**Major Rules Project adopted by AFA Committee at its March 2020 Meeting – the redrafting of the existing AFA Rules, Policies, Guidelines and Protocols - aimed at simplification and making the documents more logical in presentation.**

The Committee has endorsed the above project, involving the first comprehensive review and rewrite of the key governing rules and associated guidance documents since establishment of the AFA.

This project will take some time to complete – members will be kept informed of progress by regular reports – the first of which follows. It is a copy of the project plan adopted by the Committee at its March Meeting.

This Project does not involve seeking to make changes or amendments to the existing Rules. It’s an exercise in clarification, presentation and simplification of what exists and applies at present.

**The Project Outline follows:**

**Proposal for Simplification of AFA Rules, Policies, Guidelines and Protocols**

**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 are 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 many 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 Proposal**

This proposal involves the following:

1. Restructuring 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.

It is not intended as part of this proposal to change the substance of any current rules, although in the course of implementing the proposal suggestions for rule changes may emerge. Any such suggestions would need to be put to AFA members for approval separately.

**Proposed Overall Structure**

It is envisaged that once work is complete the resultant documents will comprise:

1. Rules with a number (more than at present) of schedules or appendices. This will make the rules shorter and simpler but clearly direct the reader to further information where necessary (as in the above example regarding competition points).
2. Policies which deal with general matters outside the scope of the rules, such as privacy, bullying, risk management, etc.
3. Guidelines which are advisory only and deal with matters such as how to manage a flyball event and how to set up and check the EJS.

Annexure A to this proposal contains a sample of what the table of contents for the redrafted rules might look like. This is expected to evolve as drafting progresses and feedback is received.

**Proposed Method**

With a view to ensure consistency of drafting style and therefore improve readability of the final documents the initial drafting work would be carried out by an experienced member of the Rules Committee. This would be done in stages.

As the first draft of each part of the rules is complete it would be circulated to the rules committee and to any others having particular expertise in the relevant subject matter for comment. After any comments are addressed the draft would be issued to the AFA Committee.

The intention is that at least one part of the rules would be available for feedback from the AFA Committee each month during the process.

**Keeping Members Informed**

It is envisaged that once the exercise is complete the members will be asked to vote on their adoption as a complete package.

In the meantime it will be important that members are made aware of the project and kept informed of its progress. Some ways in which this could be done are:

1. Publishing this paper on the AFA website.
2. Publishing progress reports on the AFA website.
3. Giving updates by committee members at race meetings.

**Next Steps**

Given the scope of the project and the considerable time commitment which will be required the AFA Committee is requested to give its approval to the project commencement.

**Annexure A – Sample Table of Contents**

**Part One – General**

1. Definitions (see current 2.7)
2. Interpretation – new provision containing basic rules for interpretation
3. Conflicts – new provision explaining how various documents relate to each other and establishing hierarchy
4. Changes (see current 12)

**Part Two – Sanctioning of Events**

1. Who may apply/club eligibility (see current 1.0)
2. Application details (see current 1.1(a))
3. Time for application (see current 1.1(a))
4. Limits on entries (see current 1.1(f))
5. Classes of racing (see current 1.1(g))
6. Racing formats – new provision identifying handicap and non-handicap formats
7. Seed times (see current 1.4)
8. Approval of format, etc (see current 1.3)
9. Notification to clubs (see current 1.1(e))
10. Report after race meeting (see current 1.1(h))

**Part Three – Equipment and Ring Set Up**

1. Ring layout (see current 4.3)
2. Barriers (see current 4.2)
3. Footing (see current 4.1 and guideline 14)
4. Boxes (see current 3.1)
5. Jumps (see current 3.3 and equipment standard 1)
6. Balls (see current 3.2)

**Part Four – Dog and Handler Welfare**

1. Minimum age for racing dogs (see current 2.1(c))
2. Lame dogs, etc (see current 9.4)
3. Collars and leads (see current 8(e))
4. Aggressive dogs (see current 9.3)
5. Limits on racing dogs (see current 9.6)
6. Footwear (see current 2.8)

