supporting personal and property preparation for the community.
Stakeholders: Members, community and external stakeholders	**Stakeholders:** Members, community, operational partners and other external stakeholders	**Stakeholders:** Members, community, operational partners and external stakeholders	**Stakeholders:** Members, community, external stakeholders and operational partners	**Stakeholders:** Members and community

8 One NSW RFS Tool Kit

The One NSW RFS Tool Kit is included in the Participation Spectrum as a key method of empowering and supporting our members in a variety of roles.

It has been developed to give us consistency in our communication and engagement activities and materials and to save us all time.

It is readily available on MyRFS and the Intranet and includes a suite of easy-to-use templates and useful resources. It also aligns with our corporate messaging and branding.

Members can confidently insert their content into a consistent NSW RFS template without needing to work out the design. Members can also share and use approved content in their communication and engagement activities.

Easy-to-use NSW RFS templates include:

> PowerPoint presentations
> Reports and meeting minutes
> Community event flyers
> Fact sheets and brochures

Useful resources include:
> Generic presentations
> Multimedia and images
> Approved content and fact sheets
> NSW RFS written and visual style guide.

9 How we communicate and engage

Online communication	Other communication	Engagement activities
NSW RFS Public Website For all stakeholders	**Media Releases** For external stakeholders	**Events** Eg: Open Day, Bush Fire Awareness Week, Winter Fire Safety, State Championships, Cadet Championships, presentations and awards, brigade openings and events, community BBQs, memorial services
MyRFS Extranet site for members	**Public Awareness Campaign** For community	
Intranet For staff administration information	**Bush Fire Information Line** Service for community	
Email Updates for members	**Bush Fire Bulletin** Quarterly publication for members and subscribers	**Meetings and Forums** Eg: After Action Reviews, debriefs, pre-season briefings, community engagement forums, Regional forums and conferences, leadership forum, volunteer to career seminars, Captains/SMTs/FCC/brigade meetings, local government liaison
eBulletin Monthly e-newsletter for members	**Annual Report** For all stakeholders	
MyFirePlan / Fires Near Me NSW Mobile apps for the community	**Corporate Plan** For all stakeholders	
NSW RFS YouTube Channel For all stakeholders	**Bush Fire Survival Plan** For community during incidents	**Training** Eg: eLearning, forums and courses, qualifications, training booklets, Regional exercises, personal development. Includes media training for media personnel, Public Liaison Officer training, and community safety and liaison courses
NSW RFS RSS Feeds For the community	**Planning for Bush Fire Protection** For planners and developers	
District and Brigade Websites and Facebook Pages For members and community	**Operational Brief** Monthly update for members	
Engagement Matters Quarterly blog for community engagement practitioners	**Fact Sheets** For members and community	**Committees** Eg: Bush Fire Coordinating Committee, Rural Fire Service Advisory Council, Fire Services Joint Standing Committee, Corporate Executive Group, Rural Fire Service & Local Government Liaison Committee, RFSA Consultative Committees
FireWise Quarterly e-newsletter for community	**District and Brigade newsletters, flyers and brochures** For members and community	
Flickr Photos of NSW RFS activities for all stakeholders	**Roadside Signage** For community	**Programs and Projects** Eg: AIDER, Supportive Employer, International Programs, Neighbourhood Safer Places, Community Fire Units, Bush Fire Resilience for Remote Aboriginal Communities, Volunteer to Career, Secondary School Cadet Program, Chaplaincy and Family Support Program, Hotspots, Household Assessment Tool, Community Protection Plans, Risk Plans
Twitter For all stakeholders	**Other Channels** Eg: pager networks, local phone trees, local SMS groups For members	
Facebook Member Page Closed group for members		
Facebook Corporate Page For all stakeholders	**Accessible Information** Eg: Plain language, translated materials, use of interpreters, large font and eReader options For community	**Research and Consultation** Eg: AFAC, Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, NSW RFS Library, surveys, workshops, user group testing
Other Facebook Pages Eg: Community Engagement, State Championships, Commissioner For all stakeholders		**Informal Engagement Activities** Eg: Fireground networking, street meetings, regular face-to-face contact with the community

10 Key messages

The following overarching key messages have been developed from the six Key Focus Areas of the NSW RFS Corporate Plan and goals in NSW 2021 – A plan to make NSW number one.

1. Protect people, property and the environment

› PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE. Protect your family. Protect your life.

› Prepare your Bush Fire Survival Plan today.

› NSW RFS aims to increase the number of properties protected and address risk across NSW through a suite of measures including hazard reduction works, development control and community engagement.

