



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

2021 UPDATE


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Reviewed by

Name	Signature	Title	Date	Version
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Approved by

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Overview

This Corporate Governance Statement sets out the NSW Rural Fire Service's (NSW RFS) commitment to corporate governance. It identifies the processes in place that contribute to the framework within which the NSW RFS undertakes its governance responsibilities and supports volunteer members of the Service. This commitment to corporate governance also supports the NSW RFS' operational emergency management arrangements.

The NSW RFS has adopted an integrated approach incorporating the disciplines of corporate governance, risk management, quality management and compliance. This approach was adapted from the Audit Office of New South Wales governance framework and is highlighted in Attachment A: NSW RFS Governance Map.

The objectives of this integration are to ensure that:

- consistent governance structures and mechanisms provide information and assurance that the NSW RFS is delivering results that are aligned with Government priorities;
- appropriate governance mechanisms are in place;
- there is clarity in reporting so that sound information is available for decision-making;
- roles and responsibilities of individuals and committees are clearly understood;
- accountability for establishing, maintaining and reporting on key governance mechanisms is identified;
- there is awareness by all staff of the meaning and importance of corporate governance and their individual governance roles and responsibilities;
- corporate values are firmly embedded throughout the organisation, supporting an ethical culture;
- there are strong links between corporate and business planning, risk management, and compliance;
- there is compliance with statutory and government requirements and internal values; and
- there is stakeholder confidence, leading to greater trust in and acceptance of decision-making as well as willingness to engage and collaborate with the NSW RFS.

This Statement is reviewed annually to ensure alignment with leading practice corporate governance standards and to reflect any statutory and organisational changes. The outcomes of these reviews will be reported to key stakeholders, including to the NSW RFS Audit and Risk Committee.

This Statement was last reviewed and updated in September 2021.

NSW RFS Values

In exercising our functions under the *Rural Fires Act 1997* and underpinning our governance arrangements we value:

- Mutual Respect
 - We actively seek and value everyone's contribution
 - We acknowledge differences in people
 - Constructive comment is accepted as a positive contribution to the richness of our organisation
 - We encourage accepting responsibility and accountability while avoiding a "blaming" culture
 - We respect the dignity of each and every person in all our communications
- Adaptability and Resourcefulness
 - We encourage creativity and flexibility, while approaching our work sensibly and with safety
 - Initiative and continuous development are necessary and to be encouraged within our approved standards, procedures and guidelines
 - We encourage open mindedness
 - We are analytical in our approach to tasks and the Service encourages progression in new methods, alternatives, equipment and processes
- One Team, Many Players, One Purpose
 - We encourage diversity: our organisation is reflective of our communities
 - We encourage contribution from all areas
 - Consultation and engagement of stakeholders are essential to the success of the NSW RFS
 - We target a diverse range of groups in our communications and the promotion of our organisation
- Integrity and Trust
 - We communicate clearly what we expect from each other
 - We take personal responsibility for actions and commitments that we make
 - We are both respectful and open with each other
 - We foster a climate of trust and reliability
 - Open and informed decision making is promoted and encouraged
- Support, Friendship, Camaraderie
 - We provide a welcome atmosphere for all
 - We support each other in all activities
 - We foster a sense of belonging, purpose, enjoyment and involvement
 - We mentor our people to help develop their full potential
- Community and Environment
 - We go above and beyond to make a difference in the community and our environment
 - We undertake our roles and behave in a way that is inspiring to others
 - We see building community capacity as central to our mission
 - We engage with the youth of our communities to ensure the sustainability of the Service
 - We are mindful of the ecological and environmental impact of our activities
- Knowledge and Learning
 - We foster a climate of continuous learning and sharing of information
 - We encourage self-reflection and personal growth
 - We enhance our knowledge through participation in a range of forums
 - We actively participate in research and embed the learning into our organisation
 - Debriefing is important, necessary and to be encouraged to improve our standards, procedures and guidelines

