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## Theory and Practice of Go Promotion: Strategic Framework for promoting Go to the Australian people

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*“I hope that people become aware of Go and that it becomes an easy option to choose as one of their hobbies. If it suits their taste, I hope they will take pleasure in Go and experience the joy it offers, and that the game might even help them, in some small way, to understand the principles of life.”*(Shin Jinseo, 2025)

### Abstract

Through my experience promoting the game of Go in Australia I have developed a strategic framework which has helped me navigate the challenges involved in spreading my passion for this wonderful, humbling, and insight provoking game. This paper introduces the Go Promotional Framework (GPF), combining theoretical approaches with practical applications. The GPF framework consists of four pillars: Accessibility, Inclusivity, Engagement, and Integration. The paper utilizes empirical research from Australia, based on my active participation of promoting Go activities in the community, to businesses and to educational institutions, between 2019-2025.

## I. Background

Go has been steadily growing within Australian communities, with a now estimated 1,000 to 2,000 active players. This includes casual enthusiasts and those who compete in national tournaments organized by the Australian Go Association (AGA). Of the approximately 800 registered AGA members, around 250 can be considered active, having participated in at least one face-to-face tournament in the past three years. However, the wider Go-playing population extends beyond AGA membership, with an estimated 5,000 individuals—primarily from Chinese, Japanese, and Korean descent—playing privately and within closed knit groups. For instance, a private group of about 80 Chinese players meets in Campsie, Sydney, combining traditional Go games with cultural activities such as dancing, singing, and Mahjong. (1)

The AGA, a founding member of the International Go Federation, plays a key role in promoting Go through clubs, online tournaments, and also provides pathways for Go players to compete for Australia in international tournaments. The broader Go community in Australia reflects the global trend of increasing interest among youth and professionals, as highlighted in reports by the International Go Federation in 2016.

The game of Go, while steeped in tradition and widely revered in East Asia, remains less popular compared to other strategic board games in Australia. Despite this, Go has seen a surge in interest following recent events, such as the TEDx Perth 2019 talk on the game delivered by myself, Dr Silvia Lozeva (2) which has inspired curiosity about the games strategic depth, and educational potential. Another stream of interest I was involved in, was in October 2024, when ABC Radio National broadcasted a featured episode dedicated to Go, exploring its history and relevance in the modern era. (3)

Although this paper focuses on the period 2019-2025, it is very much also worth noting that the popularity of Alpha Go in 2016 has a lasting legacy, and continues to inspire new Go players, especially those who are in the IT and technology sector.

To increase the popularity of the game and its benefits, this paper explores additional avenues for growth and engagement, drawing on lessons from Australia's diverse and evolving Go community.

## II. Background information

Perth (Nyungar: Boorloo) is the capital city of the state of Western Australia, the largest state in Australia with population of about 2.5 million. The city is known as the most isolated city in the world (as measured from other cities in similar size). (6) The city is situated on the traditional land of the Whadjuk Nyungar people, where Aboriginal Australians have lived for at 60,000 years.

The city is situated on the coastal area of the Indian Ocean, where Swan River (Nyungar: Derbal Yerigan) meets the sea, and it spans 125kms in lengths and 45 kilometers from the coast to the East. The city has 350 suburbs and 30 local government areas.

Perth was classified as one of the world's most livable cities as part of the Global Livability Ranking by the Economist Intelligent Unit.

The city was populated with migrants after the WWII mostly from Britain and from Southern Europe. Continuous waves of migration, at a later stage

from Asia have shaped a truly multicultural city, where half of the population rise is due to overseas arrivals currently, and 25 percent of Australians have at least one parent was born overseas.

### III. Methodology and Empirical Approach

Through my work as a Founder and Director of Institute 361, an independent business consultancy focused on gamifying strategic thinking, in the period 2016-2025, we introduced various activities in Western Australia to increase the popularity of the game.

The adopted methodology was participatory, where I participated in the events listed below and was actively involved in the organizing and the promotion of the activities. Feedback was collected through feedback forms, as well as through anecdotal verbal conversations from participants.

