



# RFS

## DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

### ROLE DESCRIPTION

Cluster	Stronger Communities
Directorate   Business Unit	Office of the Commissioner   Office of the General Counsel
Role Number	52020677
Grade	RFS Level Band 1
OSCA Code   PCAT Code	281331   1228116
Date of Approval	16 December 2024
Website	<a href="http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au">www.rfs.nsw.gov.au</a>

### About Us

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) protects the community and our environment by minimising the impact of fire and other emergencies. Our shared vision is to provide a world standard of excellence in the provision of a volunteer-based community fire and emergency service.

The RFS is established under the Rural Fires Act 1997 and is responsible for preventing and suppressing fires in rural fire districts, as well as being the lead agency for bush fire-fighting across the State. The agency also operates under the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989*. For over 100 years the RFS has been a significant part of the history and landscape of NSW and is widely acknowledged as the largest volunteer fire service in the world.

Fighting fires and protecting the community from emergencies is the most visible aspect of the RFS. The Service also has many responsibilities as the lead agency for bush fire management and mitigation in NSW. Working closely with other agencies, the RFS responds to a range of emergencies including structure fires, motor vehicle accidents and storms that occur within rural fire districts.

### Leadership Commitment

- Value and recognise the contribution of our people
- Create an environment where people can be at their best
- Work together to deliver the best community outcomes
- Be responsive and hold ourselves and each other to account
- Appreciate our different backgrounds and experiences make us greater

## Role Purpose

The Director, Office of the General Counsel, provides expert legal leadership and strategic advice to ensure compliance, mitigation of risks, and support the RFS in achieving its organisational objectives and alignment with government regulations. This role is also the Chief Audit Executive for the agency.

## Key Accountabilities

1. Provide expert legal advice and counsel to the Commissioner and other senior leadership team members on complex legal and legislative issues, supporting informed decision-making and strategic planning.
2. Lead the RFS regulatory compliance activities including the management of the Penalty Infringement Note cost recovery.
3. Embed policies and guidelines across RFS to ensure the organisation's activities comply with relevant laws and regulations, effectively mitigating legal risks.
4. Lead the development and implementation of legal policies and frameworks that align with organisational goals and government priorities.
5. Oversee and manage litigation matters to protect the interests of RFS, ensuring favourable outcomes where possible.
6. Oversee the legal and audit and compliance team operations, including contract and agreement review, legal research and risk assessment to ensure efficiencies and alignment with organisational objectives.
7. Oversee the coordinated response to Coronial, parliamentary and other external inquiries as well as responses to *Standing Order 52s*, *applications under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act)*, and the overseeing the agency's Privacy responsibilities.
8. Build and maintain strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders, fostering a collaborative approach to legal matters.
9. Drive continuous improvement initiatives within the legal function to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and alignment with best practices.
10. Lead a proactive approach to the continuous improvement of work health and safety, ensuring safe systems of work and management commitment to member wellbeing.
11. Foster a culture which drives and encourages high performance, collaboration, agility and accountability in the delivery of legal outcomes aligned with the RFS strategy

## Essential Requirements

- Bachelor of Laws (LLB) or Juris Doctor (JD) from a recognised institution.
- Admission as a solicitor or barrister in an Australian jurisdiction.
- A current Practising Certificate issued by the relevant Legal Profession Admission Board.
- Excellent writing and verbal communication skills.
- During periods of major fire activity, the incumbent may be required to support operational management activities consistent with their skills and background.

## Key Knowledge and Experience

- Sound understanding of legislative functions and in particular, the Rural Fires Act 1997 and associated regulations.
- Extensive experience in a senior legal role, preferably within a government or large organisational context.
- Proven experience in leading and managing a legal team.
- Genuine appreciation and understanding of a volunteer-based community service.
- In-depth understanding of relevant government legislation, policies, and procedures.

- Strong knowledge of risk management principles and practices as they apply to legal functions.

