



AUSTRALIAN
YARD DOG
ASSOCIATION

Convenors Guide

Approved by the AYDA Committee: 28th of January 2026

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Introduction:

The Australian Yard Dog Association [AYDA] recognises the efforts of Convenors and the challenges encountered in the running of the Championships. In an endeavour to simplify their task we have compiled a guide consolidating information relevant to convenors running these events. The convenor of the Australian Championship is expected to have experience in the running of a trial as such some of the more basic information has been left out.

Acknowledgments:

The AYDA would like to acknowledge all those who contributed to the development of this document, with particular thanks to;

- Rex and Kay Hocking;
- South Australian Yard Dog Association (SAYDA);
- Victorian Yard Dog Association (VYUFDA)

AYDA Contact List

| Name | Position | Phone | Email |
|----------|---|-------|-------|
| Withheld | President | | |
| Withheld | Public Officer (Must be SA Resident) | | |
| Withheld | Secretary/ Treasurer | | |

Eligibility to Participate:

All competitors and judges must be current financial members of their relevant State association. If clarification of membership status is required, please contact the relevant State secretary.

The following are eligible to compete in an Australian Yard Dog Championship:

- 1) The current Australian Yard Dog Champion,

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- 2) The current State Champions and dogs placed second in the State Championship trials,
 - 3) A State may nominate two (2) dogs of its choice if any of the following apply:
 - a) If an interstate dog wins its State Championship,
 - b) If the State Champion and Runner Up are unable to attend,
 - c) If a State Championship has not been held since the previous Australian Championship,
 - 4) If an interstate dog wins a state championship it is eligible to compete in the Australian Championship regardless of its State of origin.
 - 5) The field of the Championship is to number 30 & shall comprise the current Australia Yard Dog Champion, eligible State representatives & the top placings from an open qualifying trial conducted by the organising committee. All dogs in 30th position with the same score will be included.
 - 6) All Open dogs should have an equal opportunity to enter the qualifying trial held prior to the Australian Championship.
 - 7) There will be no balloting in the open qualifying round of the Australian Yard Dog Championship.
 - 8) If balloting is necessary, it may only occur in the supporting classes, ie: Junior, Encourage, Maiden, Novice or Improver classes.
 - 9) All dogs classified as Open dogs in their home State must have an equal opportunity to work in the Open qualifying trial prior to the Australian Championship.

Event Conditions:

The event is run under conditions stipulated in the AYDA Rules and all participants are subject to the conditions contained within the Code of Conduct (Links within Appendix A).

AYDC Rotation:

Order of AYDC Rotation as approved at AYDA AGM Meeting 5th of April 2022:

| State | Rotation Year | |
|-------|---------------|------|
| VIC | 2023 | 2029 |
| WA | 2024 | 2030 |
| QLD | 2025 | 2031 |
| SA | 2026 | 2032 |
| NSW | 2027 | 2033 |
| TAS | 2028 | 2034 |

Date Selection:

When determining the date for the event, please consider (historical) events already scheduled in other States.

Venue Selection:

When selecting a venue please take into consideration factors such as:

- Accessibility of the site for competitors and spectators
- Food and Accommodation availability for competitors and spectators
- Climatic conditions prevalent at the site during the proposed time of the event.
- Availability of sufficient parking for spectators and competitors
- Public Amenities.

Sheep Selection:

Sheep must be sufficiently healthy to cope with rigours of the proposed event. Sufficient sheep should be obtained to provide fresh sheep for each dog. When sufficient sheep are not available to provide fresh sheep for each competitor then all competitors must have a mixture of used & fresh sheep. (25% to 30% of used sheep). All sheep must be inspected prior to being worked for any physical defects or injuries. Any injured or unhealthy sheep must not be worked.

Sponsorship:

When obtaining sponsorship for the event, please be mindful to ensure sponsors are appropriate and are not harmful to the image of the AYDA and the sport in general.

Entry Form:

Convenors should consider the use of an online entry form as well as the traditional paper-based form. Assistance with the creation of an online entry form can be obtained from your State Association.

Judges:

The Australian Yard Dog Championship must be judged by two Championship (Open if from Tasmania, Australian if from NSW) judges from two different States unless special dispensation has been granted from the AYDA Committee.

The score from each judge will be combined and averaged. The score may not be used to challenge the judges' decision, which is final, except in the situation where a formal protest is lodged under Rules 14 (a) and 14 (b).

