



CHARTER – RURAL FIRE SERVICE LIAISON COMMITTEE

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CHARTER OF THE NARROMINE SHIRE COUNCIL RURAL FIRE SERVICE LIAISON COMMITTEE

1. NAME

The committee, as appointed under the provision of Section 355(b) of the Local Government Act 1993 and Part 9 of the Narromine Rural Fire District Service Level Agreement 1 July 2012, shall be known as the **Narromine Shire Council Rural Fire Service Liaison Committee**.

2. INTERPRETATION

For the purpose of this charter:-

"The Committee" means the Narromine Shire Council Rural Fire Service Liaison Committee

"Council" means Narromine Shire Council "Member" means a member of the committee

"RFS" means Rural Fire Service

"FCO" means Fire Control Officer – a paid member of staff within the RFS

3. STATUS OF COMMITTEE

Statutory Committee

4. PURPOSE

The Committee has been established to monitor and periodically review the performance of the Service Agreement and the following documents prepared by the Fire Control Officer prior to submission to and consideration by the Council:

- (a) The annual budget and business plan, and
- (b) The quarterly financial and performance reports.

5. FUNCTIONS

5.1 The Committee is to advise and assist Council in monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Narromine Rural Fire District Service Level Agreement by the Council and the Rural Fire Service.

6. COMMITTEE DELEGATIONS

- a) The Committee does not have the power to incur expenditure.
- b) The Committee does not have the power to bind Council.
- c) The Committee can make recommendations to Council on all business presented before it. Recommendations of the Committee will be presented to Council in written form, accompanied by a report from relevant Council officers. Recommendations made by the Committee may or may not be adopted by Council.
- d) The Committee will operate in accordance with the provisions of any Regulations, as adopted by Council.

7. MEMBERSHIP

The Committee does not have the authority to co-opt anyone to its membership.

Council Representation

- Two Councillors from the Council appointed by resolution of the Council
- One Alternate Councillor from the Council appointed by resolution of the Council
- General Manager or his/her delegate

Rural Fire Service Representation

- One volunteer rural fire fighter from the District appointed by the local branch of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association Inc (the RFS), or, in the absence of a local branch of the RFS, elected in accordance with the applicable Service Standard
- One member of the RFS staff assigned to the District of Team nominated by the FCO and approved by the Commissioner
- FCO who will be the committee's Executive Officer.

The Commissioner, the Council and the groups or entities which appoint or elect members of the Liaison Committee pursuant of sub-clause 9.1(a) to (b) may appoint another person to attend any meeting of the Liaison Committee in the event that the person they have elected is unable, for any reason, to attend that meeting.

Support Staff

Staff from Council will attend meetings to provide administrative support to the Committee as required. The FCO will send meeting requests and record the minutes of the meetings. Rural Fire Service staff set the meeting dates and prepare meeting agendas and business papers.

Chairperson

The Chairperson of this Committee shall be a staff member of the RFS.

The role of the Chairperson is to preside at a meeting of the Committee. The Chairperson requires the skills to be able to facilitate the effective functioning of the Committee.

Other Office Bearers

There are no office bearers on the Committee.

9. TERM OF OFFICE

The Rural Fire Service representatives continue on the Committee on an ongoing basis.

Councillors and designated staff remain on the Committee for one year. Councillors can be re-elected in the position.

10. QUORUM & RECOMMENDATION MAKING

The quorum required to enable business to be transacted at meetings is a minimum of four and must include a delegated Councillor representative and one ranking Rural Fire Service Staff Member.

In the absence of a quorum, 15 minutes after the advertised start of the meeting the meeting is to be adjourned and reconvened for another date.

Wherever possible, decisions of the Committee will be made on the basis of consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, the matter will be decided by a simple majority of those members present at the meeting, provided a quorum is present. In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson or person acting in the position of Chairperson shall in addition to their ordinary vote, have the casting vote.

11. GENERAL PUBLIC

The Committee will not usually be open to members of the general public. However, the Committee can decide to open the meeting to the public, subject to the agreement of the Chairperson in consultation with the General Manager. Voting does not extend to members of the general public and is restricted to only elected committee members.

Representatives of organisations or the general community may be invited to address the Committee on matters on the agenda.

12. TIMETABLE FOR MEETINGS

The meeting will occur every three months or as determined by the Committee. If there are no items on the agenda the meeting can be cancelled after agreement with the FCO and Council's General Manager.

The meeting will be limited to a maximum of two hours duration unless the committee resolves to extend the length of the meeting to a particular time or the completion of business.

Extraordinary meetings may be called by the Chairperson of the Committee.

The location, date and starting time for meetings will be advised on the agenda.

Committee meetings can only be held if seven (7) working days notice has been given to all members.

13. MEETING PRACTICES & PROCEDURES

The administrative provisions of Council's adopted Code of Meeting Practice shall apply.

The Committee will observe any other relevant Council protocols.

The minutes of the Committee will be included in Council's Business papers for Council ratification, at the following Council Meeting.

14. INSURANCE

Committee members are covered by Council's personal accident insurance only for attendance at meetings and other activities formally endorsed by the Committee.

15. CODE OF CONDUCT

All members of Council committees are required to observe the provisions of Council's Code of Conduct and any other policy applicable to the proper functioning of the Committee. All new members will be provided with a copy of Council's Code of Conduct they are required to sign to indicate that they have read and understood their obligations. A breach of the Code of Conduct may lead to the member being excluded from the Committee and may result in disciplinary action.

If a committee member has a pecuniary interest in any matter being discussed by the Committee and is present at the meeting, they must disclose their interest. They must then leave the room during any discussion or decision-making related to that matter. Staying in the room while abstaining from voting will be considered a vote against the motion (see Clause 251 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005).

A person does not breach the above clause if he or she did not know and could not reasonably be expected to have known that the matter under consideration at the meeting was a matter in which he or she had a pecuniary interest.

A committee member who has a non-pecuniary conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a meeting must disclose this interest to the meeting as soon as possible. Once a non-pecuniary conflict of interest is declared, there are various options for managing the conflict. The chosen option will depend on an evaluation of the specific circumstances, the nature of the interest, and the significance of the issue being addressed.

Committee members must handle any information obtained in their role with professionalism and care. Openness and honesty are essential for the efficient operation of committees. Members should feel free to share their opinions and views without fear of retribution. Therefore, it is important for committee members to respect one another, even when there are differences, and to work together to foster an open and trusting environment.

16. CONFIDENTIALITY & PRIVACY

Through their involvement on the Committee, members may encounter confidential or personal information held by the Council. Committee members are required to keep this information secure and confidential. They must not access, use, or remove any such information unless they have been authorized to do so.

Privacy legislation governs the collection, storage, use, correction, disclosure, and transfer of personal information. For more details about the legislation, committee members can contact the Council's Information Officer.

If a committee member becomes aware of any breach of security or misuse of the Council's confidential or personal information, they are required report it to the Information Officer.

17. MEDIA PROTOCOL

Council's Media Relations Policy (2022) states that the Mayor is the official spokesperson for Council and all media relations shall be conducted through the Mayor for policy, strategic and emergency matters and through the General Manager for procedural and operational matters.

No other member of the committee is permitted to speak to the media in his or her capacity as a committee member, unless nominated by the mayor as per the Media Relations Policy (2022).

18. REVIEW

Amendments to this charter may be proposed to Council by the Committee at any time, and change will not take effect until such time as Council has resolved to make any required amendments.