PONY TROTS RULES & CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) conducts the Pony Trots Victoria (PTV) program.

1.2 It is a condition of PTV membership that members will abide by these rules, any policies implemented by HRV and any reasonable direction of HRV.

1.3 These Rules have been developed to ensure the safe running of the PTV program.

1.4 Members and their parents, guardians, supporters, friends, and family acknowledge that the purpose of the PTV program is to encourage participation in harness racing at grass roots level and to provide an opportunity for children to learn about the care and control of horses.

1.5 HRV is committed to child safety and requires employees and volunteers of HRV, Tabcorp Park and Country Clubs to act in accordance with HRV's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety in their interaction with children and young people under the age of 18 years in compliance with Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

1.6 HRV endorses the *Australian Sports Commission Junior Sport Codes of Behaviour* and expect all parties involved in the PTV program to comply with these Codes as they apply to our sport.

1.7 These Rules may be amended by HRV from time to time.

1.8 Any matter not provided for in these rules shall be determined by HRV, which will be final and binding on all members.

2 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

2.1 In these Rules:

(a) "Clerk of the Course" means the official Clerk of the Course appointed by HRV or a harness racing club at the race meeting.

(b) "Steward" means the person appointed as the Steward on the day of the races or trials.

(c) The terms "member" and "driver" are interchangeable.

(d) Any task to be performed by HRV may be delegated by it to another duly qualified person.

(e) Unless a contrary intention appears, words importing a gender include any other gender, and words in the singular include the plural and vice versa.

(f) An appropriate HRV Licence refers to a Stable hand, Trainer or Driver Licence approved by HRV for the current harness racing season.

3 MEMBERSHIP/LICENCING

3.1 Children between the ages of 6 and 17 years are eligible for membership of PTV and be issued with a PTV licence. For the avoidance of doubt, a licensee can compete until the last day of being 17 years of age or once they are issued with a C Grade drivers licence - whichever comes first.

3.2 Membership is for the current season of 1st September – 31st August.

3.3 An application must be made in writing using the Application for membership/licence form and must be accompanied by the appropriate fee, as determined by HRV from time to time.

3.4 Additional ponies must be registered using the Pony Trots Registration Form and returning the completed form to ponytrotsvic@hrv.org.au

3.5 HRV reserves the right to request proof of age identification.

3.6 HRV has the right to determine whether to approve or reject an application for membership/licencing.

3.7 Licenses are reciprocal across all States

4 ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE IN PTV RACES

4.1 A member's competency to drive will be assessed by HRV. All members must be assessed as being competent to be eligible to compete in a pony race.

4.2 Members who own ponies must register their ponies with HRV before their first race or trial unless they are from another state. Interstate competitors must be registered and qualified in their respective state before they can compete in a PTV race.

5 PONIES

5.1 All ponies must be registered with HRV before their first race or trial start in Victoria.

5.2 All ponies will be observed at a training day by HRV prior to the pony participating in a race.

5.3 The decision of HRV to register or refuse to register a pony for participation is final.

5.4 Ponies must be 13hh or under. Ponies will be measured if there is a height dispute.

5.5 Pony stallions are excluded, as are any registered or freeze branded standardbreds.

5.6 Ponies must have reached the age of two to compete in a race or trial.

5.7 Pony Sizing - Ponies will be classed into three categories:

1. Miniatures - sized 9.0HH and below
2. Shetlands - sized 9.1HH to 10.2HH
3. Ponies - sized 10.3HH to a maximum of 13.0HH

Measurements are taken from the ground to the highest point of the withers.

6 INTER DOMINION CHAMPIONSHIP SELECTION

6.1. The rules and regulations regarding the conduct of the Inter Dominion series for mini trotting remain the responsibility of the conducting Mini Trotting Association. However, the selection of ponies shall be made using the following criteria:

1. Invitations to two (2) ponies from each state to compete in each of the three (3) height categories;
2. The selection of these ponies is at the discretion of each individual State Mini Trotting Association;
3. If, for any reason, a State is unable to fill their available positions, then the conducting Mini Trotting Association can fill these vacancies at their discretion.