### IV. Analysis of Feedback Forms

The feedback analysis employed a mixed-methods approach combining both quantitative metrics and qualitative thematic analysis. Participants were provided with brief feedback forms following each Go session, which included Likert-scale questions on enjoyment, clarity of instruction, and perceived benefits (quantitative), as well as open-ended prompts for reflections and suggestions (qualitative). Quantitative data was compiled into basic statistical summaries to identify trends across programs and locations. Meanwhile,

open-ended responses were coded thematically to extract recurring themes, such as increased social connectedness, intellectual challenge, or cultural curiosity. This hybrid approach allowed for both generalizable trends and rich, context-sensitive insights to emerge.

## V. Verbal Feedback Collection

Verbal feedback was collected through semi-structured informal discussions conducted during or after sessions. These conversations typically took place with individuals or small groups and were not audio-recorded, but documented through note-taking shortly after the interaction. While informal in tone, a consistent set of prompts guided these discussions, such as:

*“What brought you here today?”*

*“What did you find most interesting or challenging about the game?”*

*“Would you recommend this to others?”*

*Did you learn something new?*

This systematic yet casual method allowed participants to speak freely while ensuring comparability across sessions. These notes were later reviewed using inductive thematic analysis, and insights were triangulated with the written feedback to verify validity and comprehensiveness.

## VI. Overall Empirical Approach

Beyond direct participation and feedback collection, the empirical strategy included participant observation, action research, and practice-led inquiry:

Participant Observation: As the lead facilitator and organizer, I (Dr Lozeva) observed group dynamics, attendance patterns, and participants' level of engagement during sessions. These observations informed both the refinement of the program and the interpretation of feedback.

Action Research: Iterative cycles of implementation, reflection, and adjustment were central to the evolution of the Go programs. For instance, feedback from earlier workshops prompted the inclusion of Mandarin-speaking facilitators and better-aligned venues.

Practice-led Inquiry: Drawing on my background in sustainability and innovation studies, I reflected on the evolving practices and community response to Go programs to develop the Go Promotional Framework (GPF). This framework itself is an outcome of empirical synthesis and practical experimentation.

Case Study Method: Each of the local government programs served as a mini-case study. Data from these distinct contexts were compared to identify transferable practices and unique local variations.

## VII. Go activities

Some of these Go promotional activities included:

Organizing the first academic Go Symposium in Australia at the AGA 2018, Sydney University to raise awareness about the theoretical applications of Go Studies to science, technology and society alongside the AGA National Tournament. The Symposium attracted international presenters which covered a range of topics about the earliest poem written about Go, Mathematics and Go, Go as an educational tool, and others.

Premier screening of “The Surrounding Game”, the first documentary movie on the game of Go at Curtin University and the University of Western Australia, which coincided with Harmony Day in 2017. The screening at UWA was also accompanied with talks from founding members of the Perth Go Club, Clive Hunt, academics Professor Baldassar from the Migration Research Network and Silvia Lozeva, as the founder of institute 361. *The Surrounding Game* is a 2017 documentary that delves into the world of Go, one of the oldest and most complex board games. The documentary chronicles the historic tournament to crown America’s first professional Go player, capturing a four-year journey across multiple countries.

Numerous community presentation in Universities, schools and community and cultural clubs (including Japanese cultural centres).

Following on these activities, I developed a more structured approach to introduce Go (Baduk) to communities and business.

1. For the period 2022-2025, Go Community Play programs were introduced in 6 (six) local libraries in Perth, Western Australia, which included a more structured approach of 8-10 weeks activities. These programs were sponsored by Local City and delivered at the Library by Institute 361 and supported by non-for profit organizations (Multicultural Futures and Multilingual Australia). The aims of the program was successfully linked with the Strategic Plan of the Local Governments to reduce social isolation and to foster social connections, particularly in the post COVID-19 period. This more structured approach allowed for an effective delivery, leveraging also on the promotion of the local cities and the local libraries' e-newsletters and social media (see table 1).

