

Rural Fire Service Stations – Community Use

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Amendment Date:	21/09/2009, 23/11/2012, 21/02/2017, 31/10/2022
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Directorate:	City Services
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1. Purpose

To ensure that any agreed community use of Rural Fire Service (RFS) stations does not impact on RFS routine operations, emergency response, RFS members or public safety.

2. Statement

RFS stations have historically been made available for community use in several village locations where no public hall or venues suitable for local meetings and other community activities exist. An increasing focus on risk management and occupational health and safety issues has highlighted areas of potential conflict between community and RFS use of these stations. This policy is aimed at avoiding such conflict.

3. Provisions

- 3.1.1. The community use of RFS stations will not generally be permitted in localities where public halls or other suitable venues are available.
- 3.1.2. Negotiations and agreements need to be reached between the community group(s), the District Manager/Operational Officer, and local Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) members on a brigade-by-brigade basis where community use is proposed.
- 3.1.3. Where permission for community use is allowed, a nominated community member must be placed in charge of the activity and the community group must accept responsibility for adherence to any protocols that have been established by the RFS for co-use of the station.
- 3.1.4. Where any dispute over an existing or new community use arises, Council will make the final decision on any use by the community after considering each case on its merits. The determining factor is whether the use can be managed in such a way that routine RFS operations, emergency response and member/public safety will not be compromised.
- 3.1.5. Use of RFS stations by community groups will be subject to the same “casual hirers” insurance policy requirements applicable to other public halls and buildings owned by Council.
- 3.1.6. The local brigade may charge a reasonable hire fee for the use of the RFS station consistent with Council’s Delivery Program Operational Plan and Budget 2022/23.

4. Implementation

Council’s Building Services, City Services group administers this policy. The Local RFS District Manager/Operational Officer in conjunction with affected RFB Captain(s) are responsible for implementing and managing any occupation by the community groups.

5. Review

This policy will be reviewed within one year of the election of every new Council, or earlier if circumstances warrant.