



# **HANDICAPPING GUIDELINES**

As updated and effective from 1 October 2011

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	3
Objectives	3
How Does it Work	3
Key Terms	4
Initial Handicap Allocation	6
Established Athletes	6
Ongoing Assessed Athletes	6
Adjustments to Starting Marks	6
Adjustments for Artificial Tracks	6
Age of Performance Allowance	7
Veterans Allowance	7
Review of Starting Marks	7
Adjustments to Handicaps during the Season	8
First Start for the Season	8
Throughout the Season	8
Assessment of Performance	9
The Allocation of Handicap Lifts	10
Winning Penalties	10
Possible Discretionary Lift for Stawell Carnival Only	11
Maximum Handicap	11
Amateur Performances	12
New and Novice Athletes	13
Novice Handicaps	13
Interstate Athletes	14
Nationally Ranked Athletes and Internationals	14
Alterations to Declared Handicaps	15
Handicap Review and Appeal Process	16
Schedule 1 – Handicap Calculations Table	18
Schedule 2 – Table of Novice Handicaps	19
Schedule 3 – Penalty Table	20

## Introduction

This document sets out the guidelines provided by the Board of Directors of the VAL to the VAL Handicappers to assist them in the handicapping of athletes within the Rules of the VAL.

These guidelines, which are designed to facilitate greater athlete participation and strive towards regular, competitive racing, are subject to annual review by the VAL Board, with input from VAL officials and the VRTA.

## Objectives

1. To encourage athletes to compete regularly, consistently and to the best of their ability.
2. To provide clear direction to athletes, trainers and other interested parties on how handicaps are derived.

## How does it work?

The VAL Handicapping Guidelines provide a structured process for athletes to secure a lift in handicap. Under this approach, athletes who compete:

- a. a specified number of times (see further below);
- b. consistently; and
- c. to the Stewards' satisfaction;

are entitled to an incremental lift in their handicap, up to a specified limit.

A step by step guide is provided below.

## Key Terms

AAC = Australian Athletics Confederation

*Established Athlete* = an athlete is considered to be established for a particular event if they have competed in more than 5 races in the previous twelve months and 20 or more races within the last 5 years over that distance (or similar distance) in VAL competition.

*Acceptable Performance (AP)* = where an established athlete runs within the Acceptable Deviation from the fastest adjusted heat time for the event on the day, and the VAL Stewards were happy with their effort.

*Acceptable Deviation* = this deviation sets the time range within which an established athlete must run in order to ensure an AP or SP. For each event, the VAL Handicappers take the fastest heat time of the day (or if the fastest heat time breaks the Ceiling Target Time, the next fastest heat time that does not break the Ceiling Target Time) and adds the Acceptable Deviation, as set out in the Handicap Calculations Table. If you run a time that is equal to or faster than this time then you will have run an AP (or SP), subject to the VAL Stewards agreeing that you have performed satisfactorily.

Example: A Sprinter runs 12.52secs to run the fastest heat time of the day in a 120m race. The Acceptable Deviation for the 120m distance, taken from the Handicap Calculations Table, is 0.55secs. If you add 0.55secs to A.Sprinter's fastest time of 12.52sec, you get 13.07secs. If you run equal to or faster than this time and performed to the satisfaction of the VAL Stewards, then you have run an AP.

*Non-acceptable Performance (NAP)* = an established athlete didn't run within the Acceptable Deviation from the fastest adjusted heat time for the event on the day (ie it was slower), despite the VAL Stewards being happy with their effort. NAP's may also be awarded if the athlete's run was within the Acceptable Deviation from the fastest adjusted heat time for the event on the day, but in the opinion of the VAL Stewards the run was not reflective of their previous form.

*Ongoing Assessed Athlete (OGA)* = any athlete who does not satisfy established athlete criteria over a particular distance. All interstate, new and novice athletes are classified as OGA over all distances. All participants in events that are conducted 7 or less times during a season are classified as OGA in that event.

*Satisfactory Performance (SP)* = Where an OGA classified athlete runs to the satisfaction of the VAL Handicappers and Stewards.

*Unsatisfactory Performance (UP)* = where the VAL Stewards deem that an athlete has not given full effort during a particular race irrespective of the time they record in that event.

*Rate per metre (RPM)* = the average time per metre for a particular distance, calculated by dividing the time run by the distance covered (eg the RPM of a 120m runner who runs 12.20seconds off 6m =  $12.20/(120-6) = 0.1070$ )

*Starting Target Time (STT)* = for a particular distance, this is the time that athletes are handicapped to run at the commencement of each season

*Notional Starting Handicap* = an athlete's handicap for a particular distance at the beginning of the season, determined solely on the basis of a mathematical calculation and before any adjustment for prior season performances or the athlete's finishing handicap in the prior season

*Actual Starting Handicap or Starting Handicap (SH)* = the handicap that an athlete will commence the new season on, after allowing for adjustments for prior season performances and the athlete's finishing handicap in the prior season.

*Ceiling Target Time (CTT)* = the fastest time that athletes can be handicapped to run after competing on a regular and consistent basis throughout the season. Once you have reached the CTT your handicap cannot be lifted again during the season.

