



## Football (Soccer): *Football Federation Australia*

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*“I’d argue with kids at school and they all were convinced that rugby league was the most popular world sport. That shows how isolated Australia was. Soccer had to be introduced by migrants. We’ve come a long way.”<sup>1</sup>*

A Brazilian Ambassador once wondered whether Australians had a linguistic or an anatomical problem, since they seemed to reserve the term ‘football’ for games in which the players predominantly use their hands.<sup>2</sup> Such is the seeming contradiction in Australia where the term for the game played with the feet is called soccer and football (which is rugby league, rugby union or Aussie rules depending on where you live) is played mostly with the hands.

Football is no longer the poor cousin of the ‘big four’ national sports in Australia – cricket, rugby league, Australian rules football and rugby union. Following the 2006 FIFA World Cup, the game has finally come of age in Australia and is starting to seriously challenge the other sports for spectator, sponsor and media support.

### Tracing football’s roots

Playing a ball game using the feet has been happening for thousands of years. Early history reveals at least half a dozen different games, varying to different degrees, which are related to the modern game of football.

The earliest form of the game for which there is reliable evidence dates back to the 2nd and 3rd centuries B.C. in China. Another form of the game, also originating in the Far East, was the Japanese Kemari, which dates from about 500 to 600 years later and is still played today.<sup>3</sup>

However, it is almost certain that the development of the modern game took place in England and Scotland. It was a game that flourished in the British Isles from the 8th to the 19th centuries, although there were a considerable variety of local and regional versions. It was also more disorganised, more violent and more spontaneous than all previously known forms of the game and was usually played by an indefinite number of players.<sup>4</sup>

Officially, the modern game began in 1863 in England, when rugby football and association football branched off on different courses and the world’s first football association – The Football Association in England – was founded. This was followed by the Scottish FA (1873), the FA of Wales (1875) and the Irish FA (1880).<sup>5</sup> National associations in other countries throughout Europe and the rest of the world soon followed.

The need for a single body to oversee the world game became apparent at the beginning of the 20th century with the increasing popularity of international fixtures. The *Fédération*

*Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) was founded in Paris on 21 May 1904, with representatives from associations of: France, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.<sup>6</sup>

FIFA remains the international governing body of football and today comprises 207 national federations and their associated men's national teams, as well as 129 women's national teams.<sup>7</sup> It is one of the biggest – and certainly the most popular – sports federations in the world.

FIFA is split into six confederations which oversee the game in the different continents and regions of the world, including the Asian Football Confederation (to which Australia belongs having joined on 1 January 2006 after previously belonging to the Oceania Confederation).

### **Football in Australia**

The story of Australian football began in the 1880s when British settlers brought the game to the mainland colonies of Australia. It was very much a migrants' game, with a strong Scottish influence in many areas.

The Wanderers and the Kings School played the very first recorded game in Australia on Parramatta Common in 1880.<sup>8</sup> By the early 1900s, clubs and state associations had developed in every state.

In 1921 the Australian Soccer Association was formed and the Australian national team played their first games on a tour of New Zealand the following year.

During the 1950's and 1960's the British were joined by post-war migrants from all over Europe as the flood of 'new Australians' transformed football across the country and the game boomed.<sup>9</sup> Many joined soccer clubs as a way to make friends, continue links with their old country and play the game they loved. The club names often reflected the players' cultural background – the Czech club was 'Prague', the Jewish club was 'Hakoah' and the Italian club was 'Apia'.<sup>10</sup>

The game came into national prominence in 1974 when an Australian team qualified for the first time for the FIFA World Cup in Germany. The team was made up of all sorts of part-timers – a private detective, a tailor, a scrap-metal merchant, a milkman, teachers, coalminers and labourers. Their captain and centre-back, Peter Wilson, who had emigrated from England in 1969, recalled that many had trouble getting time off work to go to the finals.<sup>11</sup>

Jump forward to 2003 – and Soccer Australia (the previous name of Football Federation Australia – FFA) was haemorrhaging money and close to insolvency. The National Soccer League was generally considered to be sub-standard on and off the field and its image had been irreparably sullied by many years of mismanagement and ethnically-based trouble.<sup>12</sup>

