**Dog being under effective control Ruling, April 2017**

The following new Rule has been added to the Rules of the South Australian Canine Association, effective from 1st May 2017.

**Part VIII Exhibitions A. General:**

It is the obligation of each owner or handler at an Exhibition to ensure their dog is under effective control. Where a dog which is competing in the judging precinct, chases, persistently interferes with another exhibit, does not obey its handler or leaves the judging precinct and fails to return immediately, will be dismissed by the judge in the presence of the steward and disqualified from all competition at that Exhibition. A written report must be provided to the SACA Representative by the judge as soon as practicable, but no later than the completion of that exhibition.

The new Rule applies to all disciplines. The “judging precinct” means the area in which judging takes place and includes assembly areas. In the context of the Rule, “immediately” should be interpreted in its normal sense, meaning instantly, without delay or hesitation. In a practical sense, if the handler calls their dog back and it does not return to the handler immediately, it is in contravention of the Rule.

The intention of the rule is that it will not apply if a dog simply “wanders” away from its handler and inadvertently leaves the ring momentarily. It also would not apply to a dog which leaves the ring in the process of constantly working while undertaking a scent exercise. The rule is mainly aimed at a dog that leaves the ring to wilfully interfere with another exhibit or leaves the ring with an obvious intent to leave the judging precinct. This might include instances where a dog:

* breaks from position in a group exercise and goes over to another dog in that exercise and remains there, causing interference to the other dog
* runs out of the ring to chase a dog in another ring
* runs out of the ring to return to where the owner/handler is based
* runs out of the ring chasing birds etc

Owners and handlers are responsible for the behaviour of their dogs and should be aware of what their dog is doing at all times, including when they are in the ring. If the dog shows any indication that it might be about to leave its handler or run out of the ring, the handler should gain control of their dog immediately by calling it or restraining it. Whilst this might result in the dog receiving a non qualifying score for an exercise that it might be attempting at the time, that is a better result than having a dog cause a more serious incident by its misbehaviour.

A report on a dog made under this rule will not necessarily result in action being taken in the first instance. Where there is evidence of repeated or consistent behaviour of this type, however, it may result in the handler being required to act on addressing the problem before the dog may continue to compete.