*Ceiling Point* = the maximum handicap that an athlete can receive for an event in a given season, determined by reference to the athletes average RPM and the Ceiling Target Time.

*Novice* = an athlete who has never won an event under AAC rules.

*Novice Handicap* = the handicap allocated to an athlete who has not previously competed over a particular distance or similar distance who does not have form or performances superior to the start time in the opinion of the VAL Handicappers.

*Interstate Athlete* = an athlete who is registered with a governing body other than the VAL and permanently resides outside the State of Victoria

*Veteran* = an athlete aged 35 years old or over.

*Handicap Calculations Table* = Schedule 1 to this document. It contains all the detail you need on the number of AP's or SP's you need before you are entitled to a handicap lift in a particular event,

*Lift Range* = the range of lifts in handicap for an event that may be awarded by the VAL Handicappers, as set out in the Handicap Calculations Table.

*Minimum Graduation* = each athlete who achieves the required number of AP's for a particular event is entitled to a lift in handicap (unless they have reached the CTT). The Handicap Calculations Table provides a range (the Lift Range) in which the VAL Handicappers may lift the athlete's handicap. The minimum lift in that range is called the Minimum Graduation (refer to the attached Handicap Calculations Table).

*Penalty Table* = Schedule 3 to this document. This table sets out the range of penalties that may be applied by the VAL Handicappers to the handicaps of event winners.

*Carnival* = a meeting organised by a member club of the VAL (eg the Stawell Athletic Club Carnival).

*VAL* = Victorian Athletic League Inc

*VAL Handicappers* = The Panel of handicappers appointed by the VAL Board to handicap all events on the VAL calendar.

*VAL Stewards* = the appointed Stewards appointed by the VAL Board who along with the Handicappers oversee the conduct and stewarding of all events on the VAL calendar.

*Handicap Review Panel (HRP)* = A Panel appointed by the VAL Board to oversee the VAL Handicappers and ensure their adherence to the Handicap guidelines.

*VAL Rules and Regulations* = the official Rules and Regulations of the VAL, available on the VAL website at [www.val.org.au](http://www.val.org.au) or by contacting the VAL office

*VRTA* = Victorian Runners and Trainers Association

## Initial Handicap Allocation

At the commencement of each season, the VAL Handicappers will determine the starting handicap for each registered athlete for each event in which they compete.

An athlete's handicap cannot be greater than their last allocated handicap from the previous season. You can however start the new season on a handicap that is less than the handicap you had at the finish of the previous season based on the following guidelines.

The Actual Starting Handicap is the lesser of an athlete's last allocated handicap from the previous season or the calculated starting handicap, less any adjustments required under the guidelines (listed below).

### ***Established Athletes***

The calculated notional starting handicap is determined by dividing the average of the athlete's best Rate Per Metre (RPM) from the last 5 seasons and the next best RPM from the last 2 seasons, into the starting target (STT) for that event.

### ***Ongoing Assessed Athletes (OGA)***

The notional starting handicap is determined at the discretion of the VAL Handicappers based on consideration of the athlete's single RPM over that distance either within or outside the VAL, or performances over other distances within or outside the VAL.

### ***Adjustments to Starting Marks***

If you had a win (over any distance) in a Group 2, Group 3 or Group 4 race in the previous season your Notional Starting Handicap for that distance at the start of the new season will be reduced by the Minimum Graduation for that particular distance to give you your Actual Starting Handicap.

Also, if you had a win (over any distance) in a Group 1 or Classic race in the previous season your Notional Starting Handicap for that distance at the start of the new season will be reduced by an amount that is **two times** the Minimum Graduation for that particular distance to give you your Actual Starting Handicap.

All adjustments to Notional Starting Handicaps will be cumulative over similar distances.

If you were a Stawell Gift Finalist in the previous season your Notional Starting Handicap will be reduced by the following amount to arrive at your Actual Starting Handicap:

1 <sup>st</sup> placegetter	–	discretionary
2 <sup>nd</sup> placegetter	–	0.75m
3 <sup>rd</sup> placegetter	–	0.50m
4 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> placegetters	–	0.25m

### ***Adjustment for Artificial Tracks***

The following additions are made to times recorded on artificial tracks for the calculation of RPMs. This is done in order to equate times on artificial tracks to that of a good grass track.

70 metres & 100 metres	– 0.1
200 metres	– 0.2
300 metres	– 0.5
400 metres and above	– 1.0 per lap

## ***Age of Performance Allowance***

If in the opinion of the VAL Chief Handicapper a performance over 3 years old is no longer reflective of the athlete's capabilities, the Chief Handicapper has the discretion to exclude that performance from the RPM calculation.

## ***Veterans Allowance***

A further Veterans allowance of up to 5 minimum graduations can be added to the calculated starting handicap and ceiling handicap by the VAL Chief Handicapper if he/she believes the calculated handicaps are no longer reflective of a Veteran athlete's capabilities due to age.

