



**HANDICAPPING  
REGULATIONS**

As updated and effective from 30 November 2020

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## **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 (affiliated Organisations are VAL, SAAL, TAL, NSWAL, WAAL and QAL).

*Event Categories* = Separate event categories are Open, Women, Veterans and Novice. Combined events such as Women & Veterans are not regarded as a separate category.

*Regular Event* = An event (distance) that is conducted on 8 or more occasions within the season for a specific category. Combined events, such as Women & Veterans events, Novice and Junior events, are not classified as Regular events.

*Established Athlete* = an athlete is considered to be established for a specific category within a particular event, if they have competed in that event within that category *the number of times specified within the Athlete Status and Category guidelines. See Page 13*). It should be noted that competing in other categories over the same distance does not count towards this requirement. For example, to be considered established in the Open 100/120, requires the number of performances specified within the Athlete Status and Category guidelines to be completed in the Open 100/120 event and category.

### **Open 3200**

Delete the paragraph that begins "Prior to the commencement of the season, start marks will be determined for those athletes that have competed over the distance the previous season....."

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

*Acceptable Deviation* = this deviation sets the time range within which an established athlete must run in order to ensure an Acceptable Performance. For each event, the VAL Handicappers take the fastest heat time of the day (or if in the opinion of handicappers &/or stewards/HRP that the fastest time is not reflective of the majority of the field, that the fastest time be discounted and the next time will be taken) and adds the Acceptable Deviation, as set out in the Handicap Calculations Table. If the athlete runs a time that is equal to or faster than this time then they have run within the Acceptable Deviation. If the event is a straight final, the winning time is used, or if that time is under the ceiling, then the highest placed time that does not break the ceiling time is used.

*Acceptable Performance (AP)* = where an established athlete runs within the Acceptable time Deviation and the VAL Handicapper and Stewards were satisfied with their performance and effort.

*Satisfactory Performance (SP)* = Where an established athlete has not ran within the Acceptable time deviation but has ran to the satisfaction of the Handicapper and Stewards, or when an OGA classified athlete runs to the satisfaction of the VAL Handicappers and Stewards.

*Non-acceptable Performance (NAP)* = Performances are classified as NAPs based on time. Athletes have not met the full criteria provided above to achieve an AP or SP, however the Stewards are not dissatisfied with the effort provided

*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 Time* = for a particular distance, this is the time that athletes are handicapped to, based on their best performances, at the commencement of each season. The starting times for each event are provided in the Handicap Calculations Table (Schedule 1).

*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* = 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 Time* = the fastest time that athletes can be handicapped to run in a particular event **after competing within the season over the distance in the VAL**. Once an athlete has reached the ceiling time, their handicap cannot be lifted again during the season. The ceiling times for each event are provided in the handicap Calculations Table (Schedule 1).

*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.

*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 Ceiling Time). 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).

*Carnival* = a meeting organised by a member club of the VAL.

*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

## **INITIAL AND STARTING HANDICAPS**

### **Initial Handicap Allocation**

When a VAL registered athlete enters a particular distance for the first time they will be allocated a starting handicap based on their best performance over that or a similar distance.

The maximum initial handicap an athlete can receive is the Novice handicap for that distance, subject to the conditions listed below. The Novice handicaps are provided in Schedule 2 of the Handicap Regulations and are dependent on the gender and age of the athlete.

The starting time for each distance alongside the athlete's best performance, or potential best performance based on their personal bests over a similar distance, is used by the Handicapper to determine if an initial handicap allocation should be less than the Novice handicap and what that handicap should be. The starting times for each distance and event category are available in Schedule 1 of the Handicap Regulations.

If a VAL registered athlete has competed regularly over other similar distances within the VAL, the Handicapper can apply to the HRP to allocate an initial handicap that is more than the novice handicap. This will only be approved if the athlete's performances over other similar distances clearly show they require a greater handicap to be competitive and the athlete's current handicap over the similar distance is completely out of balance with the novice handicap for the distance they are entering.

If the athlete is over the age of 30 and their personal best performance is more than 3 years ago, the Handicapper can take into consideration the athlete's recent performances. In such circumstances the best performance from the last 3 years will be used to determine the initial handicap allocation.

For the purpose of determining an athlete's potential best performance, distances from 70 to 400 are regarded as similar, as are 400 to 800, 800 to 1500 and 1500 to 5000.

The track and wind conditions of personal best performances are to be taken into account by the Handicapper when determining an initial handicap allocation.

### **Season Start Marks**

Prior to the commencement of each season, the Handicappers in conjunction with the HRP, will determine the starting handicap for each registered athlete for each event they competed in the previous season.

An athlete's starting handicap for the season for each distance will be the lesser of their last allocated handicap from the previous season over that distance, or the calculated notional starting handicap less any adjustments required under the Handicap Regulations.

As such an athlete's starting handicap cannot be greater than their last allocated handicap for the distance, but can be less, based on the Handicap Regulations.

Starting handicaps are determined for all distances and separate individual categories (Open events, Women events and Veteran events) conducted the previous season on a regular basis. Starting Handicaps will not be calculated for Novice, Restricted and Junior events.

The Combined Women's/Veteran events are treated as Veteran events for the purposes of calculating handicaps. In the Women/Veterans 100/120 events the non-veteran women will not be allocated a starting handicap in this event. Throughout the season their handicap in the combined 100/120 events, will be determined directly from their Women's 120 handicap.



### **Calculation of Notional Starting Handicap**

For the purposes of this clause of the VAL Handicap Regulations, a “Regular” event is:

- An event that is conducted on 8 or more occasions within the current season for a specific category. The different event categories are: Open, Women’s and Veterans. All combined events such as Women & Veteran events, Novice events and Junior events are not Regular events.

Refer to the Athlete Status Section for definitions of athlete classifications (Established or OGA).

For Established athletes in Regular events, 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 time for that event. The Starting time for each event is available in Schedule 1 of the Handicap Regulations.

For all athletes classified as OGA in a specific event, the notional starting handicap is determined at the discretion of the VAL Handicapper based on consideration of the athlete’s best RPM over that or a similar distance, within or outside the VAL.

***For both Established and OGA athletes, RPMs will be drawn from all performances over the distance, both within all event categories in the VAL and external to the VAL.***

For non-Regular events, all notional starting handicaps are calculated as OGA.

### **Adjustments to Starting Marks**

If an athlete has won a Group 1 or Classic event in the VAL or any other Interstate AAC Affiliated Organisation in the previous season, their Actual starting handicap for the current season in the VAL for that particular distance only, will be reduced by one minimum graduation. This is in addition to the penalty from the previous season. Any athlete that wins two or more Group 2 or 3 races with a season may incur an additional penalty that will be applied to the athletes start mark for the following season.

### **Stawell Penalties**

The penalty for winning at Stawell in all events in the previous season, will be applied to the lesser of the finish mark from the previous season for that distance or the Notional starting handicap calculation for that distance for the new season.

This ensures Stawell winners from the previous season, will start behind their calculated notional starting handicap by a minimum of the applicable standard penalty. For all penalties, including Stawell, please refer to the Schedule 3 of the handicap Regulations.

The Stawell winning penalty is inclusive of the classic or Group 1 adjustment. If an athlete has won over the distance in an additional Classic or Group 1 event, as well as Stawell, the athlete’s start mark will be reduced by both adjustments.

