

# History of the Australian Golf Union (AGU)



The Australian Golf Union (AGU) was formed at a meeting at Royal Melbourne Golf Club on 14 October 1898.

The charter expanded enormously over time and as the senior golf authority in Australia it organized and controlled many major tournaments including the Australian Open, the Wilson Australian Amateur, the Australian Foursome Championship, the Interstate Series, the Wilson Australian Junior Championship, the Wilson Junior Interstate Series and the Club Car Australian Senior Amateur Championship.

Through its selection committee, the AGU selected players to represent Australia. This committee was responsible for naming players in the World Amateur Teams Championship for the Eisenhower Trophy, the Four Nations Championship and the Asia-Pacific Teams Championship, as well as various overseas national amateur championships.

The AGU also played a major role in the development of junior golf and an extensive training and promotion program under the guidance of a National Director of Coaching.

Within Australia, the AGU controlled the Rules of Golf, the Rules of Amateur Status, the course rating systems (both permanent and daily), and handicapping.

Further to its handicapping role, the AGU designed a national, computerized handicapping system (GOLF Link) which saw a central computer calculating and maintaining all affiliated golfers' handicaps. This world-first system attracted interest internationally.

Through a Journal published six times a year, the AGU kept clubs and golfers informed of all the latest developments including AGU programs, teams, championships, rules, policy changes, and events that are not reported in the daily media. This was later supplemented by the AGU website, which also provided updates on the performances of Australia's leading amateur and professional golfers.

For a long period the AGU was administered from the Commonwealth Golf Club, when Sloan Morpeth doubled as the secretary of the golf club and secretary of the AGU. Bill Richardson acted in the same dual capacity at Royal Melbourne Golf Club from 1962 until 1974.

The secretary of the New South Wales Golf Association, Alan Higinbotham was appointed to the AGU's senior administrative post in 1974 and for 5 years the game was administered from Sydney. AGU headquarters returned to Melbourne in 1979 when Colin Phillips was appointed as Executive Director.

In 1987, the AGU purchased a handsome Victorian-style building in Cecil Street, South Melbourne which it named Golf Australia House. Along with the administrative offices, it also housed the AGU Museum and Library.

The original AGU charter specified that Royal Melbourne, Royal Sydney and Royal Adelaide were the constituent clubs and delegates from these three clubs formed the first council.

In later times, State Association representation became the criterion. Victoria and New South Wales each had three delegates while Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia had two and Tasmania one.

The President of the AGU was elected on a state-rotational basis for one year whilst the majority of AGU business was handled by the Executive Committee which consists of one representative from each State Association.

In 2006 the AGU merged with Women's Golf Australia to form Golf Australia.