## Role Dimensions

### Decision Making

- The role routinely makes their own decisions concerning assigned work, including litigation and related matters, operating within standards, policies, procedures, relevant legislation and considers the risks and mitigation requirements.
- The role makes decisions regarding the operations of the Office of the General Counsel including legal policies and frameworks, allocation of resources, audit, risk and compliance activities, work prioritisation and team development.
- The role seeks advice about matters that may be outside the scope of their normal activities or that might attract significant criticism or concern.
- The role is guided in its decision making by the RFS Administrative Delegations (Policy P2.1.1) and RFS Financial Delegations (Policy P4.1.1).
- The role routinely makes independent decisions concerning legal advice, risk management, policy development, and litigation matters, operating within established standards, policies, procedures, and relevant legislation.
- The role seeks advice and collaborates with senior leadership and external legal experts on highly complex or sensitive legal issues that may have significant implications for the organisation.

### Reporting Line

The role reports to the Commissioner.

### Direct Reports

The role has 3 direct reports:

- Manager, Legal
- Manager, Risk & Research
- Supervisor, Assurance.

### Budget/Expenditure

The role has financial delegations and an assigned budget.

## Key Relationships – Internal

Who	Why
Commissioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide counsel and legal advice, seek guidance regarding directorate issues and policy and procedural matters</li> <li>– Provide regular updates on legal matters, risk management, and compliance issues.</li> </ul>
Executive, Directors, Directors, Managers and Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide specialist advice, and work in close collaboration to ensure the seamless delivery of services.</li> </ul>

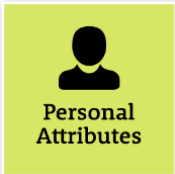
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Foster effective working relationships, collaborate and create buy-in.</li> </ul>
Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lead and provide professional guidance and development to build capability and ensure consistent quality and accessible service provision.</li> <li>– Set performance expectations, provide leadership, direction and support.</li> </ul>
All RFS Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop and maintain effective working relationships and open channels of communication across the agency to effectively contribute to better outcomes for our members and the community.</li> </ul>

## Key Relationships – External

Who	Why
Other Government Departments and Emergency Services Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensure collaboration and cooperation in regard to capabilities and strategies.</li> <li>– Ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations, obtain guidance on legislative changes, and collaborate on policy development.</li> </ul>
External Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participate as a member on a number of external committees that may vary from time to time.</li> </ul>
Regulatory Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To maintain up-to-date knowledge of compliance requirements, receive regulatory updates, and report on compliance activities.</li> </ul>
Crown Solicitor’s Officer and legal service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide advice relating to issues and matters associated with the RFS as required.</li> </ul>


## Capabilities for the Role

The [NSW Public Sector Capability Framework](#) describes the capabilities (knowledge, skills and abilities) needed to perform a role. **Focus capabilities** are considered the most important for effective performance of the role.

Capability Group	Capability Name	Level
	<i>Display Resilience and Courage</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
	<i>Act with Integrity</i>	<i>Highly Advanced</i>
	Manage Self	Advanced
	Value Diversity and Inclusion	Adept

 Relationships	<b>Communicate Effectively</b>	<b>Highly Advanced</b>
	Commit to Customer Service	Adept
	<b>Work Collaboratively</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
	Influence and Negotiate	Advanced
 Results	Deliver Results	Adept
	<b>Plan and Prioritise</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
	<b>Think and Solve Problems</b>	<b>Highly Advanced</b>
	Demonstrate Accountability	Advanced
 Business Enablers	Finance	Adept
	Technology	Adept
	<b>Procurement and Contract Management</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
	Project Management	Adept
 People Management	Manage and Develop People	Advanced
	Inspire Direction and Purpose	Advanced
	<b>Optimise Business Outcomes</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
	Manage Reform and Change	Adept

The following [occupational capabilities](#) are also required for effective performance of the role.

Capability Set	Capability	Definition	Level
 Legal	Statutory Interpretation	Interpret legislation, subordinate legislation and instruments in accordance with legislation and accepted legal principles	4
	Legal Advice	Provide quality independent legal advice and explanation of legal issues	4
	Litigation and Dispute Resolution	Litigate and resolve disputes effectively in relevant forums and jurisdictions	4
	Advocacy	Act as an effective and ethical advocate	4
	Legislative Development and Drafting	Provide legal services relating to legislative proposals and legislative drafting	4

For further information regarding this role description, please contact the Recruitment Team or email [Recruitment@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Recruitment@rfs.nsw.gov.au).

