Admin Policy Document

Policy documents

Australian Deer Association.
Policy Document 001
Administrative Units.
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Introduction

The Constitution of the Australian Deer Association (2018) authorises the Board to appoint agents to transact any business of the association on its behalf.

In order to provide services to members the Association appoints Administrative Units (AU's), which currently take the form of either geographical Branches or Special Interest Groups (SIG's).

To ensure that AU's continue to deliver against the reason for their establishment, good governance and a consistent standard of services for all ADA members, an annual assessment process is conducted before AU's apply for reappointment at each AGM.

Policy objective

This policy sets out how AU's are established, and the Associations ongoing expectations of AU's once established.

The policy also sets out the process for conducting the annual assessment, and the steps to be taken should an unfavourable view be formed at the conclusion of that process.

Guiding principles

Membership

ADA members are members of the Association, not members of a particular administrative unit (Branch or SIG).

At a minimum, all members must nominate a home branch for the purposes of enabling our electoral college voting system, e.g. at AGM's or enacting future constitutional changes.

In addition to their home branch, members are entitled to form a relationship with any other administrative unit, and this is encouraged so as to maximise the value of ADA membership.

Branches

Geographical Branches are the historical basis through which the majority of ADA members have interacted. In the main, our network of branches has been very successful.

Branches are the local face of ADA and therefore must first and foremost support and further the overall objectives and strategic plans of the Association.

Branches add value by hosting a range of social and educational activities for ADA members and guests throughout the year.

Special Interest Groups

SIG's exist in order to provide an avenue for members to pursue aspects of ADA membership which appeal to them, when the branch structure may not be the best vehicle for that.

As the name implies, SIG's add value by assisting members with a special interest to connect and work together on that common interest, regardless of physical location / home branch.

Any temporary or specialist activity undertaken by the ADA will be conducted through the SIG framework. Examples of this might be deer management & research activities, political campaigns, or one-off events such as Expos.

Policy statements

Establishment of an Administrative Unit

It is in the ADA and its members advantage if AU's can be created relatively easily to take advantage of an emerging situation or evolving membership dynamics. The view that it is better to give a new AU a chance of succeeding and to close it down if it doesn't succeed, than to follow a process which is overly prescriptive and onerous to implement.

A proposal to form a new AU should be forwarded to the National Secretary in writing, outlining the objectives of the AU, the format (Branch or SIG) and the names of any other members who support the proposal (including the proposed inaugural leadership team)

Assuming the proposal is in alignment with ADA objectives, the Board will then advertise the proposal in the next member newsletter and seek expressions of interest for the proposed AU.

If the Board determines that, on balance, the creation of the new AU adds value to the ADA and to ADA members without materially detracting from other AU's, and that the supporters of the AU are capable of satisfying all the leadership requirements, then the new AU can be formed.

It's important to note that all AU's (both existing and new) will need to achieve a credible result in the annual assessment process to gain formal appointment at the next AGM.

Leadership of an Administrative Unit

Since Administrative units will take on a range of forms, it is important that we not be too prescriptive in setting out the requirements.

At a minimum, Administrative Units are expected to have a nominated Unit Leader and a nominated Secretary/Treasurer on file with the Executive Officer as official ADA office holders. This is important for things like office holder insurance.

Depending upon the nature and complexity of the AU, the option exists to second additional volunteers to the AU's leadership team, for example to take on specialised roles such as fund raising, education, newsletter editor, first aid officer, etc.

Obviously, a meeting needs to be scheduled on the AU's annual calendar of events so that a desire to continue is confirmed, leaders can be selected / endorsed by the associates, and so that these details can be included in the annual submission for reappointment.

Annual assessment process

The criteria by which Administrative Units will be assessed should be confirmed at the preceding AGM. This is to ensure that there is absolute clarity as to what is expected over the following 12 months, and so there are no "surprises" at the time of assessment,

- Willing and capable volunteers for all leadership roles.
- The number, quality and diversity of events as registered on the national calendar.
- The number of member and guest attendances at events hosted over the previous 12 months.
- A better than average rating on the annual membership satisfaction survey.
- All administrative inputs necessary for the functioning of the Association submitted on time and in the format requested (e.g. meeting minutes, annual calendar of events, financial returns, etc).
- Successful execution of significant events or projects as nominated on the AU's application for reappointment.

Corrective actions

Where an administrative unit is considered to be not performing to expectations during the annual review process, the Board will make the leadership of the Administrative Unit aware of the concerns, and the Leadership will be offered an opportunity to reflect upon and respond to the assessment as part of the annual application for reappointment.

Where the observations of the assessment are not in dispute, the Board and the Leadership Team will engage constructively to agree an improvement plan, with the view to addressing any shortcomings prior to the following AGM (if not sooner).

Where the observations of the assessment are disputed by the AU Leadership Team, then the members associated with that unit will be advised accordingly and the dispute resolution process set out in section 13 of the Constitution shall be enacted. (n.b. this should not be viewed as an adversarial process, but rather an objective way to arrive reach agreement).

Closure of an Administrative Unit

Regrettably, it may become necessary to close an existing AU from time to time, for a variety of reasons.

It is anticipated that this will only occur when the steps above have failed to produce a mutually acceptable outcome, and after the associates of the AU have had an opportunity to drive change from within.

Whilst it is always preferable to work towards a successful resolution, it is unhealthy for all concerned should issues remain unresolved indefinitely. To be clear, an inability or unwillingness to fully resolve issues identified during the previous review process should be expected to result in the closure of the AU at the following AGM.