2. Parallel to the non-for-profit community-based work, in 2023 I also expanded Go demonstration in the business sector, particularly in industry spaces, where Go was introduced as a way to deepen strategic thinking into the corporate world. The “Go Strategic Play”(6) method brought a unique approach to team coaching, offering three tiers designed to help high-performing teams perform even better by integrating the ten strategic principles of Go (also known as the ten golden rules) into business philosophy. Feedback from these sessions highlighted the method's success in raising awareness and its effectiveness as a tool for strategic growth. Expanding Go Strategic Play into the start-up scene, especially in co-working spaces, has also proven to be a successful promotional strategy. By tapping into the energy and innovation of entrepreneurs, the approach showcased how the timeless principles of Go can bring fresh perspectives and creative solutions to the fast-paced world of business. This approach appears to be also a successful method in



other settings (see for example the captivating development of the Go scene in Kyrgystan).

Presenting at business conferences and conventions about the adaptation and the principles of the game was another avenue of Go promotional activities. For example in 2023-24, the 10 principles of strategic thinking were presented at the Cloud and Data Convention in Perth, Western Australia and also at the Western Australian Mining Expo and Conference, which attracted large audience, as the mining sector is key to the W.A. economy.

Table 1. Go Community Play programs 2022-2025

Local Government	Timeline	Number of participants	Number of G workshops	Comments
City of Bayswater	2022	30	10	Program for older Australians over 55 from a culturally and linguistically diverse background in partnership with Umbrella Multicultural Services
City of Fremantle	2023	55	12	Program for people from diverse backgrounds held weekly at Fremantle Library in partnership with Multicultural Futures
City of Cockburn	2023	70	10	Program for community to engage in new new learnings and to foster social connections in partnership with Multicultural Futures
City of Joondalup	2024-25	35	8	Program aimed at a wide range of community members, from different ages, cultural backgrounds and abilities in partnership with Multilingual Australia
City of Kwinana	2024-25	25	10	Community program to reduce social isolation and loneliness in partnership with Multilingual Australia
City of Armadale	2025	70	8	Community program to reduce social isolation and loneliness in partnership with Multilingual Australia
City of Stirling	2025	30	4	Community program to reduce social isolation and loneliness in partnership with Multilingual Australia (4 Go workshops)

The programs are about 8-10 weeks, and designed for people who have never played by structured Go sessions during a 10-week school term.

## VIII. Findings

In analyzing the main findings from the programs run, there are a few useful characteristics that stand out. They are summarized in the Go Promotional Framework (see Fig.1)

**Accessibility:** Choosing venues near public transport with ample parking facilitated participant attendance. This was important, also from the point of view in a research, which the lead author conducted on good practices for intercultural hubs (4) (see Shamim and Lozeva, 2018). Due to the spread of the geographical areas in Perth, the city is mainly designed for cars, which makes parking anchors accessibility even more important. Perth is the longest city in the world, so the spread-out of the city also makes it difficult to find a central point for everyone to group together, and this is why it is better to have smaller, but more diverse groups at local hubs, which the libraries provide. In one occasion, a participant travel more than 100 km to attend a Go session. We later introduced Go workshops close to her location.

**Inclusivity:** Local facilitators fluent in Mandarin created a welcoming atmosphere. Structured curricula progressively built participants' skills and knowledge. In the City of Cockburn and the City of Armadale, as well as in the Cities of Stirling and Maylands, the program was especially successful because of the participation of a Mandarin-speaker and a Go teacher, who

was already known by the community. He was also well known to the lead author, as they were both part of the Curtin University Go Club more than 10 years ago. As a high level Go player, an educator and a dual-language speaker, it proved to be a very successful way in engaging and attracting participants.

It is also worth mentioning that participants varied a lot, and the Go sessions provided an inclusive atmosphere for neuro-divergent individuals, people whose second language was English and people who were at risk of social isolation.

On the TEDx stage in 2019 in Perth the talks was delivered by people from culturally diverse background - me as a speaker from Bulgaria, while the game was demonstrated by two other players who were from China and New Zealand.

**Engagement:** Co-promotion with libraries and visually appealing posters significantly increased awareness and participation (see Fig. 2). Diverse participants from various backgrounds enriched the experience. Some of the examples of Go promotion included the posters below (see Fig. 2). Participants included 4 years old to 80 years old. In some instances the library staff were actively engaged with the Go classes and with the facilitation of the program, and played a key role in the promotion of the Go classes amongst other staff and visitors. Important element of the program was engaging the local Government, and acknowledging their contribution and support of the Go classes. While the numbers at the beginning were small, the number of participants grew gradually, as the program matured and gain momentum

and popularity from one City to another.