Winners of all events at Stawell will have their handicaps reassessed over all similar distances (refer Page 7) and all categories for the commencement of the next season. The Handicapper will take into account the athlete’s winning performance and RPM to determine if a reduction in start marks in other categories and similar distances is required for the athlete to be handicapped on or behind the relevant start mark for the new season. Any adjustments under this regulation are at the handicapper’s discretion and require the approval of the HRP. This regulation does not override other penalty regulations and it should be noted wins in open events automatically attract penalties across all categories.

Athletes who make the Women's or Men's Stawell gift Final in the previous season, will also have their 120 start mark reduced by the following amount. This adjustment will again be to the lesser of their finish mark from the previous season or the Notional starting handicap calculation for the new season.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Placegetter – 3m.
- 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.

However, the above penalties can be varied on recommendation from the handicapper by the HRP, should the handicapper consider the penalty is not commensurate with the performance recorded.

### **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 & 100 metres – 0.1
- 200 metres – 0.2
- 300 metres – 0.5
- 400 metres and above – 1.0 per 400.

### **Age of Performance Allowance**

If in the opinion of the Handicapper a performance over 3 years old is no longer reflective of the athlete's capabilities, the Handicapper can seek approval from the HRP to exclude that performance from the RPM calculation. This would apply to both the starting and ceiling calculations.

### **Veterans Allowance**

A Veterans allowance of up to 4 minimum graduations can be added to the calculated notional starting handicap and ceiling handicap by the Handicapper, subject to the approval of the HRP, if the Handicapper believes the calculated handicaps are no longer reflective of a Veterans athlete's capabilities due to age. The adjusted starting handicap cannot exceed the finishing handicap for last season nor place the athlete under the starting time based on their best performance from the last 12 months.

### **Developing Athletes**

If in the opinion of the Handicapper an athlete has the potential for significant natural development or improved fitness levels, the Handicapper can apply to the HRP to have the starting mark for that athlete reduced.

### **Adjustment to performances to allow for distance variations**

When calculating the RPM of a performance, the Handicapper will consider and allow for any significant variation in distance between the actual distance covered and the distance to be covered by the athlete in the particular category after allowing for the handicap of the athlete concerned.

An example would be when considering the RPM of an external 1500 performance for an athlete with a 1600 handicap either significantly greater or less than 100. Other examples would be when reviewing amateur 400 or 800 performances for athletes with large handicaps over that particular distance.

For the purpose of this regulation, a significant variation would be a variation greater than 5% between the distance actually covered in the performance being considered, and the distance to be covered by the athlete after the deduction of their handicap.

Under this regulation and in order to provide a level playing field, an RPM adjustment for specific events will be applied to the variation in distance between what was actually covered and what would be covered after the handicap deduction. If the performance being considered is less than the distance to be covered for the event being handicapped, the adjustment is added on to the rpm for the extra distance. If the performance being considered is greater than the distance to be covered, the adjustment is deducted from the rpm for the reduction in distance. The following percentage adjustments for specific distances have been arrived at after reviewing a wide range of samples for each distance and allows for the different rates of de-acceleration.

- 300/400 – 10%
- 800 – 15%
- 1500/1600 – 12%
- 3000/3200 – 10%
- Please note there is no adjustment for distances of 200 or less.

This adjustment will be used when reviewing times in external and amateur competitions, for application to VAL events. This adjustment will also be applied to convert RPMs between event categories, where variation in handicaps results in a variation in distance covered that is greater than 5%. For example when utilizing an RPM from a performance in an open category event, for a women's or masters category and visa-versa.

This adjustment will be utilized for calculating start marks and for assessing if athletes have broken the ceiling time, and therefore require adjustment during the season.

For example if an athlete runs a time of 4.20 for 1500 in an external event and has a handicap of 200 in the 1600, the following calculation applies:

- Allowance for grass @ 1 second per lap – adjusted time 4.23.75 for 1500
- RPM –  $4.23.75 / 1500 = 0.1758$
- Current 1600 handicap – 200
- Actual distance covered – 1400
- Variation in distance – 100
- Adjusted RPM for distance variation –  $0.1758 * 1.12 = 0.1969$
- Time deduction for distance variation –  $0.1969 * 100 = 19.69$  seconds
- Adjusted time for VAL distance after handicap =  $4.23.75 - 19.69 = 4.04.06$ .

### **Review of Starting Marks**

If the Handicapper believes the potential adjustment arising from the calculated notional starting handicap is too severe and would result in the athlete being uncompetitive, the Handicapper can apply to the HRP to reduce the adjustment to the starting handicap. The HRP will take into account the consistency and recent form of the athlete over this and other distances.

The HRP will review the allocated starting handicaps to ensure compliance with the regulations. Subject to the conditions and potential adjustments outlined, the HRP will instruct the Handicapper to correct and adjust any handicaps it deems as not being in accordance with the regulations.

At all times the adjusted starting handicap cannot exceed the finishing handicap for last season nor place the athlete under the starting time based on their best performance from the last 12 months.

## ATHLETE STATUS AND CATEGORIES

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's status as Established or OGA in a particular event, is reviewed and determined at the commencement of the season and remains unchanged for the entire season.

### **Established Athletes**

An athlete is considered to be established for a specific category within a particular event, if they have competed in that event within that category on 10 or more occasions in the previous 2 seasons and 20 or more occasions within the last 5 seasons in VAL competition. Refer to key terms (Page 5) for a more detailed explanation. However, for athletes over both the 800 and 1600 metre distances to be deemed Established will require 6 runs in the previous 2 seasons and 16 runs the past 5 seasons. Once an athlete has competed over the particular distance (800 or 1600 metres) 16 times, they remain an Established athlete in that specific category, unless they do not compete at all over that particular distance for 2 complete seasons, whereupon they would revert to OGA status until the criteria as outlined above is met.

The advantages for an athlete becoming established in an event are:

- It is incumbent on the Handicapper to gradually move an athlete to a potentially competitive handicap as they continue to compete in that event, so that by the time the athlete becomes Established, they have the handicap to run within the Acceptable time deviation (refer Schedule 1) and are therefore capable of being competitive and potentially winning. This is obviously subject to the athlete running to their capabilities.
- An athlete that is established in an event must be lifted when they have received the required number of APs or SPs, in accordance with the Handicap Regulations. For the purpose of this regulation all rounds of an individual event at a particular meeting is counted as 1 occasion in total.

### **OGA Athletes (including New & Novice Athletes)**

An Ongoing Assessed Athlete (OGA) is any athlete who does not satisfy the 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 on 10 or less occasions during the past 2 seasons are classified as OGA in that event.

An athlete may be classified as OGA in a single event or multiple events, depending on the number of performances over a particular distance. Athletes can be established in one event and OGA in another.

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. However OGA athletes will have their handicap reviewed after an SP and can receive a handicap lift within the range provided in Schedule 1, at the discretion of the Handicapper.

At the discretion of the VAL Handicappers, with the approval of the HRP, OGA athletes in selected Group 3 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 an athlete receive a one-off lift in handicap for a Group 3 race, they will be notified by the VAL Handicapper prior to competing in that event.