## ***Review of Starting Marks***

If the Chief Handicapper, once your Notional Starting Handicap has been determined, is satisfied that there has been a significant change in your average RPM (and as a result a significant change in your handicap) from the previous season (particularly in lactic events), the Chief Handicapper may use his/her discretion to sensibly place your Actual Starting Handicap at or around the mid-point between your previous handicap and your new Notional Starting Handicap.

In exercising his/her discretion the Chief Handicapper must not place any athlete on an Actual Starting Handicap that exceeds their CP and must have regard to the Actual Starting Handicaps of other athletes

After the VAL Chief Handicapper has reviewed the Notional Starting Handicaps for all athletes, if he/she believes that one or more handicaps are anomalous in any way (ie. A handicap appears too much or too little based on the VAL Chief Handicapper's understanding of the athlete), he/she may apply to the VAL HRP for a detailed review of the athlete's history and/or to allocate a more appropriate handicap for the athlete for that event. The VAL Handicap Review Panel (HRP) must approve any adjustment to handicaps to correct an anomaly.

Similarly, the HRP can direct the VAL Handicappers to alter an athlete's handicap if the handicapping guidelines have not been correctly applied.

Any amendments to correct anomalous handicaps and the reasons for doing so must be documented and retained at the VAL office in the event of subsequent appeal.

## Adjustments to Handicaps during the Season

As you compete during the season your handicap can be adjusted by the Handicappers on the following basis:

### ***First start for the Season***

After you have had your first start for the season in a particular event, the VAL Handicappers may, at their discretion, give you a lift in handicap based on the Lift Range applicable to Ongoing Assessed athletes (as set out in the Handicap Calculation Table), irrespective of whether you are an Established Athlete or Ongoing Assessed athlete.

Any such lift in handicap will apply to the next declared handicap over the particular distance. This discretionary handicap lift is only applicable after your first start over a particular distance during the season.

### ***Throughout the Season***

Every time you run, your performance is reviewed by the VAL Handicappers and the VAL Stewards. In order to be entitled to receive a lift in handicap for a particular event, you must achieve a sufficient number of Acceptable Performances (AP's) (or, in the case of OGA and Interstate Athletes, Satisfactory Performances ("SP's")) over the relevant distance.

The number of APs or SP's required for a handicap lift will vary depending on the distance and the category that the athlete falls into. To assist in ensuring that all athletes are handicapped fairly, athletes are separated into the following categories:

1. Established Athletes
2. Ongoing Assessed Athletes (or OGA)
3. Interstate Athletes

An athlete could be an Established Athlete in one event and an OGA athlete in another event based on how many times they compete over a particular distances (eg a runner might be an Established Athlete over 120m because they compete regularly over this distance, but they might run only the occasional 400m and as a result might be an OGA athlete for that distance). Please refer to the Key Terms for the distinction between Established and OGA athletes.

Importantly, an athlete who meets the criteria to become an Established Athlete may at the discretion of the VAL Handicappers be deemed to be an OGA athlete for a particular event/distance if, and only if, such athlete has not yet won a final of an event of the same or higher category in which they are competing. For the avoidance of doubt, an athlete competing in an event category listed in Column A of the table below may, at the discretion of the VAL Handicappers, be deemed to be OGA only if they have not yet won a final of an event in the categories listed in the corresponding line of Column B:

<b>Column A</b>	<b>Column B</b>
Open	Open
Women's	Open, Women's
Veterans	Open, Veterans, Women's
Women / Veterans	Open, Veterans, Women's, Women / Veteran
Novice	Open, Veterans, Women's, Women / Veterans, Novice

## **Assessment of Performance**

The VAL Handicappers together with the Stewards will assess every run that you have with the VAL. They assess each performance based on:

- a. the time you run.
- b. watching you run and assessing your performance for appropriate effort throughout the run.

When reviewing the time you run, the VAL Handicappers take the fastest wind-adjusted heat time of the day, add on the Acceptable Deviation (refer to the Handicap Calculations Table in Schedule 1) and then see if your run was within that range. If your event is a straight final, then the VAL Handicapper's will assess whether you are within the Acceptable Deviation from the winner's time.

After reviewing your run, the VAL Handicappers & Stewards will place it in one of three categories:

### **For Established Athletes**

#### Acceptable Performance (AP):

If your run was within the Acceptable Deviation from the fastest adjusted heat time for the event on the day, and the VAL Stewards were happy with your effort, then your performance will be classified as an Acceptable Performance (or AP).

However, also note the following conditions:

- i) Heat winners shall be regarded as having an AP for that performance irrespective of their time in the heat, provided that their semi final or final is inside the deviation parameter and the VAL Stewards were happy with the effort (ie: unchallenged heats or walkovers).
- ii) All progressions to semi finals and finals is based on adjusted times.
- iii) To be assessed as having an AP for a particular Carnival, each run in a Carnival over the same or similar distances must be an AP. Hence, if you have one NAP or UP over that distance at a Carnival then it will over-ride any AP.
- iv) If the fastest heat time breaks the Ceiling Target Time, the VAL Handicappers will assess your performance based on the next fastest heat time that does not break the Ceiling Target Time.
- v) An AP achieved in the 200m at Whittlesea/Epping VRTA Carnival will be considered as a credit performance toward 100m and 120m events (for both Established Athletes and OGA athletes).
- vi) As the Maryborough Carnival offers 100m and 120m events, any AP's achieved over the 200m at that carnival will not be considered as a credit performance for the 100m and 120m event.