As former FFA CEO John O'Neill describes: "Relations with players were strained and unworkable, sponsorship and media deals flawed and untenable, relations between the various stakeholders were dysfunctional, and Australian Soccer had a somewhat justified reputation for nepotism, parochialism, jingoism and shoddy practices, and was constantly under attack in the media."<sup>13</sup>

As a result, the federal Government initiated an independent review into the running of football in Australia, titled '*the Crawford Report*', which showed what a sorry state the game

was in. The government demanded that the sport embrace fundamental structural and constitutional reforms contained in the Report and backed this up with essential funding.

Almost three years later, the situation has changed considerably. FFA now has commercial partnerships with the federal Government, Fox Sports, SBS and Qantas, which underpin a \$60m business, which has grown at close to 100 per cent each year since 2003.<sup>14</sup>

In 2005, FFA launched a new domestic national competition, known as the Hyundai A-League. The competition has eight participating clubs located in Auckland (New Zealand), Adelaide (South Australia), Brisbane (Queensland), Central Coast (New South Wales), Melbourne (Victoria), Newcastle (New South Wales), Perth (Western Australia) and Sydney (New South Wales). The inaugural season was a great success and the second season is following on just as strong.

### **Football Federation Australia (FFA)**

FFA is the governing body for football in Australia. As such, it is responsible for the governance of the game, ensuring the highest standards of conduct and overseeing the sport's growth and development.

The FFA is committed to 'providing the leadership to foster a unifying new football culture in Australia which embraces success, diversity, professionalism, integrity and the universal appeal of the game'.<sup>15</sup>

FFA broadly follows a federation structure and includes member representatives of governing bodies of the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia. Each of these governing bodies has to comply with the FFA constitution, applicable statutes, by-laws and regulations and is responsible for the game within their respective geographic regions. FFA membership also includes a representative of the clubs participating in the A-League and representatives of FFA standing committees.

FFA is responsible for managing the new national A-League football competition and international games. It is also responsible for the Qantas open Men's team (Socceroos), Qantas Men's Under 23's, Qantas Young Socceroos (Men's U20), Qantas Joeys (Men's U17), Qantas open women's team (Matildas), Qantas Young Matildas (Women's U20), Qantas Futsalroos and Paralympic football.

In August 2006, FFA submitted new national regulations to FIFA for approval which they hope to implement at the start of 2007. These new regulations – the result of extensive consultation with state and territory federations and representatives from zone/district and club levels – aim to provide a uniform framework to govern the game by ensuring fairness, respect and protection for players, referees and coaches.

Former FFA Chief Executive Officer John O'Neill said: "For too long, this sport has been fractured with local committees, mostly with the best of intentions, developing their own regulations. These new national regulations will provide the framework for all clubs and districts to administer the game correctly".<sup>16</sup>

An important part of the new regulations is a National Player Registration Scheme, in line with FIFA regulations, which from 2007 will require all players to register with the FFA, as well as their club.

This scheme will be supported by a state-of-the-art, secure, online membership system that will enable the state/territory member federations, zones/districts/associations and clubs to register and communicate directly with their members, manage competitions and meet other needs of the football community.<sup>17</sup>

FFA Chairman Frank Lowy said: "These regulations ensure that from now on football will operate uniformly across Australia for the benefit of clubs, and most importantly, to ensure that all participants in the game of football are treated equally and fairly and thereby provide opportunity for all".<sup>18</sup>

### Who plays football?

Football is the biggest participation team sport in Australia with over 450,000 registered players.<sup>19</sup>

More than 700,000 players participate in organised football competition with clubs and schools affiliated to FFA. However, this does not include other non-affiliated or informal participants, like church-based competitions or corporate or social leagues. A recent Roy Morgan poll estimated that 1.218 million people in Australia 'play football'.<sup>20</sup>

FFA does not currently have any data on the number of Indigenous people or those from CALD backgrounds who play the game in Australia. However, the introduction of the national online registration system commencing next year should provide figures for these groups.