› NSW RFS aims to increase the number of identified Neighbourhood Safer Places.

2. Lead coordinated bush firefighting and prevention in NSW

› NSW RFS leads bush firefighting and prevention in NSW to protect people, property and the environment.

› NSW RFS has a statutory responsibility to issue pubic warnings about bush fires.

› NSW RFS aims for accurate, timely and consistent communications.

› NSW RFS leads the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee and administers Bush Fire Management Committees by maintaining current bush fire risk plans and operational plans.

3. Enhance community resilience

› Preparing for bush fires is a shared responsibility.

› Bush fires may threaten without warning, so you need to know what you will do to survive.

› NSW RFS enhances community resilience to the impact of fires by educating and empowering the community through prevention and preparedness activities.

› We mobilise communities by encouraging more people to become involved in the NSW RFS and through training programs such as the Secondary School Cadet Program.

4. Value and support our members

› Our people are what make the NSW RFS. We are One NSW RFS.

› We believe in the values of mutual respect; adaptability and resourcefulness; one team, many players, one purpose; integrity and trust; support, friendship, camaraderie; community and environment; and knowledge and learning.

› We value and support NSW RFS members.

5. Build organisational capability and sustainability

› We foster a safe working culture, actively promoting a diverse, flexible and adaptive membership.

› We build capable and ethical leadership at all levels of the Service and promote a culture of reflection, learning and evidence-based decision making.

› We build and promote good governance practices and principles and effectively manage our assets and facilities.

6. Foster partnerships

› We acknowledge the agencies that support our activities.

› We develop mutually beneficial local, national and international strategic alliances to better serve communities locally and abroad.

› We recognise the support of employers and family members, whose contribution behind the scenes is critical.

11 One NSW RFS communication and engagement principles

Taking into consideration the challenges presented in Section 5, the following communication and engagement principles will be applied:

❯ Present information in language and at levels of detail consistent with the interest level and expertise of the intended audience.

❯ 'What's in it for me?' communication messages will focus on communicating how organisational changes/information will impact on key audiences. Communications must be relevant to each audience group.

❯ Where appropriate follow the organisational hierarchy when communicating internally: volunteers, brigade, district, region, HQ. Managers/senior volunteers to be well informed of any communication and engagement activities that are likely to involve their members.

❯ Adhere to agreed key messages.

❯ Ensure misinformation is corrected early.

❯ Ensure representative groups and committees are part of communication and engagement channels.

12 One NSW RFS communication and engagement framework

	Goal:		Initiatives:
Strategic Objective 1 **Consistent, accessible and effective communications**	NSW RFS communication and engagement activities and materials are consistent, accessible and effective	**1**	Ensure our communication activities have a beneficial purpose and meet expectations – understanding what information people want and delivering that information to help them make informed decisions (community) or to do their jobs better (members).
		2	Develop One NSW RFS Tool Kit to improve consistency and professionalism of our communications with the ability to access easy-to-use templates, style guides, and useful resources and approved content.
		3	Promote two-way communications rather than just information dissemination to ensure understanding and encourage feedback.
		4	Investigate ways to consolidate, simplify and improve internal communications.
		5	Educate members about our communications and engagement framework, communication principles, key messages and roles and responsibilities.
Strategic Objective 2 **Improved use of technology to meet communication needs and expectations**	NSW RFS members have access to tools which enable effective communications	**1**	Investigate better use of mobile devices to assist in delivering best practice communications and engagement.
		2	Redesign and improve navigation, useability and accessibility of NSW RFS public website.
		3	Improve user experience, accessibility, content, service delivery and support for MyRFS.
		4	Review the Intranet with the view to consolidation into single member site.
		5	Investigate and articulate ways for stakeholders to subscribe to information of interest.
Strategic Objective 3 **Empowering stakeholders**	NSW RFS members are empowered to communicate and engage effectively, and the community responds in an effective way	**1**	Hold Corporate Executive Group (CEG) meeting in regional NSW when possible to provide an opportunity for the Executive team to interact with members and stakeholders face-to-face and share organisational information.
		2	Develop key information fact sheets to support senior members in their communication and engagement activities.
		3	Create opportunities for stakeholder input.

Strategic outcomes:

> Communications are broad reaching, structured and timely.

> Communications are disseminated using appropriate communication channels.

> Key information is accessible – easy to find and understand, succinct and available in different formats.

> Communications are aligned with corporate messages and branding and engender a culture of openness and inclusiveness – One NSW RFS.

> Increased awareness of communication principles and NSW RFS member roles and responsibilities.

