



By George Stavroulakis

MUSCAT: 'IT'S A VERY EMOTIONAL SUBJECT FOR KOSTA'

Kevin Muscat has admitted star Kiwi striker Kosta Barbarouses was impacted by Friday's Christchurch terrorist attack, which has claimed 50 lives.



Barbarouses was born in the New Zealand capital of Wellington and lived there as recently as 2017, when playing with the Wellington Phoenix. **After scoring** in last night's 2-1 win for Melbourne Victory over Brisbane Roar, Barbarouses offered a touching celebration in tribute for the victims of Friday's terrorist attack, in which two Christchurch mosques were targeted in shooting sprees. **«On behalf** of the club, our condolences go to everybody across in Christchurch," Muscat said. **"I can't** imagine what the families of everybody affected are going through so on behalf of Melbourne Victory, our condolences. **"In relation** to Kosta, it's certainly a very emotional subject when you're speaking to someone so just seeing Kosta and how he was, I didn't feel the need to have that conversation with him, especially prior to the game and he responded tonight from the affects from his country very well.» **On a** personal level, this season has shown a new level to Barbarouses' game

as Muscat has taken to deploying him in a central, striker role. **It's allowed** the former winger to vastly increase his goal output, with Barbarouses already exceeding his Victory goal tally from his previous spell at the club, in nearly half the amount of games. **Last night's** brace also takes him to equal second in the league for goals scored, with 13 strikes in 22 appearances (with three assists). **"To Kosta** himself, we've asked and we worked on him playing a different role," Muscat continued. **"All the** cries at the start of the year were that he's not a striker and he needs to get out on the touchline and play out wide, but I certainly saw something within the framework that we've got, that he'll get chances and when he's facing the opponent's goal. **"When he's** running towards that opponent's goal, he's dangerous and he's been rewarded tonight and the team has been rewarded with a performance that earned three points."

Stajcic: 'It was heart attack material'

Welcome to the A-League, Alen Stajcic. Or maybe it's just the Central Coast Mariners...

Regardless of how everyone came to be in the Hunter on a rainy Saturday afternoon - Stajcic admitting both he and his side are starting from the bottom - the Mariners are off to a winning start under the ex-Matildas boss, in an F3 Derby no less. **«It was** heart attack material that's for sure, if you wrote a movie script it would probably turn out something like that,» Stajcic said.



«I've been here for five minutes so it's a fantastic win for the group, we always knew we were starting from the bottom and that we'd have to grind it out at times. **«Hopefully this** is just the starting point of being able to attack the remaining games with vigour.» **After a** tense opening first half in which the Mariners failed to register a shot, the floodgates opened first through Jordan Murray, then Jem Karacan and finally, what turned out to be the winner, through Connor Pain. **Newcastle struck** back twice as the Mariners attempted to shoot themselves in the foot again, but two Ben Kennedy penalty saves (after the first had to be retaken) managed to secure all three points for Stajcic's side. **«They've lost** a lot of moments in matches, we still didn't put 90 minutes together today and that's something we have to address moving forward,» the new gaffer continued. **«We've all** started from a dark place and when you're at the bottom you can either lay down and die or stand up and fight. **«They've got** the capacity, hopefully they can improve on everything.»

A LEAGUE Results 22 ROUND

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



A - LEAGUE Table 21 Round

	Team	GP	Pts	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-
1	Perth Glory	22	51	15	6	1	47	20	27
2	Sydney FC	22	42	13	3	6	36	24	12
3	Melbourne Victory	22	41	12	5	5	44	28	16
4	Wellington Phoenix	22	34	9	7	6	37	30	7
5	Melbourne City	22	33	9	6	7	28	25	3
6	Adelaide United	22	31	8	7	7	27	28	-1
7	Newcastle Jets	22	26	7	5	10	28	28	0
8	WS Wanderers	22	20	5	5	12	35	46	-11
9	Brisbane Roar	22	15	3	6	13	30	52	-22
10	Central Coast Mariners	22	10	2	4	16	27	58	-31

Next 23 Round

- 29.03.2019**
19:50 Brisbane Roar - Sydney FC
- 30.03.2019**
17:35 Wellington Phoenix - Newcastle Jets
19:50 WS Wanderers - Melbourne City
22:00 Perth Glory - Melbourne Victory
- 31.03.2019**
17:00 Central Coast Mariners - Adelaide United