Objectives and functions of the NSW RFS

The *Rural Fires Act 1997* establishes the NSW RFS as an independent statutory authority. The Objects of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* No 65 are to provide:

- (a) for the prevention, mitigation and suppression of bush and other fires in local government areas (or parts of areas) and other parts of the State constituted as rural fire districts, and
- (b) for the co-ordination of bush fire fighting and bush fire prevention throughout the State, and
- (c) for the protection of persons from injury or death, and property from damage, arising from fires, and
- (c1) for the protection of infrastructure and environmental, economic, cultural, agricultural and community assets from damage arising from fires, and
- (d) for the protection of the environment by requiring certain activities referred to in paragraphs (a)-(c) to be carried out having regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development described in section 6 (2) of the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*.

The NSW RFS has the following functions, under section 9 of the Act:

- (1) The NSW Rural Fire Service has the following functions:
 - a. to provide rural fire services for New South Wales,
 - b. to issue public warnings about bush fires and bush fire threats in the State for the purpose of protecting life and property,
 - c. to provide advisory services (whether within or outside the State) relating to fire fighting and other matters with respect to which it has expertise,
 - d. as directed by the State Emergency Operations Controller, to deal with an emergency where no other agency has lawful authority to assume command of the emergency operation,
 - e. to carry out, by accredited brigades, rescue operations allocated by the State Rescue Board,
 - f. to assist the State Emergency Operations Controller to carry out emergency management functions relating to the prevention of, preparation for and response to, and to assist the State Emergency Recovery Controller to carry out emergency management functions relating to the recovery from, emergencies in accordance with the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989*,
 - g. to assist, at their request, members of the NSW Police Force, Fire and Rescue NSW, the State Emergency Service or the Ambulance Service of NSW in dealing with any incident or emergency,
 - h. to maintain effective liaison with all emergency services organisations,
 - i. to carry out such other functions as may be assigned to it by or under this or any other Act, or by the State Emergency Operations Controller or the Minister,
 - j. to do anything necessary for, or incidental to, the exercise of its functions.
- (2) The functions of the Service are to be exercised in accordance with the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* and, in particular, with the requirements under the State Emergency Management Plan or any state of emergency under that Act.
- (3) The Service is to have regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development described in section 6 (2) of the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991* in carrying out any function that affects the environment.
- (4) In this section **rural fire services** includes the following:

- a) services for the prevention, mitigation and suppression of fires in rural fire districts,
- b) the protection of persons from dangers to their safety and health, and property from destruction or damage, arising from fires in rural fire districts,
 - b1) the protection of infrastructure and environmental, economic, cultural, agricultural and community assets from destruction or damage arising from fires in rural fire districts,
- c) the provision of services referred to in paragraphs (a) - (b1) throughout the State in accordance with Part 3,
- d) any other service prescribed by the regulations.

NSW RFS Corporate Governance Framework

Sections 4 to 11 provide information on the key components of the NSW RFS' Governance arrangements that collectively form the NSW RFS' Corporate Governance Framework.

1 Management and oversight

The NSW RFS comprises nearly 2,000 rural fire brigades with a total volunteer membership of 71,234 members (*as reported for 2018/19*).

Over 1070 staff members are employed to manage the day to day operations of the Service at District Fire Control Centres, Area Commands, Customer Service Centres, Operational and Mitigation Support Service bases and Headquarters.

The NSW RFS is comprised of four Directorates, each headed by a Deputy Commissioner or Executive Director.

The Directorates are:

- **People & Strategy**
- **Technology, Finance & Legal**
- **Field Operations**
- **Preparedness & Capability**

The NSW RFS is headed by the Commissioner, who is appointed by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and has overall responsibility for the management of the NSW RFS.

The Commissioner provides leadership for the Service and has responsibility for exercising its functions, responsibilities and obligations under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*, determining strategic priorities and the organisation's policies and service standards.

The Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners and Executive Directors regularly and actively connect with all members and key stakeholders. This involves staff meetings, special events and ceremonies, forums and consultative committees.

To support the Commissioner a number of key governance controls, policies and decision-making structures have been developed to provide guidance for the Service and to ensure a high level of accountability. These are outlined, as follows:

1.1 Corporate Plan

The NSW RFS Corporate Plan defines the strategic key focus areas and objectives for the Service. It sets priorities to govern and guide the organisation's strategic position across all areas of the Service. The Corporate Plan also defines the NSW RFS' vision and mission.

The NSW RFS Corporate Plan is informed by Government directions. It provides longer term direction and strategies to achieve outcomes.

1.2 Nine Priority Projects for 2021/22

Following the NSW Bushfire Inquiry and the Royal Commission into Natural Disaster Arrangements, the NSW RFS continues to deliver priority projects for 2021/22, aligned to its strategic direction. They are:

- Australian Fire Danger Rating System
- Benevolent Fund
- Station Connectivity
- Mapping Software
- Digital ID
- Mental Health
- Workplace Conduct
- Next Generation Fleet
- Design of Fire Applicants
- Mobile Data Terminals for Firefighting Vehicles
- PPE – Respiratory Protection
- Emergency Logistics Program

1.3 Reporting regime

The NSW RFS has in place a comprehensive reporting regime to monitor performance, achievement of outcomes, risks, compliance and financial information. This includes reporting on risk management, internal audit activities and budgets. These reports are provided to a wide audience including key committees (see Section 5 for details) on a regular basis and they are made available to those staff with governance roles and responsibilities to support strategic decision making and continuous improvement.

This reporting regime has an annual component. It includes the submission of the NSW RFS Annual Report to the Minister and then to Parliament. This report is posted on the NSW RFS public website to ensure it is readily available to the general community.

1.4 Clear accountability and delegations

Accountability in the NSW RFS is primarily allocated in role descriptions and policy documents. The role descriptions include key accountabilities in order to guide and govern performance in the organisation. They are translated, at an individual level, into work plans, which articulate the activities and outcomes expected for each individual.

Delegations in the NSW RFS are set out in guidance documents for both staff and volunteers. These documents reinforce “who can do what when” and are regularly reviewed. In addition, corporate systems, such as SAP, have been established with their workflow configuration based on delegations related to roles.

The NSW RFS maintains a Financial Delegations Policy, which is approved by the Minister, to ensure that delegations for staff remain compliant with:

- applicable legislation;
- NSW government mandates, policies and initiatives; and
- NSW government procurement guidelines.

In addition to the Financial Delegations Policy (P4.1.1) there is also an Administrative Delegations Policy (P2.1.1), which includes procurement delegations.

1.5 Diversity policy

The NSW RFS addresses diversity with a wide range of activities which are supported by relevant Policies and Service Standards, including a Respectful and Inclusive Workplace Service Standard. This Service Standard outlines the NSW RFS' strong commitment to providing and maintaining a respectful and inclusive workplace, where all members are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect at all times and in all work locations.

In 2021/22 the Service will update its Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan to re-engage members and reflect contemporary approaches to developing diversity and enhancing inclusion.

The NSW RFS also engages in key industry wide diversity initiatives such the Male Champions of Change program.

2 Structure and key governance committees

The Commissioner is advised on specific matters by a number of committees. These include a number of statutory committees, an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) (as detailed in the Section 7.1), and the Corporate Executive Group (CEG). There are also consultative committees in place including with the Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA), with Local Government through the Local Government Liaison Committee (LGLC), with Staff through the Workplace Advisory Committee (WAC) and with the Public Service Association (PSA).

Of these committees, the following are of significance to corporate governance:

2.1 Statutory committees

Statutory Committees contribute to the strategic decision-making relevant to the NSW RFS and its interaction between the community and other firefighting agencies.