### A new sport on the block

The changes to football in Australia over the last three years have been quite remarkable. The new Hyundai A-League is now built on a one-team-one-city model, the standard of competition has improved, and there is strong spectator support. More than 40,000 spectators who attended last season's grand final at Sydney's Aussie Stadium is testament to this fact. In addition, more than a million spectators went through the turnstiles at the 90 matches last season, with crowds averaging over 11,500.<sup>21</sup>

The audience is predominantly young - more than 65 per cent under 35 years of age. They are also broadly representative of Australia's culturally diverse population - more than 44% of the A-League's audience in the first season was at least second generation Australian (compared to 41% in the broader population).<sup>22</sup>

What is missing is the taint of ethnic problems that blighted the old soccer league. Former FFA CEO John O'Neill believes that the one-team-one-city model "would appear to have both 'united the tribes', as well as removing many barriers to supporters which existed in the past".<sup>23</sup>

The success of the Qantas Socceroos over the last 12 months has also generated a level of support and interest in the game that is quite unprecedented in this country. A Roy Morgan survey showed that 6.7 million Australians got up between one and three in the morning on 27 June to watch Australia play Italy in the recent FIFA World Cup second round match<sup>24</sup>.

Another huge shift in FFA's strategic and competitive landscape is Australia's move to membership of the Asian Football Confederation in January 2006, allowing Australia to be part of tournaments like the Asian Cup - one of the largest sports events in the world, drawing an international broadcast audience of more than a billion people.<sup>25</sup>

## Junior development

Community football is the heart and soul of the game in this country. From April to August each year, hundreds of thousands of children, parents, officials, administrators and football supporters converge on the local football grounds to play and watch Australia's largest team participation sport.<sup>26</sup>

To introduce the game to the widest audience possible, FFA runs a number of modified football programs including 'Rooball' and 'Football Anytime'.

### Rooball

*Rooball* is FFA's modified version of the game for children aged 6–12 years which aims to give young girls and boys the maximum opportunity to participate in the sport.

*Rooball* is divided into four age specific groups and is played on smaller fields with less players, fewer rules and modified equipment. As such, there is more ball contact, more goals scored, increased activity and more fun.

In *Rooball* there are no premiership points, which takes the pressure of winning off children and parents. The game encourages frequent interchanges so everyone gets equal playing time and all players are rotated so they spend time in each position on the field.

In 2006, Football Federation Northern Territory conducted the first in a series of national trials for these new age-appropriate games.<sup>27</sup> It is hoped that *Rooball* will be played in clubs and schools all year round from 2007.

### Telstra Football Anytime

*Football Anytime* is the Targeted Sports Participation Growth Program developed by FFA in conjunction with the Australian Sports Commission. The program is designed to introduce children to football through small-sided, age appropriate (5–12 years) friendly games.

*Football Anytime* allows children to play a 'free' style of football in a flexible environment, with few rules and basic coaching. Using equipment such as ball, witches hats, cones and bibs, games can be played on almost any surface and in any combination of players (eg. 4 versus 4, 6 versus 6) and either indoors or outdoors.<sup>28</sup>

FFA have worked closely with state member federations and Hyundai A-League clubs in the rollout of the program. They work with interested schools, clubs, associations and/or community groups in all aspects of the planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of the program.

Some A-League clubs have provided the opportunity for kids to participate in on-field demonstrations of the program either prior to, or at half-time, of league fixtures. A-League players have also attended many programs throughout the country to pass on tips and sign autographs.<sup>29</sup>

In excess of 3200 kids have already participated in the program since its inception in March 2006. More than 100 clubs, schools and community groups have hosted the program, which has now been rolled out in all states and territories.<sup>30</sup>



### Roar Talent Development program

The *Roar Talent Development program* is a joint venture between A-League team Queensland Roar and Football Queensland and has already been enjoyed by thousands of kids across the state.

The six-week program is designed to allow young people to get involved in football. For one hour a week accredited coaches host a fun day at schools around Brisbane that involves ball skills, playing matches and being active.<sup>31</sup>

### Active Factor Top Shots

*Active Factor Top Shots* is a club-based program which promotes training ideas and activities implemented by coaches throughout the course of the season.