### **For OGA Athletes**

#### Satisfactory Performance (SP):

Based on your prior and recent form and performances if the Handicappers and Stewards are satisfied with both the time and effort your performance will be classified as a Satisfactory Performance (SP)

### **For all Athletes**

#### Non-acceptable Performance (NAP):

For established athletes if your run was not within the Acceptable Deviation from the fastest adjusted heat time for the event on the day (ie it was slower), and the VAL Stewards were happy with your effort, then your performance will be classified as a Non-Acceptable Performance (or NAP).

Your run may also be classified as an NAP if it was within the Acceptable Deviation from the fastest adjusted heat time for the event on the day, but in the opinion of the VAL Stewards the run was not reflective of your current form.

For OGA athletes if the Handicappers were not satisfied with your performance when considering your prior and recent form, your performance will be classified as an NAP.

**Unsatisfactory Performance (UP):**

Irrespective of the time you run for a particular event, if the VAL Handicappers and/or VAL Stewards determine, based on their review of your performance, that did not give full effort throughout the race, then your performance will be classified as an Unsatisfactory Performance (or UP).

The VAL Stewards and/or VAL Handicappers do not need to formally charge you under the VAL Rules before categorising your performance as a UP.

## ***The allocation of Handicap Lifts***

The Handicap Calculations Table sets out the number of AP's or SP's required before you are entitled to a lift in your handicap. Once you have achieved the required number of AP's or SP's the handicappers will give you a lift in handicap from within the relevant Lift Range for that distance (again, as set out in the Handicap Calculations Table).

Any lift in handicap that you receive will take effect from the next Carnival where handicaps have not yet been declared.

If you are getting NAP's each time you run instead of AP's (or SP'S), the VAL Handicappers do have the discretion to lift your handicap within the same Lift Range. Before you are entitled to be considered for a discretionary lift in handicap, you must first record at least the same number of NAPs as an established athlete who is recording AP's.

It is important to remember the following when considering whether you have met the requirements for a lift in handicap:

- i) If you get an NAP it does not count towards the number of AP's you need to be entitled to a lift in handicap. However, importantly, getting an NAP does not cancel any AP's you have received at previous Carnivals for the particular event.
- ii) If you receive a UP, it automatically cancels out any AP's (or SP's) or NAP's that you have previously recorded over that distance or a similar distance.
- iii) Your placing in an event alters whether you are entitled to a mandatory lift or discretionary lift.
- iv) All finalists in Group 1 or Classic races will not receive an AP (or SP or NAP) for that event on that particular day (in other words, the level of your performance on that day means you do not receive any credit towards a future lift in handicap over that distance).
- v) All placegetters in Group 2, 3 and 4 races will not receive an AP (or SP or NAP) for that event on that particular day (in other words, the level of your performance on that day means you do not receive any credit towards a future lift in handicap over that distance).
- vi) For the avoidance of doubt, race winners are not entitled to a lift in handicap.
- vii) Penalties for race wins are determined in accordance with the guidelines below and listed in Schedule 3.

## ***Winning Penalties***

Once you have won a race you will incur a penalty in accordance with the Penalty Table. This is to give the VAL Handicappers the best possible opportunity to make every athlete competitive and with the opportunity to pick up a win.

In exceptional circumstances, the VAL Board will determine that certain events will not attract a penalty.

For every event, the Penalty Table provides the VAL Handicappers with a range of penalties they can impose (taking into consideration the winning margins and times).

Race winners who break the Ceiling Target Time in winning an event must, at a minimum, be re-handicapped back to a handicap where they would run the Ceiling Target Time. However, the penalty will be applied to the race winner's winning handicap position and, in most circumstances, will be inclusive of any penalty for breaking the Ceiling Target Time.

Women who win an Open race will be penalised in Woman's events over the equivalent distance, even if the race won was not a Group 1 or Classic race. Similarly, a Veteran who wins an open event will be penalised in the Veteran category for a similar event.

Winners of Classic and Group 1 events can be penalized over other distances at the discretion of the VAL Handicappers. Similarly, athletes who win over the same distance more than once during a season may incur an additional penalty.

Winners of Classic and Group 1 events can be penalized within a Carnival for an event that is yet to commence (ie. heats for the event haven't started), based on the guidelines provided herein and the penalty table.

Interstate wins by Victorians or Interstate athletes will be penalised as per the table of standard penalties and discretionary penalty will be applied.

### ***Possible Discretionary Lift for Stawell Carnival Only***

The VAL Handicappers with the approval of the HRP, can provide a discretionary lift of up to 2 minimum graduations to athletes established over the particular distance for Stawell events only.

After the "Stawell only" discretionary lift, their handicap would have to remain on or inside their ceiling handicap for that distance.

This "Stawell only" discretionary lift is not a part of an athlete's allocated finishing handicap and will not be carried forward into the start mark for the following season.

