



To – All Australian Golf Clubs (21 February 2018)

Dear All,

**Subject: Australia to adopt the World Handicap System (WHS)**

In November 2017 I wrote to all clubs to invite your feedback on Golf Australia's preferred direction of adopting the World Handicap System. We sincerely appreciate the comments and queries we received during the consultation period, and we acknowledge the very positive industry sentiment.

I write to you today to confirm that the Golf Australia (GA) Board has now decided to adopt the WHS. Key factors in this decision were:

- The WHS will result in just two changes of substance to the user experience of Australian golfers and administrators (these two changes are explained in the resources that accompany this letter). The two changes are both considered strong improvements to Australian handicapping. GA's chief statistician is also strongly supportive of both changes.
- Golf is played globally with one set of playing Rules; it makes sense for there to be only one handicap system.
- Every other major country will adopt the WHS. Given this we believe it is important that GA align its operations with the global standard and with world's best practice. We do not believe strong governance is best served by continuing to invest in a stand-alone handicap system when resources could instead be directed to supporting the sustainability of golf clubs and facilities.
- Golf NSW, Golf NT, Golf Queensland, GolfSA, Golf Tasmania, Golf Victoria, GolfWA, and the Board of GMA all previously recommended adoption of the WHS.
- GA commissioned respected industry consultant GBAS to poll the views of individual golfers. This polling displayed the following sentiments on the WHS. Change to Daily Handicap calculation – 65% strongly in favour, 27% slightly in favour, 6% neutral, 1% opposed. Introduction of Soft Cap – 56% strongly in favour, 26% slightly in favour, 13% neutral, 4% opposed. Should Australia adopt the WHS? – 81% strongly in favour, 13% slightly in favour, 4% neutral, 2% opposed.
- No clubs advised GA against adopting the WHS.

On a global level, the WHS is scheduled to take full effect in January 2020. One theme of feedback that has repeatedly been expressed to GA is that the WHS changes are very positive and that implementation in Australia earlier than 2020 would be preferred by many. As a result, we are now investigating an earlier roll-out. We are mindful that extensive involvement of various software providers will be required to bring the WHS changes into effect. Whilst we are hopeful of an earlier implementation than January 2020, nothing has been confirmed and we will keep you updated on any new timelines.

We thank you all for your cooperation during the consultation period and we look forward to communicating further with you about the WHS in the coming months.

Please direct any WHS queries to Simon Magdulski at the GA office – [simonm@golf.org.au](mailto:simonm@golf.org.au).

Yours sincerely,

**John Hopkins OAM**  
**Chairman – Golf Australia**