

Australian Rogaining Association Inc. – Environmental Guidelines

1.1 Introduction

Rogaining is an outdoor recreational activity involving navigating cross country on foot with only the aid of a map and compass. As rogaining is based primarily on the use of natural landscapes and includes appreciation of the natural environment as one of the benefits and attractions to participants, participants generally have a high level of environmental concern and awareness combined with a desire to cooperate with landowners in meeting their particular requirements.

Rogaining is highly dependent on access to both private and public land to conduct events and the full cooperation of landowners and managers is vital for its ongoing development. These Environmental Guidelines (the Guidelines) have been developed to assist both organisers and participants in understanding how to minimise any potential for adverse environmental impacts of rogaining.

1.2 Purpose

The Guidelines are primarily intended to serve as a guide to organisers and participants to ensure that rogaining has minimal adverse impact on both natural and constructed features of event areas.

In addition, they provide a means by which both private and public landowners and managers can better understand how rogaining works to minimise the potential for adverse environmental impacts.

1.3 Statement of Intent

The Australian Rogaining Association Inc. (the ARA) and its member associations are committed to ensuring that rogaining is conducted in a manner that is environmentally sound and in accordance with landowner requirements. Furthermore the ARA, through its member associations, will endeavour to ensure that organisers and participants are made aware of these Guidelines and are encouraged to follow them.

1.4 ARA Responsibilities

- 1.4.1 The ARA will include these Guidelines within their standards governing the conduct of rogaining within Australia.
- 1.4.2 The ARA will ensure the periodic review and updating of the Guidelines. From time to time and in conjunction with the member associations specific impacts may be monitored to ensure best practice is understood and communicated. The ARA and the member associations will make every reasonable effort to work with landowners to ensure the sport is conducted with minimal adverse environmental impact.
- 1.4.3 The ARA will collate and disseminate any information made available to it on the environmental impacts of rogaining or similar activities.
- 1.4.4 The ARA Technical Subcommittee is responsible for coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the Guidelines.

1.5 Member Association Responsibilities

- 1.5.1 Member associations shall operate under these Guidelines unless they have in place a replacement set of environmental guidelines or code of practice approved by the ARA.
- 1.5.2 Member associations should be conscious of the value of collecting data on the impact of rogaining and shall pass on any substantial or significant data to the ARA.

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- 1.5.3 Requests by landowners, or third parties, for studies to be undertaken are welcomed and every cooperation should be given to researchers to help them carry out valid independent studies. However, as rogaining is a voluntary activity, the ARA and member associations are generally not able to provide any funding to assist with such studies.
- 1.5.4 The ARA acknowledges the rights of traditional owners of land that may be used for rogaining events. Where traditional owners retain a demonstrated interest in land to be used for a rogaining event, the organising association shall seek the permission of these traditional owners.
- 1.5.5 Event map and course files should be maintained, by member associations, to assist with monitoring impacts over a period of time and to provide a reference for course setters re-using an area.

1.6 Event Organisers', Course Setters' and Vettors' Responsibilities

Event organisers, course setters and course vettors should follow the guidelines set out below in the planning and management of rogaines:

1.6.1 Area Selection

- (a) In selecting areas for rogaining, consider whether an area is capable of sustaining the scale of the proposed event without excessive impacts on the physical environment or conflicts with other users. If considered appropriate, local organisations such as field naturalists clubs, scientific researchers with specific knowledge of the area or conservation agencies such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service, may be requested to offer advice about the ability of an area to withstand an event without serious adverse impact on the physical environment.
- (b) Where seasonal sensitivities exist, for example, due to wildlife breeding, lambing, weaning or other pastoral operations or climatic extremes, events in such areas should be scheduled to avoid sensitive periods.
- (c) Once an area has been selected, regular liaison should occur with the relevant landowner and/or manager to ensure their requirements are incorporated into planning for the event at an early stage. When required by statute or regulation, relevant permits must be obtained and organisers must ensure that everyone associated with the event is aware of any conditions required by such permits.

1.6.2 Access and Parking

- (a) Parking and assembly areas should be selected in collaboration with landowners and/or managers.
- (b) Roads and tracks should be adequately formed and maintained for the number of vehicles expected. Adverse weather conditions and the possible requirement for access by trucks and/or coaches must be considered.
- (c) There should be clearly defined routes wherever vehicles are required to traverse open areas and, if required, attendants or signs should be deployed to direct and control parking.
- (d) Vehicles should not be parked in areas of long dry grass if there is a risk of fire caused by hot exhausts.
- (e) Access gate closure should be managed by use of signs, attendants or other appropriate measures.
- (f) The movement of vehicles or people should not adversely affect livestock.
- (g) Car-pooling and/or bus usage should be encouraged.