### ***Maximum Handicap***

In the same way that a Starting Target Time is set for each distance in order for each athlete to receive a Notional Starting Handicap (and ultimately their Actual Starting Handicap), a Ceiling Target Time (CTT) is also set for each distance.

This helps identify a Ceiling Point (CP) for each athlete's handicap for each distance over which they compete. Just like the Notional Starting Handicap calculation, this CP is determined by a mathematical calculation and represents the maximum handicap that an athlete can receive for the event in a given season.

Importantly, the CP is just that, the maximum potential handicap. It should not be considered an entitlement. Each athlete must demonstrate, through regular, consistent performances, that they require the additional lifts in handicap that will get them closer to their CP in a particular event.

In this way, every performance by every athlete is an integrity test to ensure an athlete needs the handicap allocated and needs a handicap at or near their CP in order to run the CTT and be competitive.

If an improved performance within the current season means that your existing handicap is greater than your CP then you may be subject to a handicap re-adjustment at the discretion of the VAL Handicappers.

If within the current season an athlete creates a personal best RPM or runs to a level that improves their calculated RPM, their CP Handicap is adjusted and reduced accordingly.

In cases where an athlete has reached their handicap CP, the VAL Handicappers have the ability, at their sole discretion, to reassess the average RPM of the athlete (and therefore their CP) by taking into consideration the age of any performances in the athlete's sample of past performances.

The allowance is applied on a discretionary basis and acknowledges:

- a. the length of time since an athlete has performed at his/her best; and
- b. an athlete's eligibility for veteran status.

In addition, the Handicappers are not required to lift the handicap of an athlete who bettered the CTT (or came extremely close) in the prior season from a handicap that is the same, or less, than their current handicap.

## ***Amateur Performances***

The VAL Handicappers may, at their sole discretion, take into account your amateur performances when they determine your handicap for a particular event.

If you achieve a personal best performance in amateur competition, it will only have an impact on your handicap in that event (or similar event) if it improves your average RPM within your sample of performances after allowing for artificial tracks and conditions. If the performance does change your RPM, the CP is re-adjusted and the VAL Handicappers will consider a possible adjustment to your current handicap.

Performances in amateur competition on synthetic/rubber/mondo shall be assessed with discretion with regard to the comparative performance if achieved on a good/fast grass track. This assessment may be applied at the discretion of the VAL Handicappers.

## **New and Novice Athletes**

It is more challenging for the VAL Handicappers to set handicaps for new athletes because in many cases there are little or no past performances to assess.

As a result, all new athletes (being athletes who have not previously registered with the VAL or any other AAC member association) and athletes who have not yet recorded a large sample of performances in a particular event (or similar event) are classified as subject to Ongoing Assessment (OGA) for that event (or similar events).

An athlete may be classified as OGA in a single event or multiple events depending on the number of performances over particular distances.

As a guideline, the First Starting Handicap for OGA classified athletes will be the Novice Handicap for the particular event, subject to the following:

- i) In circumstances where OGA athletes have past performances that indicate that they should have a handicap less than the Novice Handicap for a particular event, the VAL Handicappers may, at their discretion, allocate an Actual Starting Handicap that is behind the Novice Handicap for that distance.
- ii) OGA athletes may be allocated an Actual Starting Handicap that is higher than the Novice Handicap if that handicap has been earned through competition in VAL (or equivalent competition with another AAC member). Like Established Athletes, OGA athletes can not commence a new season on a handicap that is greater than the handicap on which they finished the previous season.

OGA athletes are not guaranteed a lift in handicap for any event and can be re-assessed at any time at the discretion of the VAL Handicappers if warranted.

OGA athletes who achieve the requisite number of SP's (or equivalent number of NAP's) are able to achieve lifts in handicap at the discretion of the VAL Handicappers within the Lift Ranges set out in the Handicap Calculations Table.

At the discretion of the VAL Handicappers, OGA athletes in selected group 4 events may be provided with one-off lifts in handicap, on the basis that these one-off lifts can be reversed for future races. Should you receive a one-off lift in handicap for a group 4 race, you will be notified by the VAL Handicappers prior to competing in that event.

An OGA athlete will cease being OGA and become an Established Athlete (and be handicapped accordingly) when they no longer fall within the definition of OGA athlete. For instance, once an athlete has competed over a particular distance (or similar distance) in at least 20 VAL Carnivals within the last 5 seasons and at 5 or more VAL Carnivals within the particular season they are no longer an OGA athlete. The one exception to an athlete ceasing to be OGA and becoming an Established Athlete is where the athlete, at the discretion of the VAL Handicappers, has been deemed to be an OGA athlete for a particular event on the basis that the athlete has not yet won a final of an event of the same or higher category in which they are competing. For further details refer to the section "Adjustments to Handicaps during the Season".

## **Novice Handicaps**

Novice Handicaps are set for every distance for every event type (ie. for Veterans, Women and "Open" competition) and are provided in Schedule 2 of this document.

## Interstate Athletes

All Interstate athletes are treated as OGA and can only be lifted by meeting the same criteria as Victorian OGA athletes (refer above).

Like VAL athletes, Interstate Athletes will be handicapped to the STT at the commencement of each season and as OGA athletes thereafter.