Statutory Committees were formed to fulfil the requirements of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* and the *Fire Services Joint Standing Committee Act 1998*. These committees are:

➤ **Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee (BFCC)**

The *Rural Fires Act 1997* requires the NSW RFS to maintain the BFCC. The BFCC is responsible for the coordination of all State firefighting agencies including the NSW RFS, Fire and Rescue NSW, Forests NSW, Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and various animal and environment agencies and land managers. The BFCC advises the Commissioner and the Minister of Emergency Services on bush fire prevention and suppression matters.

➤ **Rural Fire Service Advisory Council (RFSAC)**

The RFSAC advises and reports to the Minister and the Commissioner on any matter relating to the administration of rural fire services under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. The RFSAC also advises the Commissioner on public education programs relating to rural fire matters, the training of rural fire fighters and Service Standards.

➤ **Fire Services Joint Standing Committee (FSJSC)**

The FSJSC, under the *Fire Service Joint Standing Committee Act 1998*, ensures cooperation between the NSW RFS and Fire and Rescue NSW

➤ **State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC)**

The *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* sets out State arrangements for emergency and rescue management with provisions for bushfire fighting under emergency management. Under this Act, the State recognises three levels of management:

- State Emergency Management Committee;

- District Emergency Management Committee; and
- Local Emergency Management Committee;

All levels are required to prepare and maintain a Disaster Plan (Displan) for the prevention, preparation, response and recovery of emergency events.

2.2 Corporate Executive Group

The Corporate Executive Group (CEG) has the principal roles of considering higher level strategic issues and providing advice to the Commissioner, as per its Charter.

- Commissioner (Chair)
- Executive Directors
- Directors Area Operations
- Director Response & Coordination
- Director Information and Communication Technology
- Two volunteer representatives of the RFSA

The CEG provides advice to the Commissioner across a range of areas including the strategic plan of the Service, financial reports, major projects, standards and policies, and continuous improvement opportunities.

3 Ethics

3.1 Ethical framework

The NSW RFS models its ethical framework on the *Ethical Framework for the NSW government sector*. Central to this framework is the comprehensive NSW RFS Code of Conduct and Ethics that is consistent with leading practice and the NSW Public Service Commission Direction. The Code, which is set out in a Service Standard, outlines the fundamental values and principles that define the standards of behaviour expected by all members of the NSW RFS. The Code has been endorsed by the Commissioner through the Policy Review Committee. All staff are required to acknowledge their understanding of the Code and its requirements annually through a self-declaration process.

The Code of Conduct and Ethics is made available to all members on recruitment, supported by training for all staff and senior volunteers and it is also posted on the Service's web pages. In addition, it is supported by policy documents covering Conflict of Interests, Grievances, Discipline and Personal Information and Privacy matters.

All NSW RFS Senior Executives are required to provide an annual declaration that relevant registers have been established and that staff have adhered to policy requirements in relation to conflicts of interest (pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests), gifts and benefits, and other paid employment.

For external stakeholders engaged in NSW RFS business activities, as part of the Ethical Framework, the Service has in place a Statement of Business Ethics. This provides guidance to commercial partners and suppliers on expected behaviours.

3.2 Fraud and corruption control framework

The NSW RFS has a Fraud and Corruption Control Framework in place. This Framework comprises key elements including public interest disclosures, conflict of interest and gifts and benefits. Fraud and corruption control is informed by a risk management approach (see Section 10 for details). As part of the Framework, the NSW RFS has a Fraud and Corruption Prevention Control plan in place. This plan covers the key issues of:

- Planning and Resourcing;

- Prevention;
- Detection; and
- Response.

Further to the Framework, the NSW RFS has in place a Fraud and Corruption Strategy, a Fraud and Corruption Prevention Service Standard as well as an identified Corruption Prevention Officer. Training from key external agencies, such as NSW ICAC and the Ethics Centre, is regularly provided for staff.

