

nsw



By George Stavroulakis

Western Melbourne Group spokesman Steve Horvat has announced the club's name, colours and badge will be revealed "sooner rather than later".

Western Melbourne Group will enter the Hyundai A-League in the 2019/20 season, FFA announced on Thursday, leaving less than a year before the Victorian-based team plays their first official match.

That means time is of the essence but ex-Australia defender Steve Horvat said the people behind the winning bid would "engage with the community" before making key decisions about the club's identity.

"We've run a campaign over the past few months on our social media pages," Horvat told reporters.

"We've run polls about colours, about names, about badges, people have sent in strip designs, badge designs and things like that.

"We will run a process where we engage with the community.

"We are a team for all of the west [of Melbourne]. We held a fan forum here in Wyndham [in August].

"We'll be doing the same in places like Ballarat, Geelong and many through the western region of Melbourne over the next month to really get a sense of what the fans want from this club.

"Sooner rather than later, we [will] look to firm up names, colours and identity for the club."

Horvat said the reaction to the announcement was significant from football fans in the west of Melbourne and added there would be "some huge announcements" just around the corner.

"It's really exciting. In terms of football operations, 24 hours ago, we didn't exist," he said.

"People are tweeting and messaging us [saying] 'how do we get memberships?'

"These things will be sorted out over the next couple of weeks and we look forward to making some huge announcements, both in player signings, coaches and people who are running the club and established in the community."

Horvat also re-iterated his excitement about the club's new stadium in Tarneit - a suburb 25km west of Melbourne and 50km north-east of Geelong.

Western Melbourne Group's Hyundai A-League team will play out of Geelong's Kardinia Park for their first two seasons before moving to a purpose-built and privately owned stadium.

The stadium will have an adjoining training and administration complex and Horvat feels the site will help "put our game on the map in this country".

"We wanted to have the ability to create something and via our agreement and partnership with Wyndham [City Council], we've been able to do that where football, for the first time in this country, will be the major owner and beneficiary of a stadium," he said.

"That means incredible ability to shape the way game day looks, the way the stadium is decked out in our colours, unlike anywhere in this country.

"That's what really excites us as a group. Not only to represent the west but to really make a statement and put our game on the map in this country and to be able to take control of our destiny."

NEW MELBOURNE CLUB A WIN FOR VICTORY: MUSCAT

Kevin Muscat believes the addition of a third Victorian club to the Hyundai A-League is a positive opportunity for Melbourne Victory to accelerate their own growth.

"There are so many positives - whether the teams are from Melbourne or somewhere else in the country," he said.

"It's a good challenge for us to get even better, to work harder, to make sure we stay ahead, to make sure push further away. Another derby, another team in Melbourne, great."

VUJICA EMBRACES EXPANSION

Newcastle Jets defender Ivan Vujica has welcomed news of the impending expansion of the Hyundai A-League as a big boost to football in Australia.

"I think it's great," said left-back Vujica, who spent several seasons in Croatia.

"The more games we get to play, the better for us. It's also great if more fans come along and more people get involved in the game.

"There are more opportunities for young players to come through the ranks and it's ultimately better for Australia."

A-League Results ROUND 8

Adelaide United- Melbourne City 0-2
Newcastle Jets-Perth Glory 0-2
WS Wanderers-Sydney FC 1-3
Wellington Phoenix-Central Coast Mariners 2-0
Brisbane Roar- Melbourne Victory 2-4



A - League table ROUND 8

	Team	GP	Pts	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-
1	Perth Glory	8	20	6	2	0	15	7	8
2	Melbourne Victory	8	18	6	0	2	20	9	11
3	Sydney FC	8	14	4	2	2	14	9	5
4	Melbourne City	8	13	4	1	3	10	8	2
5	Adelaide United	8	11	3	2	3	10	10	0
6	Wellington Phoenix	8	11	3	2	3	9	11	-2
7	Newcastle Jets	8	8	2	2	4	7	10	-3
8	WS Wanderers	8	8	2	2	4	9	14	-5
9	Brisbane Roar	8	6	1	3	4	9	13	-4
10	Central Coast Mariners	8	2	0	2	6	6	18	-12

Round 9 Fixtures

DATE	HOME	AWAY	VENUE	Kick-Off (AEDT)
Friday, 21 December 2018	Perth Glory	Sydney FC	nib Stadium	9:00PM
Saturday, 22 December 2018	Wellington Phoenix	Brisbane Roar FC	Westpac Stadium	5:35PM
Saturday, 22 December 2018	Melbourne City FC	Melbourne Victory	AAMI Park	7:50PM
Sunday, 23 December 2018	Central Coast Mariners	Newcastle Jets	Central Coast Stadium	5:00PM
Wednesday, 26 December 2018	Adelaide United	Western Sydney Wanderers FC	Coopers Stadium	7:50PM