



Weekly publication edited by the George Stavroulakis

A-League clubs demand 14 team league

The Australian Professional Football Club's Association (APFCA) has released a statement demanding the A-League is expanded to 14 teams.

The APFCA - the representative group for A-League clubs - has been vocal in pressuring FFA to accelerate the expansion process.

Their most recent statement highlights the benefits of moving to 14 teams, and eventually 16.

The statement includes the group's own criteria for a successful A-League expansion franchise and rejects FFA's validity in selecting two new A-League teams.

"FFA management and expansion policies to date have witnessed at least nine license turnovers or failures for financial reasons," the group's statement said.

"The APFCA believes that it is essential that the 10-team A-League expands in a strategic and sustainable way, as quickly as possible.

"Ultimately, the ambition must be to expand to numbers that will allow for a season based only on home-and-away fixtures.

"Such a schedule will require at least 14 participating clubs and optimally 16. The benefits of achieving a home-and-away fixture schedule are clearly evidenced by existing leagues around the world.

"Moreover, there will also be the additional benefits created by new derbies and rivalries.

"These positive developments will enhance both the international credibility and commercial viability of the League and will in turn create ongoing benefits for the whole Australian football family."

FFA will announce two new A-League clubs in October, with FFA boss Greg O'Rourke recently responding to calls for more than two clubs to be added to the 10-team league by saying rushing expansion could create additional problems.

"The answer is no," O'Rourke told The World Game. "We won't be looking beyond two teams at this point because we need to make sure this is structured properly from a player depth point of view and also a financial point of view."

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a) Predicated on extensive pre-assessment of potential markets and associated licenses, including:

- i. Demographic modelling
- ii. Assessment of available revenue streams
- iii. Cost of required infrastructure and available infrastructure
- iv. The potential of planned football operations

b) Based on the market size of the intended geographic location - i.e. greater value placed on key television markets such as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane;

c) Benchmarked against the potential enterprise values of existing clubs so as to maintain the values and investments of existing clubs;

d) Used to effect the required annual

capital, revenue and/or membership;

- Details as to how they intend to finance the acquisition of the licence;
- Details as to how they intend to fund the ongoing operations of the club.

• Details about persons involved in the prospective bid, including relevant experience across sport/football, business management, marketing and media experience. The APFCA's criteria places greater emphasis on capitalising on larger markets such as Sydney and Melbourne, with FFA's criteria leaving open the possibility of expanding to new markets.

In contrast, it holds social media engagement and marketing experience in less stead, instead focusing on "television markets".

Like FFA, the APFCA have remained coy on the introduction of promotion and relegation, safeguarding the future of their existing football clubs.

"It is also the shared view of the APFCA membership that a fully-expanded League model must be achieved and sustained before the introduction of promotion and relegation can be considered," the statement continued.

"For promotion and relegation to be achieved it is imperative that a second-tier of Australian football is established and evolved in order to create appropriate football and economic proximity between the two tiers.

"Only in this way can the second-tier produce promoted clubs with the capacity to compete in the A-League and at the same time receive relegated A-League clubs without catastrophic economic impact for the relegated club."