1.6.3 Area Management

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- (a) Signs and/or checkpoint markers must never be nailed to trees due to the potential risks to future felling and milling operations and also the risk of introducing disease into the tree.
- (b) Permission should be obtained to use pit toilets including agreement on siting. Portable toilets may be required in water catchment areas, areas of high public use, environmentally sensitive areas and on land where the management authority or landowner does not permit pit toilets.
- (c) Any fire restrictions must be understood and adhered to, and participants advised accordingly. Smoking is not permitted on the course and participants are not permitted to light fires. Event organisers may light fires at the assembly area provided this is acceptable to the landowner and/or manager and does not contravene any restrictions. Firewood shall only be collected from locations approved by the relevant landowner.
- (d) Assembly areas should be planned to ensure minimum impact on vegetation. Areas of concentrated activity such as adjacent to the administration tent, results area and Hash House should be carefully located.
- (e) The assembly area should be located away from steep, erodible slopes or areas of sensitive vegetation.
- (f) All rubbish must be removed from the area. Participants should always be encouraged to take out their own waste but adequate rubbish collection facilities, which allow for recycling, should be provided. A thorough inspection of the area should be undertaken after the last participants have left the area. All tapes to mark checkpoint sites must be removed. The area surrounding water points on courses should also be carefully checked and cleaned of disposable cups, bottles or fruit/food if these were provided.
- (g) The rights of other users of an area when a rogaing event is in progress should be respected by sharing or, if practical, avoiding public areas and other facilities.
- (h) If public announcement systems or generators are used, these should be designed and located to minimise the spread of noise outside the assembly area.
- (i) Some serious plant diseases can be spread through soil on shoes and camping equipment and vehicles. All equipment should be clean of mud and dirt before arriving at the event site. Events in areas known to be infected with serious and easily transmitted plant diseases require special attention.

1.6.4 Course Setting

- (a) When setting courses in sensitive areas thought should be given to numbers of participants passing or visiting a specific point. Checkpoint sites should be selected to minimise impacts. Courses should be set to avoid damage at other areas of potentially high usage such as crossing points at fences or creeks, open marshes, mossy surface rock and soft earth embankments.
- (b) In some cases, after consultation with the landowner and/or manager, it may be necessary to declare areas as 'out of bounds' to assist crop and stock management, security or resident's privacy requirements. Such restrictions should be clearly communicated to participants. "Out of bounds" areas should be clearly shown on the competition map.
- (c) On property containing stock or crops, landowners and/or managers must be consulted to determine what, if any, measures are required to avoid disturbance. Appropriate and agreed measures must be clearly communicated to participants.
- (d) If the area contains known sites of natural or cultural significance that may be disturbed by the movement of participants checkpoints should not be placed on or near these sites or such as to concentrate the movement of participants through them. If deemed appropriate such areas shall be marked "out of bounds".

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- (e) Any specific requirements in regard to fence crossing must be communicated to participants. In some cases it may be necessary to create and identify specific crossing points.

1.7 Competitors' Responsibilities

Participants in rogaines shall be requested and encouraged to adhere to the following guidelines:

- (a) Read and adhere to organisers' requests.
- (b) Not take pets or weapons, including firearms, to events.
- (c) Observe fire and smoking restrictions.
- (d) Always leave gates in the state found and cross fences so as to avoid damaging them.
- (e) Report any damage to property to the organisers.
- (f) Avoid spreading seeds and mud when cleaning shoes and clothing. Shoes and clothing should be cleaned before leaving the event site or at home. Cleaning should not be left until the participant arrives at the next event site. If cleaning is done at home material should be disposed of in a way that ensures it is not spread.
- (g) Avoid fauna and livestock as much as practical. Cattle trapped at fence corners or in confined areas can stampede and should always be given a wide berth. Stock with young should be avoided.
- (h) Try to avoid disturbing wildlife. Keep a distance whenever possible to avoid stressing any animal.
- (i) Remove your own rubbish. Do not leave it for the organisers to collect and take away.
- (j) Drive and park as directed by the organisers.
- (k) Wherever practical avoid damage to sensitive areas such as wetlands, marshes and soft earth embankments such as creek banks. Mossy rock surfaces should be avoided to prevent damage and also because they could be slippery and dangerous.
- (l) Respect the rights of other users of the area such as walkers, picnickers, and resident landowners. Do not approach farm residences except in an emergency.