7 RACES

7.1 Non-Country Cup races are discretionary handicaps.

7.2 Field selection of races is determined by HRV and this decision is final.

7.3 A minimum of 4 ponies in a field is preferred before a race can be conducted, but this remains at the discretion of the HRV/PTV officials.

7.4 If a scratching is received the morning of a race meeting leaving the field with only 3 runners, the race will proceed.

7.5 Ponies which gallop excessively and/or interfere with other runners may be relegated or disqualified.

7.6 If a pony gallops/breaks gait during a race its driver must take immediate action to restrain the pony to its correct gait (trotting) to avoid disqualification.

7.7 If a pony breaks gait during a race and a HRV/PTV Official is of the opinion that an advantage was gained or interference with another runner occurred, the Official may disqualify or relegate the placing of the pony and driver.

7.8 Whips are prohibited at all times, this includes for the purpose of training, warming up or competing.

7.9 Reins must not be used in a manner which resembles a whip.

7.10 A pony that gallops across the finish line may have their placing relegated or be disqualified.

7.11 A member who fails to comply with the above rules (7.5-7.11) may be guilty of an offence and may be penalised.

8 BEHAVIOUR OF MEMBERS

8.1 Any member whose behaviour is deemed to bring HRV into disrepute may have his or her membership cancelled and accordingly, nominations refused.

8.2 All members must present themselves and their ponies in a professional manner when competing.

8.3 Parents/Guardians of PTV members must also obey these rules or they may be banned from attending future PTV events.

8.4 PTV participants are not permitted to enter the driver's rooms for any reason when NOT competing at that race meeting.

8.5 PTV participants and their connections are bound by the Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR) 188, 188A, 189 – 194, 195, 195A, 196, 196A and 196 B. (For the purposes of this document, 'connections' include but are not limited to the owners or lessees of pony or an immediate family member of a participant).

8.6 PTV Officials may report any inappropriate behaviours to the HRV Stewards. Stewards may take disciplinary action in such circumstances.

9 SAFETY GUIDELINES AND DRESS STANDARDS

9.1 All members must ensure their personal appearance, racing attire and ponies are clean, neat, and tidy.

9.2 When driving in races, members must always wear;

(a) Registered colours

(b) A Safety helmet approved by Harness Racing Australia (HRA) that conforms to AS/NZS 3838:2006 or the accepted helmet standards for Equestrian Australia national competition

(c) Eye protection of minimum standard AS 1067-2003

(d) An approved body protector (vest) to the equestrian standard Beta 1, Beta Level 2 or Beta Level 3. (The Beta level 3 vest is best suited for general driving and offers the most protection)

(e) White Pants

(f) Quality black or brown riding boots. NB: No other footwear including runners or sneakers of any kind will be allowed.

(g) Any persons wearing open toed shoes, sandals, thongs etc. will be refused entry to the pony/horse area due to Occupational, Health and Safety (OH&S) requirements.

10 SULKY STANDARDS

10.1 Sulkies must be of an approved standard as set out in Schedule 1.

10.2 All sulkies must have a dustsheet affixed.

10.3 American style sulkies will not be permitted unless approved modifications have been made to the footrests, and a cross bar attached. Approval may be granted by HRV on inspection.

11 STARTING PROCEDURES AND RACING ETIQUETTE

11.1 Children/Parents/Guardians are not permitted to ride on the side of a member's sulky at any time.

11.2 Drivers must always keep their bodies within the confines of the sulky.

11.3 Drivers are not permitted to race with their feet out of the stirrups or on the dustsheet. Offending drivers will be automatically disqualified.

11.4 Drivers shall always obey the instructions of the Clerk of the Course and other HRV/PTV Officials.

11.5 A driver must not delay the start of a race or be late onto the track.

11.6 Once on the racetrack, drivers must proceed immediately to their handicap mark. If the driver's pony will not stand, the driver must have a handler holding the pony until the starter gives the signal to race. All handlers must hold a current licence with HRV.

11.7 Handlers must not push, pull, or perform any action to the pony or sulky that could give advantage to the driver at the start of a race.

11.8 The pony driven by any driver who shouts loudly, makes improper noises or attempts to do anything which interferes with the progress of another runner may be disqualified.

11.9 The pony driven by a driver who in the opinion of a HRV/PTV Official uses their reins excessively to whip their ponies may be disqualified.