In line with the 2015 Audit Office Fraud Control Improvement Kit, an annual Fraud Control Health Check sampling business sections of the Service was in 2016, 2017 and in 2018 which has resulted in all business sections/ work locations being surveyed over this three-year cycle. Now that a baseline has been established the Fraud Control Health Check will now be conducted across all business units periodically, with the next occurring in late 2021.

To assist in controlling and minimising fraud and corruption, the NSW RFS has developed and implemented a Procurement Manual to support and guide procurement activities across the Service.

3.3 Compliance framework

The NSW RFS has developed a Compliance Management System, based on AS ISO 19600:2015 Compliance management systems – Guidelines.

The NSW RFS operates, maintains and continually improves a Compliance Register (CR). The aim of maintaining this register is to ensure that the NSW RFS manages its compliance obligations.

The CR identifies responsible officers for the obligations listed in it. These officers are accountable for regularly reviewing the compliance information to ensure the NSW RFS continues to comply with its obligations. Built into this review process is an annual review of NSW RFS compliance management processes and the CR by the Executive and the ARC.

The NSW RFS has in place a regular scanning process and all policy documents include reference to the relevant laws/legislation. Responsible officers are asked to identify areas where the NSW RFS is at risk of failing to comply with its obligations and to take action to minimise that risk.

To assist in ensuring contract compliance, the Procurement Section has established a Contract Management system to support their monitoring of contract conditions and obligations.

These compliance management activities are regularly reported on to the Commissioner, the Executive Directors and to key committees including the Audit and Risk Committee.

4 Corporate reporting

In addition to the reporting outlined in Section 4.2 above, the NSW RFS regularly reports on its performance. This reporting reflects the Service's accountability to the public and includes the following:

4.1 Audit and Risk Committee

The NSW RFS operates an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) in line with the requirements of NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines Paper: tpp15-03: Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the NSW Public Sector.

The objective of the ARC is to provide independent assistance to the Commissioner by overseeing and monitoring the Service's governance, risk management framework, and its external accountability requirements. The ARC, which has a fully independent membership, is provided with regular reports to assist with their oversight and monitoring role.

Whilst the ARC has no executive powers, it is directly responsible and accountable to the Commissioner for the exercise of its responsibilities. The ARC undertakes an annual self-assessment of its performance and reports this to the Commissioner.

The ARC is kept regularly informed of internal audit activities. These activities are a key component of the NSW RFS' governance. Internal audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve the Service's operations. It helps the Service to accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

Internal and external audit activities are coordinated to help ensure the adequacy of overall audit coverage and to minimise duplication of effort.

An Internal Audit Charter and an Internal Audit Manual have been developed in line with the relevant core requirements of TPP15-03 Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the NSW Public Sector. This provides a framework for the conduct, operation and maintenance of the Internal Audit function within the NSW RFS.

The Chief Audit Executive is responsible on a day to day basis for the internal audit function. The Internal Audit function, through the Chief Audit Executive, reports functionally to the ARC on the results of completed audits, and for strategic direction and accountability purposes, and reports administratively to the Commissioner to facilitate day to day operations.

The NSW RFS organisational risk management approach is summarised in Section 10 below.

4.2 Internal and external audit

As outlined above the NSW RFS internal and external audit operates in line with tpp15-03 Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the NSW Public Sector.

For internal audit there is a three-year Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP) that identifies the focus of audits, the key objectives and when the audit is scheduled to be undertaken. This plan is provided by the Chief Audit Executive to those involved in the audits and to key stakeholders.

Internal audits are conducted to provide assurance of the existence of appropriate systems and documentation, compliance with those systems and the effectiveness of controls. The NSW RFS is also subject to external audit by the Audit Office of NSW under the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

Once completed, the key findings of the audit, any recommendations made and the associated management responses are provided to the ARC, with the auditors presenting their findings directly to the ARC. This is followed up with regular reporting on the progress related to the implementation of the recommendations.