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. Column A represents the event category being entered, Column B represents the same or higher categories for the corresponding category in Column A.

Column A	Column 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

### **Interstate Athletes**

All interstate athletes are classified as OGA.

The initial handicap for an interstate athlete entering a VAL event for the first time within the season, is calculated based on their PB performance in the same manner as other OGA athletes. (Track, Age of Performance and Veterans allowances apply where applicable).

If an interstate athlete has previously competed in an AAC member organization (TAL, SAAL, QAL, WAAL, NSWAL) their performances in these bodies can be taken into account in allocating an initial handicap and for the ongoing assessment of interstate athletes within the season, once they have competed in the VAL.

The same expectations for consistency of performance and running to an athlete's capabilities, are required of Interstate athletes as VAL registered athletes, in order for Interstate athletes to be considered for a lift. This includes both VAL and interstate performances.

All interstate athletes who have not competed in an AAC member organization, as listed above, cannot receive an initial handicap greater than the Novice mark for their applicable category in that event. The same process and regulations apply as to all new athletes in determining their initial handicap (refer Initial Handicap Allocation and OGA Athletes Status sections of these regulations).

## **ADJUSTMENT TO HANDICAPS DURING THE SEASON**

As athletes compete during the season their handicap can be adjusted by the Handicappers on the following basis:

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

After an athlete's first start for the season in a particular event, the VAL Handicappers may, at their discretion, give the athlete a lift in handicap based on the Lift Range applicable to Ongoing Assessed athletes as set out in Schedule 1, irrespective of whether they are an Established Athlete or Ongoing Assessed athlete.

Any such lift in handicap will apply to the next declared handicap over the particular distance. An established athlete can still receive an AP or SP for this performance that would count towards a potential lift once the required number has been achieved.

### **Throughout the Season**

Every time an athlete runs their performance is reviewed by the VAL Handicappers and Stewards. In order to be entitled to receive a lift in handicap for a particular event, an athlete must achieve a sufficient number of Acceptable Performances (AP's) or 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 (refer allocation of Handicap Lifts)

### **Assessment of Performance**

The VAL Handicappers together with the Stewards will assess each performance with the VAL based on the time the athlete ran and their judgment in regards to the appropriate degree of effort being applied throughout the run.

The VAL Handicappers & Stewards will place each performance it in one of the following categories. Please note that where an athlete has competed in multiple rounds (ie heat, semi, final), all rounds are classified as 1 performance for this assessment process:

### **For Established Athletes**

#### **Acceptable Performance (AP):**

For a performance to be classified as an AP it needs to meet the following requirements:

- Be within the Acceptable time Deviation (all rounds) as set out in Schedule 1. If the event has heats the fastest wind adjusted heat time for the event is used. In the case of a straight final, the winning time is used.
- The performance throughout all rounds needs to be consistent with and reflective of the athlete's current capabilities
- The Handicapper and Stewards are satisfied with the athlete's performance and effort throughout.
- The performance in all rounds, in the opinion of the Handicapper and Stewards, is unhindered by lack of fitness, sickness, injury or participation in prior events or rounds.

Also note the following conditions apply:

- Heat winners shall be regarded as having an AP for that performance irrespective of their time in the heat, provided that their semifinal and/or final meet the above AP requirements (ie: unchallenged heats or walkovers).
- To be assessed as having an AP for a particular event, each run in the same event must be an AP. Hence, if you have one NAP or UP in a round of the event, then it will over-ride any AP.
- 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 Time.
- 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).

#### Satisfactory Performance (SP)

If the performance of an Established Athlete does not meet the AP criteria based on time, but both the Stewards and Handicappers are satisfied the athlete's performance was reflective of their current capabilities, The Handicapper has the discretion to classify the performance as a Satisfactory Performance.

#### **For OGA Athletes**

##### Satisfactory Performance (SP):

Based on the athlete's prior and recent form and performances, if the Handicappers and Stewards are satisfied with both the time and effort of the performance, it will be classified as a Satisfactory Performance (SP).

#### **For all Athletes**

If a performance does not meet the criteria above and is not classified as an Acceptable or Satisfactory Performance, it will be classified as a Non-acceptable Performance (NAP) or an Unsatisfactory Performance (UP). A UP is the more serious of the two classifications as it is based on effort.

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

Performances are classified as NAPs based on time. Athletes have not met the full criteria provided above to achieve an AP or SP, however the Stewards are not dissatisfied with the effort provided.

For Established athletes NAPs can be awarded for not running within the Acceptable Time Deviation or for not meeting the other criteria provided above. As such, it should be noted a performance can be classified as an NAP if it is within the Acceptable Time Deviation, but in the opinion of the Handicapper or Stewards, the run was not reflective of the athlete's current capabilities.

An athlete who is OGA in an event can receive an NAP when the Handicapper or Stewards are not satisfied with the athlete's performance when considering the athlete's prior and recent form.

##### Unsatisfactory Performance (UP):

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

The athlete does not need to be formally charged under the VAL Rules for a performance to be categorised as a UP. Any athlete issued with a UP can be considered for a handicap review.



### **Right of Review for Athletes receiving an NAP or UP**

*An athlete who has received an NAP or UP can seek a review of this decision from the Handicap Review Panel. This does not apply to NAPs received for running outside the acceptable time deviation, for which there is no right of review.*

*An NAP or UP review request must be submitted to the VAL Administrator within 7 days of the athlete being informed of the decision. The HRP will then either uphold the NAP or UP, overturn the decision, or vary the decision, in which case the athlete will be awarded an SP for the performance.*

*The decision of the HRP in regards to NAP/UP review requests, is final and there is no further right of appeal.*

### **Stewarding, a fundamental part of the Handicap System.**

Stewarding is a fundamental and essential part of VAL Handicapping as it focuses on the integrity of the process. The Stewards comprise the Handicappers and Acting Stewards at the Carnival, one of whose tasks are to assess each performance.

In order for a performance to receive an AP or SP, the Stewards need to be satisfied with the effort provided and that the performance is consistent with the athlete's capabilities.

Factors the Stewards will consider in judging a performance include:

- Satisfactory effort throughout a performance. It is a requirement to always run to win, or achieve the best possible outcome, in each performance. This includes heat and semis.
- A sensible racing strategy. For example if competing in a distance event how the athlete has paced themselves throughout a performance will be considered by the Stewards.
- Has the performance been hindered by lack of fitness, sickness, injury or participation in prior events or rounds. If an athlete, prior to competing, feels their performance could be hindered in some way, but wishes to compete, they are advised to discuss this with the Stewards beforehand. If the Stewards permit the athlete to run, this does not preclude or change the athlete's requirements as set out above, to achieve an AP or SP. (ie normal criteria applies).
- What reporting a potential hindering of performance prior to competing may alleviate, is further Stewarding action.
- Has there been interference in running that has sufficiently hindered an athlete and impacted on their capacity to run a satisfactory time.

If the Stewards have concerns over these or any other matters, they will address that with the athlete. Please note athletes have a right to be represented when being addressed by the Stewards and it is compulsory that all athletes under 18 years of age are represented.

Please refer to the VAL Rules & Regulations, available on the VAL website or from the Office, for more detail on Stewarding procedures and the potential sanctions and penalties that can apply if charged with an offence.

