

Information for members on proposed new AFA rules

As part of the 2021 AGM process members are being asked to vote on adopting new AFA rules to replace existing rules. The new rules have been prepared under the guidance of the Rules Sub-Committee and have been reviewed by the AFA committee.

This information is provided to assist members in their review and consideration of the proposed new rules. Voting on the new Rules closes on **19th November** and a voting Ballot form is available on this web site.

The new Rules, if adopted by the members, will take effect from 1st January 2022.

Background

The AFA rules were originally based on the NAFA rules. Over time changes have been made to reflect Australian conditions and circumstances.

Unfortunately, these changes have not always been made in a coordinated way so that the current AFA rules can be difficult to navigate, contain various internal inconsistencies, and are often opaque. Many frequently used words and phrases are not defined, making interpretation difficult.

Various policies and guidelines have been promulgated which are sometimes inconsistent with the rules and in some cases, repetitive.

In addition, the AFA committee has from time to time issued interpretations and clarifications of rules. While some of these have subsequently made their way into the rules by way of formal amendments, there are many which continue to have application but again these are not easy to quickly locate.

Outline of approach

In March 2020 the AFA committee approved a proposal involving the following:

1. Restructuring of the rules so that they are presented in a logical fashion.
2. Removing duplication which exists across the current documents.
3. Reworking the rules using plain English and modern drafting techniques, including sensible paragraphing to make them easier to understand and remove inconsistencies.
4. Ensuring that words and phrases are defined where appropriate and then ensuring that the defined terms are used consistently throughout.
5. Establishing the hierarchy of rules, policies, guidelines and protocols and what it is appropriate to include in each category, including consideration as to whether some guidelines would be better placed as appendices to the rules.
6. Ensuring that interpretations and clarifications of the rules are readily accessible, either by including examples in the rules or by inserting cross references to relevant rule notifications.

7. Ensuring that the rules reflect current electronic processes for race meeting entries, reporting by race meeting organisers and judges, etc.

There was and is no intention to change the substance of the current rules. During the project several possible substantial changes to the Rules have been identified. **These have not been included in the new rules.** Any substantial changes to existing rules will be considered by the Rules Sub Committee with recommendations put to Committee to adopt the changes as “On Trial” rules. Motions to adopt any On Trial rules would then be brought by separate motion to a later general meeting.

One of the existing On Trail Rules contained in the existing Rules has been retained in the new Rules. The On Trail Rule dealing with Single and Two Team Divisions remains as On Trial given the limited opportunity that has existed to allow members to consider the effects of the On Trial Rule. The amended Rule continues to be On Trial and will be submitted to members at the 2022 AGM. All other On Trial Rules in the existing Rules were assessed as being minor changes and have been incorporated in the new Rules.

Current status

A full set of the updated rules, including appendices has been completed and is now provided to members for review and ballot by no later than 19th November 2021.

A number of policies, guidelines and protocols have been incorporated in appendices. If the new rules are adopted those policies, guidelines and protocols will be withdrawn.

All rule clarifications and notifications have been reviewed. To the extent that any of these have not previously been incorporated into the rules they have been included in the new rules, mostly by inclusion of notes and examples. If the new rules are adopted it will no longer be necessary to refer to past notifications and clarifications and these will be able to be removed from the website.

If the new rules are adopted further work will be required over time on other documents, including policies, guidelines and manuals (many of which are cross-referenced in the new rules), to ensure their consistency with the new rules, including the consistent use of defined terms across all AFA documents.