



Governance Document Management Framework

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Overview

Equestrian South Australia Inc. (ESA) operates in an ever-changing environment. To do this, it requires a robust governance document management framework to support its objectives.

The document framework:

- Provides a sensible, transparent and co-ordinated approach to the creation of policies, by-laws, procedures and other documents, facilitating the development and review life cycle of the document;
- Ensures that governance documentation supports the equestrian community in complying with relevant legislation and aligns itself with the Association's governing documents and its Strategic Plan;
- Allows the equestrian community access to the documents;
- Optimises the number of association-wide governance documents to the minimum necessary for sound business practice;
- Delivers consistency, standardisation and predictability throughout the Association, of governance documentation and ensures only current versions are accessible;
- Supports quality assurance and continuous improvement; and
- Assists in the gap analysis of the overall ESA policy portfolio.

The Governance Document Management Framework provides the rules and tools by which governance documents are developed, documented, approved, promulgated, controlled and reviewed. Plans (such as the ESA Strategic Plan) are not included in the context of this framework as these are considered to be operational documents rather than governance documents, though it is important to recognise that one of the primary purposes of governance documentation is to give effect to such plans. Legislation, Acts and regulations of the Australian Commonwealth and South Australian Governments apply as a matter of course to the Association.

Records Management

Information is a vital corporate resource. The implementation of best practice corporate records management will support ESA business in many ways and is significant for a number of reasons. The ESA is committed to accurate corporate records management and this is achieved through the records management process.

Good records management:

- Improves the conduct of business in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner;
- Supports compliance with statutory obligations;
- Supports and documents policy and managerial decision-making;
- Protects the interests of the Association and the rights of employees, members and stakeholders;
- Maintains a corporate 'memory' for the Association.

The process for effective records management will be covered by the relevant framework.

Definition

Document Controller. This is a functional role, referring to the person/s who manage the ESA document library. Contact can be made via the email address manager@equestriansa.com.au

External & Internal Documents

ESA relies on and uses documents which are either externally or internally sourced.

Externally sourced documents are provided by other organizations such as FEI (e.g. International rules and regulations) and Equestrian Australia Limited (e.g. National rules and regulations). Externally sourced documents, when accepted as relevant to ESA, will be included on the register of controlled documents.

Internally sourced documents are those created and maintained by Equestrian South Australia. These are automatically included on the register of controlled documents.

This particular framework is focussed on internally sourced documents.

Levels of Governance Documents

- **ESA-wide Governance Documents**

These include the constitution, by-laws, rules, policies, procedures and guidelines. They are kept in a central document library maintained by ESA Administration – the Governance Document Library. The words “by-laws”, “policy”, “procedures” and “guidelines” are reserved for ESA-wide documents.

- **Operational & Administrative documents**

Operational and administrative documents are meant to add detail to ESA-wide governance documents or address issues that only concern the operation of the Association. They must not contradict or conflict with ESA-wide governance documents. These are often referred to as work instructions.

- **Discipline documents**

These apply to a specific ESA discipline and may vary from one discipline to another. They must not contradict or conflict with ESA-wide governance documents.

ESA-wide governance documentation

Different ‘types’ of governance documentation clarify the notions of importance and enforceability of the document and are classified in one of seven categories:

[The Equestrian South Australia Inc. Constitution](#)

The constitution grants the ESA Board powers to appoint staff, manage and control the Association’s affairs and property, and manage and control finances to promote the Association’s interests. Equestrian South Australia Inc. is governed by a nine-member Board. The Board is led by the ESA Chair, elected by the Board.

The Executive Officer is responsible to the Board for the overall management of the Association.

Equestrian Australia – Memorandum of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is between Equestrian Australia Ltd (EA) and its member branches. ESA is one such member branch. The MoU is an external document.

The MoU identifies EA as the International Equestrian Federation (FEI)-recognised body for the promotion of equestrian sport in Australia.

