



# Gladstone Regional Council

## Council Policy

Title	<b>RURAL FIRE BRIGADES FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS</b>
Policy Number	<b>P-2015/32</b>
Responsible Directorate	<b>CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER</b>
Responsible Officer	<b>DISASTER AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR</b>
Date of Adoption	<b>15 DECEMBER 2015</b>
Resolution Number	<b>G/15/2712</b>
Date Review Due	<b>15 DECEMBER 2018</b>

### 1.0 PURPOSE:

To detail the arrangements for the financial support of the various Rural Fire Brigades within the Council region.

### 2.0 SCOPE:

All Rural Fire Brigades within the Council region.

### 3.0 RELATED LEGISLATION:

- *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990*
- *Local Government Act 2009*

### 4.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS:

Nil

### 5.0 DEFINITIONS:

To assist in interpretation of this policy the following definitions apply:

- **"Advisory Committee "** means an Advisory Committee known as the 'Gladstone Regional Council Rural Fire Finance Committee' established by Council as an advisory committee under the *Local Government Act 2009* comprising

representatives from Council, the Rural Fire Service and Rural Fire Brigades within the Council region.

- **"Area Director, Rural Fire Service "** means the employee of the Rural Fire Service appointed by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to manage the Rural Fire Service, Gladstone Area.
- **"Council"** means Gladstone Regional Council.
- **"Chair"** means an elected representative of Council (a Councillor) appointed by Council as the Chair of the Advisory Committee.
- **"Group Officer"** means the member of the Rural Fire Service as elected by members of Rural Fire Brigades of a Rural Fire Brigade Group to assist in administration matters and to represent the Rural Fire Brigade Group.
- **"Local Disaster Coordinator"** means the Local Disaster Coordinator as appointed in accord with the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.
- **"Rural Fire Brigade"** means a group of persons registered as a rural fire brigade under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* with responsibilities under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* for an area within Council's area.
- **"Rural Fire Brigade Group"** means a number of Rural Fire Brigades within the Council region functioning as a group for administrative purposes.
- **"Rural Fire Service"** means *Rural Fire Service Queensland*.

## 6.0 POLICY STATEMENT:

### 6.1 Advisory Committee

#### 6.1.1 Composition, Meetings and Functions of the Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee established by Council has the following membership:

- An elected representative (a Councillor) as Chair;
- The Chief Financial Officer of Council;
- The Local Disaster Coordinator of Council;
- The Disaster and Emergency Management Coordinator of Council;
- The Area Director, Rural Fire Service, Gladstone Area;
- The Group Officer of the Port Curtis Rural Fire Brigade Group; and
- The Group Officer of the Miriam Vale Rural Fire Brigade Group.

#### 6.1.2 Frequency of Meetings of the Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee shall meet as and when required in order to perform its function.

### **6.1.3 Functions of the Advisory Committee**

The Advisory Committee shall operate within the bounds of the Council resolution establishing the Advisory Committee and is restricted, under the Local Government Act 2009, to making recommendations to Council.

## **6.2 Council Funding Provision**

### **6.2.1 Guiding Principles**

- a) Council funding provision is founded on the basis that it is unreasonable to expect volunteers to fundraise in order to provide an emergency service (in its entirety), particularly given the statutory training and subsequent administrative requirements pertaining to volunteers.
- b) In recognition of this foundation principle Council accepts its obligations to provide funding towards Rural Fire Brigades as a donation for the following areas:
  - I. Operational Expenses  
Primarily, funding is provided towards the operational expenditure of Rural Fire Brigades. Brigades will receive funds each year for operating expenses only. Such expenditure includes telephone, electricity, fuel and other costs associated with running a Rural Fire Brigade and maintaining an ability to respond to fires as required.
  - II. Asset Maintenance  
If Brigades identify as part of their forward planning, a requirement to undertake significant maintenance or upgrade to their facilities and/or assets, funding allocation will be provided subject to the availability of funds.
- c) As the Rural Fire Service has advised that the State will now fully fund the replacement of fire fighting vehicles and appliances for Rural Fire Brigades no Council funding will be allocated towards this area.
- d) Council will however consider contributing toward the cost of acquiring a suitable Operational Support Vehicle if a demonstrated need exists.
- e) Whilst Council may collect levies via its rating powers under the *Local Government Act 2009* for funding for Rural Fire Brigades, no levies will be raised by Council on behalf of Rural Fire Brigades.
- f) The level of Council funding provided will be based on recommendations provided to Council by the Advisory Committee.
- g) The Advisory Committee will review funding annually and make recommendations to Council for any amended funding at least annually.
- h) Council will determine the annual funding provision and any amendments to funding. Such amendment may represent an increase or a decrease in funding allocation on an individual Rural Fire Brigade basis, depending on identified and prioritised needs.