Criteria to be selected a Championship Judge

- Has already judged an AYDC, or
- Has finished in the top 3 of an AYDC as a competitor and has judged 3 State Championships, 1 of which must be in another State, or
- Has judged 5 State Championships, 2 of which must be other States, or
- Does not meet the above criteria but is acknowledged by the State hosting the AYDC and the AYDA Executive as having the requisite experience and standing in the trialling community to properly acquit their responsibilities.
- Irrespective of the above, an AYDC Judge must be a current participant in the sport by either trialling or judging within the previous 2 years.

The Convenor's nominations must be approved by the AYDA Executive prior to the publication of the entry form.

Draws:

The below draw format has been approved by the AYDC Committee on 10th of October 2025.

The basic framework of the draw is that you start with the competitor with the most dogs,

Round 1- five dog workers

Round 2 - four dog workers, then five dog workers

Round 3 - three dog workers, then five dog workers, then four dog workers

Round 4 - two dog workers, then five dog workers, then four dog workers, then three dog workers.

Last round – one dog workers, two dog workers, three dog workers, four dog workers, five dog workers.

Colour coding each worker according to their number of dogs will assist in keeping track of the process, then cut and paste across the page to create the draw

Everyone should have one dog each in this last round.

| Colour codes | Workers with: | Rounds | |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|---|
| 5 | 5 dogs | Round 1 workers | 5 |
| 4 | 4 dogs | Round 2 workers | 4 |
| 3 | 3 dogs | | 5 |
| 2 | 2 dogs | Round 3 workers | 3 |

| | | | |
|---|-------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | 1 dog | | 5 |
| | | | 4 |
| | | Round 4 workers | 2 |
| | | | 5 |
| | | | 4 |
| | | | 3 |
| | | Last round workers | 1 |
| | | | 2 |
| | | | 3 |
| | | | 4 |
| | | | 5 |

Finals:

The Championship Final is to comprise 10 dogs, unless there is more than 1 dog in 10th place.

Support class finals are to comprise 1 more dog than the number prizes on offer. Finalists with the same score will share the prizes for the relevant placings.

Risk Management

Awareness of risk is the responsibility of everyone involved in the conduct of the event. Risk includes, but is not limited to, injury to people [public, competitors, officials, volunteers], injury to dogs and sheep and unwelcome media attention due to the way we conduct ourselves. The Host State is responsible to ensure the event is covered by Public Liability Insurance.

A risk assessment should be conducted prior to the event. To assist Convenors, we provide the following checklist:

Please see Appendix C

Spectators:

Convenors must ensure spectators are quarantined from the possibility of being injured by sheep or bitten by dogs. If a secondary perimeter fence is impractical, the height of the course fence needs to compensate. Bunting should be used to keep spectators a safe distance from those parts of the course where "lost" sheep is more likely or where spectators may inadvertently impact sheep during a competitor's run.

For safety reasons please ensure vehicle access to spectator areas is restricted during the running of the event.

Animal Welfare:

AYDA recognises it has a duty of care in relation to the health and safety of the animals involved in our sport. Respect for animals underpins our rules. This respect is demonstrated by application of the following principles:

- AYDA has zero tolerance for any act of animal cruelty. This includes, but is not limited to, wilful mistreatment and neglect of animals and acts which maliciously cause pain, injury or suffering. We expect all participants to adopt and adhere to proper animal care and handling methods at all times;
- Yards are to be designed in a manner to consider the welfare of the stock involved
- All dogs to be worked should be vaccinated and in general good health

Inclement Weather Policy:

The AYDA Championship trial is run under the rules of AYDA Inc will take the following actions when inclement weather is experienced during the trial. The elected Disputes Committee will decide, when practical, showing a duty of care for sheep, dogs and competitors.

A decision is to be made after:

1. The Convenor/s has consulted the landowner and/or owner of the sheep.
2. Consultation with the Convenor/s.
The trial will be either cancelled or delayed where practical.

Inspections:

Prior to the commencement of an event there must be a safety inspection of the venue. This inspection is to be made by the Convenor (or nominated representative) and the Executive.

Competitors must be given the opportunity to inspect the course prior to the event and withdraw from the event if any genuine concerns cannot or will not be addressed.

Yards:

Yards must be of sound construction, capable of containing all the sheep being used.

Sharp edges, wire ends and any hazard which potentially could injure people or animals must be eliminated. The perimeter fence must be designed to minimise the possibility of sheep leaving the course and injuring spectators.