4.3 Commissioner and CFO sign-off

The NSW RFS has a Finance Committee in place. This committee performs a range of functions including overseeing the internal budget process, reviewing monthly financial management reports and monitoring performance against budget targets. This committee comprises the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioners, and the Executive Directors with the Executive Director Technology Finance & Legal also being the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and meets on a monthly basis.

All procurement, purchasing, contracting and other financial activities comply with the requirements of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, Treasury Circulars and other government guidelines. Financial management and reporting in the NSW RFS is governed by these NSW Government requirements and obligations.

In addition, the ARC monitors compliance with internal management and financial control systems. Financial reports are provided regularly to the ARC by the CFO and ARC Financial meetings are held regularly, in addition to main ARC meetings.

The Commissioner and the CFO provide an annual sign off on the external audit management representation letter and this is then supplied to the Audit Office, as per their requirements.

5 Disclosure

5.1 Annual Report

The NSW RFS prepares an Annual Report in accordance with the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984* and associated Regulation.

Once this report has been tabled in Parliament it is made available on the NSW RFS public website. Also, all the Service's Policies and Service Standards are made available on the NSW RFS public website in addition to their internal availability.

5.2 Continuous disclosure

The NSW RFS has a Continuous Disclosure Policy (P1.1.7) in place. The aim of this policy is to meet community expectations of a more open and transparent government and proactive release of government information. Further, this disclosure is supported by a Service Standard covering Public Access to Government Information.

The NSW RFS has arrangements in place for the management of its responsibilities under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA)*. These arrangements include maintaining a Disclosure Log and having a Right to Information Officer.

Further to this, emerging issues of significant public interest are continuously disclosed to the Minister through briefings.

6 Remuneration

All the NSW RFS Senior Executives are engaged under the NSW Public Sector Senior Executive (PSSE) arrangements. Their performance agreements include criteria drawn from the NSW RFS Corporate Plan together with the mandatory requirements set by the Public Service Commission.

All other staff are covered by relevant Crown Awards and the Crown Employees (Rural Fire Service) Award and their remuneration and conditions of employment are indexed to Industrial Relations Commission Award movements.

7 Risk management

7.1 Risk management program

The NSW RFS operates, maintains and continually improves a Risk Management Framework that complies with the relevant core requirements of NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines Paper tpp15-03 Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the NSW Public Sector and is aligned with ISO 31000:2018 Risk management – Guidelines, and the AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management – Principles and guidelines.

Central to this framework is the Organisational Risk Management Policy (P7.1.10), which reflects a documented approach to ensure risk is managed consistently across the Service. 2021/22 will see the service transition to an Enterprise Risk Management Framework following review, that will be implemented comprehensively by end 2022.

The NSW RFS has an appointed Chief Risk Officer as recommended in TPP15-03 Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the NSW Public Sector.

To ensure the appropriate management of enterprise risks, they are recorded on an enterprise risk register as a record. These records summarise the risk, identify the risk rating, outline the key controls and proposed additional treatments when these are required. The records are regularly reviewed and reported on by the risk owner and then an overall report is provided to the ARC. All risks on the registers are formally reviewed at least annually.

Risk Treatment Plans are developed to address risks where the controls need to be strengthened and further action is required. These treatment requirements have strong relationships with the Priority Projects and responses to various Inquiries. This is to ensure treatments are tracked and that the residual risk is within acceptable limits.

Risk management is integrated with the corporate planning and reporting process, with compliance management, the Internal Audit planning process, project management, as well as the various other elements of the NSW RFS' corporate governance decision-making structures.

7.2 CEO and management sign-off on internal controls

To support the Commissioner and the CFO in their sign off on internal controls, all Directors and Managers complete an Annual Management Certification questionnaire on the internal controls in place across the Service. The responses to this questionnaire support the CFO to meet the requirements of NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines Paper tpp14-05 Certifying the Effectiveness of Internal Controls Over Financial Information.