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

The Handicap Calculations Table (Schedule 1) sets out the number of AP's or SP's required before an athlete is entitled to a lift in their handicap for the particular event. Once the athlete has achieved the required number of AP's or SP's the Handicappers will give them a lift in handicap from within the relevant Lift Range for that distance (again, as set out in Schedule 1).

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

It is important to remember the following when considering whether an athlete has met the requirements for a lift in handicap:

- If an athlete gets an NAP it does not count towards the number of AP's they need to be entitled to a lift in handicap. However, importantly, getting an NAP does not cancel any AP's an athlete has received at previous Carnivals for the particular event.
- If an athlete receives a UP, it automatically cancels out any APs or SPs that they have previously recorded over that distance or a similar distance.
- An athlete's placing in an event can alter whether they are entitled to a mandatory lift or discretionary lift.
- All finalists in Group 1 or Classic races will not receive an AP or SP for that event on that particular day.
- All placegetters in Group 2 and 3 races will not automatically receive an AP or SP for that event on that particular day. The Handicappers do have the discretion to award an AP or SP to placegetters in these events, if they believe the quality of the field is below the average for that event and the athlete's performance would not have achieved a place in a field of normal or better quality.
- For the avoidance of doubt, race winners are not entitled to a lift in handicap.
- Penalties for race wins are determined in accordance with the Handicap Regulations below and listed in Schedule 3.

### **Handicap Ceiling (CP) or Maximum Handicap**

An athlete cannot be lifted beyond their ceiling point calculation for that event. The Ceiling point is determined by dividing the athlete's best RPMs (refer to Calculation of Notional Starting Handicap for details on how this is obtained) into the ceiling time for the event. The ceiling times are available in Schedule 1.

If an athlete runs a performance during the season that reduces their ceiling point handicap, this performance will be used to recalculate their ceiling point handicap for the remainder of the season.

All performances external to the VAL are also included in this provision. Track and wind adjustments apply.

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 cases where an athlete has reached their handicap CP and if in the opinion of the Handicapper, based on current and recent form over this and all other distances, the athlete has clearly shown the ceiling point is no longer reflective of their capabilities, the Handicapper can seek the approval of the HRP 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. If approved this would allow the Handicapper to increase the athlete's CP.

The allowance is applied on a discretionary basis and acknowledges:

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

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

### **Athletes who break the Ceiling time during the Season.**

The Handicap Calculations table (Schedule 1) sets out the ceiling time for each event. If an athlete's time (adjusted time for the sprint events) in any round or final, is under the ceiling time, their handicap will be adjusted to a handicap that takes them back to the ceiling at the next carnival they compete in over that distance based on their RPM recorded in the performance that broke the ceiling time.

All performances external to the VAL are also included in this provision. Track and wind adjustments apply.

Upon completion of a meeting if the HRP believe the track to be exceptionally fast, for the purpose of handicap calculations, the HRP can declare that an allowance is added to the recorded times.

Factors that will be considered are the conditions of the track, weather and the times recorded by all participants.

Any such allowance will be stated in the Stewards report and will apply to the current season for ceiling calculations and for the determination of future ratings and calculations of start and ceiling handicaps for future seasons.

### **Winning Penalties**

Once an athlete has won a race they will incur a penalty in accordance with the Penalty Table (refer schedule 3 for 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.

The VAL Board can determine that certain events will not attract a penalty. This will be advised to the athletes, prior to the commencement of the event.

For every event, the Penalty Table provides the VAL Handicappers with a range of penalties they can impose based on the event category and prizemoney on offer.

The Penalty table includes both a minimum penalty and an additional discretionary penalty that is available to the Handicappers. It should be noted that the Discretionary penalty will be used to take into account considerations such as the actual prizemoney, winning time and margin and the performance and improvement shown by the athlete.

Race winners who break the Ceiling Time in winning an event will have their handicap readjusted to the ceiling time prior to the deduction of the winning penalty.

Women and Veteran athletes who win an Open race will be penalised in both the women and Veteran categories over the equivalent distance.

Wins in any of Veterans, Women's or Combined Women's & Veteran events will attract penalties in all these categories over the equivalent distance.

Wins in the Women's, Veterans or Women's & Veteran events will not attract an automatic penalty in the equivalent Open events. If the athlete's RPM takes them under the ceiling in the Open event off their Open handicap however, their Open mark will be adjusted back to the ceiling.

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 will incur an additional penalty.

Athletes who win 2 or more professional running races within a season (this can be over multiple distances or categories) will have their handicaps reassessed over all categories and all distances (refer page 7). The Handicapper will consider if the athlete's form has improved sufficiently to warrant a handicap reduction in other events and categories including those the athlete has recorded victories in. Any adjustments under this regulation are at the handicapper's discretion and require the approval of the HRP. This regulation does not override other penalty regulations and it should be noted wins in open events automatically attract penalties across all categories.

Athletes who win junior events can have their handicaps reviewed and adjusted in junior events over other distances, at the discretion of the Handicapper.

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), in accordance with the Regulations provided herein and the Penalty Table.

Interstate wins by Victorians or Interstate athletes will also be penalised in accordance with the Penalty table and the Handicap Regulations.

### **Discretionary Lift for Classic Races & Stawell Carnival**

The VAL Handicappers with the approval of the HRP, can provide a discretionary lift of up to 4 minimum graduations to athletes for Classic races and all Stawell events that are not a part of the athlete's normal handicap. The purpose of this discretionary lift is to reward athletes who have recorded wins in lower graded events over the same distance earlier in the season and received a handicap penalty as a result of those wins, and to provide more competitive racing in our major events and at Stawell.

It can also be applied to new and interstate athletes with a strong racing history in other competitions, such as state & national level amateur athletes whose handicap is behind novice, in order to place them above the starting time in Classic races and for Stawell events, without the discretionary lift being a part of their normal handicap.

Athletes who have won a Classic or Group 1 event in the event category and distance or similar distance, over the last 2 seasons, are not eligible for this discretionary lift.

All discretionary lifts in this category, require the approval of the HRP.

In all cases, after the discretionary lift, the athlete's handicap must remain on or inside their ceiling handicap for that distance.

***This 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.***

### **Amateur Performances**

The VAL Handicappers will take into account an athlete's amateur performance in determining the athlete's handicap for a particular event.

If an athlete achieves a personal best performance in amateur competition, it will have an impact on their handicap in that event (or similar event) if it improves their RPM after allowing for artificial tracks and conditions. If the performance does change the athlete's RPM, the CP is re-adjusted and if the athlete's handicap now exceeds the CP, their handicap will be readjusted back to the new CP.

### **Adjustment to race distances when events are readjusted to scratch**

When handicaps for the entire field are adjusted either forward or back due to the inclusion of a backmarker who would otherwise be handicapped behind scratch, or as a result of the field being pulled back to scratch, the handicap adjustments will be proportional to the net distance normally covered from each handicap. This is in order to allow for the different RPMs of athletes from different handicaps and to maintain the equity of the handicapped race with the change in distance.

For example if an 800 Frontmarker event is handicapped to scratch and the Backmarker normally has a handicap of 70, the distance each athlete runs will be adjusted by 9.59% ( $70/730$ ). The adjustments to handicap ranges would then be calculated by adding 9.59% to the distance covered from each handicap. As a result an athlete with a normal handicap of 120 would come back 66 metres to an adjusted handicap of 54, in order to run 746 metres ( $680 * 1.0959$ ).

