

# AUSTRALIAN HANDICAPPING RULES

**HCAP FINAL**

**Effective: 18 March 2011  
Amendments highlighted in yellow  
to take effect: 15 May 2018**

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**1. DATE OF EFFECT**

- 1.1 All horses competing at Harness Racing meetings on or after 1 September 2009 shall be classified in accordance with these Rules.
- 1.2 Winners of all races at Harness Racing meetings on or after 1 September 2009 shall incur penalties as provided by these Rules.
- 1.3 A horse that has raced prior to 1 September 2009 shall commence to race thereafter with its classification:
- (a) as at midnight on 31 August 2009 in accordance with the Australian Handicapping Rules 1996 and as thereafter amended, and
  - (b) inclusive of any applicable reductions in class as provided in Rule 17 hereof.

Note: Throughout these Rules -

- (a) the masculine shall include and refer to the feminine.
- (b) 'dollars' mean Australian dollars or New Zealand dollars interchangeably and each shall be deemed to be of equal value to the other.

**2. DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 **Age Penalty (AP)**  
A penalty of one class imposed to adjust the Age Class of a 2YO or 3YO horse.
- 2.2 **Age Race**  
A race that is confined to either 2YO, 3YO or 4YO horses only.
- 2.3 **Automatic Handicap Race**  
A standing start race in which each class equates to 10 metres.
- 2.4 **Career Penalty (CP)**  
A penalty of one class imposed to adjust the Career Class of a horse.
- 2.5 **Class**  
The designated classification of a horse within the Handicapping Scales.
- 2.6 **Classic**  
A race for either 2YO, 3YO or 4YO horses of the same age or sex, which is designated as such by the Controlling Body and in which all horses shall start from the front.
- 2.7 **Concession Driver**  
A licensed driver who has held a licence for a period of less than five years from the date a Grade B licence was first granted.
- 2.8 **Controlling Body**  
The body of persons in control of harness racing in the relevant State or Country.
- 2.9 **Discretionary Handicap**  
A race in which handicap marks are allotted by and at the discretion of the handicapper at intervals of five metres and/or ten metres after the ten metre handicap mark.

- 2.10 **Graduation Age Penalty (RAP)**  
A penalty of one class imposed to adjust the Graduation Age Class of a 2YO or 3YO horse.
- 2.11 **Graduation Penalty (RP)**  
A penalty of one class imposed to adjust the Graduation Class of a horse.
- 2.12 **Graduation Race**  
A race with stakemoney greater than \$2,000 but not exceeding \$4,500.
- 2.13 **Heat**  
A race held for the purpose of determining which horses from that race shall qualify for a Repechage, Semi-Final, Final or Consolation.
- 2.14 **Invitation Race**  
A race approved by the Controlling Body for which the nominations may be by invitation of the Conducting Club or Controlling Body.
- 2.15 **Metropolitan Penalty (MP)**  
A penalty of one class imposed to adjust the Metropolitan Class of a horse.
- 2.16 **Metropolitan Race**  
A race with stakemoney in excess of the metropolitan threshold amount that is set by a State's Controlling Body for application within the State for the 12 months period commencing 1 September each year.
- Note: The metropolitan threshold amounts set by the respective State Controlling Bodies in 2014/2015 are:*
- |                          |   |                 |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------|
| <i>New South Wales</i>   | - | <i>\$14,999</i> |
| <i>Queensland</i>        | - | <i>\$14,999</i> |
| <i>South Australia</i>   | - | <i>\$14,999</i> |
| <i>Tasmania</i>          | - | <i>\$14,999</i> |
| <i>Victoria</i>          | - | <i>\$14,999</i> |
| <i>Western Australia</i> | - | <i>\$14,999</i> |
- 2.17 **Penalty Free Race**  
A race with stakemoney of \$2,000 or less.
- 2.18 **Preferential Barrier Draw (PBD)**  
A predetermined method applied to the barrier draw in races other than Random Barrier Draw (RBD).
- 2.19 **Race**  
Any contest between two (2) or more horses.
- 2.20 **Race-Front**  
One or more specified classes or ages used to determine eligibility for a race.
- 2.21 **Sires Stake Race**  
A race conducted as part of a State's Sires Stakes program.
- 2.22 **Stakemoney**  
The total Prizemoney specified in the published conditions of a race excluding GST when applicable which:

- includes float rebates, time incentives and unconditional bonuses (including cash and the retail value of vouchers, credit, goods and or services); and
- excludes trophies and conditional bonuses (including breeding scheme and Industry Association or Club Membership bonuses where a fee is applicable to be eligible for that bonus).