## **6.2.2 Requests for Additional Funds**

In the event that a Rural Fire Brigade is likely to exhaust their funds due to unbudgeted extraordinary expenses (such as unbudgeted repairs to equipment) or unexpectedly high fuel costs due to a heavy demand fire season, a request for additional funding is to be lodged with the Area Director Rural Fire Service with notification to the relevant Group Officer. The requests will be considered by the Area Director Rural Fire Service who will prepare a report to the appropriate Council Officers on the request for an additional funding allocation. Subject to the availability of funds from within the Capital and Contingency Reserve for Emergency Services, Council will approve the additional funding request and arrange payment within 14 days of Council approval.

## **6.2.3 Carry-forward on Unutilised Council Funding Allocations**

Any unused moneys allocated to the Rural Fire Brigades as at 30 June will be carried over to the following financial year and be kept in reserve for contributing to future equipment acquisition, including operational support vehicles, or for funding the provision of Council plant and equipment in fire emergencies.

## **6.2.4 Payments**

When budget allocations have been approved by Council for disbursement they will be disbursed in accord with Council's Procurement Policy. Such disbursements will be by way of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to the Rural Fire Brigades' nominated bank accounts.

## **6.3 REQUIREMENTS OF RURAL FIRE BRIGADES**

To be eligible for funding allocation under this policy, Rural Fire Brigades must comply with the following requirements:

### **6.3.1 Documentation**

- a) Brigades must provide appropriate reports and documents to the Area Director Rural Operations for consideration and collation by the end of January in each year for the previous financial year as follows:
  - A copy of the Annual General Meeting minutes of the Rural Fire Brigade where the audited statement of accounts (Profit and Loss and Balance Sheet) for was adopted;
  - A copy of the Rural Fire Brigade's audited statement of accounts (profit and Loss and Balance Sheet) for the most recent financial year;
  - A 1 year activity plan for the next financial year (July to June);
  - A 3 year operational plan (including estimated cost of capital items required); for the next 3 financial years (July to June); and
  - A financial budget for next financial year (July to June).
- b) The information and documents provided by the Rural Fire Brigades to Council are utilised by Council as documented evidence for auditing purposes for the expenditure of public monies.

### **6.3.2 Provision of Bank Details**

- a) As payments to Rural Fire Brigades are made by Council via Electronic Funds Transfer, Rural Fire Brigades must supply Council with their bank details to ensure payment can occur.
- b) Details required include the name and branch of the financial institution, the BSB number and the account number.
- c) Any changes to the bank and/or account details are to be notified to the Council at the earliest opportunity.

## **6.4 REQUIREMENTS OF THE RURAL FIRE SERVICE**

### **6.4.1 Documentation**

The Rural Fire Service is to supply Council with copies of the funding submissions and associated documentation provided by the Rural Fire Brigades as detailed in section 6.3.1 with such documentation to be provided by the end of the February prior to commencement of the next financial year (July to June).

This will allow sufficient time for consideration to be given to requests and the conduct of meetings of the Advisory Committee to formulate any required Advisory Committee recommendations to Council for decision by Council

### **6.4.2 Recommendations**

The Area Director Rural Fire Service will make a recommendation to the appropriate Council Officers by the end of February regarding the total funding required for next financial year based on the submissions by the Rural Fire Brigades. This is provided by way of a summary of the funding submissions in a spread sheet or similar format identifying operational and other costs.

## **7.0 ATTACHMENTS:**

Nil

## **8.0 REVIEW TRIGGER:**

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

1. The related legislation/documents are amended or replaced.
2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by a resolution of Council
3. Periodic Review – 3 years from date of adoption.

<b>TABLE OF AMENDMENTS</b>		
Originally Adopted	4 May 2010	10/149
Amendment 1	5 November 2013	G/13/1775 (Formerly Policy P-3.11.02)
Amendment 2	15 December 2015	G/15/2712 (Formerly P-2013/24)
Amendment 3	<INSERT DATE COUNCIL MEETING>	<INSERT RESOLUTION NUMBER>

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**STUART RANDLE**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**