## **HANDICAPPING OF SPECIFIC EVENTS / CATEGORIES**

### **Regular Events**

A Regular event is an event that is conducted on 8 or more occasions within the current VAL season for a specific category. Separate event categories are Open, Women's and Veterans. All combined events such as Women & Veteran events, Novice events and Junior events are not classified as Regular events.

The Handicapping of all Regular events is done in accordance with the VAL Handicapping Regulations. Please refer to the section "Adjustment to Handicaps during the Season".

Please find below the handicapping process followed for specific non-regular events and categories.

### **Novice and Restricted events**

The handicaps for Novice and restricted events are determined on a discretionary basis by the Handicapper throughout the season. The allocated handicap is to take into account the previous performances of the athlete over the distance and other similar distances in all categories, including Open, Novice and Junior.

If the athlete does not have a previous performance over the distance or similar distance, the novice handicap will be allocated for that event and athlete category.

The allocated handicap cannot exceed a handicap that places the athlete under the starting time for that distance based on their best performance both within and external to the VAL. The handicapper will take into account the potential for rapid improvement of new and developing athletes in determining the allocated handicaps. As a result handicaps in Novice events can be reduced from the last allocated handicap based on the above circumstances.

Whilst the allocated handicap can exceed or be less than the athlete's Open handicap for the distance, handicap movement from each performance over the distance cannot exceed the amount provided in the Handicap Calculations Table (Schedule 1) for that distance.

Handicap movement in Novice events will be more gradual than in Junior events and will be more closely aligned with the athletes Open Handicap over the distance.

### **Junior events**

The Handicaps for Junior and Age group events are determined on a discretionary basis by the Handicapper throughout the season. The allocated handicap is to take into account the previous performances of the athlete over the distance and other similar distances in all categories, including Open, Novice and Junior.

The allocated handicap will be based on a net time for the distance to be determined by the handicapper, based on their best performance both within and external to the VAL. The handicapper will take into account the potential for rapid improvement of new and developing athletes in determining the allocated handicaps. As a result handicaps in Junior events can be reduced from the last allocated handicap based on the above circumstances.

If the athlete does not have a previous performance over the distance or similar distance, the Handicapper will determine an appropriate starting handicap based on the athlete's age and gender.

If an athlete run faster than the net time for the distance in any category or external to the VAL, allowing for their handicap, their next allocated handicap for that event will be reduced back to the net time.

Handicap movement in Junior events will often be quicker than in Novice and Open events, depending on the athlete performances, with the aim being to quickly move the athlete to a competitive handicap.

### **Combined Womens & Veteran Sprint & 300 events**

The Combined Womens & Veteran events are treated as Veteran events for the purposes of calculating handicaps.

All veterans and women competing the Combined 300 events will be allocated handicaps in the Veterans 300 event which is classified as a regular event and handicapped in accordance with the Regulations and starting times.

In the Women& Veterans 100/120 events the non-veteran women will not be allocated a handicap in this event. Throughout the season the handicap of non-veteran women in the combined 100/120 events, will be determined directly from their Womens 120 handicap by means of adding an adjustment to allow for the faster start time of the veterans 120.

Veterans competing in the combined 100/120 events will be eligible for an AP/SP for their veterans 120 handicap, and women will be eligible for an AP/SP for their womens 120 handicap. Penalties for wins in the combined events will apply to both veterans and womens 120 events.

The different treatment of women in the combined 300s, as opposed to the combined 100/120 events, is due to the lack of 300 Womens only events on the VAL calendar.

### **Womens 200**

The Womens 200 distance is a stand-alone event and is handicapped on a discretionary basis. However given it is conducted so infrequently the handicaps are predominantly calculated from the current Womens 120 handicaps at the time. Previous performances, personal bests and victories over 200 are also taken into consideration by the Handicapper.

No start marks will be determined with all handicaps done based on entries at the time. Penalties for previous wins over 200 will apply. The event is non-penalty for all other distances

### **Open 200**

The Open 200 distance is to be treated by the Handicapper as a stand-alone event and handicapped separately from the 120. The 120 handicaps will be used as a guide for the Handicapper but are not the single determining factor, recognizing that the capacity of athletes to run 200 varies from that of the 120.

The 200 is handicapped on a discretionary basis and all athletes competing in the 200 are classified as OGA.

The initial handicap allocation for an athlete entering the 200 for the first time will not exceed the lesser of 1.6 times their gift mark, or a handicap allocated based on the start time and the athlete's best RPM over all sprint distances up to 200 both within and external to the VAL.

Prior to the commencement of the season, start marks will be determined for those athletes that have competed over the distance the previous season. They will be the lesser of the last allocated handicap or the handicap that the Handicapper, in conjunction with the HRP, has determined is required to run the start time (refer schedule 1). If an athlete has not competed over the distance the previous season, their starting handicap will be determined on entering a 200 event, on the same basis as above.

In determining the starting handicap, the Handicapper will consider the athlete's performances over the 200 as well as over other sprint distances up to 400. If the athlete has competed on 5 or more occasions over the last 5 years over 200 in the VAL, their best 200 RPM over the last 5 years (3 years for veteran athletes) will be used to determine the starting handicap. If the athlete has competed on less than 5 occasions over 200 in the VAL, their best RPM over all sprint distances in the last 5 years will be used to determine their 200 start mark.

The Veterans allowance and age performance allowance can be applied by the Handicapper if deemed required, in accordance with the Handicap Regulations.

External performances and personal bests over 100 and 200 events will also be used to determine the starting handicap. Track allowances apply. If an athlete has performed well over 400, the Handicapper can use their discretion to take this into consideration in the calculation of the 200 start mark.

Throughout the season as the athlete competes over the 200 events in the VAL, provided they receive a Satisfactory Performance, at the discretion of the Handicapper, they can be lifted out to a maximum handicap based on the ceiling time (refer schedule 1). Throughout the season if the athlete records a personal best RPM over distances from 100 - 200 either within or external to the VAL that takes potentially them under the 200 ceiling, their 200 handicap will be adjusted to the ceiling.

Penalties for wins over the 200 distance will apply however penalties for wins over other sprint distances won't automatically apply, unless the performance and RPM is judged by the Handicapper to take the athlete under the ceiling time. The Handicapper can also apply a penalty to the 200 for wins in Classic and Group 1 events within or external to the VAL over distances between 70 and 400.

The 200 event is non penalty for other distances, with the possible exception of the Stawell 200, which can attract a discretionary penalty for other similar distances as a Group 1 event. This will depend on RPM calculations in relation to the other handicap in question.

### **Womens 300**

The Womens 300 distance is a stand-alone event and is handicapped on a discretionary basis. Given it is conducted so infrequently the handicaps are predominantly drawn from the current Womens & Veteran 300 handicaps at the time. If an athlete entering the Womens 300, does not have a current Womens & Veterans 300, her Womens 300 handicap will be derived from her PBs, performances and handicaps over other events.

No start marks will be determined with all handicaps done based on entries at the time. Penalties for previous wins over 300 in all categories will apply. A win in the Womens 300 attracts a penalty for the Veterans and Women & Veterans 300 in accordance with the Penalty table. It is non-penalty for all other distances.



