



By George Stavroulakis

Expansion verdict on hold...

The day we were all waiting for finally came and went, with no one bar a few possibly tight-lipped FFA board members any the wiser.



After a five hour boardroom meeting, FFA has delayed the announcement of two successful expansion bids, with a decision now expected to be announced at a press conference at 12pm tomorrow (AEST).

Many pundits are backing Team 11, Canberra, West Melbourne and Macarthur South West Sydney as the frontrunners at this late stage, but it's still possible that no decision will be made, or expansion could be delayed until a later stage.

Macarthur South West Sydney began its life as a relatively low profile entrant, but has quickly joined Team 11 in garnering support in key areas.

A key pillar of their bid was the promise of an element of community ownership, in a similar model to that of the German Bundesliga, in combination with financial backing from Lang Walker, CEO of the Walker Group.

Team 11 are set to build a 20,000 seater 'Dandenong Stadium' with funding from the Victorian state government and centered their campaign largely around the community benefits of a professional sports club in the Dandenong region.

Macarthur joined forces with South West Sydney FC before the FFA cut down expansion bids into a six team shortlist, while they also rejected a reported \$20 million offer from Hong Kong-backed Southern Expansion to merge before the announcement.

Macarthur - which will represent South West Sydney - is backed by the Campbelltown City Council, while Team 11 is a three-way effort between Casey, Dandenong and Cardinia Shire Councils and will represent the Greater Dandenong region.

The Canberra A-League bid would be based at the 25,000 capacity GIO Canberra Stadium, a rectangular stadium that they will share with NRL club the Canberra Raiders.

The bid were another relatively late inclusion, spearheaded by local businessman Jeff Williamson, alongside entrepreneur Michael Caggiano and lawyer Bede Gahan.

Like the Macarthur South West Sydney bid, Canberra will follow a fan-owned model. The bid have announced plans to build a \$30 million training facility in the nation's capital if successful.

West Melbourne originally began life as the Geelong-based bid Victoria Patriots, which quickly folded in favour of a bid based in the broader Western suburbs of Melbourne.

The bid retained a low public profile throughout the expansion process, but announced a privately funded plan for a 15,000 seater stadium in Melbourne's west, backed by Wyndham City Council.

Southern Expansion and South Melbourne FC are the other two bids remaining in the six bid shortlist.

BIG CITY BIDS WIN FFA EXPANSION GREEN LIGHT - REPORTS

The entry of SWS has been delayed at the request of Western Sydney Wanderers who have been petitioning the FFA for a year of clear air to rebuild their fanbase at their new stadium home in Parramatta.

Fairfax and News Corp press say Western Melbourne Group are set to get the green light immediately so work can start on the club's own stadium, which was the centrepiece of their bid.

They will play out of Kardinia Park in Geelong in the interim during the promised three year construction phase.

The reported immediate backing for the West Melbourne bid is a slight surprise.

Team 11 looked to be the FFA favourite, while others may have expected that if any bid was going to be given a delayed entry it would be Western Melbourne.

That would allow stadium construction to begin in tandem with the club's creation and mean the club only played two seasons in Geelong, rather than its first three years.

Western Melbourne Group has been



fronted by Australian super agent Lou Sticca and Geelong-born former Soccerro Steve Horvat, backed by a team of mysterious businessmen who have kept their identities secret during the bidding process.

The bid has promised to reveal their backers to the public if they are successful.

The Macarthur South-West Sydney bid is a merger between the two rival bids around the Campbelltown area, led by millionaire businessman Gino Marra.

It won the support of Sydney FC - which was facing a battle for fans with rival bid South Sydney Expansion - but was a concern to the Wanderers who felt it was infringing on their catchment area.

A-League Results ROUND 7

Western Sydney Wanderers 2 v Central Coast Mariners 0
Sydney FC 1 v Wellington Phoenix 3
Melbourne Victory 2 v Adelaide United 0
Perth Glory 1 v Melbourne City 0
Newcastle Jets 2 v Brisbane Roar 0



A - League table ROUND 6

	Team	GP	Pts	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-
1	Perth Glory	7	17	5	2	0	13	7	6
2	Melbourne Victory	7	15	5	0	2	16	7	9
3	Sydney FC	7	11	3	2	2	11	8	3
4	Adelaide United	7	11	3	2	2	10	8	2
5	Melbourne City	7	10	3	1	3	8	8	0
6	Newcastle Jets	7	8	2	2	3	7	8	-1
7	WS Wanderers	7	8	2	2	3	8	11	-3
8	Wellington Phoenix	7	8	2	2	3	7	11	-4
9	Brisbane Roar	7	6	1	3	3	7	9	-2
10	Central Coast Mariners	7	2	0	2	5	6	16	-10

Round 8 FIXTURES

Friday 14th December

Brisbane Roar v Melbourne Victory - Suncorp Stadium - 7:50pm

Saturday 15th December

Wellington Phoenix v Central Coast Mariners - Westpac Stadium - 5:35pm

Western Sydney Wanderers v Sydney FC - ANZ Stadium - 7:50pm

Sunday 16th December

Newcastle Jets v Perth Glory - McDonald Jones Stadium - 5pm