The member branches are the recognised bodies, which, within the policy framework of EA, govern equestrian sport in their respective States and Territories.

By-Laws and Rules.

Only the ESA Board can approve by-laws; though where a by-law has equestrian discipline implications, the Board will seek advice from the relevant discipline committee.

Rules of the Association relate directly to a by-law and may define or clarify it further. Draft documents for by-laws and rules are sent first to the discipline committees for discussion and approval and then for final approval to the Board. By-laws and rules are permanent in nature though subject to periodic review. Compliance is mandatory and non-compliance may be actionable through appropriate conduct policy documents.

Policies

A policy is a concise formal statement that outlines non-discretionary governing principles and intentions, in order to guide Association-wide practice. Policies are a formal statement of intent that mandate principles or standards that apply to the Association's governance or operations or to the practice and conduct of its staff, officials and members. Those principles are derived from and shaped by:-

- Laws and regulations that govern ESA;
- National standards and community expectations and;
- The values and mission the Association articulates in its strategic plan.

In short, policy provides members of the Association with the approved way of operating in relation to a particular matter. It is the role of Policy to:

- Translate values into operations;
- Ensure compliance with legal and statutory responsibilities;
- Guide the Association towards the achievement of its strategic plan;
- Provide a framework for action;
- Set standards; and
- Improve the management of risk.

Corporate policies are approved by the ESA Chair upon recommendation by the Board. ESA discipline policies are approved by the Board through the recommendations considered by the discipline committees. Where a need has been identified and requires a policy, these may be recommended through the relevant discipline chair. Policies are intended to be long term in application. They are reviewed every 3 years - less frequently than procedures or guidelines.

Procedures

Procedures set out, often in a step-by-step fashion, the Association's requirements for a particular course or mode of action. Procedures clearly define how a policy will be implemented and by whom. They are updated more often than by-laws, rules or policies - reviewed every 2 years - as operational systems change in line with the Association's requirements. Procedures often elaborate on, and give effect to, a by-law, or policy and define the area in which policy is operative. Compliance with procedures is mandatory and

non-compliance may be actionable through appropriate conduct policy documents. Procedures necessarily require approval by the Board; approval is usually through either the designated discipline committee and relevant Board member.

Guidelines

Guidelines set out the ESA requirement for, or prescription of, best or safest practice. They are interpretive statements and as with policies and procedures they need to be forwarded to Governance for approval from either the Board or discipline committee. Similar to procedures, guidelines are updated more often than by-laws or policies. Reviews of guideline documents should be every 2 years.

Work Instructions

Work Instructions are an internal document developed and implemented to standardise and recommend work practices or processes that are used to conduct a particular business function. Work Instructions are developed and amended as needed by those conducting the function. As an internal use only document, they do not need Board approval. A Work Instruction cannot contradict or conflict with any ESA governance documents, by-laws or government legislation.

Governance Documentation Life Cycle

There are nine steps in the governance documentation life cycle

- Identification
- Evaluation
- Development
- Consultation
- Quality Control and Records Management
- Approval
- Implementation
- Promulgation
- Review

Identification

Identifying the purpose for which a governance document is needed is a crucial step. A well-defined, clearly stated problem defines the issue and demonstrates an understanding of the desired outcome. Basically, the following question should be asked:

“Why is the governance document needed, and what does it aim to achieve?”

Evaluation

Existing relevant governance document/s should be examined to judge whether they cover the issue that has been identified. It may be that amendment to an existing governance document will cover the issue without a need to add to the overall documentation portfolio.

Consider the following:

- To which area/s of the Association would the governance document apply?
- Who should write it?
- Who are the key stakeholders? and
- Has feedback been sought about the document from interested parties regarding what works well and what does not?

A draft document should be written and circulated for consultation, taking into account all of the above criteria and determining who the key stakeholders across the equestrian community may be.