**2.23 Standard Race**

A race with stakemoney greater than \$4,500 but not exceeding the threshold amount for a Metropolitan Race – see Rule 2.16.

**2.24 Young Driver**

A licensed driver who has not attained the age of 25 years or as otherwise specified by a Controlling Body.

**3. HANDICAPPING PENALTIES - GENERAL**

**3.1 Metropolitan Penalty (MP) Races**

The winner of a Metropolitan race for open-age horses shall incur one Metropolitan Penalty, one Career Penalty and one Graduation penalty except that:

- (a) if the horse is a 2YO or 3YO it shall also incur such other penalties as provided in Rules 4 and 5 respectively,
- (b) a Metropolitan Penalty shall not be incurred by the winner of:
  - (i) a race for 2YO's,
  - (ii) a race for 3YO's,
  - (iii) a Sires Stake race for 4YO's with stakemoney not exceeding \$50,000.
  - (iv) a special race approved by the Controlling Body with no stakemoney restriction for pacers classified C0 to C5 (inclusive) or for trotters classified T0 or better.

**3.2 Career Penalty (CP) Races**

The winner of a Standard race for open-age horses shall incur one Career Penalty and one Graduation Penalty except that if such horse is a 3YO it shall also incur one Age Penalty and one Graduation Age Penalty.

**3.3 Age Penalty (AP) Races**

- (a) The winner of a Standard race for 2YO's shall incur one Age Penalty and one Graduation Age Penalty.
- (b) The winner of a Standard race for 3YO's shall incur one Age Penalty, one Graduation Age Penalty and such other penalties as provided in Rules 5.4 and 9.4 hereof.

**3.4 Graduation Penalty (RP) Races**

The winner of a Graduation race for open-age horses shall incur one Graduation Penalty and if such horse is a 3YO it shall also incur one Graduation Age Penalty.

**3.5 Graduation Age Penalty (RAP) Races**

- (a) The winner of a Graduation race for 2YO's shall incur one Graduation Age Penalty.
- (b) The winner of a Graduation race for 3YO's shall incur one Graduation Age Penalty and such other penalties as provided in Rules 5.6 and 9.6 hereof.

**3.6 Penalty Exempt Races**

The winner of a race in any of the following shall not incur a handicapping penalty/s as provided by these Rules:

- (a) World Drivers Championship.

- (b) Australasian Young Drivers Championship.
- (c) A drivers' series of not more than 6 races in each State as approved by the Controlling Body but limited to not more than three series in a racing year and which are not restricted to Concession Drivers.
- (d) One or more drivers' series restricted to Concession Drivers in each State as approved by the Controlling Body but limited in total to not more than 24 races in a racing year.
- (e) Any other driver's championship race or series approved by Harness Racing Australia.

### **3.7 Penalty Free Race**

- 3.7.1 The winner of a Penalty Free race shall not incur a class penalty.
- 3.7.2 The winner of a Penalty Free race may at the discretion of the Controlling Body incur a handicap of 10 metres for each subsequent Penalty Free race.

### **3.8 Monté Races**

- 3.8.1 The winner of a Monté race for open-age horses shall not incur a handicapping penalty/s.
- 3.8.2 The winner of a Monté race for open-age horses shall have such win recorded by the Controlling Body for the purpose of programming and handicapping Monté races only.

## **4. 2YO PACERS**

- 4.1 A 2YO pacer shall commence racing as a 2YO with classifications of 2C0 and 2R0.
- 4.2 The winner of a Metropolitan or Standard race for 2YO's shall incur one Age Penalty and one Graduation Age Penalty.
- 4.3 The winner of a Standard race for 2YO's or a Standard race with a race-front that combines 2YO's and older horses shall incur one Age Penalty and one Graduation Age Penalty.
- 4.4 The winner of a Graduation race for 2YO's shall incur one Graduation Age Penalty.
- 4.5 The winner of a Graduation race for 2YO's or a Graduation race with a race-front that combines 2YO's and older horses shall incur one Graduation Age Penalty.
- 4.6 A 2YO pacer that wins a race that is not a race for 2YO's or not a race with a race-front that combines 2YO's with older horses shall incur the penalties provided by these Rules.

