



Australian Go Association Inc.

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AGA Secretary-General's Report for 2017/18

By David Mitchell

2018 has been a big year for the Australian Go Association with a number of significant changes since the last AGM in September 2017. There have also been a number of new events and activities but the biggest change is the Incorporation of the AGA.

The AGA is now an Incorporated Association under the laws and regulations of the NSW Department of Fair Trading and we have a new constitution. Incorporation is not simply a change of name; Incorporation makes the AGA a legal entity with all the rights and responsibilities that encompasses.

Incorporation also means that officers and committee members have legal responsibilities. This sounds scary but all they need to do is act in a business-like manner and in the best interests of the association and the association's members.

Apart from formalising processes and procedures, Incorporation opens opportunities for the AGA. Previously we have been unable to seek government grants, sponsorship or commercial business support, now that is a possibility. Money does not fall from the sky, we need people and support to prepare proposals, apply for grants and/or sponsorship and to make it happen but we have taken a significant step forward.

Since the last AGM there have been more events than ever before. The South Australian State Championships were brought back to life by Brenton Williams, Erli Qiu organised the first Sydney Go Festival showing how powerful WeChat is in the Chinese community with over 200 young people registering for beginner lessons. There have been new tournaments in Queensland including the Jenny Yang Realty Cup, all of which bring Go players together as a community.

The Australian Go Congress, sponsored by the Hanho Newspaper & Raphael Shin (AGA President) continues to power on with a 20% increase in participants. There were two days of lessons and simultaneous games delivered by two Professional players Yang Jaeho 9P and Cho Hye-Yeon 9P thanks to the support of the Korean Baduk Foundation.

Two new initiatives were undertaken at this year's Congress – James Kaaden's idea to broadcast live games with pro commentaries using Twitch and hosted by Dwyryn (Josh Allen) from the USA was very successful. The broadcasts attracted a large number of insomniacs from Europe and the USA who gave positive feedback. The other initiative was a Go Academic Symposium organized by Silvia Lozeva from Western Australia. This was the first attempt at such an event and attracted a number of papers on subjects as



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diverse as Go and AI and Go in education. The Symposium was recorded and will be videos of each presentation released on YouTube soon.

Attendance at clubs continues to decline. The cost of hiring rooms, supplying and maintaining equipment is a problem for large clubs. The key issues appear to be the time it takes to travel and the day of week the club meets. The AGA has published a short document to help on the website to help and encourage small clubs in local communities – even if it's just a few people meeting on your back deck or local library.

The AGA has initiated a “help for local clubs” program. Local clubs can have a remote lesson from An Younggil using teleconference technology. A local organizer needs to find a room with appropriate Internet technology but the lesson is paid for by the AGA. A pilot lesson was held in Perth earlier in the year and another is planned for Griffith University in the coming weeks. Melbourne Uni and Adelaide are the next clubs on the list and will have a lesson in early 2019. The lessons are recorded and published on YouTube so all AGA members can benefit. If your club wants to participate contact me (email address above).

The Australian Online Go Club established in Oct/Nov 2017 is a highlight, the club focusses on kyu players and has over 60 members from across Australia. There are six amateur Dan players giving free lessons to Australia Go players and lessons with a Professional player can also be booked. Game reviews and lesson are recorded and posted to the private Facebook group which now boasts around 100 teaching videos. There are periodic lectures, tournaments and other activities that help improve player strength and build friendships across the Australian Go community. For more information and registration please visit <http://club.artofgo.org/> and complete the 'Join us' page – you need to live in Australia and have a Facebook account.

AGA committee activities

There have been six normal committee meetings and one special committee meeting since the last AGM. A lot of effort was spent creating a new Constitution (which was passed at an EGM in March) and creating the required documentation and processes for Incorporation.

During 2018 there have been new projects as well as the continuation of existing initiatives. In summary, the AGA achievements are:

- The KBF have kindly donate books and beginner Go sets to help the AGA spread the game. These are being used in various initiatives including the Youth program. The Korean Baduk Federation (KBF) have also released and paid for the airfares for professional players to visit Australia to teach, comment on games and play simul teaching games.
- The AGA website is being upgraded – an interim site (aga-inc.asn.au) has been established and contains information about clubs, events, AGA documents and other activities. This website will be merged with the AGA official domain australianggo.asn.au during 2018/19.



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- The Youth sub-committee has distributed books and has taught Go to many young people and continues its work to promote Go to young people around Australia. The AGA has materials, advice and guidance ready to help teachers and parents alike.
- The third Online Go Tournament took place at the beginning of the year with a record number of participants.
- Updates and maintenance of AGA rating system (Agatha) continues thanks to Neville Smythe – we need one or two volunteers who know how to program to assist Neville develop and maintain the software. Don't be shy!
- 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). While social media has been helpful we really need somebody to join the committee who has experience creating and executing a marketing and promotions plan.

During the year the AGA committee lost one of its long-term members. Horatio Davis surprised everybody when he resigned as Treasurer and webmaster in June. Horatio has done a lot for Australian Go and continues to do so in Queensland. I and the committee have expressed our thanks to Horatio for his dedication and work and I want to take this opportunity to do so again in this report.

James Kaaden took over the role of Treasurer at short notice and has prepared the attached financial reports for 2017/18. Matthew Crossman has taken over the role of webmaster with assistance from Neville Smythe and myself. I would like to express thanks on behalf of the whole association to James and Matthew for taking on these roles.

2019 and beyond

While we have achieved a lot in 2017/18, there is much more that needs to be done. We need more people playing Go and we need people who are prepared to spend time and effort supporting the AGA. Being able to raise funds is one thing, putting in the effort and getting the money is quite another.

We need more members and Go needs to have a greater presence in Australia and Australian life. One way we can get more people is to start more clubs and this is something anybody can do. A club needs a minimum of two people to play on a regular basis in their living room, a library, a park or wherever and be prepared to teach others. The AGA has materials that can help and a limited supply of equipment, so start a club today and do your bit to help promote Go in Australia.

David Mitchell,
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