



By George Stavroulakis

THE QUESTIONS THE FFA BO

THE BOARD OF FOOTBALL FEDERATION AUSTRALIA MEETS FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY SINCE AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION SACKED ALLEN STAJCIC IN DECEMBER 2018 AND ALMOST A MONTH LATER, KEY QUESTIONS STILL REMAIN UNANSWERED OVER THE SHOCK DECISION.



Stajcic, 45, was sacked just months out from the start of the 2019 Women's World Cup in France after almost five years in the role and overseeing the Matildas rise to be ranked fourth in the world last year.

The axe fell after surveys by Professional Footballers Australia and One Watch found issues needing to be addressed within the team structure – but specifically neither of them recommended anyone should be sacked over their findings.

The PFA had sanctioned a planned workshop Stajcic had arranged with players and coaching staff to address the issues as the most appropriate way to deal with any problems. **But despite** that, elements within the FFA chose to escalate the issue rapidly, forcing an emergency FFA board meeting conference call before Stajcic's dramatic exit the following day.

Questions have been raised about the validity of the surveys, who filled them in and who didn't, the answers given, and the follow up investigations conducted.

There have also been concerns over the way information was leaked about Stajcic's exit before he was even interviewed by FFA executives, and the subsequent conduct of board members and selective leaks and allegations made.

Speculation continues to grow about the role key FFA executives have played in the recent oversight of the Matildas and the subsequent move against Stajcic and its eyewatering swiftness.

Since the row exploded – dominating headlines while the Socceroos were defending their Asian Cup crown in the UAE and infuriating FFA's commercial partners – deputy chair Heather Reid has stood down for personal health reasons just two months after she was elected.

Three other members of the Matildas coaching staff have also resigned in disgust over Stajcic's dismissal, but Stajcic himself has not yet been replaced, despite the WWC now being just four months' away and CEO David Gallop initially insisting the coach would be replaced within days.

Stajcic himself is unable to discuss the case under the terms of his contract termination, but people close to the family say he is still baffled by the decision, while his wife Brenda is said to be distraught.

Many of the Matildas have spoken out in support of their former coach, while others have demanded his reinstatement. More have also been infuriated that their comments in the survey have been taken out of context and used against him.

The PR nightmare reached new levels of farce over the weekend when the original PFA survey was discovered online and fans began videoing themselves filling in their own results. It was later shutdown after the URL was published on Twitter.

Now veteran Australian football executive Stefan Kamasz has demanded answers from the newly-elected FFA board over how the debacle has unfolded.

"The recent sacking has raised the ire of many football fans, female players and ex-players, including former and current Matildas," Kamasz said.

"The board has yet to provide clear, transparent reasons why. Although it seems impossible Stajcic will be reinstated, the football public is demanding answers.

"The promised transparency has not been forthcoming and has served to generate different theories on why he was dismissed."

He added: "I and many other football followers are demanding answers."

Kamasz has now assembled a list of the key questions the board must now ask at today's board meeting - and then answer them clearly to the public.

According to Kamasz, a former general manager of the National Soccer League, Sydney FC general manager and interim chief executive with Football NSW, the FFA board needs to address key questions including:

If there is indeed a supposed toxic culture involving other members of staff, why have there not been any other sackings?

Our Watch Report

- Why were Our Watch contacted by FFA?
- On who's recommendation, and in what context, was their involvement requested?
- Which group of people (not names) were required to complete the survey (eg ex-Matildas, current Matildas, parents, coaching and ancillary staff etc.)?
- How many people were provided with surveys to complete?
 - Were these surveys password protected or guaranteed to be secure?
- Who in FFA determined the number and which people should participate in the survey?
 - It has been suggested in the media that some 280 surveys were issued and that 142 responses were received, with only 3 of these from Matildas and 1 from a Socceroo. Is this correct?
 - Why weren't all members of the Matildas' staff involved in the survey?
- Who in FFA has been responsible for obtaining and dealing with the results of the survey?
 - Has the Board seen a copy of the OW Report and is it satisfied the Report does represent the responses provided?
- OW has indicated that there was not a recommendation to sack the coach. Is this correct?
- If this is the case, why was the survey referenced publicly in Alen Stajcic's sacking?
- Was the OW survey actually a factor in the recommendation to sack Alen Stajcic?