## **5. 3YO PACERS**

- 5.1 A 3YO pacer shall commence racing as a 3YO with classifications of 3C0 and 3R0.
- 5.2 The winner of a Metropolitan race for 3YO's shall incur one Age Penalty and one Graduation Age Penalty.

- 5.3 The winner of a Standard race for 3YO's or a Standard race with a race-front that combines 3YO's and older horses shall incur one Age Penalty and one Graduation Age Penalty.
- 5.4 A 3YO pacer winning more than two Standard or Metropolitan races shall also incur one Career Penalty and one Graduation Penalty for each subsequent win.
- 5.5 The winner of a Graduation race for 3YO's or a Graduation race with a race-front that combines 3YO's and older horses shall incur one Graduation Age Penalty.
- 5.6 A 3YO pacer winning more than two Graduation races shall also incur one Graduation Penalty for each subsequent win.
- 5.7 A 3YO pacer that wins a race that is not a race for 3YO's or not a race with a race-front that combines 3YO's with older horses shall incur the penalties provided by these Rules.

**6. 4YO AND OLDER PACERS**

- 6.1 A pacer upon attaining the age of four years shall be classified C0 and R0 except that a horse that has won three (3) or more races as a 3YO shall be classified as provided by Rule 5 hereof.
- 6.2 The winner of a Standard race for 4YO's shall incur one Career Penalty and one Graduation Penalty.
- 6.3 The winner of a Metropolitan race for 4YO's shall incur one Metropolitan Penalty, one Career Penalty and one Graduation Penalty except as provided in Rule 3.1(b).

**7. PACERS HANDICAPPING SCALES**

<b>METROPOLITAN</b>	<b>CAREER</b>		<b>GRADUATION</b>	
<b>Open Age</b>	<b>Open Age</b>	<b>Age (3YO)</b>	<b>Open Age</b>	<b>Age (3YO)</b>
M0		3C0		3R0
M1		3C1		3R1
M2	C0	3C2	R0	3R2
M3	C1	3C3	R1	3R3
M4	C2	3C4	R2	3R4
M5	C3	3C5	R3	3R5
etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.

- Notes:
- 1. The Metropolitan handicapping scale stands alone as there is no link connecting a Metropolitan class with an equivalent increment in another class
  - 2. The 2YO handicapping scales (not shown) for Career class and for Graduation class are a simple numerical progression - 0, 1, 2, 3, etc., and have no links to 3YO or Open Age classes.

- ▶ *Pacer classed C5/R5 wins an R5 race to become ..... C5-R6*  
*..... it next wins a C5 race to become ... C6-R7*  
*..... it next wins a M0 race to become M1-C7-R8*  
*..... it next wins a C7 race to become M1-C8-R9*  
*..... it next wins a C8 race to become M1-C9-R10*  
*..... it next wins a M1 race to become M2-C10-R11*
  
- ▶ *3YO pacer classed 3C0/3R0 wins a 3R0 race to become ..... 3C0-3R1*  
*..... it next wins a 3R1 race to become ..... 3C0-3R2*  
*..... it next wins a 3C0 race to become ..... R1-3C1-3R3\**  
*..... it next wins a 3C1 race to become ..... R2-3C2-3R4*  
*..... it next wins a C0 race to become ..... C1-R3-3C3-3R5*  
*..... it next wins a Metro 3YO race to become C2-R4-3C4-3R6*  
*\* The horse has won more than two Graduation races therefore it also incurs an open-age Graduation penalty, see Rule 5.6. A handy tip to note is that when looking at the handicapping scales, a horse's open age class will never be lesser than the equivalent 3YO class.*

**8. 2YO TROTTERS**

- 8.1 A 2YO trotter shall commence racing as a 2YO with classifications of 2T0 and 2TR0.
- 8.2 The winner of a Metropolitan or Standard race for 2YO's shall incur one Age Penalty and one Graduation Age Penalty.
- 8.3 The winner of a Graduation race for 2YO's shall incur one Graduation Age Penalty.
- 8.4 A 2YO trotter that wins a race that is not a 2YO race shall incur the penalties provided by these Rules.