**Part Five – Race Meeting Rules**

1. Amateur race meetings (see current 2.3)
2. Handlers must be members (see current 5(c) and 10.3(h))
3. Dogs must have CRN (see current 5(e) and (f))
4. Teams (see current 5(a), (b) and (d)))
5. Changing teams (see current 2.4)
6. Time sheets (see current 5(b) and (c)and 6.3)
7. Meaningless heats (see current 1.5)
8. Reporting for racing (see current 7(a), (b), (c) and (d))
9. Record times (see current 2.6)
10. Protests (see current 2.5)
11. Determining the winner of a race (see current 9.2(q))
12. Determining the winner of a race meeting (see current 9.2(p) and (r))

**Part Six – Rules of Racing**

1. Warm up (see current 8(a), and (d))
2. No training in the ring (see current 8(b), (c) and (f))
3. Jump heights (see current 6.3 and 9.1)
4. Challenging a team’s running height (see current 6.4)
5. The start (see current 9.2(a))
6. The Run (see current (9.2(b))
7. The finish/determining the winner of a heat (see current 9.2(j) and (o)
8. Knocked down jumps/broken boards/safety hazards (see current 9.2(c), (l) and (m)
9. Box malfunction (see current 9.2(d))
10. Intervention (see current 9.2(e))
11. Fouling (see current 9.2(f)
12. Boxloader (see current 9.2(h)
13. Interference (see current 9.2(i))
14. Distraction (see current 9.2(k))
15. Out of bounds (see current 9.2(g)
16. Rerunning dogs (see current 9.2(n)
17. Forfeits other than break out (see current 7(f))
18. Forfeit for break out (see current 7(g))
19. Non-competitive teams (see current 7(e) and (h))
20. Signal cards (see current 9.2(s))
21. Sandbagging (see current 9.5)

**Part Seven – Race Meeting Officials**

1. Number of officials (see current 10.1(a))
2. Judges (see current 1.6, 10.1(d), (e), (g) and (h), 10.2, 10.3(a), (b) and (c)
3. Timekeepers and stewards (see current 10.1(b), (c), (f) and (g), 10.3(d), (e), (f), (g), and (i))
4. AFA Representatives (see current 10.4)

**Part Eight – Measuring**

1. Measuring (see current 6.1)
2. Height cards (see current 6.2)
3. Challenging a height card (see current 6.5)

**Part Nine – Titles and Awards**

1. Points (see current 1.2)
2. Titles (see current 11.1)
3. Annual awards (see current 11.2)

**Part Ten – Misconduct**

1. Code of ethics (see current 2.1)
2. Misconduct (see current 2.2)
3. Investigations (see current 13.1)

**Appendix One – Equipment Standards** (see current equipment standard 1; other standards, for example, for boxes, may be included here rather than being detailed in rules)

**Appendix Two – Round Robin Format** (see current Appendix A)

**Appendix Three – Elimination Racing Format** (see current Appendix B)

**Appendix Four – Champions Trophy Format** (see current Appendix C)

**Appendix Five – Veterans Class Format** (see current Appendix D)

**Appendix Six – Open Class Format** (see current Appendix E)

**Appendix Seven – Schedule of Fees** (see current Appendix F)

**Appendix Eight – Measuring Using the Wicket System** (see current Appendix G – query whether this is any longer required)

**Appendix Nine – Calculating Division Splits** (see current guideline 3)

**Appendix Ten – Approving a Running Order** see (current guideline 4)

**Appendix Eleven – Preparing Timesheets** (see current guideline 8)

**Appendix Twelve – Timesheets** (see current guideline 9)

**Appendix Thirteen – Calculating Race Meeting Points** (see current guideline 11)

**Appendix Fourteen – Calculating Title Points** (see current guideline 12)

**Appendix Fifteen – Dealing with Incidents and Appeals** (see current policy 2 and protocols 1, 2 and 3)