

Position Description

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| Position Title: | Fire Safety Officer |
| Directorate: | Governance |
| Service Unit: | Regulatory Planning & Assessment |
| Salary Point: | SP13 |
| Position Reports To: | Senior Investigations Officer (Fire Safety) |
| Staff Management: | Nil |
| Budget Responsibility: | Nil |
| Date PD Reviewed: | August 2019 |

Organisation Context of Position

City of Newcastle (CN) employs over 900 staff and is responsible for a local government area of 187km². Newcastle has a population of 148,000 and is the business and cultural centre of the Hunter region, home to over 620,000 people. In the heart of the Hunter Region, CN has a variety of locations across the City and encompasses five groups who lead the vision to be a Smart Sustainable City through a Smart Organisation that puts people first. These include:

- Governance
- Strategy and Engagement
- City Wide Services
- Infrastructure and Property
- People & Culture

The purpose of the Governance Directorate is to provide legal compliance and advice to inform evidence-based decision making throughout and across CN including:

- Legal compliance, good governance and ethical decision making
- The Directorate is primarily internal facing to effect regulatory and compliance advice across and on behalf of CN through internal services to all service units.
- The Directorate will also have direct community contact through the Regulatory, Planning & Assessment functions and customer/Councillor requests for information and advice.
- The direct customer is CN through good governance across the organisation however, service provision must also be maintained to relevant external agencies.
- Ensure cross functional working relationships, connections and collaboration to achieve 'whole of organisation' objectives.

The Service Units and Elements that form the Governance Directorate are:

- Finance
- Legal
- Regulatory, Planning & Assessment
- Transport, Traffic and Compliance

The purpose of the Regulatory, Planning & Assessment Service Unit is to ensure compliance to legislative requirements and provide advice to inform evidence-based decision making throughout and across CN.

| Workplace Health & Safety | |
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| WHS RAA Level | 6 |
| For specific WHS Responsibilities, Authorities & Accountabilities applicable to this position, the position holder will refer to the WHS Responsibilities, Authorities & Accountabilities matrix in the WH&S Management System. The person accepting the position will be required to sign off that they have received and understood their WHS Responsibilities, Authorities & Accountabilities. | |

Purpose

This position is critical in providing City of Newcastle (CN) with delivering an evidence-based professional, objective, investigative and assessment service relating to the non-compliance with fire safety legislation in buildings within the Newcastle Local Government Area (LGA). The Fire Safety Officer will assist with fire safety regulatory investigations within the Regulatory, Planning and Assessment Service unit of CN.

Position Responsibilities

- Work collaboratively with CN's Fire Safety Investigations Officers.
- Conduct investigations into allegations of non-compliance with the National Construction Code / Building Code of Australia, current and former legislation, in respect to fire safety.
- Conduct fire safety audits of boarding houses within the Newcastle LGA in support of CN's Boarding House Inspection Program, to determine compliance with the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2000, Local Government Act 1993, Local Government (General) Regulation 2005, National Construction Code / Building Code of Australia and development approvals.
- Carry out fire safety audits and inspections on non-compliant or high-risk premises as required.
- Assess older buildings which are not subject to an Annual Fire Safety Statement and identify and apply applicable essential fire safety measures to enable the creation of a Fire Safety Schedule.
- Review Fire Safety Schedules and determine whether the listed essential fire safety measures are applicable for the building's classification and use.
- Review Annual Fire Safety Statements submitted to CN for accuracy, relevance of essential fire safety measures and compliance with the Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2000.
- Ability to prepare high quality and articulate 'Fire Safety Audit Inspection Reports' for CN.
- Ensure CN's database systems are always maintained and up to date in relation to annual fire safety, statements, complaints, orders and relevant legislative requirements regarding fire safety.
- Actively contribute to the development and review of policies, internal procedure manuals, processes, development control plans and practice guides in respect to fire safety.

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- Provide professional fire safety information and answer inquiries to and from CN officers, members of the public, fire industry and members of the regulated community and government organisations to achieve compliance with fire safety legislation and standards.
 - Prepare correspondence in the form of Councillor and MP memo's, constituent letters, fire safety audit reports, fire safety schedules, Notices of Intention and Development Control Orders as required.
 - Provide specialist advice in relation to investigations involving fire safety issues to internal and external customers.
 - Perform a peer review of notices, orders and reports prepared by colleagues prior to submission for enforcement action for compliance with fire safety legislation and standards.
 - Develop and maintain a professional working knowledge of relevant legislation, local government regulatory issues, industry standards and required industry accreditation.
 - Attend Court and represent CN as an 'Expert Witness' as required.
 - Promote CN as a competent, efficient and courteous service provider, by delivering high quality outcomes and promoting CN's values of Cooperation, Respect, Excellence and Wellbeing.
 - Comply with CN WHS policies, procedures and WHS legislation.
 - Ensure EEO, the principles for a culturally diverse society and CN policies are always complied with.
 - Represent CN at internal and external meetings, including public forums.
 - On occasion work outside of normal business hours.
 - Any other accountabilities or duties as directed by Supervisor / Manager which are within the employee's skill, competence and training.

Position Selection Criteria

Essential

- Relevant tertiary qualifications in Fire Safety and/or extensive experience in the Fire Safety Industry.
- Extensive knowledge of the National Construction Code / Building Code of Australia, particularly the 'Deem to Satisfy' provisions relating to fire safety and essential fire safety measures.
- Knowledge of the development and construction process as applicable to fire safety and relating to the issue of Construction Certificates, Occupation Certificates, Fire Safety Certificates, Fire Safety Statements and Fire Safety Schedules.
- Extensive job-related experience in the inspection and assessment of buildings to identify the classification and use of buildings in accordance with the National Construction Code / Building Code of Australia, determine what essential fire safety measures should be installed and operating within a building, identify what essential fire safety measures are installed, identify any fire safety risks and determine a course of action to eliminate or reduce risks posed to the life safety of occupants and property.
- Established knowledge in the identification and management of risks, development of risk assessments and identification of strategies to eliminate or reduce risks associated with fire in buildings.
- Highly developed decision-making skills.
- Effective analytical and innovative problem-solving skills.
- An ability to work in a multi-disciplinary team environment with a strong customer service focus.
- Effective and highly developed written and oral communication skills with an ability to translate technical information on fire safety issues to non-industry specialists.
- Proven ability to resolve complex customer requests/complaints and provide professional advice regarding fire safety compliance matters.
- The ability to manage a complex and high workload in a demanding fast paced work environment.
- Excellent organisational and time management skills.
- Current Class 'C' Driver's Licence.

Desirable

- Proven experience and demonstrated competence in environmental planning investigation and compliance, and an understanding of the provisions of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 and other relevant local government legislation.

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- Possession of Certificate IV of Government (Investigations) or its equivalent, or the ability to obtain within 12 months of commencing employment.
 - Proven ability and experience in the preparation of Development Control Orders (Fire Safety) and Emergency Development Control Orders in accordance with the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979.
 - Experience and demonstrated competence in the preparation of policy, procedure and process documents in the area of fire safety.
 - Prior experience in the preparation of statements and giving evidence as an 'Expert Witness' in Criminal and Land and Environmental Court jurisdictions.