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## Sports World

With LAKIS KONISTIS

### RUDD GOVERNMENT BEHIND 2018 WORLD CUP BID

Australia's bid to host the 2018 World Cup has received another major boost with the Federal Government pledging A\$45.6 million (US\$30 million) to the campaign. Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said the money would be distributed over the next three years as the government and the Football Federation of Australia (FFA) try to bring the World Cup to Australia for the first time.

"Today's announcement sends a clear message to the football world that Australia is serious about hosting the 2018 FIFA World Cup," Rudd said in a statement.

Australia faces stiff opposition to host the World Cup with Belgium and the Netherlands, who are preparing a joint bid, the United States, Mexico, England, Spain and China all expressing interest in staging the tournament.

The official bidding process begins next year, with FIFA expected to announce the successful candidate by December 2010.

FFA Chairman Frank Lowy welcomed the government's support, saying Australia had a great chance of hosting the tournament. "If I didn't think so, I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't ask the government to support us for a pipedream," Lowy said in a statement. "This is not an impossible dream. It is very achievable".

Australia's proposed bid has also received strong support from the head of the Asian Football Confederation who believes the tournament should return to the region after its only previous appearance in 2002. "Our focus is on 2018 because it is a powerful way to develop football in the Asian region and Australia has the capacity to host a major sporting event in this time-frame," Lowy said.

### NICE HANDOUT... IF YOU CAN GET IT!

Good luck to Adelaide United in these tough economic times....

Ruling soccer body FIFA has been 'courting' the Reds in their quest for Club World Cup honours. Business-class flights, five-star accommodation, etc.

So far, it is rumoured that FIFA has

spent approximately \$600,000 on Adelaide United. Adelaide United have themselves gone through almost \$800,000 during their AFC Champions League journey and are expecting to make a loss of \$2 million this year.

And that is despite a \$600,000 payout for being the AFC's runner-up in Asia. As well as a guarantee of \$778,000 if they unexpectedly bowed out to New Zealand's Waitakere United in the quarter-final at Tokyo National Stadium last night.

But if the Reds manage to get through to the next stage, they could earn themselves a massive \$2.33 million (for 5th place) or \$1.55m (for 6th).

In the meantime, the Reds have most certainly welcomed FIFA's generosity at such a crucial time for the club.

### BETEZY BONANZA FOR ALL OUR LOYAL "SPORTSWORLD" READERS!

What a great run we are having with the "Betezy Bet-Of-The-Week"!

Not only has "The Scotsman" from Betezy landed 2/2 lays so far through this column but last week, all "Sportsworld" readers struck gold with the Winner, Quinella and the Exacta in the the Kingston Town Classic at Ascot.

"I like three horses Niconero, Gilded Venom and Annenkov. If we bet these three at best tote we will be eating lobster Saturday night", said the Scotsman.

And he was 100% right!

In fact, he almost tipped the trifecta in order as well!

Niconero won the race (\$5.20 on the NSW TAB), Gilded Venom ran second (Quinella paid \$25.40 and the Exacta paid a beautiful \$47.90), and the other horse ran fourth!

We truly enjoyed the lobster on Saturday night and I hope you all collected some money on Saturday afternoon.

### THIS WEEK?

Here's what The Scotsman has to say for this weekend: "To all my followers I said we would be eating lobster on Saturday night after Niconero won and my other selection Gilded Venom ran the Quinella / Exacta .

I really enjoyed the Moet with my lobster. Life is great . This week I am stepping out of the square as the Australian Open is on. I think Geoff Ogilvy is great odds at 7/1 before the start of play along with John Senden at 20/1 each way.

I am off now to count how much I can afford to buy flowers for my wife.

Good Punting, from The Scotsman at Betezy".

### A-LEAGUE TRIVIA.....

Did you know that Wellington Phoenix are on a three match home winning streak? A feat that no other New Zealand team has ever achieved in Hyundai A-League history?

Did you know both the Central Coast Mariners and Sydney FC have scored the most number of goals of any pair of Hyundai A-League teams? In 12 previous encounters between the Central Coast Mariners and Sydney FC, 45 goals have been scored – that's an average of 3.75 goals per game.

In their five previous encounters at Suncorp Stadium, Queensland Roar has never scored a goal against the Newcastle Jets- having lost 0-1 four times, and 0-3 in the remaining match!

Back in 2006, on this very round, Melbourne Victory moved to an astounding 13 point lead at the top of the ladder after Round 15.

### WHAT CREDIT CRUNCH ASKS REAL MADRID

What global credit crunch? Not at Real Madrid it seems. Want to revitalise a sick and sorry national economy?

Try a few big interest rate cuts to encourage spending first. And if that doesn't work, then go shopping for some quality players! That seems to be the plan for Real Madrid, who have had a miserable start to the season.



Huntelaar begins the spending.

The ongoing turmoil engulfing the Spanish giant continues to rage as another week passed with further ructions. And the angry scenes following Sunday's tumultuous 4-3 home defeat to Sevilla was not even the most heated event of the weekend.

That came at a stormy annual general meeting during which club members screamed for the resignation of president Ramon Calderon and only approved Real's financial budget by a narrow margin.

With its bid for the La Liga title slipping away rapidly and the vultures circling, it is increasingly likely that Calderon will try to spend his way out of trouble next month.

A deal to sign Dutch striker Klaas Jan Huntelaar from Ajax for \$25 million has already gone through, but expect more big names to follow.

Once again, Cristiano Ronaldo is likely to come into the equation as Calderon knows that if he could pull off a blockbuster deal for Manchester United's Portuguese winger it would ease the pressure on him considerably.

In any case, the cash that Real throws around in January should stimulate a market that may otherwise have been reasonably flat. It could be the last throw of the dice for Calderon as he fights to save Real's season- and his own position.

### ROMAN TIGHTENS THE STRINGS

Roman Abramovich on the other hand looks set to tighten the Chelsea purse strings after taking a absolute battering courtesy of the atrocious global market conditions.

The Chelsea owner's billions have started to dwindle, after being hit by the global economic downturn and the decline in his business profits.

Don't worry too much though. Abramovich won't starve any time soon.

However, several of his key investments have fared poorly in the current market, among them multinational steel producer Evraz, which has seen drastic drops in value after the Russian ploughed \$3.2 billion of his wealth into it.

Abramovich has introduced a new policy of frugality at Chelsea, a far cry from the early days of his reign when the club appeared to be treated as his personal plaything and vast sums were splashed about.

The days of big spending in the transfer market appear to have gone, leaving head coach Luiz Felipe Scolari with no choice but to work with what the squad he already has at his disposal.

Are they good enough to win the League? No.