

Australasian Rescue Organisation (ARO)
Australasian Water Rescue Challenge (ARBC)
Challenge Rules 2025

1) AWRC Challenge Rules

The following rules apply to the Australasian Water Rescue Challenge (AWRC). All participants, Challenge Management Team (CMT) and support personal are required to be familiar with these rules.

2) Participating teams

A Team will consist of max eight (8) persons,

- i) One will be the nominated Team Leader for the whole event, this cannot change unless due to injury. If a Team Leader is changed out during the event, any Team Leader points remain with that person, not the team. A new Team Leader commences point accumulation if there is a change.
- ii) Two persons will be nominated as Land Based Operators and must remain in this position throughout the event. They are to wear Land Based attire and only carry Land Based equipment.

3) Team Manager

- a) A Team Manager may be appointed for each team. This is to support the team during the day. The Manager can provide support and feedback between events but must not coach, signal, communicate or otherwise assist the team whilst they are competing in an event.
- b) The Team Manager also acts as a liaison with the Challenge Management Team, where required by ARO.

4) Reserve Member

- a) The team can have one (1) reserve member.
- b) The Reserve can only interchange for injury or illness and only after consultation and approval from ARO. The reserve must interchange with the injured person's position only.
- c) If a team has persons short due injury, illness or other circumstances, ARO will make a determination on site if the team can commence or continue in the challenge.

5) Injury or Illness

If a team has persons short due injury, illness, or other circumstances, the ARO Chief Assessor is required to be notified.

6) Evidence of Qualifications

Team and individual's qualifications must be provided to ARO at ARO request.

7) Equipment

All equipment must be correctly fitted, within service date and appropriate for the task. Final decisions on equipment will be made by ARO.

8) Land and In Water Operators

- a) All Operators must carry PPE and PPC required by their agency for the role they undertake in the vessel and challenge.
- b) Unless approved by ARO, no other equipment other than that listed below may be carried on an IWO.

- i) Recognised In Water helmet
- ii) Wetsuit of full length 'steamer' style
- iii) In Water boots/shoes
- iv) Throw bag, max 20m float rope, floating design
No other accessories to be attached to the throw bag
- v) Recognised/approved In Water Personal Floatation Device carrying the following;
 - 1. Leg loops are recommended
 - 2. Must have quick release strap
 - 3. 2 x tape slings up to 5m each
 - 4. 2 x carabiners
 - 5. 2 x pulleys
 - a. Note: 2 Roller carabiners can be utilised to replace the 2 carabiners and 2 pulleys
 - 6. 2 x prussik loops
 - 7. Glass breaking device/tool
 - 8. Cutting tool, ie knife. Any cutting instrument must be sheathed.
 - 9. Whistle
 - 10. Protective eyewear
- c) Land Based Operators must carry the following;
 - i. Dry land attire as per agency, including footwear
 - ii. Agency Land Based helmet
 - iii. Agency Land Based PFD carrying the following;
 - 1. Whistle
 - iv. Throw bag, max 20m float rope, floating design
No other accessories to be attached to the throwbag
 - v. Gloves
- d) Sun protection (including sunglasses) may be used provided they conform to safety requirements. It is advised that a sunglass restraint device is used.

9) Events

Events will be listed as per ARO directions

10) Timings

- a) Unless otherwise stated the event will commence on the designated times, every time.
- b) Each stand has the same timings, as indicated below.
 - i) Brief 5 mins
 - ii) Scenario 15 mins
 - iii) Debrief 5 mins
 - iv) Transition 5 mins
- c) ARO may cease commencement of a team arriving at a stand late, or if the team is not complete to start.
- d) If a team arrives late, and ARO approves them to commence the stand, the same time will be used for Briefing and Debriefing and any time short will be removed from the scenario timing.
- e) Teams and Team leaders are encouraged to monitor their own time as assessors will not be providing times to the teams other than commencement and ceasing of the scenario.