## Nationally Ranked Athletes and Internationals

Any athlete who enters a VAL event and is ranked in the top 15 in Australia over a related distance according to the latest available official Athletics Australia rankings one month prior to the declaration of handicaps for the event being entered will be will be classed as OGA and not automatically handicapped to the Ceiling Target Time. In determining whether an athlete should be treated as OGA as a result of their national ranking, the VAL Handicappers shall have regard to the table below.

International athletes who enter a VAL event and whose best time over 100metres or 200metres in the preceding 2 years would have placed them in the top 15 in Australian rankings referred to above will be treated in a similar manner.

<b>Distance in which Nationally Ranked (or would have been Nationally ranked in the case of International athletes)</b>	<b>VAL events in which the athlete will be classed as OGA</b>
100 metres	70 metres, 100 metres, 120 metres, 200 metres
200 metres	70 metres, 100 metres, 120 metres, 200 metres
400 metres	200 metres, 300 metres, 400 metres, 550 metres
400 metres hurdles	200 metres, 300 metres, 400 metres, 550 metres, 800 metres
800 metres	400 metres, 550 metres, 800 metres, 1600 metres
1,500 metres	800 metres, 1600 metres, 2000 metres
2,000 metres steeplechase and 3,000 metres steeplechase	1600 metres, 2000 metres, 3200 metres
3,000 metres	1600 metres, 2000 metres, 3200 metres
5,000 metres	1600 metres, 2000 metres, 3200 metres
10,000 metres	3200 metres

The reason for treating these athletes as OGA is to provide the VAL Handicappers with more flexibility in handicapping so that regular VAL competitors are not disadvantaged.

## Alterations to Declared Handicaps

No handicap can be altered after declaration unless:

- a) An athlete wins another race over the same (or similar) distance after the declaration of handicaps for a subsequent Carnival;
- b) An athlete breaks the CTT over the same (or similar) distance after the declaration of handicaps for a subsequent Carnival;
- c) An athlete wins a Classic or Group 1 event at a Carnival. In such cases, the athlete may at the sole discretion of the VAL Handicappers be subject to a handicap penalty applying to their handicap over the same or similar distance in an event at the same Carnival. Consistent with the VAL Rules and Regulations, no penalty will apply to the same or similar distance where the subsequent event has already commenced (ie the athlete has already competed in a heat or semi-final and qualified for a final);
- d) An athlete receives a handicap penalty under the VAL Rules as a result of a handicap review initiated by the VAL Stewards;
- e) It can be clearly established that the VAL Handicapper/s have not correctly applied the Handicapping Guidelines in setting the handicap (this includes instances where an athlete successfully appeals their handicap);
- f) There has been a clear, proven administrative error.

The allocation of withheld marks shall be kept to a minimum.

# Handicap Review & Appeal Process

If, after reading these guidelines, it is not clear to you how the handicap you have received has been calculated, there are a number of avenues open to you to either (a) check that it is correct or (b) request an amendment.

As a starting point, if you are a member of the Victorian Runners and Trainers Association Inc (VRTA) you may wish to consult a representative for assistance in understanding your handicaps. Details of relevant contacts can be found on the VRTA website at [www.vrta.org.au](http://www.vrta.org.au) or by contacting the VAL office. Your VRTA representative may be able to either confirm that your handicap is in fact correct and explain why, or, to the extent that there is a clear error, be able to resolve by consulting the VAL Chief Handicapper or the Handicap Review Panel.

If you wish to have your handicap reviewed in a formal way, the VAL Rules contain a series of procedures that you should follow.

Once handicaps have been declared for a particular Carnival, you are able to lodge an application for review or an appeal against your handicap. The procedures for doing so are set out in detail in Section 14 of the VAL Rules & Regulations and are summarised below:

## ***Handicap Review***

1. To apply for a review of your handicap, you must complete the Handicap Review Application form (available at [www.val.org.au](http://www.val.org.au) or by contacting the VAL Office) and submit it to the VAL office together with the \$25 non-refundable fee. When applying for a review, you must clearly state the basis of your request and why you believe your handicap is unjust (including providing any evidence).
2. The VAL office will refer your application to the relevant VAL Handicapper within two (2) business days of receipt.
3. The VAL Chief Handicapper will review the application and all relevant circumstances and provide a brief written report to the VAL office within 7 days of receipt. This report must then be forwarded to you within a further 2 business days.
4. The review by the VAL Chief Handicapper may or may not result in a change to your handicap. In either case, the VAL Chief Handicapper must provide reasons for their decision.

Note: in exceptional circumstances (particularly when time is critical), the VAL Board may decide that the formal written process not apply and the athlete be allowed to address the VAL Chief Handicapper by way of oral submission (not more than 15 minutes). In such cases, you may have a representative speak on your behalf, although they must not be a lawyer. In such cases, the VAL Chief Handicapper may provide their decision directly to you and then prepare a report to be sent to the VAL office within 48 hours.

