



* Embargoed until 4pm on 28 May 2008 *

Football Federation Australia and UNICEF team up for children

Football Federation Australia (FFA) and UNICEF Australia today launched a new partnership to benefit vulnerable children in Australia and throughout the Asia Pacific region.

Frank Lowy AC, Chairman of the FFA, announced the partnership in Sydney today, on the eve of the opening of the FIFA World Congress.

The FFA joins FIFA and a prestigious group of global football bodies, clubs and players partnering with UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund).

The partnership follows in the footsteps of FIFA's support for UNICEF through the FIFA World Cup and Women's World Cup, UNICEF's partnerships with Barcelona FC, Manchester United and Real Madrid, and support by UNICEF Ambassadors such as David Beckham and Harry Kewell.

Ben Buckley, the FFA's CEO said the entire football family is thrilled to partner with UNICEF.

"Football has the power to unite children all over the world," Mr Buckley said.

"Football in Australia is going through a growth period and what better way to take advantage of this than to join the global football community in its partnership with UNICEF to help vulnerable children throughout our region."

Initially, the FFA partnership will support UNICEF community development programs for children in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere in south-east Asia, as well as Indigenous communities within Australia.

In addition, donations collected at the Qantas Socceroos FIFA World Cup qualifying match against Iraq at Suncorp Stadium on Sunday 1 June will support projects for children in Iraq.

"Sport and play are important to UNICEF because they are vital elements in the health, happiness and well-being of children and young people," UNICEF CEO Carolyn Hardy said.

"UNICEF achieves results and together with the FFA, we will use sport-based programs to deliver important messages about child health and well being, improve children's lives and strengthen communities. Outreach to FFA supporters in Australia will provide vital funds for these programs," she said.

The partnership for children is being promoted extensively at the upcoming World Cup qualifying matches in Australia and overseas through match day announcements, advertisements featuring QANTAS Socceroo ambassadors and promotion to Football Australia supporters.

UNICEF relies on voluntary donations, and members of the public are encouraged to support the Indigenous Australian and Asia Pacific projects the FFA is supporting by calling 1300 884 233 or visiting www.footballaustralia.com.au or www.unicef.org.au

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THE PLAYING FIELD**