



Australian Go Association

President

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AGA Secretary's Report for 2017

David Mitchell

The Australian Go Association is an association of members, its strength and future is in the hands of those members. On 4th September 2017 we have 345 members, 261 are in NSW, Victoria 41, Queensland 23, ACT 9, WA 4 with SA 5 and Tasmania 1. There has been a slight increase since last year but membership numbers have been in the 300 range for many years.

AGA membership does not represent the prevalence of Go in Australia, there are many millions of people in Australia with a cultural background that includes Go – however very few of these people know that Go is played in Australia or that there's a national organization.

Right now, people who play Go in Australia must have two aims, to improve their own skill and to spread the game to others (and not necessarily in that order). Members need to promote the game and bring in more people, this means setting up a club at your university or in your home, teaching absolute beginners to play and sharing your knowledge, books and time with people so they can learn and improve.

For parents, it means approaching the school your children attend and asking if Go/Baduk/Wei Chi can be included into their language or cultural program. In N.S.W. the cultural curriculum for Asian studies includes learning a pastime – many schools pick on kite making or mah-jong because they don't know any better. The AGA has limited resources – both people and money but we do have information and some equipment that can help teachers.

The only way things will change is if the current membership follows the example of Cindy Xu (the founding president of the University of Sydney Go Club) and Daniel Li who give their time to promote the game and inspire people to learn. The University of Sydney club enrolls 100+ beginners each year and has regular lessons to help the newbies learn. Sure, there's churn but there are always 10 to 15 who continue and those that tried and gave up are not a lost cause, they know about the game and may return in the future because they are aware.

Money or more accurately resources is also a problem.

The Korea Baduk Association (KBA) continue their strong support for the AGA and Go players in Australia. Their assistance and that of the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and the National Sports Promotion Corporation have been of great value to Go in Australia.

Raphael Shin and his business enterprises make ad-hoc cash donations, and support tournaments such as the Australian Go Congress and Hanho cup with very large sums of money and resources.

The KBA and Raphael deserve high praise for their support of the AGA but the AGA or more correctly its members are not doing much to help themselves. We, the members of the AGA need to take action, promote the game, get sponsors, set up clubs and teach people young & old otherwise we will continue to have around 300 members in 2030 and beyond.



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AGA committee activities

There have been four committee meetings so far in 2017 and another is scheduled just prior to the AGM.

The committee selected Justin Shao to attend the Kuksu Mountain Cup and the Promising players program studying with up and coming Korean players and top professionals and we have established more clubs using the sets provided by the KBA.

The Third Australian Go Congress has also seen great support, physical and financial from Raphael Shin and the Hanho Newspaper. This year the Congress will be combined with the AGA's National Championships.

During 2017 there have been new projects as well as the continuation of existing initiatives. In summary, the AGA achievements are:

- The committee established guidelines and assistance for tournament directors. It is hoped this will encourage more people to hold tournaments in Australia.
- The Youth sub-committee continues its work to promote Go to young people around Australia. Members with young children are encouraged to ask teachers to include Go in their language and culture subjects. The AGA has materials, advice and guidance ready to help teachers and parents alike.
- The staging of the third Online Go Tournament has been delayed until the end of 2017 for organizational reasons.
- The AGA has invested in lapel pins which are available to all members at a cost of \$5 each plus \$2 postage and packing. The pins will also be used as small gifts to visiting professional and other valued guests.
- In March, we established a learning web site (aga.baduk.org.au) to help low to middle level players learn and improve their game. Articles have been written by James Kaaden and me (David Mitchell) and more will be added in the coming months.
- A proposal to Incorporate the AGA was approved by the committee with no votes against and one abstention. The proposal will be discussed and a decision made at the AGM.
- Updates and maintenance of AGA rating system (Agatha) continues thanks to Neville Smythe.
- The continued use of Facebook and other social media opportunities is proving to be a reasonable way to engage with Go players in Australia (AGA members or not). Occasionally comments are made that go against the spirit of Go and good fellowship but for the most part the presence is a benefit to all.

With the approval of the AGM, the AGA will become an Incorporated organization, this will give us the ability to apply for grants and sponsorship but it's only a single step. The important thing is the promotion of the game – if in 2018 each AGA member taught just one friend to play and join AGA membership would double.

David Mitchell,
Secretary,
AGA