**9. 3YO TROTTERS**

- 9.1 A 3YO trotter shall commence racing as a 3YO with classifications of 3T0 and 3TR0.
- 9.2 The winner of a Metropolitan race for 3YO's shall incur one Age Penalty and one Graduation Age Penalty.
- 9.3 The winner of a Standard race for 3YO's or a Standard race with a race-front that combines 3YO's and older horses shall incur one Age Penalty and one Graduation Age Penalty.
- 9.4 A 3YO trotter winning more than three Standard or Metropolitan races shall also incur one Career Penalty and one Graduation Penalty for each subsequent win.
- 9.5 The winner of a Graduation race for 3YO's or a Graduation race with a race-front that combines 3YO's and older horses shall incur one Graduation Age Penalty.
- 9.6 A 3YO trotter winning more than three Graduation races shall also incur one Graduation Penalty for each subsequent win.
- 9.7 A 3YO trotter that wins a race that is not a 3YO race or not a race with a race-front that combines 3YO's with older horses shall incur the penalties provided by these Rules.



**10. 4YO AND OLDER TROTTERS**

- 10.1 A trotter upon attaining the age of four years shall be classified T0 and TR0 except that a horse that has won four (4) or more races as a 3YO shall be classified as provided by Rule 9 hereof.
- 10.2 The winner of a Standard race for 4YO's shall incur one Career Penalty and one Graduation Penalty.
- 10.3 The winner of a Metropolitan race for 4YO's shall incur one Metropolitan Penalty, one Career Penalty and one Graduation Penalty except as provided in Rule 3.1(b).

**11. HANDICAPS FOR TROTTERS 3YO AND OLDER**

In a standing start race for trotters 3YO and older, the horses shall be handicapped as follows unless otherwise specified by a Controlling Body:

- 3T0 class horses front mark
- 3T1 class horses - 10 metres
- 3T2 class horses - 20 metres
- 3T3 class horses - 30 metres
- etc.
- T0 class horses - 30 metres
- T1 class horses - 40 metres
- etc.

**12. TROTTERS HANDICAPPING SCALES**

METROPOLITAN	CAREER		GRADUATION	
Open Age	Open Age	Age (3YO)	Open Age	Age (3YO)
TM0		3T0		3TR0
TM1		3T1		3TR1
TM2		3T2		3TR2
TM3	T0	3T3	TR0	3TR3
TM4	T1	3T4	TR1	3TR4
TM5	T2	3T5	TR2	3TR5
TM6	T3	3T6	TR3	3TR6
etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.

- Notes:*
1. The Metropolitan handicapping scale stands alone as there is no link connecting a Metropolitan class with an equivalent increment in another class.
  2. The 2YO handicapping scales (not shown) for Career class and for Graduation class are a simple numerical progression - 0, 1, 2, 3, etc., and have no links to 3YO or Open Age classes.

- ▶ Trotter classed T3-TR6 wins a TR5+ race to become ..... T3-TR7
- ..... it next wins a T5\* race to become ..... T4-TR8
- ..... it next wins a T4+ race to become ..... T5-TR9
- ..... it next wins a TM0 race to become TM1-T6-TR10
- ..... it next wins a T5+ race to become TM1-T7-TR11
- \* racing out of class

- ▶ *3YO trotter classed 3T2/3TR3 wins a 3TR race to become T0-TR1-3T2-3TR4\**  
 ..... *it next wins a 3T race to become .....T0-TR2-3T3-3TR5*  
 ..... *it next wins a 3T race to become .....T1-TR3-3T4\*\*-3TR6*  
 ..... *it next wins a T0+ race to become ... T2-TR4-3T5-3TR7*  
 ..... *it next wins a Metro 3YO race to be T3-TR5-3T6-3TR8*

*\* The horse has won more than three Graduation races therefore also incurs an open-age Graduation penalty, see Rule 9.6*

*\*\* The horse has won more than three Standard or Metropolitan races therefore also incurs an open-age Career penalty and an open-age Graduation penalty, see Rule 9.4. A handy tip to note is that when looking at the handicapping scales, a horse's open age class will never be lesser than the equivalent 3YO class.*

**13. TROTTERS COMPETING IN PACERS RACES**

13.1 A trotter may compete in a race programmed for pacers and shall be classified in accordance with the following class equivalents unless otherwise specified by a Controlling Body:

- T0 to T9 ..... shall equate to C0
- T10 ..... shall equate to C1
- T11 ..... shall equate to C2
- T12 ..... shall equate to C3
- etc.
- TM3 to TM6 shall equate to M0
- TM7 or TM8 shall equate to M1
- TM9 or better shall equate to M2.