11.10 Drivers shall not before, during, or after a race, drive in a manner which in the opinion of the HRV/PTV Officials is careless, reckless, dangerous, improper or incompetent in nature.

11.11 Drivers must maintain awareness of their surroundings, but should not look behind excessively during a race.

11.12 Drivers must always keep a straight racing line after passing another competitor (no weaving in or out) or the pony driven by that driver may be disqualified.

11.13 Handlers must not run and cheer from the infield; this may result in disqualification of their pony.

11.14 A Driver or Handler who fails to comply with these Rules is guilty of an offence and may be penalised.

12 NOMINATIONS

12.1 All nominations must be made online through the PTV nomination form.

12.2 Late nominations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

12.3 If a member has nominated for a race and is unable to attend, the members must telephone the PTV Representative of that race meeting no later than 10:00am on the morning of the race. Failure to abide by this rule may result in refusal of future nominations.

12.4 It is the member's duty to check start times of races at all venues.

13 JUDGES

13.1 Races shall be judged by a HRV or PTV Official or any other person appointed by HRV. Where possible, the race day judge will officiate.

13.2 The Judge's decision is final.

13.3 The Judge may correct a mistake.

14 HANDICAPPING

14.1 Handicapping will be conducted via the preferred handicapping method. Using the preferred handicapping method, ponies should, where possible, race in classes according to height, and be handicapped by distance, based on metres per second using the metres per second formula - with the aim of all ponies reaching the finishing line simultaneously. Each pony will be assigned a handicap based on their meters per second time measured at the commencement of the season. New ponies (i.e. ponies that have never raced before) start at a mark decided by the PTV official. All ponies go back 10 metres for a Pony of the Year win and 20m for a Cup win; there is no limit as to how far a pony can win back to. After two consecutive unplaced runs a pony comes forward 10 metres.

14.2 Ponies will be handicapped using Meters per Second (MPS) formula. To achieve the (MPS) handicap, the starting handicap mark is divided by the seconds timed to cover distance. This rating then is multiplied by the base mark of 120. (This should give race time of 2 min). All ponies 13 hands and under may compete in the same division and no front mark will be required. Ponies may carry the same handicap should they choose to compete with any affiliated club. HRV handicappers reserve the right to re-handicap ponies if required.

14.3 Club Handicappers at their discretion may place a horse forward of the front marks should they desire.

14.4 The winner of any "Group One" race conducted by the association or any other state controlling body (e.g. Championships, Inter-Dominion, and Miracle Mile etc) shall be penalised ten metres for each such win at Championship (Group One) events.

14.5 Ponies receiving a penalty of 10 metres for winning Group One events will carry that penalty should they move into another height division other than the one where they received the initial penalty.

14.6 Feature Races will all be conducted via the preferred handicapping method.

14.7 If a pony that has an MPS Handicap is driver-substituted by a more skilled driver, that pony may be re-handicapped by the designated PTV official up to a 50-metre difference. Driving changes must be notified to officials a minimum of half an hour before the advertised starting time of the race/event.

15 OFFENCES/DISPUTES

15.1 An HRV/PTV Official may refer any breaches of the rules to HRV Stewards to determine if an offence has been committed. Stewards may determine the appropriate penalty where required as per AHRR 256.

15.2 All decisions made by HRV are final.

Schedule 1

SULKY & WHEELS

Sulky Standard

- No less than 900mm and no wider than 1200mm
- No longer than 2750mm
- The sulky shafts, frame and undercarriage shall be manufactured from steel or another material if approved by HRA. Accepted steels are mild steel, low carbon alloy steel, low alloy steel (including chrome-molybdenum alloys, chrome-manganese alloys, etc) and structural stainless steel alloys with a minimum tensile strength of 350MPa and a minimum elongation at break of 20%.
- All edges must be rounded, including shaft tips
- Wooden sulkies, including shafts are not permitted (as of 1 July 2017)

The sulky shall contain:

- Two wheels
- Undercarriage and dust sheet
- Two shafts for attachment to the horse
- A driver's seat and driver footrests

Wheel Standard

The wheel diameter shall be in the range of 508mm (20") to 660.4mm (26") for Ponies and no smaller than 06.4mm 16") for Shetlands - but to be viewed in the context of what is appropriate given the height of the pony.

