



# Women in Golf Charter Impact Studies.

March 2021

On a day to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women on a global scale, International Women's Day provides the opportunity to highlight the progress of the Women in Golf Charter.

Launched in May 2018 by The R&A, the Charter aims to increase women and girls' participation and membership in golf, encourage more families to enjoy golf as a leisure activity and encourage more opportunities for women to work and volunteer in the golf industry. To date, over 700 organisations worldwide have committed to developing a more inclusive culture within golf.

Reflecting the international appeal of the Charter, two organisations are profiled on the following pages – the Australian Sports Turf Managers Association (ASTMA) and EDGA, the body that helps people with disability thrive through the power of golf. Each assesses their commitment to the Charter, their efforts and impact to date.

**Highlighting the work of the Australian Sports Turf Managers Association (ASTMA) and EDGA to help grow women and girls' golf, two key individuals at both organisations offer insight through a Q&A.**

**Why did your organisation sign up to the Women in Golf Charter?**

**Mark Unwin, Chief Executive Officer, ASTMA:** The Charter is something we are very supportive of. Locally, while we have seen an increase in the number of females working in the turf management industry over the past few years, and whilst taking the first steps to address the gender imbalance in the industry, we still have some way to go.

While we have seen an upward trend in females across areas of sports turf management in recent years, it's still very heavily male orientated – in the vicinity of 97% to 98%. To address this, we have commenced the development of programmes to advocate for women in turf management. We see it as being critical for our industry's future that we continue the momentum we've started building and will continue to strongly support initiatives such as the Women in Golf Charter.



EDGA promote golf for disability at every level

**Tony Bennett, President, EDGA:** Although one might think that the distribution of disabilities should be roughly equal cross gender, at least at birth, this concept can be misleading. Our research into more than 140 countries seems to point to a slightly increased number of males born with an impairment and yet more women live with a disability in many nations. However, these statistics are not reflected in the number of registered golfers with a disability, which is heavily skewed to the male population.

**What commitments did your organisation make to the Charter?**

**Mark:** We committed to a programme of work encouraging more women and girls into Turf Management as a career, through actively engaging with Australian training providers, schools and local employment organisations. This included an approach to increase the profile of female Turf Managers in the profession, and to promote and advocate for more women and girls working in golf course management.

Furthermore, we are in the process of establishing a Women In Sports Turf Management programme in Australia as a key initiative for developing a platform for females in the industry, and supporting a range of existing programmes in place with aligned golf bodies in Australia, including other Charter signatories Golf Australia, the PGA and the WPGA.



The ASTMA is working hard to encourage more women into the industry

**Tony:** Our pledges on signing the Charter were as follows:

- To showcase women golfers with disability through one or more ambassadors who champion golf as a game for all.
- To develop an awareness programme to attract more women to the game of golf, either as rehabilitation therapy, leisure activity or competitive sport.
- In the EDGA profiles section of our website, introduce more stories about women golfers.
- EDGA operate an 'open golf' philosophy that considers all people equal. Women and men compete together at all levels of competition.
- Encourage more women to progress through our teams and working groups and to grow the number of women at the strategic level of the Board. Additionally, continue to promote more positions for women at the delivery levels in teams and working groups.

### What successes has the organisation enjoyed from your Charter work?

**Mark:** We have met and discussed the establishment of a Women In Sports Turf Management programme in Australia with State and Federal Governments. We are currently in the planning phase of a talent attraction/retention programme for females in the industry with State government departments of Education, Sport & Recreation, with an objective of a mid-2021 launch to school leavers and tertiary education providers.

We are also in the process of developing a business case for further presentation to Federal Government in relation to addressing the gender imbalance in the industry, and the establishment of an employment programme in remote and regional areas – to attract, recruit and retain female talent to the Australian Sports Turf Management industry – as well as updates made to the 2023 Association Strategic Plan to support the approach.

**Tony:** Concerning our pledges, EDGA has:

- Established a team of seven women advocates to join and work alongside the six men advocates. We are actively developing awareness campaigns the whole team can deliver, but specifically by our valued women advocates.
- We have a working group that focuses on attracting women with a disability to sample, participate and compete in the sport. We are in the final stages of a research paper in which the views of 14 men and 14 women are heard, giving a balanced view of the barriers and facilitators to entry into the game.
- 21% of the EDGA player profile stories are of women. This percentage is higher than found in the number of women holding approved passes. Women in Golf are running a regular feature in their online magazine for women golfers with a disability.
- EDGA operates a single ranking for male and females, although we have implemented a women's only event to attract new women players.
- EDGA has two women Directors on the Board, both with executive functions who provide valuable service to the organisation, with responsibility for the areas of tournaments and development.



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TONY BENNETT, PRESIDENT, EDGA



More female EDGA players are sampling golf

### What impact has been made?

**Mark:** Whilst planning has been undertaken and several meetings with government representatives completed, COVID-19 impacts have delayed the commencement of many programmes for our Association, and this has resulted in implementation being delayed by several months.

**Tony:** There is an increase in the number of women players competing, but the number is not significant until now. This disappointment must be tempered with the realisation that the lead time to take a newcomer from sampler to competitor in golf can be several years. At this stage, we do not know if this is longer for a women golfer with a disability than it might be for a man. However, the general feeling is that more women are at the sampling and participant stage, but this is not yet quantified.

### How positive are you for the future of women and girls' golf and/or women working in the industry?

**Mark:** Very positive. It's not a quick fix, nor an easy single solution to the current situation of women in turf management. However, as it is our belief that encouraging and supporting more women to take up a career in sports turf management is perhaps the biggest opportunity to the future development of our profession, one that could provide a dramatic leap forward for our industry, it's one that we are intensely committed to.

**Tony:** Macro factors affect how all people use their time, and as we have seen most recently, these factors are beyond the control of the golf industry. However, the dominant trend has been to encourage a more inclusive and diverse look to the sport. More women players will lead to more women becoming engaged in the sport as volunteers and professionals.

The golf industry's challenge is to disrupt the status quo, break stereotypes, and ensure that inclusion and diversity are front and centre when it comes to decision-making at every level. EDGA is championing the inclusion of women with a disability, not in words but by our actions.

To view more information on the women and girls' work of the organisations profiled visit the websites of [Australian Sports Turf Managers Association](#) and [EDGA](#)



**EDGA**

To find out more about The R&A Women in Golf Charter visit our [website](#)