13.2 A trotter that wins a Standard race for pacers shall incur one pacers Career Penalty, one trotters Career Penalty, one pacers Graduation Penalty, one trotters Graduation Penalty and if the horse is a 3YO it shall also incur one pacers Age Penalty, one trotters Age penalty, one pacers Graduation Age Penalty and one trotters Graduation Age penalty

13.3 A trotter that wins a Metropolitan race for pacers shall incur one pacers Metropolitan Penalty, one trotters Metropolitan Penalty and it shall also incur the penalties provided in Rule 13.2 hereof.

**14. HANDICAPPING - MISCELLANEOUS**

**14.1 Events conducted as a Series of Races**

An event may be conducted as a combination of related races (“the Series”) that may include a Prelude/s, Heat/s, Repechage/s, Semi-Finals, Final and Consolation/s in conjunction therewith provided that:

- (a) The winner of a race of the Series shall incur the penalties provided by these Rules.
- (b) The penalties for a win in a race of the Series shall not apply in other races of the Series.
- (c) The penalties provided by these Rules for a win in a race that is not part of the Series shall apply in races of the Series unless otherwise specified in the published conditions of the Series.
- (d) The penalties provided by these Rules for a win in a race of the Series shall apply in a race that is not part of the Series.

**14.2 Wins Out of Class**

A horse that wins a race for which the front is better than its classification shall incur the penalties provided by these Rules irrespective of the front of the race.

*Note: Examples of the penalties incurred for wins out of class (with the upgraded classes marked in bold type) are:*

- ▶ 3YO pacer classed 3C0-3R0 wins a C0 race to become **C1-R1-3C1-3R1**
- ▶ Pacer classed C3-R3 wins an M0 race to become **M1-C4-R4**
  
- ▶ 3YO trotter classed 3T1-3TR2 wins a T0 race to become **T1-TR1-3T2-3TR3**
- ▶ Trotter classed T2-TR6 wins a T5+ race to become **T3-TR7**

**14.3 Dead-Heats**

A horse shall not incur a handicapping penalty/s as provided by these Rules for a dead-heat for the first placing in a race.

**14.4 Time Trials**

A horse that wins a race conducted as a Time Trial shall incur the penalties provided by these Rules.

**14.5 Conversion of Gait**

A horse which has had its gait converted shall have its classification adjusted as though it had won its races at the gait to which it has been converted.

**14.6 Claiming Races**

The winner of a Claiming Race shall incur the penalties provided by these Rules.

**15. CLASSIFICATION OF HORSES FOR WINS OUTSIDE AUSTRALIA**

- 15.1 A horse cleared into Australia after midnight on 31 August 2009 by a Controlling Body in another country shall be classified in respect of any race won in any other country in accordance with these Rules as at 1 September 2009 irrespective of the date of such win except that if a horse won a race in a country outside Australia as a 2YO or 3YO before 1 September 2009, the horse will be classified in accordance with the Australian Handicapping Rules in place at the time the race was won.
- 15.2 The handicapping classification of any horse cleared by a Controlling Body in another country and registered to race in Australia shall be calculated:
- (a) From its lifetime performances recorded on the Clearance or Export Certificate provided by such Controlling Body.
  - (b) With the inclusion of not more than ten (10) non-winning performances.
- 15.4 Stakemoney as shown on the Clearance or Export Certificate won by a horse in New Zealand, United States of America, Canada or other dollar denominated country shall be deemed to be the equivalent dollar amount in Australian Dollars.
- 15.5 Stakemoney as shown on the Clearance or Export Certificate won by a horse in any other country outside Australia other than New Zealand, United States of America, Canada or other dollar denominated country shall be converted to its equivalent in Australian dollars calculated at the date of its most recent clearance from a country outside Australia.

