

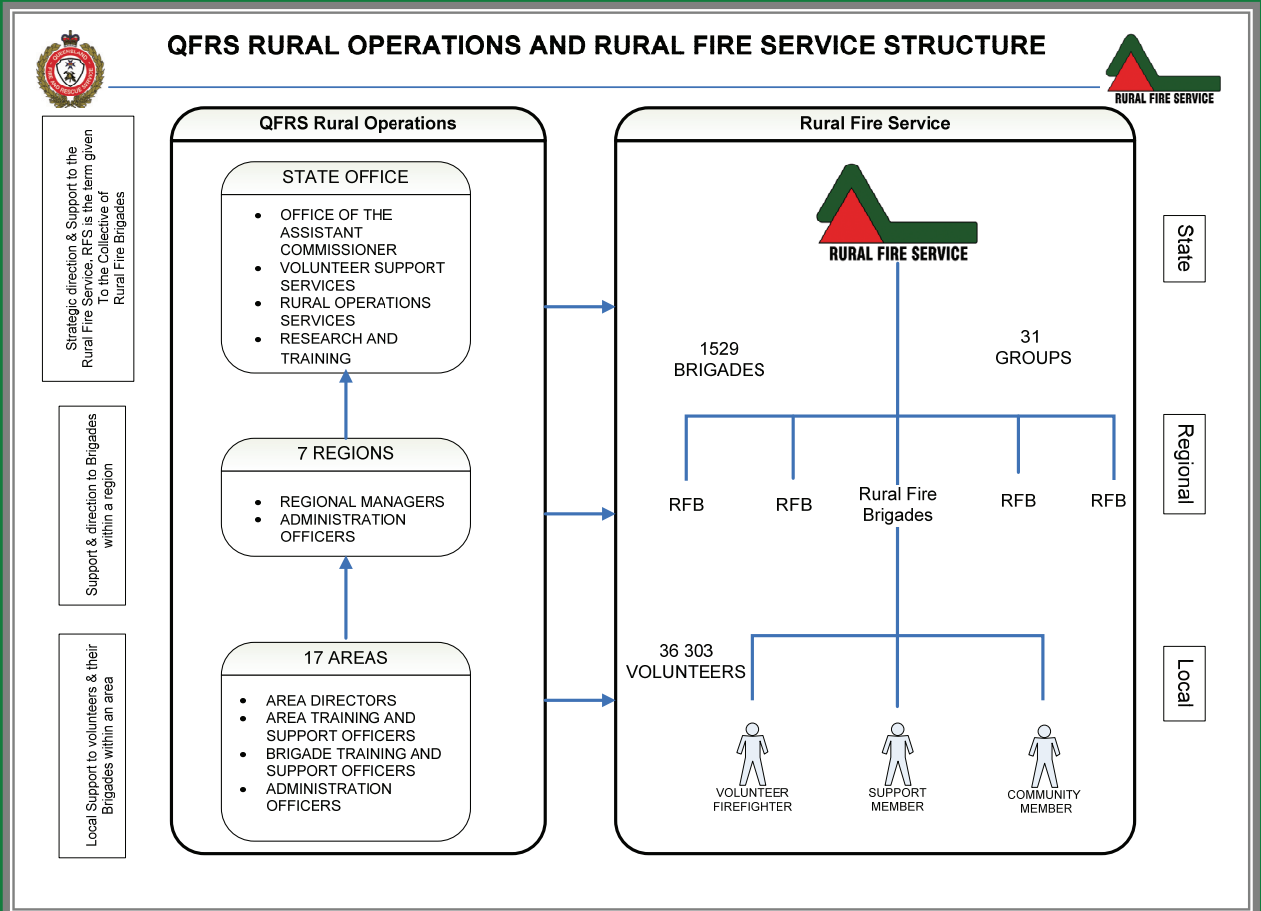


GENERAL

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INTRODUCTION

Rural Operations is a division of Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS). It is the lead agency for rural fire management in Queensland, responsible for providing services to approximately 93% of the State (1,730,648 square kilometres). It is a complex organisation with full time staff accountable for the management of Queensland's 2,660 volunteer Fire Wardens and 1,529 Rural Fire Brigades which make up the Rural Fire Service and who collectively provide responsible rural fire management to the communities of Queensland.



FUNCTIONS OF QFRS RURAL OPERATIONS OFFICES

CENTRAL OFFICE

Rural Operations Central Office is located at the Emergency Services Complex at Kedron Park in Brisbane. The Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations is responsible for the overall management and direction of Rural Operations.

REGIONAL OFFICES

The State is broken into seven regions. Regions are managed by seven Regional Managers Rural Operations who are located in the Department of Emergency Service Regional Offices at Toowoomba, Beenleigh, Brisbane, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns.

AREA OFFICES

The seven regions are broken into seventeen areas across the State. The Area Director has prime responsibility for the management and administration of the fire wardens, brigades and their members within the area. They are the first point of contact for any inquiries on rural fire management, volunteer or brigade issues. The Area Directors report to the Regional Managers.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A RURAL FIRE BRIGADE AND QFRS RURAL OPERATIONS

A rural fire brigade is formed under the *Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990* and is bound by the functions and role shown in the *Act* in addition to QFRS policies and procedures. Section 85 of the *Act* defines QFRS's responsibility for the efficiency of rural fire brigades through the provision of training and other assistance.

To fulfil its role under Section 85, QFRS (via Rural Operations) has developed policies and procedures to guide the conduct and management of rural fire brigades and their volunteer members. Brigades have input into the management and decision making process of QFRS Rural Operations through their representative of the Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland (RFBAQ).

The brigade therefore has obligations towards QFRS, the community that it serves and other brigades. The relationship between the brigade and QFRS Rural Operations could therefore be described as one of mutual cooperation and benefit. In accepting membership of a brigade a person acknowledges that the rules and procedures of the brigade are required to be adhered to. Similarly in accepting registration as a rural fire brigade members accept that they and the brigade are required to adhere to policies and procedures implemented by QFRS.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A RURAL FIRE BRIGADE AND THE GOVERNMENT

The State Government (via QFRS) provides:

- the framework for the management of rural fire by enacting legislation and providing funds for staffing QFRS Rural Operations; and
- funds for supplying brigades with equipment at subsidised rates.

A Local Government does not have any official role or responsibility towards brigades.

However many Local Governments actively support brigades by:

- collecting a Rural Fire Levy;
- providing other financial assistance or in kind support; and
- involving brigades in disaster management planning.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A BRIGADE AND A FIRE WARDEN

Fire Wardens are appointed to their positions either by QFRS Rural Operations or by Governor in Council for police officers and public servants. They are responsible for managing the pre-fire conditions of hazard reduction through the issuing of Permits to Light Fire. Therefore a Fire Warden and First Officer have different roles and responsibilities.

Although many Fire Wardens are intimately involved with brigades, the position of Fire Warden is not an office bearer position within a brigade. A person can perform the duties of Fire Warden without being involved in the brigade. However it is essential that the First Officer maintain contact with the Fire Warden(s). Close cooperation can only enhance the management of fire in rural areas.