> Technology used that enhances our communication and engagement activities and meets demands in the future.

> Business units, regions, districts and brigades are able to effectively manage their communications and benefit from using the One NSW RFS Tool Kit.

> Key information is identified and made accessible to stakeholders through the preferred communication channels.

> Stakeholders are informed of key corporate messages, plans, decisions, policies, procedures and focus areas.

> Information is accessible, transparent, reusable and shared.

> Stakeholders have opportunity to engage through face-to-face and online interactions and participate through informal and formal feedback loops.

13 Roles and responsibilities

All members have a role in improving the way we communicate and engage with each other and our stakeholders. The table below will help outline your role and responsibilities. We will review this on a regular basis to ensure messages and tactics remain appropriate and that roles and responsibilities for the delivery of communication and engagement activities remain current.

Role	Responsibility
Members	› Use content provided through the One NSW RFS Tool Kit for communication and engagement activities › Feedback issues, risks and suggestions through appropriate channels › Provide input into communication materials and the One NSW RFS Tool Kit
Senior brigade members	› Use content provided through the One NSW RFS Tool Kit for communication and engagement activities › Provide feedback through organisational hierarchy on communications issues and risks › Keep brigade members informed and engaged › Key conduits for information to volunteers
Group Captains and District SMTs (Senior Management Teams)	› Formal communication channel between districts and brigades › Identify key communication issues and risks › Keep districts and brigades informed › Encourage members to communicate and engage effectively in their communities
District staff	› Use content provided through the One NSW RFS Tool Kit for communication and engagement activities › Key conduits for information to brigades › Provide frontline customer service for the community › Provide input into communication materials and the One NSW RFS Tool Kit › Feedback issues, risks and suggestions through appropriate channels
District Managers	› Provide advice on key issues and risks at a district level › Facilitate building relationships with local government and other key stakeholders and administering the Bush Fire Management Committee › Keep district staff, brigades and volunteers informed › Provide frontline customer service for the community › Key conduits for information to district staff and brigades › Ensure appropriate channels for feedback are in place › Support members to communicate and engage effectively in their communities

Stakeholder	Responsibility
Regional staff	❯ Use content provided through the One NSW RFS Tool Kit for communication and engagement activities ❯ Key conduits for information to district satff ❯ Provide input into communication materials and the One NSW RFS Tool Kit ❯ Feedback issues, risks and suggestions through appropriate channels
Regional Managers	❯ Provide direction and advice on key issues and risks at a regional level ❯ Keep regional staff and District Managers informed ❯ Key conduits for information to regional staff and District Managers ❯ Strengthen relationships with districts and brigades ❯ Ensure appropriate channels for feedback for volunteer and staff members are in place
HQ staff	❯ Use content provided through the One NSW RFS Tool Kit for communication and engagement activities ❯ Key conduits for information to the business units ❯ Provide input into communication materials and the One NSW RFS Tool Kit ❯ Feedback issues, risks and suggestions through appropriate channels
HQ Managers	❯ Assist with coordination of communication materials for their business unit ❯ Help reinforce communication and engagement principles and roles and responsibilities ❯ Key conduits for information to HQ staff and Regional and District Managers ❯ Key conduits of information to frontline staff ❯ Strengthen relationships with regions and districts ❯ Ensure appropriate channels for feedback are in place and volunteer and staff members consulted
Group Managers	❯ Provide direction and advice on key communication issues and risks from a Corporate/Operational level ❯ Key role in implementation of communication and engagement strategy within each Group ❯ Key conduits for information to HQ staff and Regional and District Managers ❯ Strengthen relationships with regions and districts ❯ Leadership role in helping reinforce communication and engagement principles and roles and responsibilities ❯ Manage expectations of staff and encourage member consultation

Stakeholder	Responsibility
Directors	❯ Provide direction and advice on key communication issues and risks on a Director level ❯ Key conduits for information to Regional and District Managers ❯ Promote communication and engagement principles broadly across the Service and ensure they are given appropriate level of priority within each Director's area
Commissioner	❯ Provide direction and advice on key communication issues and risks across the Service ❯ Reinforce communications hierarchy with regions and districts ❯ Provide leadership messages to all NSW RFS members ❯ Key conduit for information to all members about Service-wide issues ❯ Respond to issues affecting the community or members or media related issues ❯ Interface with Minister, media, RFSA, key stakeholders and committees etc
Corporate Communications	❯ Direct and lead communications and engagement initiatives across the NSW RFS ❯ Raise awareness for best practice communications and engagement ❯ Support members to communicate and engage effectively in their communities ❯ Coordinate implementation of the One NSW RFS Communication and Engagement Strategy across the Service ❯ Refine, edit and design communication and engagement material – the One NSW RFS Tool Kit ❯ Inform NSW RFS members about our communication and engagement principles, roles and responsibilities, communications and engagement framework and the benefits of the Tool Kit ❯ Educate members on how to use the Tool Kit and provide direction on NSW RFS written and visual style.