## ***Handicap Appeal***

1. If you are not happy with the outcome of the Handicap Review, then you have the right to lodge an appeal against your handicap. To do this you must complete the Handicap Appeal Application form (available at [www.val.org.au](http://www.val.org.au) or by contacting the VAL Office) and submit it to the VAL office together with the \$150 fee (note: for the Stawell Gift the fee is \$500).
2. You must lodge your appeal application with the VAL office within 7 days of receiving the decision from your Handicap Review Application. If you lodge your appeal on a race day, you must lodge it with the VAL Stewards.

3. The VAL will convene a hearing of the Handicap Appeal Panel (comprising independent panel members) within 7 days of receiving your appeal application (this can be later in exceptional circumstances).
4. The Chief Executive Officer of the VAL will convene a hearing of the Handicap Appeal Panel and may take into consideration your availability when setting the date, time and location of the hearing. The Chief Executive Officer of the VAL will advise you when the hearing is to be held and you must make reasonable efforts to make yourself available.
5. If you wish to present a submission of your arguments for the appeal in writing, you must lodge it with the VAL office at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.
6. The VAL Chief Handicapper may choose to make oral submissions to the Handicap Appeal Panel in response to your appeal application, in addition to relying on the content of the VAL Handicapper's report (ie from the handicap review).
7. You may also make oral representations to the Handicap Appeal Panel. You may also ask the Handicap Appeal Panel if a representative (who can not be a lawyer) can make such oral submissions on your behalf. The Handicap Appeal Panel has discretion to allow (or not allow) you to have a representative to make submissions for you.
8. The Handicap Appeal Panel may either dismiss your appeal or they may uphold your appeal and in doing so re-handicap you taking into account the relevant matters presented in the appeal hearing.
9. If your handicap is adjusted, this adjusted handicap applies until you are subject to any other penalties under the VAL Rules or the next declaration of handicaps.
10. If your appeal is successful you will receive a refund of 50% of your application fee (ie \$75 or \$250). The remaining 50% of the fee will be used to assist in meeting the costs of the panel members.

If you are considering asking for a review of your handicap, or appealing your handicap, it is important that you read the VAL Rules & Regulations in detail. The explanation below is designed as a summary only and does not in any way seek to amend, explain, confirm or alter the formal VAL Rules & Regulations (in their entirety).

SCHEDULE 1 - HANDICAP CALCULATIONS TABLE AS AT NOV. 2011

EVENT	MINIMUM GRAD/N	ESTABLISHED ATHLETES		ONGOING ASSESSMENT ATHLETES				TARGET TIMES		TIME RANGE
		NUMBER OF ACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCES	LIFT RANGE	NUMBER OF SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCES	LIFT RANGE	NUMBER OF SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCES	LIFT RANGE	STARTING	CEILING	ACCEPTABLE DEVIATION
70 OPEN	0.25	3	0.25-0.50	1	0.25-0.75	1	0.25-2.00	7.75	7.58	0.30
120 OPEN	0.25	3	0.25-0.50	1	0.25-1.00	1	0.25-2.00	12.40	12.25	0.55
120 WOMEN	0.25	3	0.25-0.50	1	0.25-1.00	1	0.25-2.00	14.20	14.00	0.55
120 VETS & WOM/VET	0.25	N/A	N/A	1	0.25-2.00	1	0.25-2.00	13.20	13.00	N/A
200 OPEN	1	N/A	N/A	1	0 - 4	1	0 - 8	21.00	20.80	N/A
300 OPEN	1	N/A	N/A	1	0 - 6	1	0 - 12	34.50	33.50	N/A
300 VETS, WOM, W/V	1	3	1 - 2	1	0 - 6	1	0 - 12	36.00	35.00	2.00
400 OPEN	1	3	1 - 2	1	0 - 8	1	0 - 8	47.60	46.50	2.00
400 WOMEN	1	2	1 - 2	1	0 - 8	1	0 - 8	53.90	52.80	2.00
550 OPEN	1	N/A	N/A	1	0 - 10	1	0 - 10	70.00	69.00	N/A
800 OPEN	2	3	2 - 6	1	0 - 20	1	0 - 20	1.52.0	1.50	5.00
800 WOMEN	2	N/A	N/A	1	0 - 30	1	0 - 30	2.10.0	2.06.0	N/A
800 VETS & WOM/VET	2	N/A	N/A	1	0 - 30	1	0 - 30	2.00.0	1.57.0	N/A
1600 OPEN	5	3	5 - 10	1	0 - 40	1	0 - 40	4.07.0	4.02	11.00
1600 VETS & WOM/VETS	5	N/A	N/A	1	0 - 60	1	0 - 60	4.25	4.20	N/A
3200 OPEN	5	N/A	N/A	1	0 - 80	1	0 - 80	9.10	9.00	N/A

**NOTES**

1. ALL NOVICE & RESTRICTED EVENTS OVER ALL DISTANCES ARE HANDICAPPED ON A DISCRETIONARY BASIS
2. HANDICAPS FOR ALL 100 EVENTS ARE DETERMINED FROM THE 120 HANDICAPS OF THE SAME CATEGORY
3. ALL NON VETERAN WOMEN ARE OGA IN WOMEN/VETS 300S.
4. THOSE DISTANCES LISTED AS N/A FOR ESTABLISHED ATHLETES ARE "OGA" EVENTS ONLY.