Launched by FFA in May 2005, the program is aimed at 5–13 year old children who are already participating in football to help them develop basic skills, such as dribbling, passing and juggling in a fun and non-competitive environment.<sup>32</sup>

### Indigenous participation in football

While most NRL and AFL clubs have a number of Indigenous players on their roster, few A-League sides (or NSL clubs before them) have had Aboriginal representation. Similarly, despite some great Indigenous players in football over the years, such as John Moriarty, Harry Williams and Charles Perkins, very few have gone onto represent the national team.<sup>33</sup>

Apart from Australia's first Aboriginal Soccerroo, Harry Williams, who was part of the first national team to make the World Cup finals in 1974, only four other Indigenous players have donned the senior Soccerroos jersey, Kasey Wehrman, Jade North, Travis Dodd and Archie Thompson.

But the growing popularity of football in recent times and the fact that some Indigenous role models are beginning to emerge could help to change things. For example, in August 2006 in an international game versus Kuwait, for the first time in the Soccerroos' history two Indigenous players – North and Dodd – were part of the starting line-up.

Each year, the national talent identification program picks up many Indigenous players of the calibre of North and Dodd. Female players of Aboriginal heritage include Belinda Downey, Bridgette Louise Starr and Leoni Carpenter. Lachlan Wright is a star at indoor soccer and Fred Agius has played for Australia at Under-17 level in the outdoor game.<sup>34</sup>

As part of an exhaustive review into soccer coaching and junior development, FFA is currently considering ways in which it could put soccer on the map for Aboriginal youngsters, particularly those in rural communities.<sup>35</sup>

Harry Williams is also hoping to give Indigenous players a pathway to follow in his footsteps. He was involved with an Indigenous soccer tournament, 'The Harry Williams Cup', held on 10–14 July 2006, which brought Indigenous youngsters from around NSW together for a tournament, from which a state Indigenous team (the NSW Geckos) was selected.

The fact is many Indigenous players have had to overcome considerable prejudice in order to play and have put up with abuse when they played. Moriarty, the first Indigenous person to be picked for Australia, said: "We can't go on like we did with the old system. The FFA

needs to be involved in a detailed, structured way, to reach out to Aboriginal kids and bring them into football".<sup>36</sup>

Former FFA chief executive John O'Neill said: "We've lagged behind the other sports in this area, and we know we have a lot of catching up to do. We've now got some federal Government funding for Indigenous programs and we intend to do something about it".<sup>37</sup>

### Encouraging cultural diversity

Football in Australia has had no problems encouraging participation from people from a diverse, multicultural background – it was the tensions that came with this diversity that have hamstrung the sport for so many years.

However, a journalist in Brisbane's Courier Mail recently wrote: "The Socceroos, and even in their own way the A-League teams, have united Australians in a quite unprecedented manner ...it is safe to say that one sport has never before crossed social groups and ethnic communities, uniting the elderly immigrant man from Asia to the toddler in Alice Springs. Its stretch connects the banker in Martin Place to the farmer in North Queensland".<sup>38</sup>

Sydney Morning Herald football correspondent Michael Cockerill put it eloquently in a column he wrote the night Australia qualified for the World Cup in November 2005. "In a multicultural nation in a fractured world, the Socceroos can bring together the sum of their parts: Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican. German, Lebanese, Polynesian, Croatian, Italian, Melanesian, Greek. It is a rich tapestry but last night they – and we – were one thing only. Australian".<sup>39</sup>

SBS TV commentator Les Murray added: "The beauty of this Australian football team (the Socceroos) is it marries a lot of qualities the migrants brought into Australia. Their cultural qualities, technical qualities. The different cultural backgrounds and football skills, they grew up learning football skills from their father, whether Croatian or Italian background kids, and Lebanese, they all carry cultural values, and because they grew up in Australia they also have that envied 'never surrender' attitude, this never surrender attitude, work ethic and discipline".<sup>40</sup>

Football is striving to use the game as a positive vehicle for helping people from a culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to feel part of the community. Some of the events or programs to promote this goal include:

### Onside Soccer

Onside Soccer is a program that seeks to engage and motivate marginalised young people of Aboriginal heritage, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who have come in contact with the criminal justice system and young people with physical or intellectual disabilities.