11) Safety

- a) Safety is paramount for the entire challenge including water events, participant, and spectator safety.
- b) Participants are encouraged to ensure safe techniques are used as opposed to rushing a technique or scenario to finish. There is no 'bonus points' for finishing a scenario.
- c) Any team may self-exclude at any time.
- d) Any unsafe practises may result in that competitor and their team being disqualified from the event.
- e) Hand, verbal, and whistle signals can be used.
- f) No radio or other electronic communication is allowed by competing teams.
- g) Full PPE must be worn during the challenge.
- h) Teams may elect to have a stand conducted as a learning stand. The team will receive zero points for that stand, however they will undertake a learning stand assisted by the stand Assessor and Safety Official.
- i) ARO may impose any further rule to ensure safety and/or fairness to all compeditors.

12) Stop Calls

- a) ARO Assessors and Safety Officers may stop a scenario due to safety at any time. During a stop call, the safety matter is identified for immediate actioning by the team. No continuation by any team member may continue during a safety stop. The clock will not stop, and any remedial action will be required to be fixed prior to a 'go' call to recommence.
- b) A stop call can be initiated by an Assessor, Chief Assessor, Safety Officer, or Chief Safety Officer by calling 'stop', notifying the Team Leader to stop the team and/or a loud single whistle blast.
- c) A stop also occurs if a team member or piece of equipment exits the scenario boundary. Any team member washed downstream must be recovered by the team and when the entire team is back in the scenario area the scenario will recommence.

13) Assessors

- a) Assessors play a critical role in creating a fair and safe challenge.
- b) Assessors are selected by ARO based on experience in the technical field and assessing experience.
- c) The Assessor's role is to assess a team's activity in a scenario. The assessor's role is not to provide instructions on how to undertake a task, or what a team 'should' have done.
- d) Any team or competitor not complying with instruction or direction from ARO, a Safety Officer or an Assessor may result in disqualification from the event.

14) Competitors

- a) Competitors are to enter and participate in the challenge and all scenarios with a mindset of learning whilst undertaking tasks that replicate water rescues.
- b) Competitors must comply with the Code of Conduct for the event.
- c) Competitors must only work to their level of skill and training and with techniques they are trained in and compete within the spirit of the challenge.

15) Team Communication

- a) Teams may use whistle signals, hand signals and voice commands to each other.
- b) No radios or electronic transmittable communication devices are allowed for scenarios.

16) Coaching

- a) Coaching from anyone not an active team member is not allowed, this includes the public and other service members.
- b) The Team Manager is not allowed to coach during scenarios but can provide feedback during breaks. The Team Manager is allowed to listen in to the debrief.
- c) Any disallowed coaching may have a team disqualified.

17) Learning Scenario

- a) A team may self-exclude themselves from a scenario and move to a Learning Scenario.
- b) If a team presents to a scenario that, it feels, the team may not benefit from the competitive scenario, does not feel safe to undertake the task, or for any other reason does not wish to undertake the scenario in a challenge and scored format, the team may elect to have the scenario changed to a learning scenario.
- c) A Learning Scenario allows the Assessor and Safety Officer to discuss and walk through learning topics of that scenario with the team to create a learning option. The team may ask questions and seek feedback about how to undertake the scenario. The team may attempt all or part of the scenario with assistance from the Safety Officer and Assessor.
- d) The Learning Scenario is marked as zero points.

18) Code of Conduct

- a) The Code of Conduct has been created for the AWRC event, this is in addition and does not replace ARO doctrine.
- b) Any breaches of the code of conduct will be managed by ARO.
- c) Any breach of the code of conduct may result in the competitor and their team being disqualified.

19) Other agency members

- a) Any other agency members, support members or spectators must comply with the Code of Conduct
- b) All ARO members must be treated with respect and courtesy. Any breaches of this or the code of conduct by any person of any agency may result in the team or agency being disqualified from the event.