**Schedule 2 – Table of Novice Handicaps**

<b>VICTORIAN ATHLETIC LEAGUE NOVICE HANDICAPS 2011/12</b>					
<b>DISTANCE/ CATEGORY</b>	<b>UNDER 35</b>		<b>OVER 35</b>		<b>START TIME</b>
	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	
<b><u>70 METRES</u></b>					
OPEN	4.0	10.5	6.0	12.5	7.75
WOMEN	NA	3.0	NA	5.0	8.9
<b><u>120 METRES</u></b>					
OPEN	6	17	9	20	12.4
WOMENS	NA	6	NA	9	14.2
VETERANS	NA	NA	5	17	13.2
VET/WOMEN		14	5	17	13.2
<b><u>200 METRES</u></b>					
OPEN	10	26	15	30	21
WOMEN	NA	10	NA	15	24.2
<b><u>300 METRES</u></b>					
OPEN	10	35	18	42	34.5
WOMENS	NA	30	NA	36	36
VETERANS	NA	NA	10	36	36
VET/WOMEN	NA	30	10	36	36
<b><u>400 METRES</u></b>					
OPEN	20	54	30	62	47.6
WOMENS	NA	20	NA	30	53.9
<b><u>550 METRES</u></b>					
OPEN	25	75	35	85	70
<b><u>800 METRES</u></b>					
OPEN	40	110	60	126	1.52.0
WOMENS	NA	50	NA	70	2.10.0
VETERANS	NA	NA	30	100	2.00.0
VET/WOMEN	NA	80	30	100	2.00.0
<b><u>1600 METRES</u></b>					
OPEN	100	260	150	290	4.07.0
VETERANS	NA	NA	50	200	4.25.0
VET/WOMEN	NA	165	50	200	4.25.0
<b><u>3200 METRES</u></b>					
OPEN	150	400	250	400	9.10.0

### Schedule 3 – Penalty Table

#### Open Events

DISTANCE	TOTAL \$	STANDARD PENALTY	+ DISCRETION
70	UP TO \$500	0.25	0.25
	\$501 TO \$1000	0.50	0.50
	\$1001 TO \$3000	0.75	0.75
	\$3001 +	1.00	1.00
	STAWELL	1.50	1.50
100/120	UP TO \$500	0.25	0.25
	\$501 TO \$3000	0.50	0.50
	\$3001 TO \$5000	0.75	0.75
	\$5001 TO \$10000	1.00	1.00
	\$10001 TO \$15000	1.50	1.50
	\$15001 +	2.00	2.00
	STAWELL	3.00	3.00
200	UP TO \$2000	1.00	1.00
	\$2001 +	2.00	2.00
	STAWELL	4.00	4.00
300/400	UP TO \$500	2.00	2.00
	\$501 TO \$1000	3.00	3.00
	\$1001 TO \$2000	4.00	4.00
	\$2001 TO \$4000	5.00	5.00
	\$4001+	8.00	8.00
	STAWELL	8.00	8.00
550	UP TO \$500	3.00	3.00
	\$501 TO \$1000	4.00	4.00
	\$1001 TO \$2000	6.00	6.00
	\$2001 +	8.00	8.00
	STAWELL	10.00	10.00
800	UP TO \$749	4.00	4.00
	\$750 TO \$999	6.00	6.00
	\$1000 TO \$1500	8.00	8.00
	\$1501 TO \$3000	12.00	10.00
	\$3001+	16.00	16.00
	STAWELL	16.00	16.00
1600	UP TO \$749	10.00	10.00
	\$750 TO \$1500	15.00	15.00
	\$1501 +	20.00	20.00
	STAWELL	30.00	30.00
3200	UP TO \$1000	20.00	20.00
	\$1001 +	30.00	30.00
	STAWELL	40.00	60.00

Note: Any multiple winner over the same distance may incur an additional penalty.

Schedule 3 (continued) – Penalty Table

*Women's and Veterans Events*

DISTANCE	TOTAL \$	STANDARD PENALTY	+ DISCRETION
70	UP TO \$400	0.50	0.50
	\$401 TO \$1000	0.75	0.75
	\$1001 -3000	1.00	1.00
100/120	UP TO \$400	0.50	0.50
	\$401 TO \$750	0.75	0.75
	\$751 TO \$1000	1.00	1.00
	\$1001 TO \$2000	1.25	1.25
	2001-5000	1.50	1.50
	5001-9999	2.00	2.00
	STAWELL		
300/400	UP TO \$400	2.00	2.00
	\$401 TO \$800	3.00	3.00
	\$801 TO \$1200	4.00	4.00
	\$1201+	6.00	6.00
	STAWELL	8.00	8.00
800	UP TO \$400	6.00	10.00
	\$401 - \$800	8.00	12.00
	\$800 +	12.00	14.00
	STAWELL	16.00	16.00
1500 / 1600	UP TO \$400	10.00	20.00
	\$401 TO \$800	15.00	25.00
	\$801 +	20.00	30.00
	STAWELL	25.00	35.00

Note: Any multiple winner over the same distance may incur an additional penalty.