The project was established following the success of the 'Kick Start' program, which was organised and conducted by Victoria Police and Collingwood Football Club in partnership with the Magistrates' Court of Victoria. This program has resulted in over 5,000 disadvantaged young people and their parents or carers attending AFL matches at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Onside Soccer aims to get young people actively involved in the sport of soccer and provide similar opportunities to attend international, national or local soccer matches. Onside soccer involves school holiday programs, coaching clinics, organising events/games and the establishment of new teams. The project also aims to increase the number of sporting fields available for new arrival and refugee communities.

### Refugee Youth Soccer Development Program

The Refugee Youth Soccer Development Program, organised by Anne Bunde-Birouste of the UNSW School of Public Health and Community Medicine, aims to use football to help promote social cohesion and build racial harmony.

The program is designed for young people between 10–25 years who have arrived in Australia as refugees. The range of activities include skills training, referee and coaching clinics, after-school and holiday camps, and workshops on fundraising, club, team and sports management.

This program is designed to build on current fledgling initiatives such as the African-Australia All Age Cup, which supports the communities in the development of their local clubs and assists them in their integration into the world of football in Australia. Football personalities Craig Foster and Andy Harper are co-patrons and are actively involved in the program's development.

### Darebin Community Strengthening Project

Funded by the Victorian Multicultural Commission, the City of Darebin has partnered with the Football Federation Victoria (FFV) to improve access to mainstream football clubs for members of small and emerging communities. Other project partners are Migrant Resource Centres and the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI).

FFV is working with soccer clubs and newly-arrived communities in the Darebin area to create cross-cultural awareness and provide avenues for community groups to get involved in football.

Sport and Recreation Victoria have supported the program until November 2006 and have produced translations of the Victorian Codes of Behaviour for junior sporting clubs, specifically for use by All Nations teams.<sup>41</sup>

### All Nations Soccer Competition

In June 2002, the first All Nations Soccer Competition was run in the City of Greater Dandenong (Victoria). All Nations is a community-based, ethno-specific, low-cost soccer competition for newly arrived young men. The CMYI partnered with Onside Soccer and FFV to assist in the delivery of the competition.

This award-winning program provides newly-arrived young people with access to a low-cost football competition, and provides opportunities to participate in sport and recreation that they may not otherwise get due to issues of resettlement, economic constraints and language barriers.



The event was postponed in 2005 due to financial constraints. However, Onside Soccer and FFV, partnering with Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES), combined to deliver a low cost competition throughout Melbourne in 2006.

In 2006, a total of 12 teams took part in competitions, split into three regions. The teams are made up of youth from all across the globe, including East Timor, West Papua, Afghanistan, Iran, and many African and Asian players. The finals carnival included a multicultural festival organised by FFV and City of Darebin, and funded by the Victorian Multicultural Commission.<sup>42</sup>

### Rising Stars Cup

The Arab Council of Australia organised and hosted the Rising Stars Cup – a one-day indoor soccer competition in July 2006 at the University of Western Sydney.

The event attracted strong interest from young Arab Australians from around Sydney. A total of 16 teams participated in the round-robin event which was open to people from Arabic speaking backgrounds between the ages of 13 and 21 years.



### Football and harmony

Football is the ‘world game’ and as such it is an ideal forum for delivering ‘living in harmony’ messages. The Professional Footballers Association (PFA) has been involved in the two successful ‘living in harmony’ activities described below.

#### PFA Equal Opportunity Education Programs and ‘Living in Harmony Cup’ – December 2000

During the 2000/01 season, the PFA conducted an extensive education program across the National Soccer League (NSL) in an attempt to remove racism from the game and promote the value of multiculturalism to Australia.