20) Media

- a) ARO has contractual, financial, and other agreements with supporting companies. This includes promotion of items that are provided under these agreements by sponsors and promotion on media releases of supporting companies and brand names.
- b) Media will be controlled by ARO members and delegated officials, with permission to other persons or agencies.
- c) No unauthorised media will be allowed without prior permission.
- d) External media postings will be controlled by ARO. ARO must endorse any external post by any agency. Failure to gain endorsement may create the following.
- e) Loss of future support and sponsorship of the challenge.
- f) Inaccurate messaging to public, government, and agencies.

- g) Unequal and biased promotion of one agency over another.
- h) Promotion of unsafe, unauthorised, or dangerous techniques.
- i) Any unauthorised release, posting or publication of information, videos, photos, or other communication from the event may result in that agency being disqualified. That includes all team(s) and all participants.

21) Boundaries

- a) Boundaries are set for each stand and outlined in the briefing.
- b) Penalties and possible disqualification will result for willingly or unwillingly stepping out of bounds.
- c) Participants are required to check with the Assessor or Safety Officer if unsure of boundaries.
- d) Bridges are out of bounds unless otherwise notified in a briefing.
- e) As a rule, boundaries will be set by the assessor during the briefing of the stand. Teams are to check any out of bound areas.

22) Other structures

- a) Accessibility of any structure will be determined and communicated during the briefing.
- b) Using, in any way, any structure that is out of play or bounds may result in penalty points and/or disqualification.

23) Bollards and Rocks

- a) Bollards cannot be walked on, and extreme care must be taken around bollards as they move and can cause foot, hand or other injury.
- b) Rocks may be walked on with care.
- c) There is strictly no jumping or entering any water from a rock or bollard.

24) Agency Uniform

- a) Agencies may wear their designated uniform provided.
- b) It complies with safety requirements.
- c) Has not been deemed disallowed by ARO.
- d) Reflects the level of participation or role in the event.

25) Appeals Process

- a) Appeals must be made to the Chief Assessor at the first break after the scenario requiring appealing.
- b) All appeals must be in writing with the team's name to the Chief Assessor.
- c) Appeals resulting from the last two scenarios must be made within 10 minutes of the end of the final scenario.
- d) The ARO Chief Assessor will have sole decision regarding all appeals. There will be no further appeal mechanism.
- e) Gear / equipment appeals, and requests must be made to the Chief Assessor. The Chief Assessor may seek further ARO subject matter expert (SME) advice for a decision.
- f) Scoring appeals must be made to the Chief Assessor.
- g) Appeals regarding other teams entering a team's work area must be made to the Chief Assessor who may consult with the scenario assessor and others.

26) Awards

Awards will be provided for:

- a) First Place
- b) Second Place
- c) Third place

- d) Best Team Leader
- e) Other awards as designated by ARO

27) Timings

- a) The Challenge event relies on a 'round robin' style timing system or singular sole use team scenarios.
- b) All scenarios will commence at a time designated by ARO.
- c) Competitors should manage and watch their own time. Assessors and Safety officers will not provide time updates.

28) Scoring

- a) Each scenario has a scoring system based on the complexity of the tasks required and the rescues and entrapment located within the scenario.
- b) Scoring is both positive and negative.
- c) Positive scores are obtained for good technique, safety, and management of the rescue scenario.
- d) Negative scores may include working outside of the scenario boundary, venturing into another team's scenario, either intentionally or unintentionally. Losing control of swim, raft, rope, or other techniques that results in entering another team's work area may result in large negative points being added.
- e) Negative points will be deducted from a team's positive points.
- f) It is possible to receive a negative score.
- g) Scores will not be provided to teams during the event.

29) Final Results

- a) The top three (3) final standings will be announced on the day.
- b) Final standings will be published on the ARO website post event.
- c) Final points may not be provided.
- d) Feedback can be requested from ARO, however individual score sheets will not be provided.
- e) No appeals will be entered into outside of the appeals process.

30) Conclusion

- a) This concludes the AWRC Rules.