The Internal Audit and Risk Management Statement is published in NSW RFS Annual Report, reflecting the adequacy of the Service's internal controls

8 Key stakeholder rights

The suite of NSW RFS' stakeholders are clearly identified by the Service and are outlined in the Service's Annual Report. Within this suite, the people of NSW and our members are seen as the NSW RFS' key customers.

In July 2017 the NSW RFS released a Community Engagement Strategic Directions document for 2017–2021. The Directions aim to enhance collaboration between staff, volunteers and the community to encourage information sharing and feedback. The Directions reflect the fact the NSW RFS considers its stakeholders as integral to its professional operations, service delivery and reputation.

In relation to key stakeholders the NSW RFS facilitates a range of consultative forums. These include, for example, Consultative Committees with the RFSA covering Community Engagement, Infrastructure Services, Membership Services and Operations.

Two-way interaction with stakeholders is undertaken through a range of public channels including Facebook, Twitter and public events such as the Get Ready Weekend and education programs in schools.

Interaction with members includes activities such as Captain's meetings, Group Officer Forums, Regional Training Advisory Group meetings, Community Engagement conferences and Leadership and Young Members Forums.

The NSW RFS has put in place a Complaints Management Policy. This policy is intended to ensure that the handles complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively and to provide guidance to members and people who wish to make a complaint. The NSW RFS provides an opportunity for the general public to lodge a complaint via its public website.

In addition to the above, information about the Service's role and functions is made publicly available on the Service's website and social media platforms.

The NSW RFS has a proactive approach to engagement with national peak industry stakeholders, such as with the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC), having representation on the AFAC Board with the Commissioner being the Deputy President.

The NSW RFS has also developed a range of partnerships, including international assistance, to broaden its engagement and industry positioning.

9 Summary

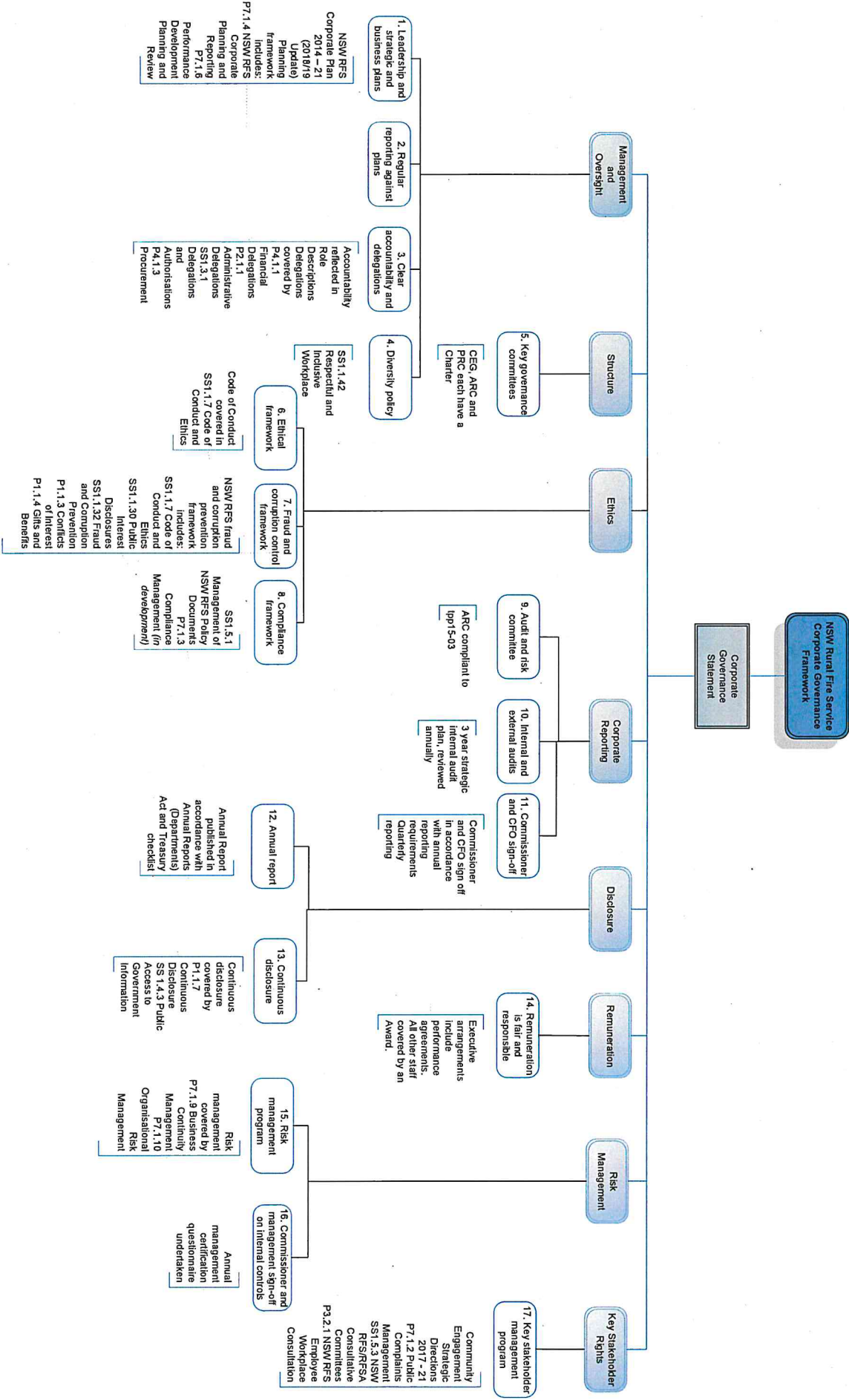
The Corporate Governance arrangements outlined above reflect a comprehensive range of controls, policies and decision-making structures that are implemented by the NSW RFS. These contribute to its overall performance and support its conformance to all relevant requirements.