This resulted in an entire round of the NSL being dedicated to the ‘living in harmony’ message. All players across the country lined up at the start of their matches wearing ‘Give Racism a Red Card’ t-shirts and there were pitch announcements throughout all matches.

Tennis Legend Evonne Cawley kicked off the inaugural ‘Living in Harmony Cup’ between the South Melbourne Soccer Club and the Wollongong Wolves.

#### PFA Living in Harmony Education and Fun Day – May 2006

In conjunction with Jesuit Social Services, the PFA held an education and fun day with children from the Horn of African communities. PFA President Simon Colosimo, Adelaide United’s captain Ross Aloisi, Queensland Roar’s Ante Milicic were joined by David Clarkson for a clinic with 80 kids.

The clinic was followed by a question and answer session during which the footballers shared their personal stories about racism in sport and society and other experiences they have had over their careers.<sup>43</sup>

## Harmony Cup

In February 2006, Football Federation Victoria (FFV) Vodafone Cup clubs South Melbourne and Preston Lions signed a 'Statement of Harmony' ahead of the weekend's match between the two sides. The initiative will see the clubs play for the 'Harmony Cup' over two games this season.

Each side wore orange arm bands during the games to symbolise harmony between the two clubs. In keeping with this theme, young footballers from emerging migrant communities from Africa played a curtain raiser to the match, as well as accompanying players onto the field in green and gold uniforms.

FFA CEO Tony Pignata said: "Preston Lions and South Melbourne have taken the initiative to work together in building tolerance and harmony amongst their constituencies with the full support of FFV, the Victorian Multicultural Commission and Victoria Police".<sup>44</sup>

## Barriers to participation for CALD participants

Football does benefit from the fact that many new arrivals to Australia are already well acquainted with the game of football in their country of origin.

So it is important to know how best to introduce these people to a sporting club environment where they can participate on a regular, organised basis and how to overcome the barriers that can limit their ability to be involved.

Many migrants and refugees can not afford the costs associated with organised sport, such as club registration and insurance fees, taking public transport to attend training and games, and buying the necessary equipment (such as balls and boots) and club uniforms.

Keith Wise, formerly from the Football Federation Victoria, said: "New arrivals, like old arrivals, come here and want to start a new club; they also want to play with others they know and feel comfortable playing with".<sup>45</sup> This often creates a situation where, for example, Sudanese refugees are engaged and assisted to join a club, then all other people from a Sudanese background hear about this club and want to join, until effectively it ends up being a 'Sudanese team' which is playing against other teams in the competition.

This was exactly the case in South Australia, where the State League team, Western Districts Torros Soccer Club, was suffering from poor membership. To increase numbers they decided to attract refugees and migrants from an African background. As word spread about the club, more and more African migrants joined the team, until eventually most of the team was of African descent.

In the beginning there were many problems, including inter-racial fighting between teammates and fighting against other teams. Club Manager John Lupio said: "It was a nightmare for the club in terms of energy and finances"<sup>46</sup>; energy from coaches, administrators and officials to deal with all of these 'extra issues', and finances as the club picked up the bill for subsidising fees, providing boot replacement schemes and organising transport to and from matches.

The language barrier was also an issue, with many players misunderstanding Australian colloquial sayings and blaming referee decisions on 'racial bias'. "It was trial and error trying to teach coaches and administrators appropriate cultural sensitivities, particularly as some of our players were of a Muslim faith," said Lupio.<sup>47</sup>

“Now all players participate in the club, and all believe they belong and have a chance to develop as elite athletes. Acceptance is a huge element – the success of the Africans in the club was based on their perception that they were accepted by the club. This promotes confidence in their sport and in all other areas of their lives.”<sup>48</sup>

## Racism in football

While the sport today projects a new, vibrant and family-friendly image, administrators continue to be haunted by football’s troubled ethnic past and small numbers of soccer hooligans still attend games, intent on starting fights with opposing supporters.