### **Open 300**

The Open 300 distance is to be treated by the Handicapper as a stand-alone event and handicapped separately from other distances. The 400 handicaps will be used as a guide for the Handicapper but are not the single determining factor recognizing that the capacity of athletes to run 300 varies for sprinters as opposed to 400 athletes.

The 300 is handicapped on a discretionary basis and all athletes competing in the 300 are classified as OGA.

If an athlete entering an Open 300 for the first time, has a history in the Open 400, their initial handicap will not exceed three quarters of their current 400 handicap minus 5. Hence an athlete with a 400 handicap of 20, would have an initial 300 handicap of 10. The novice 300 handicap is 10.

If an athlete entering an Open 300, has a current 300 Veterans or Womens & Veterans handicap, this can also be used to allocate a current 300 Open handicap, allowing for the difference in starting times between the two categories.

If an athlete entering the 300 for the first time, has a 120 handicap behind the novice mark of 6, the Handicapper will use their discretion to place the athlete on a 300 handicap behind the novice mark of 10.

Prior to the commencement of the season, start marks will be determined for those athletes that have competed over the distance the previous season. They will be the lesser of the last allocated handicap or the handicap that the Handicapper, in conjunction with the HRP, has determined is required to run the start time (refer schedule 1). If an athlete has not competed over the distance the previous season, their starting handicap will be determined on entering a 300 event, on the same basis as above. In determining the starting handicap, the Handicapper will consider the athlete's performances over the 300 as well as over other sprint distances up to 400.

The Veterans allowance and age performance allowance can be applied by the Handicapper if deemed required, in accordance with the handicap Regulations.

External performances and personal bests over 100 up to 400 will also be used to determine the starting handicap. Track allowances apply.

Throughout the season as the athlete competes over the 300 events in the VAL, provided they receive a Satisfactory Performance, at the discretion of the Handicapper, they can be lifted out to a maximum handicap based on the ceiling time (refer schedule 1). Throughout the season if the athlete records a personal best RPM over distances from 100 to 400 either within or external to the VAL then if the Handicapper believes this improvement would take the athlete under the ceiling time in the 300, the Handicapper has the discretion to adjust the athlete's 300 handicap back to the ceiling time.

Penalties for wins over the 300 Open distance will apply however penalties for wins over other distances and categories won't automatically apply, unless the performance and RPM is judged by the Handicapper to take the athlete under the ceiling time. The Handicapper can also apply a penalty to the 300 for wins in Classic and Group 1 events within or external to the VAL over distances between 70 and 400.

The 300 event is non-penalty for other Open distances, however if it is a Classic or Group 1 event, it can attract a penalty for similar Open distances at the Handicapper's discretion. Wins in the Open 300 will attract a penalty in the Womens and Veterans 300 events.

### **Open 550**

The Open 550 distance is to be treated by the Handicapper as a stand-alone event and handicapped separately from other similar distances. The 400 handicaps will be used as a guide for the Handicapper but are not the single determining factor recognizing that the capacity of middle distance athletes who compete over the 800 distance, to better handle the 550 distance than sprinters and 400 metre athletes.

The 550 is handicapped on a discretionary basis and all athletes competing in the 550 are classified as OGA.

The initial handicap allocation for an athlete entering the 550 for the first time will not exceed the lesser of 1.25 times their 400 handicap, or a handicap allocated based on the start time and the athlete's best RPM over the 400 or 800 distances both within and external to the VAL, converted to the 550 distance. The conversion factors are an addition of 7% to the 400 RPM, or a reduction of 7.5% to the 800 RPM.

Prior to the commencement of the season, start marks will be determined for those athletes that have competed over the distance the previous season. They will be the lesser of the last allocated handicap or the handicap that the Handicapper, in conjunction with the HRP, has determined is required to run the start time (refer schedule 1). The athlete's performance over 400 and 800 will be considered utilising the conversion formula outlined above. If an athlete has not competed over the distance the previous season, their starting handicap will be determined on entering a 550 event, on the same basis as above.

The Veterans allowance and age performance allowance can be applied by the Handicapper if deemed required, in accordance with the Handicap Regulations.

External performances and personal bests over 400 and 800 events will also be used to determine the starting handicap. Track allowances apply.

Throughout the season as the athlete competes over the 550 events in the VAL, provided they receive a Satisfactory Performance, at the discretion of the Handicapper, they can be lifted out to a maximum handicap based on the ceiling time (refer, schedule 1). Throughout the season if the athlete records a personal best RPM over the 400 or 800 either within or external to the VAL that, utilizing the conversion formula outlined above, takes them under the ceiling, their handicap will be adjusted to the ceiling.

Penalties for wins over the distance will apply to the athlete's 550 handicap, however penalties for wins over the 400 and 800 distances won't automatically apply, unless the performance and converted RPM takes the athlete under the ceiling time. The Handicapper can also apply a penalty to the 550 for wins in Classic and Group 1 events within or external to the VAL over distances between 400 and 800.

The 550 event is non-penalty for other distances, however if it is a Classic or Group 1 event, it can attract a penalty for Similar distances such as the 400 and 800, at the Handicapper's discretion.

### **Womens 800**

The Womens 800 distance is a stand-alone event and is handicapped on a discretionary basis. All athletes competing in this event are classified as OGA.

Given it is conducted so infrequently no start marks will be determined at the commencement of the season, with all handicaps done based on entries for the particular carnival.

For an athlete's first entry for the season in the Womens 800, they will receive a maximum handicap based on the starting time of 2.10. This will be based on the athlete's PBs and prior history over 800 in all categories within the VAL, including Open 800s and external to the VAL, ie interstate and amateur performances. The Handicapper at their discretion can apply Age of performance and veterans allowance in accordance with the Handicap Regulations. Track allowances also apply in the case of performances on artificial tracks.

***For an athlete's first entry in the Womens 800 for the season, if they have broken 2.10 in prior seasons, they will have their handicap reduced back to 2.10.***

Once an athlete has competed over the Womens 800, if they receive a satisfactory Performance, at the discretion of the Handicapper they can be lifted within the season to maximum handicap based on the ceiling time (refer, schedule 1). Throughout the season if the athlete records a personal best RPM over the 800 either within (including other event categories) or external to the VAL that takes them under the ceiling, their handicap will be adjusted to the ceiling.

Penalties for wins over the 800 distance in all categories will apply to the athlete's Womens 800 handicap. The Handicapper can also apply a penalty to the Womens 800 handicap for wins in Classic and Group 1 events within or external to the VAL over distances between 400 and 1600.

Wins in either the Womens 800 or the Womens & Veterans 800 attracts a penalty in both categories, but is non-penalty for Open events and other distances in the Womens and Womens & Veterans category. If it is a Classic or Group 1 event, it can attract a penalty for other categories or similar distances such as the 400 and 1600, at the Handicapper's discretion. Also if performances reflect an RPM that breaks the athlete's ceiling in other categories, their handicaps in those categories will be adjusted in accordance with the regulations.

### **Womens & Veterans 800**

The Womens & Veterans 800 distance is a stand-alone event and is handicapped on a discretionary basis. All athletes competing in this event are classified as OGA.

