



**It's the** latest in a series of vital measures put in place by the FFA in response to the ongoing spread of COVID-19.

**We caught** up with James Johnson following Tuesday's announcement.

**Q: It's an unprecedented time for football in Australia and around the world, how has the game worked to respond to the evolving circumstances around COVID-19?**

**Johnson:** We've had to take some extremely difficult decision as an organisation over the last 10 weeks. If you remember we started with the Westfield Matildas, ensuring they were safe, not allowing them to go to China and bring the Olympic Qualifiers back to Australia and since then we've had to take a number of decisions.

**Overnight, we've** had to finally decide to postpone the Hyundai A-League for the foreseeable future, we've taken this with a heavy heart, it's been a very difficult decision but the reason we've taken this decision is to ensure our players, our fans and our community are safe.

**We've also** taken this decision because we want to be a good citizen in the public and help the Australian community slow the spread of the virus.

**With the Hyundai A-League now postponed, how will football be proactive in the decision making in the coming weeks as this virus takes its course?**

**Johnson:** The virus is unpredictable. It's moving very quickly and we've seen this all around the world.

**What we** need to do as a game is we need to be listening, we need to be getting the latest advice and then we need to be basing our decisions on facts, on figures, on reason and on logic. So that we can hopefully resume the game we all love as soon as possible.

**Q: The Australian football community has really come together in recent weeks, what has pleased you the most of how the game has responded?**

**Johnson:** The way the game has responded has been one of unity. I've been very happy

that when we took the decision that affected grassroots football, we did it in close cooperation with our Member Federations, where we were able to reach unanimous decisions.

**We were** also able to reach unanimous decisions with our Hyundai A-League club owners. For the first time in a long time you have the Australian football community that is united behind one voice.

**We've responded** very quickly, we've responded rapidly to many of the challenges that we've faced as a game. What's really impressed me is the ability of the Australian football community to be united and come together during this difficult period.

**Q: What's your message to football community, right from grassroots to the elite level?**

**Johnson:** We are resilient. We are resilient as people, as football people, we are resilient as a football community and we'll ride through this like we've ridden through difficult circumstances in the past.

**Stay resilient,** stay united, we'll get through this and we'll be stronger for it.

**Q: While football at all levels is on hold for the moment, how can the football community continue to stay involved in the game?**

**Johnson:** While football isn't being played at the moment, I think one important aspect we need to maintain is that spirit of community, that spirit of being connected to the football community.

**What we'll** be doing over the coming weeks is issuing a suite of different projects so we can continue to engage, we can continue to be connected as a football community.

**We'll be** looking at social projects, we'll be looking at technical projects that children can play and develop their skills in their own backyards, we're looking at podcasts where we can talk about great historic moments of Australian football.

**So stay** active and stay connected as we get through this crisis.

# WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS AND BE STRONGER FOR IT': FFA CEO JAMES JOHNSON'S MESSAGE TO AUSTRALIA'S FOOTBALL COMMUNITY

Football Federation Australia Chief James Johnson has urged Australia's football community to 'stay active and stay connected' as the game works through the changes precipitated by COVID-19.