Undoubtedly, the perpetrators are a handful of individuals intent on stoking old hatreds and rivalries – most are probably known to club administrators – but they have proved a surprisingly resilient and malign influence.<sup>49</sup>

Former Soccerooo captain Paul Wade said: “Ethnic-based violence had been damaging the game in Australia for decades and clubs that could not control their supporters should be cut from the competition. We’ve seen it so many times. It is passed down from generation to generation with some of these people. Enough’s enough”.<sup>50</sup>

But apparently enough is *not* enough. Crowd violence erupted at a game between Croatian-backed Sydney United and Serbian-supported Bonnyrigg White Eagles at the Sydney United Sports Centre in March 2005. As a result, an inquiry chaired by the head of the NSW Community Relations Commission, Stepan Kerkyasharian, was set up to investigate the incident. The subsequent report castigated Soccer NSW for failing to secure the venue and allowing fans to enter with flares, banners and a pig carcass painted with Serbian insignia.

The Inquiry also found Soccer NSW had failed to enforce a ban on foreign national flags, banners and emblems at soccer stadiums and on club logos. It recommended that clubs introduce a ticketing system to keep rowdier fans behind each goal area at the end of the field and position families along the sidelines.

Soccer NSW said it would accept the inquiry’s recommendations, including a finding that its slogan ‘*Local, Vocal, Tribal*’ supported “vocalisation of ethnic differences” and should be replaced. The association was also ordered to stop drawing on the ethnicity of clubs to market events such as the ‘Macedonian derby’.<sup>51</sup>

Despite these recommendations, the next game between the two clubs again erupted in violence causing the two teams to be suspended from the competition for the rest of the season. The NSW Parliament subsequently introduced new laws which will see violent fans banned from attending matches for up to 10 years, as well as bans on national and political symbols at soccer grounds and on club insignia. In addition, clubs will have to share information on troublemakers with police, provide separate seating for avid fans, and remove inflammatory material from club websites.<sup>52</sup>

## Member Protection Policy

FFA’s Member Protection Policy provide procedures to eliminate discrimination, harassment, child abuse and other forms of inappropriate behaviour from football.<sup>53</sup>

The policy provides codes of conduct and behaviour that form the basis of appropriate and ethical conduct which everyone in the sport must abide by.

## Anti-discrimination Policy

Under the FFA's Anti-discrimination Policy members must not engage in discriminatory behaviour, including public disparagement of, discrimination against, or vilification of, a person on account of their 'race, colour, religion, language, politics, national or ethnic origin, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, pregnancy or intellectual or physical impairment'.<sup>54</sup>

In addition, a member must not impose a requirement, condition or practice that is the same for everyone, but which has an unequal or disproportionate effect or result on particular groups. Unless this type of requirement is reasonable in all the circumstance it is likely to be indirect discrimination, even if there was never any intention to discriminate.

## Anti-harassment Policy

Under FFA's Anti-harassment Policy a member must not engage in any form of harassment, including sexual harassment or any unwelcome sexual conduct, which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated, where that reaction is reasonable in the circumstances. This may include:

- (a) written, verbal or physical abuse or threats
- (b) unwelcome physical contact
- (c) display of offensive materials
- (d) promises or threats in return for sexual favours
- (e) unwelcome sexual comments, jokes or propositions
- (f) homophobic comments or behaviours or
- (g) jokes or comments directed at a person's body, looks or attributes.<sup>55</sup>

Each Member Federation of FFA is responsible for the implementation, enforcement and education of these policies throughout its jurisdiction.<sup>56</sup>

## FFA Code of Conduct

The FFA Code of Conduct seeks to promote and strengthen the reputation of football in Australia by establishing a standard of performance, behaviour and professionalism for its participants and stakeholders.<sup>57</sup> This code applies to the conduct and behaviour of FFA, Member Federations, competition administrators, clubs, players, officials and agents.