**16. PENALTIES FOR DISQUALIFIED AND PROMOTED HORSES**

If a horse wins a race ("the subject race") and is subsequently disqualified as the winner of the subject race, other than as a result of a protest on the day of the race, then:

- (a) The horse that was placed second in the subject race shall be promoted to first ("the promoted horse") and the owner thereof shall receive the specified stakemoney for first placing in the race.
- (b) The disqualified horse shall not incur any penalty in respect of the subject race.
- (c) If the disqualified horse has won a race or races following the subject race and prior to its disqualification it shall incur the penalties provided by these rules applicable to the other race or races which it has won, and:-
  - (i) The horse shall then be reclassified in accordance with Rule 16(b).
  - (ii) For the obviation of doubt, the horse shall be deemed eligible for such other race or races which it has won.
- (d) If the promoted horse has not won any other race following the subject race and prior to its promotion it shall incur the penalties provided by these Rules for winning the subject race.
- (e) If the promoted horse has won a race or races following the subject race and prior to its promotion it shall incur the penalties provided by these Rules applicable to the other race or races which it has won and upon its promotion or after the conduct of any race for which it is at that time an acceptor (whichever shall last occur) it shall also incur the penalties provided by these Rules applicable to the subject race.

**17. REDUCTIONS IN CLASS**

17.1 A horse that is registered to race in Australia shall have all its classifications simultaneously reduced by one class upon ten (10) consecutive race starts without a win except that a reduction in class/s shall only be made for horses classified better than:

- (a) Pacers – 2R1, 2C1, 3R1, 3C1, R1, C1, M1;
- (b) Trotters – 2TR1, 2T1, 3TR1, 3T1, TR1, T1, TM1.

*Note:* Examples of Reductions in Class (drop backs) with the reduced classes in bold type, are as follows:

- ▶ 3YO pacer classed 3C1-3R2 would drop back to 3C1-**3R1**
- ▶ 4YO+ pacer classed C5-R5 would drop back to **C4-R4**
- ▶ 4YO+ pacer classed M1-C8-R9 would drop back to M1-**C7-R8**
  
- ▶ 3YO trotter classed 3T2-3TR3 would drop back to **3T1-3TR2**
- ▶ 4YO+ trotter classed T7-TR8 would drop back to **T6-TR7**
- ▶ 4YO+ trotter classed TM2-T9-TR10 would drop back to **TM1-T8-TR9**

17.2 A dead-heat for the first placing shall not count as a win.

17.3 No time limits shall apply to the accrual of 10 consecutive race starts.

- 17.4 For the purposes of clarification, effective from 1 September 2009, no horse shall drop back more than one class notwithstanding that horse may have accumulated more than 10 starts without a win up to and including 31 August 2009.

**18. CONCESSION DRIVERS**

- 18.1 A Concession Driver may, with the approval of the Controlling Body, claim a concession (subject to the exceptions hereinafter set out) in each of the first five years from the date of first being granted a Grade B licence.
- 18.2 The Controlling Body may at any time withdraw its approval for a Concession Driver to claim a concession.
- 18.3 A horse driven by a Concession Driver claiming a concession shall have its classification reduced by one class for that race except that:
- (a) a concession may only be claimed for horses classified better than R1, TR1, C1, T1, M1 or TM1 unless otherwise specified by a Controlling Body.
  - (b) a Controlling Body may specify races in which a concession cannot be claimed.
- 18.4 The maximum number of wins allowed in a racing year before a Concession Driver cannot claim a concession in that year shall be specified by the Controlling Body but shall be a total/s that is inclusive of all wins in such year irrespective of whether or not a concession was claimed.
- 18.5 A dead-heat for the first placing shall not count as a win.
- 18.6 When a Concession Driver wins his final concession claim race in a year at a meeting where he has further driving engagements, the driver will be permitted to claim the relevant concession for the remainder of such meeting and any other meeting on the same day.

**19. LOCAL HANDICAPPING RULES**

- 19.1 A local handicapping rule of a Controlling Body shall not affect the classification of any horse under these Rules and shall be applicable only in respect of a race programmed by such Controlling Body.
- 19.2 Classification of a horse under a local handicapping rule of a Controlling Body shall be kept separate from the horse's classification under these Rules which shall be maintained and kept current by such Controlling Body.

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