Development

A governance document is developed by relevant person/s in consultation with the key stakeholders and submitted for approval through the relevant chairperson. If amending a document currently in use, the most current version must be requested from the ESA Document Controller. The developer will then submit the documentation to the appropriate approval authority.

Consultation

Broad consultation shall be undertaken to ensure that governance documentation is as accurate as possible and reflects best practice. The consultation process is driven by the document controller with an overview by the Executive Officer (on behalf of the Board) who ensure that adequate and inclusive consultation has taken place. Consultation should include: developing, implementing, those affected by, etc. Conflicting perspectives can assist in identifying areas most affected by implementation across a variety of equestrian contexts.

Approval

When all parties believe the document is ready for submission for approval, the relevant committee chair then becomes the “Sponsor” for the proposed document. They will submit the document to the Executive Officer for inclusion in the agenda for the next Board meeting as appropriate. In the interests of efficiency, minor amendments to a document that do not affect its substance or intent, or do not substantially change the majority of the document, may be approved by the Executive Officer under authority delegated by the Board (for example, a change of person’s contact details). Where documents impact on any discipline or ESA business function, any major amendments must be approved first by either the relevant discipline or committee before being sent to the Board. This table lists the approval authorities of the Association:

Table 1 Approval Authorities.

Approval authority	Responsible for authorisation of
ESA Board	All by-laws, policies, rules and regulations.
Discipline Committees	All procedures, guidelines and documents pertaining to the relevant committee. These documents will, once approved, be further submitted to the Board by the relevant Committee Chair, dependent upon whether it is of a corporate or discipline nature.
ESA Administration/Executive Officer	All documents during the drafting phase and prior to submission to the Board. ESA Administration retains in its policy document library the approved, current version of any Association document. Any minor amendments to a document which do not affect the substance or intent of the document such as position/title changes

Implementation and Promulgation

Once approval has been given, the Executive Officer has the responsibility to:

- Place the document into the Governance Document Library and upload on to the pages of the ESA website, thereby ensuring that the equestrian community has read access to all of the current governance documentation held by the Association.
- Notify the relevant stakeholders including Equestrian Australia that the document is available online.
- Ensure the governance document is clearly communicated to all stakeholders through the Document Review Schedule available on the Governance web pages.

Once approval has been given, the Executive Officer has the responsibility to:

- Ensure all stakeholders who will be either directly or indirectly impacted by the governance document are aware of its existence and the changes to practices that it may require.
- Ensure all stakeholders are aware of the document and are able to access and understand the document.
- Allocate resources to update, amend or create any work instructions which may be necessary to implement or support the document.
- Ensure all staff, and authorised persons within their area/s of responsibility comply with the governance document.

Review

All governance documents are subject to a process of periodic review to ensure that the information contained in the document is still correct, accurately reflects the practices of the Association and ensures they remain compliant with Commonwealth and South Australian Government legislation and the Association's governing documents. Prior to the review date, the document controller notifies the Sponsor or discipline chair that a document is due for review and the date that it is due to be reviewed by. A 'Word' copy of the document is sent to the Sponsor so that no duplication of documents is extant. Scheduled reviews are usually every 2 years for Procedures and Guidelines, and every 3 years for Policy documents. By-laws and Rules are reviewed as necessary. Reviews of documents can also be carried out at any time if it becomes evident that the document requires amendment. Where a review is required that is not a scheduled review, a 'Word' version of the document should be requested through the Document Controller.

Web Pages

Governance documents are available on the ESA website, located in the Governance Document Library and are managed by the Document Controller. The website offers users the ability to:

- Access all current governance documents;
- Obtain contact details for general enquiries in relation to governance documentation.

Governance Document Library

The Governance Document Library holds the ESA governance documentation. The objective of providing a repository for governance documentation is to provide a location for reliable, consolidated, duly authorised and up-to-date versions of current documents. The Governance Document Library is accessible via the ESA web pages.