14 How does this work in practice?

Understanding our communication and engagement principles, key messages and roles and responsibilities will help us to effectively communicate and engage. Here are a few scenarios to show how this works in practice.

Scenario 1 – Volunteer wants to share some lessons learned about fire they went to last night. How can I do this?

> Option 1: Discuss in your brigade meetings or email a senior brigade member and ask for the information to be filtered up through the organisational hierarchy:

>> Volunteer to senior brigade member, senior brigade member to Group Captain/Senior Management Team (SMT), Group Manager/SMT to District Manager, District Manager to Regional Manager, Regional Manager to HQ Manager)

> Option 2: Choose other communication channels to share information keeping in mind our communication and engagement principles. For example:

>> Introducing a new forum discussion on MyRFS

>> Posting information on the NSW RFS Facebook Member page

>> Submitting a story contribution to the eBulletin or Bush Fire Bulletin.

> Option 3: Information shared by Corporate Communications more broadly if applicable (eg via MyRFS, Facebook Member page, eBulletin, Bush Fire Bulletin) or by other members through presentations, meetings etc.

> Note: Always encourage feedback via established communication channels or through organisational hierarchy. Remember there is a lead time for having information published in the eBulletin or Bush Fire Bulletin.

Scenario 2 – District Manager wants to communicate about a District navigation exercise or field day. How do I ensure my message is delivered?

> Step 1: Consider the planning activities that are involved (eg liaising with Group Captains, organising catering, contacting council to get the park closed, obtaining planning permits, organising live fire demonstration permits, possibly involving Fire and Rescue NSW, talking to adjoining Districts)

> Step 2: Apply the communication and engagement principles when drafting the communication and get necessary approvals

> Step 3: Filter message out through organisational hierarchy by email or through existing forums/meetings:

>> District Manager to Group Captain/Senior Management Team (SMT) and Group Captain/SMT to brigade

> Step 4: District Manager to reinforce message through supporting communication channels such as District News page on MyRFS and through local communication channels

> Step 5: Senior brigade members to follow through with supporting engagement activities such as face-to-face information sharing in Brigade meetings

> Step 6: District Manager to measure success of communications through feedback received and attendance at exercise/field day.

Scenario 3 – Headquarters Manager wants to communicate about upcoming training opportunities. How do I ensure my message is delivered?

❯ Step 1: Apply the communication and engagement principles when drafting the communication and get necessary approvals (eg Group Manager and/or Director)

   Note: Engage with Corporate Communications if needed for advice on messaging and engagement activities etc.

❯ Step 2: Filter message out through organisational hierarchy by email or through existing forums/ meetings:

   ❯ HQ Manager to HQ staff and Regional Manager, Regional Manager to Regional staff and District Manager, District Manager to District staff and Group Captain/Senior Management Team (SMT) and Group Captain/SMT to brigade

❯ Step 3: HQ Manager/Corporate Communications to reinforce message through supporting communication channels such as MyRFS, eBulletin, Facebook Member page etc

❯ Step 4: Senior brigade members to follow through with supporting engagement activities such as face-to-face information sharing in brigade meetings

❯ Step 5: HQ Manager to measure success of communications through feedback received and attendance at training sessions.

15 Implementation plan for 2013-2015

The table below outlines the 2013-2015 implementation plan for the initiatives listed in the One NSW RFS Communication and Engagement Framework. The Corporate Communications Group will lead the initiatives with the support of other areas of the organisation including brigades, districts, regions, business units and the Executive. The progress of these initiatives will be reported against on a quarterly basis.