Given it is conducted so infrequently no start marks will be determined at the commencement of the season, with all handicaps done based on entries for the particular carnival.

For an athlete's first entry for the season in the Womens & Veterans 800, they will receive a maximum handicap based on the starting time of 2.00. This will be based on the athlete's PBs and prior history over 800 in all categories within the VAL, including Open 800s and Womens 800, and external to the VAL, ie interstate and amateur performances. The Handicapper at their discretion can apply Age of performance and veterans allowance in accordance with the Handicap Regulations. Track allowances also apply in the case of performances on artificial tracks.

***Whilst performances will be drawn from athlete's history in the Open 800, as the Womens & Veterans 800 is a discretionary event handicapped to a start time, handicaps will not necessarily be reflective of an athlete's handicap in the Open 800.***

Once an athlete has competed over the Womens & Veterans 800, if they receive a satisfactory Performance, at the discretion of the Handicapper they can be lifted within the season to maximum handicap based on the ceiling time (refer, schedule 1). Throughout the season if the athlete records an RPM over the 800 either within (including other event categories such as the Open 800) or external to the VAL that takes them under the ceiling, their handicap will be adjusted to the ceiling.

Penalties for wins over the 800 distance in all categories will apply to the Womens & Veterans 800 handicap. The Handicapper can also apply a penalty to the Womens & Veterans 800 handicap for wins in Classic and Group 1 events within or external to the VAL over distances between 400 and 1600.

Wins in either the Womens 800 or the Womens & Veterans 800 attracts a penalty in both categories, but is non-penalty for Open events and other distances in the Womens and Womens & Veterans category. If it is a Classic or Group 1 event, it can attract a penalty for other categories or similar distances such as the 400 and 1600, at the Handicapper's discretion. Also if performances reflect an RPM that breaks the athlete's ceiling in other categories, their handicaps in those categories will be adjusted in accordance with the regulations.

### **Womens & Veterans 1600**

The Womens & Veterans 1600 distance is a stand-alone event and is handicapped on a discretionary basis. All athletes competing in this event are classified as OGA.

The initial handicap allocation for an athlete entering this event for the first time will be based on the athlete's history in other events, such as the Open 1600. If the athlete has a current handicap in the Open 1600, their initial 1600 Womens & Veterans handicap will be the maximum of their Open 1600 minus 90 metres, or a handicap that places them on the start time of 4.25, based on their best performance. (Age of performance and Veterans allowance applies at the discretion of the handicapper). New athletes will be placed on the maximum of the relevant novice mark for their category (refer Schedule 2). If the new athlete's recent personal best reflect they should be behind the novice mark, they will be handicapped to the start time of 4.25. Interstate athletes with history in other AAC affiliated bodies, entering the 1600 Womens & Veterans for the first time will be handicapped in the same manner as a VAL athlete entering the event for the first time.

Prior to the commencement of the season, start marks will be determined for those athletes that have competed over the distance the previous season. They will be the lesser of the last allocated handicap or the handicap that the Handicapper, in conjunction with the HRP, has determined is required to run the start time (refer, schedule 1). The athlete's performances in the Open 1600 will be taken in account in assessing the starting handicap. If an athlete has not competed over the distance the previous season, their starting handicap will be determined on entering a 1600 Womens & Veterans event, on the same basis as above.

The Veterans allowance and age performance allowance can be applied by the Handicapper if deemed required, in accordance with the Handicap Regulations.

External performances and personal bests over distances from 800 upwards will also be used to determine the starting handicap. Track allowances apply.

Throughout the season as the athlete competes over the 1600 Womens & Veterans events in the VAL, provided they receive a Satisfactory Performance, at the discretion of the Handicapper, they can be lifted out to a maximum handicap based on the ceiling time (refer, schedule 1). Throughout the season if the athlete records an RPM over the 1500/1600 either within or external to the VAL that potentially takes them under the ceiling, their handicap will be adjusted to the ceiling at the Handicapper's discretion.

Penalties for wins in both the Open 1600s and Womens & Veterans 1600 will apply to the athlete's Womens & Veterans 1600 handicap. The Handicapper can also apply a penalty to this event for wins in Classic and Group 1 events within or external to the VAL over distances from 800 to 3200.

Penalties for wins in the Womens & Veterans 1600 won't automatically apply to the Open 1600 handicaps, however if an athlete records an average RPM that takes their Open 1600 handicap under the ceiling, their handicap in this event will be adjusted back to the ceiling.

### **Open 3200**

The Open 3200 distance is to be treated by the Handicapper as a stand-alone event and handicapped separately from other similar distances. The 1600 handicaps will be used as a guide for the Handicapper but are not the single determining factor recognizing that the capacity an athlete to compete over 3200, differs from that of the 1600.

The 3200 is handicapped on a discretionary basis and all athletes competing in the 3200 are classified as OGA. Where an athlete is yet to compete regularly over the 3000/3200 distance, their 1500/1600 form will be used to allocate an appropriate 3200 handicap. Performances over 5000 and longer will also be considered in assessing an athlete entering the 3200 for the first time.

The initial handicap allocation for an athlete entering the 3200 for the first time will not exceed the novice 3200 handicap of 150 or a calculation based on the athlete's 1600 mark of two times their 1600 handicap, less 80. For example if an athlete entering the 3200 for the first time, has an open 1600 mark of between 100 and 115, the Handicapper will, subject to external form over distances from 3000 upwards, allocate a maximum 3200 mark of 150. Again by way of example if an athlete entering the 3200 for the first time has an open 1600 mark of 130, the handicapper can place the athlete on a maximum mark in the 3200 of 180  $((130*2)-80)$ .

***Athletes entering the 3200 for the first time with 1600 handicaps behind the novice mark of 100, the maximum initial 3200 they can receive is two times their 1600 handicap, less 80. This is due to the fact that in the 1600 they are handicapped as "better than novice" athletes.***

***Athletes entering the 3200 for the first time with external times over 1500 or longer that, based on the starting time of 9.10, takes them under the Novice handicap of 150, they will be allocated a starting handicap less than 150 that reflects their external performances and personal bests. Track allowances apply.***

~~Prior to the commencement of the season, start marks will be determined for those athletes that have competed over the distance the previous season. They will be the lesser of the last allocated handicap or the handicap that the Handicapper, in conjunction with the HRP, has determined is required to run the start time (refer, schedule 1). The athlete's performance over 1600 will be considered in assessing the starting handicap, taking particular note of improved RPMs over the 1600. If an athlete has not competed over the distance the previous season, their starting handicap will be determined on entering a 3200 event, on the same basis as above.~~

The Veterans allowance and age performance allowance can be applied by the Handicapper if deemed required, in accordance with the Handicap Regulations.

External performances and personal bests over distances from 1500 upwards will also be used to determine the starting handicap. Track allowances apply.

Throughout the season as the athlete competes over the 3200 events in the VAL, provided they receive a Satisfactory Performance, at the discretion of the Handicapper, they can be lifted out to a maximum handicap based on the ceiling time (refer, schedule 1). Throughout the season if the athlete records a personal best RPM over the 1500 upwards either within or external to the VAL that potentially takes them under the ceiling, their handicap will be adjusted to the ceiling at the Handicapper's discretion.