Course Design Guide:

All competitions shall be run over such a course as the organising committee determines.

Judges are to restrict their involvement with course design to safety and welfare issues.

When designing and erecting the competition course:

- the drenching race width is to be a minimum of 500mm [20 inches] and a maximum of 800mm [31 inches]; and
- a ramp width is to be a minimum 500mm.

Competition Courses should include at least four of the following –

- Gather of sheep
- Drafting race
- Drenching /classing race
- Trailer/truck / elevated platform
- Ramp
- Put sheep away
- Any obstacle likely to be found in a farm sheep yard.

Where the yards are constructed from panels or portable yards, the Organising Committee must ensure that they are securely fixed to prevent any movement when pressure is applied to the sheep.

In competition courses that incorporate a drenching race or other confined area into which all sheep must be forced, the number of sheep to be worked shall be that number that allows each sheep to stand comfortably. This number shall be determined by the Organising Committee in consultation with the judges.

Appendix A AYDA Competition Rules, Code of Conduct & Constitution:

AYDA Competition Rules - Approved 5 April 2022 - Update 6 August 2025:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1affJ1C6xfuLeh1G5UmxcvSkDefFhfFU6/view?usp=sharing>

AYDA Code of Conduct - Approved 5 April 2022:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iFqA0g5EvtXPQ-HctO8Ab9komi1GhcDj/view?usp=sharing>

AYDA Constitution - Approved 5 April 2022 - Update 8 March 2023

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CAF1-b2LZS5JteVs0XBldp15zjXK8E-0/view?usp=sharing>

Appendix B Draw Lay Out

The attached Excel file provides a clear example of how to complete the draw in accordance with the committee-approved procedure for the open class.



2025 - Large Draw
format Layout.xlsx

Appendix C Risk Assessment Form

AYDA Risk Assessment Sheet:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Trial location: | |
| Name of person conducting assessment: | |
| Signature: | |
| Date: | |

| Spot the Hazard | | Risk | Assess the Risk | Fix the Problem | |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------|--|--|----------|
| Identify the work task or activity? | What are the hazards associated with each activity? | Is there a risk? | Is the risk associated with the hazard low, moderate, significant or high? | If the risk is deemed unacceptable for the task, what will be done to reduce or remove the risk? | By whom? |
| Venue: | | | | | |
| | Are yards secure? | | | | |
| | Have yard hazards been eliminated? E.g dropper caps, sharp edges, loose wire. | | | | |
| | Has Spectator safety been reviewed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have spectators been separated from high risk areas • Are fences of appropriate height to prevent animal and spectator mixing. | | | | |
| | Can you observe crowd movement in close proximity to traffic? | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
| | Is there any protection for scorers/let out staff to following environmental risks; sun, cold, lightning? | | | | |
| | There is appropriate venue perimeter fencing? • Prevent stock from entering public areas e.g. roads | | | | |
| | There are First Aid station or first aid kits available? | | | | |
| | Adequate parking areas to cater for the expected vehicle numbers attending the event? | | | | |
| | Adequate provision of: • toilets / hand washing; • food preparation / clean-up; • drinking water; • shelter / shade. | | | | |
| | Seating requirements: Is it fit for purpose? | | | | |
| Livestock: | | | | | |
| | Are sheep sound and fit for purpose? | | | | |
| | Water and feed (where appropriate) available for sheep? | | | | |
| | Shade and Shelter available for sheep? | | | | |
| | Hospital pen for sick/injured sheep? | | | | |
| General: | | | | | |
| | Discussion with judges re importance of animal welfare. | | | | |
| | Briefing of everyone involved re exit points and assembly areas: | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| | Briefing of competitors and walk through yards: | | | | |
| | Course inspection conducted by Judge? | | | | |
| | Refreshments for volunteers and officials? | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Risk Descriptions:

| Risk Assessment level | Description of Risk | Actions |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Low | If an incident were to occur, there would be little likelihood that an injury would result. | Undertake the activity with existing controls in place |
| Moderate | If an incident were to occur there would be some chance that an injury requiring first aid would result | Additional controls may be required |
| Significant | If an incident were to occur there would be likely that an injury requiring medical treatment would result | Controls need to be put in place before conducting the activity. |
| High | If an incident were to occur it would be likely that a permanent, debilitating injury or death would result. | Consider alternative to the activity. Significant control measures need to be implemented to ensure safety. |

