

UPDATE: From the NSW Rally Advisory Panel

To: NSW Rally Competitors

Subject: Update on 2025 Rally Panel activities for first half of 2025

Authorised by: Rob O'Toole, Chair

Authored by: Paul Fletcher, Secretary

### Content

As 2025 ticks away into June, the first couple of events of the NSWRC have already been run (Rally of Canberra and Bega Valley Rally) while Coffs Harbour has been delayed until October.

I want to give you a short update on the main strategic initiatives the Panel has been working on in 2025 with the objective of making a positive difference to Event Organisers and Competitors. Going forward, it is my aim to release a couple of these updates on key Rally Panel activities each year.

At the face-to-face Rally Panel meeting in February, we identified the need to be more active in developing real solutions to containing the main costs of rallies for both competitors and Event Organisers. It has become clear that we have more of a role to play other than just overseeing the Rally calendar and other administrative tasks if we are to continue to rally in NSW.

As you all know, it was in late 2023 that the requirement was introduced (by MA) for rally competitors aged 45 years old (later revised to 60 years old) to complete a biannual medical via a GP. At the time, I remember that many of us on the Rally Panel took a lot of feedback from you on the topic and it was clear that most competitors felt this was a big deal.

The medical requirement was seen as another hurdle introduced to what was already an expensive process to gain a National Rally licence. Most of us feel the current high cost of a National level licence alone makes it hard for all competitors to regularly compete in State and Clubman rallies. It is particularly difficult for new entrants wanting to start rallying by entering a Clubman level Motorsport Australia sanctioned rally event.

So, in early March, we developed a working paper summarising the most important challenges (in our view) facing our sport. We kept the paper confidential at the time as we wanted the MA team to have the first option to respond to the various points raised within the working paper.

A National Rally licence cost is now significant and when you add in event entry fees, it has become much tougher to enter State and Clubman rallies. We have seen the reduced field entry sizes and note that some of you might tend to “cherry pick” out your best events from MA rather than do a full series. Many of us compete in both MA and AMSAG events.

So in mid-March, Rob O'Toole and Ray Winwood-Smith reached out to Motorsport Australia using the working paper as the voice for discussions and asked for their input into developing real solutions to the issues we raised.

To that end, MA responded very positively and began by organising a full day workshop in April 2025 with the representatives from the Rally Panel. MA also invited a number of long term, experienced rally competitors and officials to attend the meeting at Eastern Creek.

Sunil (CEO MA Australia) and his team gave us a good hearing and allowed us (the Competitors and the Panel), to have the floor and lead the morning discussions. We spent considerable time in discussing how the rally licence application process (including the medical requirement) could be simplified. We asked them to consider other lower licence cost options (which could sit below the current National Rally licence). I feel there was good alignment from all attendees in developing real outcomes to resetting and containing competitor and event organiser costs.

While no commitments have yet been finalised or made, we remain positive and are anticipating that Motorsport Australia will release an update to Rally competitors during the second half of 2025.

In addition to competitor licencing, we discussed several other important topics which included:-

- Reducing and containing event permit & insurance costs (MA is doing considerable work in the insurance area to keep a lid on costs),
- Identifying event organisation items of a National nature (common across all State jurisdictions) where MA can take the lead on behalf of Event Organisers and make things simpler. E.g. items such as Traffic Management Planning, Certification and insurance,
- Engaging with State Forestry and State Governments so that our Rally community has a voice in lobbying the decision makers so we continue to be able to access these areas for recreation purposes,
- Understanding that AMSAG is a viable, alternative rally series and that MA must remain committed to being able to continue underwriting and sanctioning a viable NSW State Rally series for all State competitors.

As always, the NSW Rally Panel representatives welcome your feedback and interaction with us. Please visit [www.rallynsw.com.au](http://www.rallynsw.com.au) to see who is on the Panel.

Best,

Rob O'Toole

Chair, NSW Rally Panel