Penalties for wins over the distance will apply however penalties for wins over other distances won't automatically apply, unless the performance and converted RPM takes the athlete under the ceiling time. The Handicapper can also apply a penalty to the 3200 for wins in Classic and Group 1 events within or external to the VAL over the 1600 distance.

## **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 CT 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 Regulations in setting the handicap (this includes instances where an athlete successfully appeals their handicap);
- f) There has been a clear and proven handicapping or administrative error.

## **HANDICAP REVIEW & APPEALS PROCESS**

If, after reading these Regulations, 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 (VRTA) you may wish to consult a representative for assistance in understanding your handicaps. Contact details can be found on the VRTA website at [www.vrta.org.au](http://www.vrta.org.au) or by contacting the VAL office.

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 by contacting the VAL Office and submit it to the VAL office together with the \$50 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 (this includes 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 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 Handicapper may or may not result in a change to your handicap. In either case, the 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 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 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 submit the Handicap Appeal Application by contacting the VAL Office and submit it to the VAL office together with the \$200 fee (note: for the Open and Women's 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 Handicapper and the Handicap Review Panel 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 cannot 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 100% of your application provided there are no expenses in meeting costs of the panel members. Any cost will be taken out of the application fee.

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 OCTOBER 2018**

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	7.60	0.30
120 OPEN	0.25	3	0.25-0.50	1	0.25-1.00	1	0.25-2.00	12.45	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	2	0.25-0.75	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	2	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 / 1000 OPEN	2	2	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	2.08.0	N/A
800 VETS & WOM&VET	2	N/A	N/A	1	0 - 30	1	0 - 30	2.00.0	1.58.0	N/A
1600 OPEN	5	2	5 - 10	1	0 - 40	1	0 - 40	4.07.0	4.03	11.00
1600 VETS & WOM&VETS	5	N/A	N/A	1	0 - 60	1	0 - 60	4.25	4.21	N/A
3200 OPEN	5	N/A	N/A	1	0 - 80	1	0 - 80	9.10	9.00	N/A

- NOTES:**
1. ALL JUNIOR & 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 120s and 300s.
  4. FOR THOSE DISTANCES LISTED AS N/A FOR ESTABLISHED ATHLETES, ALL ATHLETES ARE "OGA".
  5. ESTABLISHED MASTERS (35+) ATHLETES MAY RECEIVE A LIFT AFTER 2 SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCES IN OPEN RACES (IN THE OPINION OF THE HANDICAPPER AND STEWARDS), EVEN IF THOSE PERFORMANCES FALL OUTSIDE THE AP TIME RANGE. SHOULD THE ATHLETE FAIL TO RUN WITHIN THE TIME RANGE, THE HANDICAPPER HAS THE DISCRETION TO REASSES THE HANDICAP AND LIFT IF REQUIRED.

1. Schedule 2 – Table of Novice Handicaps

<b><u>VICTORIAN ATHLETIC LEAGUE NOVICE HANDICAPS 2011/12</u></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	12.45
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	21.0
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	36.0
VETERANS	NA	NA	10	36	36.0
VET & WOMEN	NA	30	10	36	36.0
<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 \$	MINIMUM PENALTY.	+ DISCRETION
70	UP TO \$600	0.25	0.50
	\$601 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 \$600	0.25	0.75
	\$601 TO \$3000	0.50	0.75
	\$3001 TO \$5000	0.75	0.75
	\$5001 TO \$7500	1.00	1.00
	\$7501 TO \$10000	1.25	1.25
	\$10001 TO \$12500	1.50	1.50
	\$12501 TO \$15000	1.75	1.75
	\$15001 +	2.00	2.00
	STAWELL	3.00	3.00
200	UP TO \$2000	1.00	2.00
	\$2001 +	2.00	2.00
	STAWELL	4.00	4.00
300/400	UP TO \$600	1.00	2.00
	\$601 TO \$1000	2.00	2.00
	\$1001 TO \$1500	3.00	3.00
	\$1501 TO \$2000	4.00	4.00
	\$2001 TO \$3000	5.00	5.00
	\$3001 TO \$4000	6.00	6.00
	\$4001+	8.00	8.00
	STAWELL	8.00	8.00
	550	UP TO \$600	2.00
\$601 TO \$750		3.00	3.00
\$851 TO \$1100		4.00	4.00
\$1101 TO \$1500		5.00	6.00
\$1501 TO \$2000		6.00	6.00
\$2001 +		8.00	8.00
STAWELL		10.00	10.00
800/1000		UP TO \$600	2.00
	\$601 TO 850	4.00	4.00
	\$851 TO \$1100	6.00	6.00
	\$1101 TO \$1500	8.00	8.00
	\$1501 TO \$2000	10.00	10.00
	\$2001 TO \$3000	12.00	12.00
	\$3001+	16.00	16.00
	STAWELL	16.00	16.00
	1600	UP TO \$600	5.00
\$601 TO \$1000		10.00	10.00
\$1001 TO \$1500		15.00	15.00
\$1501 TO \$2000		20.00	20.00
\$2001 TO \$3000		25.00	25.00
\$3001 +		30.00	30.00
STAWELL		30.00	30.00
3200	UP TO \$600	10.00	20.00
	\$601 TO \$1000	20.00	20.00
	\$1001 TO \$1500	30.00	30.00
	\$1501 TO \$2000	40.00	40.00
	\$2001 +	50.00	50.00
	STAWELL	50.00	50.00

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

Schedule 3 (continued) – Penalty Table

**Women's Only Events**

DISTANCE	TOTAL \$	MINIMUM PENALTY.	+ DISCRETION
100/120	UP TO \$600	0.25	0.75
	\$601 TO \$1000	0.50	0.75
	\$1001 TO \$2000	0.75	1.00
	\$2001 TO \$4000	1.00	1.50
	\$4001-\$6000	1.25	2.00
	\$6001-\$10000	1.50	2.50
	\$10001+	1.75	1.75
300/400	STAWELL	3.00	3.00
	UP TO \$600	2.00	3.00
	\$601 TO \$850	3.00	3.00
	\$851 TO \$1200	4.00	4.00
	\$1201+	6.00	6.00
	STAWELL	8.00	8.00
800	UP TO \$600	6.00	10.00
	\$601 - \$850	8.00	12.00
	\$851 +	10.00	14.00
	STAWELL	16.00	16.00

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

**Veterans and Women & Veterans Events**

DISTANCE	TOTAL \$	MINIMUM PENALTY.	+ DISCRETION
100/120	UP TO \$700	0.25	0.75
	\$701 TO \$900	0.50	0.75
	\$901 TO \$1100	0.75	1.00
	\$1101 TO \$1500	1.00	1.25
	\$1501-\$2000	1.50	1.50
	\$2001+	2.00	2.00
	STAWELL	2.00	2.00
300	UP TO \$700	2.00	3.00
	\$701 TO \$900	3.00	3.00
	\$901 TO \$1200	4.00	4.00
	\$1201+	6.00	6.00
	STAWELL	8.00	8.00
800	UP TO \$700	6.00	10.00
	\$701 - \$900	8.00	12.00
	\$901 +	10.00	14.00
	STAWELL	16.00	16.00
1600	UP TO \$700	10.00	20.00
	\$701 TO \$900	15.00	25.00
	\$901 +	20.00	30.00
	STAWELL	25.00	35.00

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