

A-LEAGUE HOPEFULS ACCUSED OF WAGE THEFT

A-League aspirants South Melbourne FC have been accused of wage theft by current and former players and staff. South are currently part of NPL VIC and have been pushing to join the A-League as part of the expansion project.

In the past two years, South have tried to ensure they're ready to return to Australian football's top flight and said they have the facilities, money and history to compete in the A-League.

However not everybody agrees, as a number of former and current players and employees have alleged the club has failed with its duty of care.

FTBL contacted Professional Footballers Australia (PFA) who confirmed they had South players approach them.

The PFA said they provided legal advice and assistance to players who approached the union.

"While the PFA does not comment directly on individual cases, the PFA can confirm it has been approached by players in relation to the enforcement of overdue payments from South Melbourne," a PFA spokesperson said.



Football Federation Victoria (FFV) told FTBL they were unaware of the allegations and declined to comment.

FTBL contacted South president Leo Athanasakis who denied all allegations that any current or former player or employee is owed money.

However, FTBL spoke to staff, current and ex-players who claimed the opposite.

Among them was one current South player, who did not want to be named, who contacted FTBL and said he was desperate to put pressure on the club to deliver.

The player said the PFA was aware, however had not contacted the FFV, adding it would be a tedious process waiting for their action.

He said players get paid monthly and alleged that some of his teammates were owed wages from August and September.

"I've tried to do everything the right way and to speak to them about it and they just don't want a bar of it, so this was the last resort," he said.

"It's not about me, it's just that I know there are boys that need the money a lot more than I do.

"Some of the guys rely on it and it's just not fair. I need something to happen.

"The whole back office is a shambles, the club is in

a bad way and they will lose a lot of players during the off-season and that's why they're holding out the money, so I'm just trying to force their hand."

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