This Corporate Governance Statement is not a standalone document. It should be viewed in the context of the governance activities that it outlines taking place on a regular basis, related activities such as sessions for increasing members' awareness and understanding of their role in governance, and regular reviews with managers of the organisation and possible improvement of the governance instruments within their area of responsibility.

This Statement is based on the corporate governance principles and key components put forward by the Audit Office of NSW. In this regard the NSW RFS is well positioned in relation to these principles and components through the work it has done to date in relation to governance.

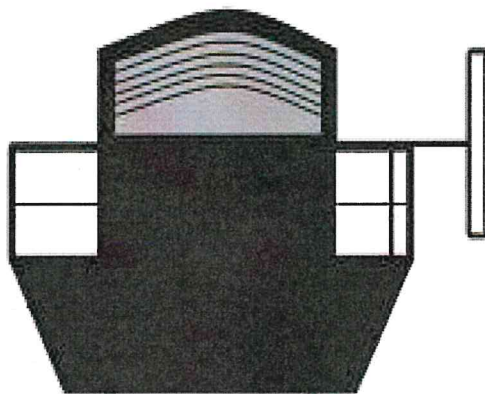
Finally, in order to increase members' general awareness of Corporate Governance in the NSW RFS environment, the NSW RFS Corporate Governance model uses a different symbol from the Audit Office of NSW model. In place of the '*lighthouse*' as presented in the Audit Office model, the NSW RFS model has adopted a '*fire tower*'. This symbology conveys the concept that corporate governance is a strategic early warning system but in a form that is more aligned to the NSW RFS. A copy of the NSW RFS Corporate Governance Fire Tower model is at Attachment B.

Attachment A: NSW RFS Governance Map



Adapted from the Audit Office of NSW Corporate Governance Lighthouse (2016 Update)
Updated December 2018 (Ref: Doc:18/151153)

Attachment B: NSW RFS Governance Fire Tower



Governance Fire Tower

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Always on watch

