

The NCPF has recently been contacted by a member club concerning the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within an image submitted to one of their internal club competitions. The use of AI was inadvertent, and the result of using a “generative remove tool” within a popular software application. This tool generated new artificial content which was not the original work of the author.

The NCPF thought it would be helpful to clubs to restate our position on the use of generative AI content.

It’s important to state that the NCPF are not involved, nor should be, with competition rules for clubs’ internal competitions. These are a matter for individual clubs to decide for themselves.

Where the NCPF do become involved is in setting the rules for the NCPF Club Championships and Annual competitions. The NCPF rules have been carefully drawn up to ensure compliance and consistency with PAGB rules and those of international organisations such as FIAP. This is why NCPF rules specifically prohibit the use of generative AI in any image entered into our competitions. This rule also applies to PAGB and FIAP competitions. It is important that clubs, their competition secretaries, and members are aware of the generative AI prohibition when submitting entries to NCPF competitions. If an image containing generative AI content is entered into an NCPF competition and is chosen to represent the NCPF, there is a risk of serious reputational damage and sanction to the NCPF, club, and individual if the use of generative AI is detected - whether its use was deliberate or not.

To help clubs and competition secretaries, we will continue to highlight the prohibition of generative AI in the rules which we issue as part of every entry invitation pack for our competitions.

Some additional guidance on the use of generative AI is shown below and we will also include this on the NCPF website.

- Permitted AI enhanced editing includes editing tools that perform transformations, enhancements, or corrections based exclusively on the existing pixel data captured in the author’s original photograph without introducing externally sourced content.
- Prohibited AI editing includes any AI assisted processes for synthetic image generation that incorporate external image data, visual elements, textures, objects, or scenes not originally present in the author’s photograph are prohibited.

The use of generative AI is often not easy to detect and we appreciate the difficult job competition secretaries have in this area, but we hope this note is helpful to clubs and their members when submitting entries to NCPF competitions.

### Guidance on Artificial Intelligence and the Remove tool.

I give below a summary of the PAGB's position on the use of Artificial Intelligence tools, and the Remove tool in particular, when editing images. This refers to Lightroom and Photoshop, but the same argument will apply to other editing software such as Affinity.

The PAGB (Photographic Alliance of Great Britain) allows the use of the Remove tool in Lightroom or Photoshop, provided it functions as a content-aware removal tool using only pixels from the original image. Generative AI features that create new, non-photographic, or imported elements however, are generally forbidden. The key rule is that the final image must be entirely derived from the photographer's own work.

Key Considerations for PAGB and club Competitions:

- Remove Tool vs. Generative AI: When using the Remove tool, ensure "Generative AI" is turned off (if using Photoshop/Lightroom) to avoid adding content not present in the original scene. There is a separate tick box to do this.
- Content-Aware is Okay: Tools that use surrounding pixels to fill in a removed object (similar to cloning/healing) are generally acceptable. (Spot healing tool probably safer if not sure.)
- Edit > Generative Fill or > Generate Image must not be used.
- No New Elements: You cannot use AI to add, replace, or heavily alter pictorial elements (e.g., adding a sky, birds, or new objects).
- Responsibility: It is the photographer's responsibility to ensure all adjustments are derived from their own source photo.

In summary, standard, non-generative, content-aware removal for cleaning up an image is allowed, but AI-generated, "imagined" content is not.

Please be aware of these rules when editing your images.