It is a breach of the code if any of the following occurs:

- (a) discriminatory behaviour
- (b) harassment
- (c) offensive behaviour, including offensive, obscene or insulting gestures, language or chanting
- (d) incitement of hatred or violence
- (e) spectator or crowd violence
- (f) intimidation of match officials, including use of violence or threats to pressure a match official to take or omit to take certain action.<sup>58</sup>

## Spectator Code of Behaviour

A spectator at any event held by FFA, a Member Federation, a district association or a club must: 'respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, race, colour, religion, language, politics, national or ethnic origin' and 'not engage in discrimination, harassment or abuse in any form, including the use of obscene or offensive language or gestures, the incitement of hatred or violence or partaking in indecent or racist chanting'.<sup>59</sup>

They must not attempt to, or bring into a venue, national or political flags or emblems (except for the recognised national flags of any of the competing teams), or offensive or inappropriate banners, whether written in English or a foreign language.<sup>60</sup>

Any person who does not comply with the Spectator Code of Behaviour or who causes a disturbance may be evicted from a venue and banned from attending future matches.

The Spectator Code of Behaviour may be tailored for matches involving national teams or national league clubs (eg. the A-League competition has its own Spectator Code of Behaviour).

## Racial and Religious Vilification Code

Football Federation Victoria has endorsed a Racial and Religious Vilification Code, which was developed in partnership with the APFA and the Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria, to support the federal Government's 'Living in Harmony' initiative.

The objectives of this code are:

- to promote FIFA's guiding principles of fair play and ethical conduct to ensure a welcoming environment for everyone to enjoy the game of soccer regardless of their race, colour, descent or ancestry, national or ethnic origin or religious belief or activity
- to eliminate, as far as possible, racial and religious vilification amongst players, officials and spectators
- to take active measures to educate and raise awareness about the damaging effects of racial and religious vilification, and of the benefits to be derived by taking positive action to eliminate it and
- to provide redress for people involved in football who have been the victim of racial and religious vilification in an orderly and expeditious manner, and in accordance with the requirements of natural justice and procedural fairness.<sup>61</sup>

A person will be considered to have engaged in racial and religious vilification if they do an act, otherwise than in private, which:

- (a) is reasonably likely, in all the circumstances, to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person or a group of people; and
- (b) is done because of the race, colour, descent or ancestry, national or ethnic origin or religious belief or activity of the other person or of some or all of the people in the group.<sup>62</sup>



The Northern NSW Soccer Federation has also endorsed a Racial and Religious Vilification Code, which has been developed in accordance with the aims of the Australian Professional Footballers' Association and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.<sup>63</sup>

## Complaints procedure

Any person may report a complaint about a member bound by these policies if they reasonably think that they have breached the policy or have engaged in unethical or inappropriate conduct or behaviour.

FFA and the Member Federations must:

- (a) deal with any complaints about breaches of the policies promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially and in accordance with the complaints handling procedure
- (b) keep complaints confidential and not disclose to another person without the complainants consent, except if required by law or if disclosure is necessary to effectively deal with the complaint and
- (c) recognise that natural justice is the minimum standard of fairness to be applied in the investigation and adjudication of a complaint.<sup>64</sup>

On receipt of a formal complaint, FFA will appoint its Chief of Staff or General Counsel to consider the complaint or, if it considers it appropriate in the circumstances, an independent expert to investigate the complaint.<sup>65</sup>

A Member Federation must investigate complaints brought by or against its district associations, clubs, players or officials within its jurisdiction; and impose disciplinary sanctions against a party found to have breached this policy.<sup>66</sup>

## Endnotes

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/worldcup/history-pre74.shtml>.

<sup>9</sup> *Welcome to the world, Australia*, by Kevin Mitchell, *The Observer* (UK), June 18, 2006.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.footballaustralia.com.au/default.aspx?s=insideffa\\_newsfeature\\_features\\_item&id=10271](http://www.footballaustralia.com.au/default.aspx?s=insideffa_newsfeature_features_item&id=10271).

<sup>18</sup> Frank Lowy AC Chairman Football Federation Australia at [http://www.footballaustralia.com.au/default.aspx?s=insideffa\\_newsfeatures\\_newsitem&id=10414](http://www.footballaustralia.com.au/default.aspx?s=insideffa_newsfeatures_newsitem&id=10414).

<sup>19</sup> Football Federation Australia Chief Executive Officer Mr John O'Neill address to the National Press Club on July 26, 2006.

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