**Information for members on proposed new AFA rules**

At the AGM on 16 October 2021 members will be 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 in advance of formal notice of the motion to be put to the AGM.

Members with any queries, comments or suggestions are requested to raise these with the Secretary by 31 August 2021 so that they can, if the AFA committee thinks it appropriate, be incorporated into the final version of the new rules to be brought to the AGM.

**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 a number of 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 any current rules.** During the course of the project a number of potential changes have been identified. **These have not been included in the new rules.** Any 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 be brought by separate motion to a later general meeting.

**Current status**

**A full set of the updated rules, including appendices has been completed and is now provided to members for review and comment before the AGM.**

A number of policies, guidelines and protocols have been incorporated in appendices. If the new rules are adopted at the AGM those policies, guidelines and protocols will need to 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.

**Reading the new rules**

To assist in comparing the new rules to current provisions of the rules, policies, guidelines, protocols and rules clarifications/notifications cross-references to the current provisions are included throughout. These are shown in square brackets and highlighted in yellow. See, for example, in new rule 5.7: **[see 7(a), RN14, RN53]**.The cross-references will be deleted in the final version of the new rules to be voted on at the AGM.