The wheel shall be:

- Attached to the sulky via a conventional T-bar axle or other approved axles.
- If spoked, be covered on both sides by a disc of approved brand.
- The tyres shall be an approved type and be no more than 50mm in width.
- Wheels shall be manufactured from approved materials only. Wooden wheels are not permitted.

Schedule 2

PONY WELFARE

Competitors, officials, and administrators always acknowledge and accept that the welfare of the pony is paramount. All ponies must be competent and fit to compete.

The following guidelines must be read in conjunction with State Control Bodies equine welfare policies and adhered to as a minimum:

General Pony Welfare

Please refer to HRV's Animal Welfare Framework on the HRV website.
Summary guidelines provided below.

a) Good Pony Management

Stabling and feeding must be compatible with the best pony management practices. Clean, good quality hay, feed and water must always be available.

b) Training Methods

Ponies must only undergo training that matches their physical capabilities and level of maturity. They must not be subjected to methods which are abusive or cause fear.

c) Farriery and Gear
Foot care and shoeing must be of a high standard. Gear must be designed and fitted to avoid the risk of pain or injury. Reins must have a minimum of 4 hand loops for greater control. Reins that have single or moveable hand loops are not permitted

d) Transport
During transportation, ponies must be tethered to protect against injuries and other health risks. Vehicles must be safe, well ventilated, maintained to a high standard, disinfected regularly and driven by competent personnel. Competent handlers must always be available to manage the pony.

e) Transit
All journeys must be planned carefully with due consideration to weather conditions. Ponies should be provided with regular rest periods and access to food and water.

Fitness to Compete

a) Fitness and competence
Participation in competition must be determined by the proven competence of the pony and participant. Ponies must be allowed suitable rest period between training and competitions and additional rest periods should be allowed following travel.

b) Health status
No pony deemed unfit may compete or continue to compete - veterinary advice must be sought whenever there is any doubt.

c) Doping and Medication
Any action or intent of doping and illicit use of medication constitutes a serious welfare issue and will not be tolerated. After any veterinary treatment, sufficient time must be allowed for full recovery before competition.

d) Pregnant/recently foaled mares
In accord with AHRR103B, a mare or filly shall not race or perform track work after day 120 of its pregnancy or with foal at foot. Prior to 120 days if the club/event organiser is concerned about the ability of a pregnant mare/filly to compete a veterinarian evaluation can be requested.

e) Misuse of Gear or Equipment
Gear or equipment shall only be used for its designated purpose. Abuse of a pony using gear and equipment will not be tolerated.

Events Must not Prejudice Pony Welfare
a) Competition Areas
All competition conditions are designed with the safety of ponies in mind.

b) Ground Surfaces
All ground surfaces on which ponies walk, train or compete must be designed and maintained to reduce factors that could lead to injury.

c) Extreme Weather
Competitions must not take place in extreme weather conditions that may compromise welfare or safety of ponies. In hot weather, provision must be made for cooling conditions for ponies after competing.

d) Stabling at Events
Stables or tie up areas must be safe, hygienic, comfortable, well ventilated and of sufficient size. Wash-down areas and water must always be available.

Humane Treatment of Ponies

a) Veterinary Treatment
Veterinary expertise must always be available at an event. This can include an on-call local veterinarian. If a pony is injured or exhausted during a competition, the pony must stop competing and a veterinary evaluation performed.

b) Competition Injuries
The incidence and cause of all injuries sustained in competition should be closely monitored, with risk factors examined carefully to identify ways to minimise future injuries.

c) Euthanasia
If injuries are sufficiently severe, a pony may need to be euthanised on humane grounds by a veterinarian as soon as possible, with the sole aim of minimising suffering.

d) Retirement
PTV must be notified of a pony's retirement from Pony Trots, including subsequent sale (see below) or type of use (e.g. family pet, used for riding etc). Ponies must be treated respectfully and humanely when retired from competition.

e) Sale
The sale of a pony must be notified to PTV and details updated in registries to comply with State Government Legislation.

Education
PTV urges all those involved in Pony Trots to undertake all available education to improve their knowledge in the care and management of their ponies.