**Integration:** Exposure and networking outside the Go community were crucial. Presenting at conferences like the Data Cloud and Storage convention and the Mining conference led to collaborations with mainstream businesses. A key component was the “Go Strategic Play” workshop, a half-day session that gamified strategic thinking for business professionals. This workshop demonstrated how Go’s principles could be applied to enhance strategic decision-making in the corporate world. Through the GPF and the Go Strategic Play workshop, we successfully blended theory and practice to promote Go, offering a replicable model for enhancing community engagement and business integration.

This model is offered both in-person and online, as well as in blended mode and allows participants to explore the principles of strategic decision-making in a short timeframe. While the method relays only the fundamentals and the basics of Go, it taught the ways of thinking, which facilitate better decision-making and provokes interest in continuing learning of the game. Particularly well-received was the workshop at business startup courses and integrating it with the needs to think outside the box, showcasing some of the innovations that the game of Go has sparked, such as the inventions of the QR code and the break-through of AI technology through Deep Mind and Google - Alpha Go.

**Use of technology:** while most of the time, the program used traditional Go sets, the use of the IZIS AI Go set gave a strong advantage, as it attracted a large interest. During the course of this article, Sese Robot Go also

emerged on the Western market, which is another highly interactive technology. Technology was an important element to draw attention to the programs, although not often used in the demonstration. Rather it serves as the next stepping stone for improving participants' skill levels.



Fig. 1 Go Promotional Framework



**Give Go a Go**

Learn to play the ancient strategic  
game of Go

Various sessions available  
Contact: Dr Silvia Lozeva 0406097868  
silvia@institute361.com



Scan to register!

Fig. 2. Go poster for City of Fremantle, Go Community play



Fig.3 Participants in Go workshop who also were on the TEDx stage.

## IX. Conclusions

The promotion of Go in Australia from 2019 to 2025 has demonstrated the effectiveness of a structured, strategic approach in fostering engagement across community, educational, and business sectors. The Go Promotion Framework (GPF), with its four pillars—**Accessibility, Inclusivity, Engagement, and Integration**—has provided a robust foundation for expanding Go's reach and relevance in contemporary Western Australian society.

Through empirical research and participatory methods, this study has



highlighted the success of tailored approaches in different settings. Community-based initiatives, such as Go Community Play programs in libraries, have shown the importance of accessibility and cultural inclusivity in sustaining participation. The introduction of Mandarin-speaking facilitators and structured curricula proved particularly effective in attracting diverse groups and maintaining long-term engagement. Moreover, leveraging institutional partnerships with local governments, non-profit organisations, and educational institutions facilitated the seamless integration of Go into existing social programs aimed at reducing social isolation and fostering connections.

The business sector has also emerged as a key avenue for Go promotion. The “Go Strategic Play” (6) methodology successfully introduced Go principles to corporate settings, demonstrating their applicability in strategic thinking, team-building, and decision-making. Presenting Go at business conferences and industry conventions has broadened its appeal beyond traditional Go-playing communities, leading to new collaborations and increased visibility within professional networks.

Technology has played a crucial role in modernising Go’s appeal. While traditional Go sets remained central to the programs, the integration of digital tools, such as the IZIS AI Go set, attracted new participants, particularly those with an interest in technology and artificial intelligence. This suggests a promising direction for future Go promotion efforts, particularly among younger audiences and those in the tech industry.

Overall, the findings from this research suggest that the promotion of Go in Australia can be further enhanced by continued investment in inclusive community programs, strategic business engagement, and technological innovation. The Go Promotion Framework offers a scalable and adaptable model that can be replicated in other regions seeking to integrate Go into diverse cultural and professional landscapes. Moving forward, collaborations

with international Go bodies, further integration into educational curricula, and a sustained presence in industry spaces will be essential to solidifying Go's place in Australia's cultural fabric.

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