Strategic Objective	Initiative	Lead responsibility	Support role / participants
Strategic Objective 1 – Consistent, accessible and effective communications	Ensure our communication activities have a beneficial purpose and meet expectations – understanding what information people want and delivering that information to help them make informed decisions (community) or to do their jobs better (members).	Corporate Communications	All NSW RFS members
	Develop One NSW RFS Tool Kit to improve consistency and professionalism of our communications with the ability to access easy-to-use templates, style guides, and useful resources and approved content.	Corporate Communications	ICT, regions, districts, brigades
	Promote two-way communications rather than just information dissemination to ensure understanding and encourage feedback.	Corporate Communications	All NSW RFS members
	Investigate ways to consolidate, simplify and improve internal communications.	Corporate Communications	ICT, business units, regions, districts, brigades
	Educate members about our communication and engagement framework, communication principles, key messages and roles and responsibilities.	Corporate Communications	Business units, regions, districts, brigades
Strategic Objective 2 – Improved use of technology to meet communication needs and expectations	Investigate better use of mobile devices to assist in delivering best practice communications and engagement.	Corporate Communications	ICT
	Redesign and improve navigation, useability and accessibility of NSW RFS public website.	Corporate Communications	ICT
	Improve user experience, accessibility, content, service delivery and support for MyRFS.	Corporate Communications	SAP Project Team, ICT
	Review the Intranet with the view to consolidation into single member site.	Corporate Communications	ICT
	Investigate and articulate ways for stakeholders to subscribe to information of interest.	Corporate Communications	ICT

Strategic Objective	Initiative	Lead responsibility	Support role / participants
Strategic Objective 3 – Empowering stakeholders	Hold Corporate Executive Group (CEG) meeting in regional NSW when possible to provide an opportunity for the Executive team to interact with members and stakeholders face-to-face and share organisational information.	Commissioner's Office Secretariat Corporate Communications	All Directorates, regions, districts, brigades
	Develop key information fact sheets to support senior members in their communication and engagement activities.	Corporate Communications	Business units, regions, districts
	Create opportunities for stakeholder input.	Corporate Communications	Business units, regions, districts, brigades

16 Evaluation

We need to know what good communications and engagement look like in order to evaluate if we are doing well as an organisation.

Key elements of good communications are:

❯ Two-way communications

❯ Listening at all levels of the organisation

❯ Access to useful resources and accurate, timely and reliable information

❯ Developing relationships through involvement and consultation

❯ Face-to-face interactions as much as possible

❯ Fostering a culture where people are valued and recognised.

Key elements of good engagement are:

❯ Liking what we're trying to achieve

❯ Being committed

❯ Working individually to perform well and also collectively for the wider strategic goals

❯ Knowing in advance what we're trying to achieve and being able to clearly see how we, individually and collectively, will reach that goal

❯ Being able to see the results of our work

❯ Having an opportunity to share lessons learned

❯ Feeling that our opinions count

❯ Having opportunities to learn and grow.

The Corporate Communications Group will review the One NSW RFS Communications and Engagement Strategy regularly to ensure the communication and engagement principles, key messages and roles and responsibilities remain current.

To ensure continuous improvement we will establish a baseline and set benchmarks for our communication and engagement activities. We will measure against these through a variety of ways including:

❯ Online tracking - visits to the public website, MyRFS, Intranet, subscribers to official communication channels, downloads of information, sharing of information

❯ Scheduling - ensuring we are meeting timeframes set in the implementation plan

❯ Surveys - gauging whether people are informed, have a voice and access to accurate, timely and reliable information

❯ Stocktakes/audits - of current activities to measure progress and change over time. For example publications that are consistent, accessible and effective, up-to-date information on communication channels

❯ Feedback - through emails/calls/conversations providing comments, questions, suggestions and raising issues at all levels of the organisation.

Governance for the Strategy will also include planning and quarterly reporting against the strategic objectives and initiatives outlined in the communication and engagement framework and implementation plan.

New initiatives and success measures will be identified every two years and the implementation plan updated accordingly.

The One NSW RFS Tool Kit will be continually updated as new templates and resources are developed and it will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it provides the required resources.

17 Feedback

Stakeholder feedback and input is essential in the development and implementation of the One NSW RFS Communication and Engagement Strategy and the One NSW RFS Tool Kit.

For communications to be effective it must be two-way. This includes surveys, feedback loops, online forums, input into planning processes, workshops, question and answer sessions and face-to-face meetings.

All feedback can be forwarded to **organisational.communications@rfs.nsw.gov.au** or contact Phillippa Baume, Manager Organisational Communications on 02 8741 5192 or **phillippa.baume@rfs.nsw.gov.au**

18 Related documents

This Strategy has linkages with the following documents:

> NSW 2021 – A plan to make NSW number one
> NSW RFS Corporate Plan 2011-2015
> Community Engagement Strategy and Tool Kit
> Service Standard 1.1.22 Organisational Communications
> Service Standard 1.1.6 Media Relations
> Service Standard 1.4.2 Corporate Visual Identity
> Service Standard 1.4.5 Social Media
> Service Standard 1.4.6 NSW RFS Websites