



**FOOTBALL FEDERATION**  
**TASMANIA**

COMPILATION OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED BY  
FOOTBALL FEDERATION TASMANIA ON THE  
REVIEW OF THE SOUTHERN COMPETITION  
STRUCTURE

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***CLUB SUBMISSIONS***

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# CLUB SUBMISSIONS



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**CLUB: New Town Eagles SC**

**SUBMITTED BY: Darren Frost, President**

**DATE RECEIVED: 11/4/07**

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New Town Eagles Soccer Club Committee have discussed this issue several times & we all agree that we want to keep the Premier League set up ( Seniors, Reserves & U/19) Followed by Division 1, Division 1 reserves & a U/19 Competition.

We feel that changing it to a Senior, U/21 set up will disadvantage some clubs while making it easier for those clubs that have never bothered to develop a junior set up.

We will not accept any other system other than the option that I have just mentioned.

I'm sure most clubs feel the same way except a few Premier clubs that have done nothing to look after their juniors. They just think it's better to play players to come and play for their senior sides than bring through their own players.



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**CLUB: DOSA SC**

**SUBMITTED BY: Richard Korn, President**

**DATE RECEIVED: 16/4/07**

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**Re: Northern suburbs-DOSA Soccer Club submission on FFT League structures**

Northern suburbs-DOSA S.C. would like to submit the following points for consideration, as per email received from yourself regarding the above matter:

We believe a two tier (seniors and reserves) Premier League of eight teams, supported by a two tier (seniors and reserves) eight team Division One with no clubs allowed to have teams in both these competitions and promotion/relegation at the end of each season between the two leagues would be the best set up for the future of southern Tasmanian soccer. Teams entered into leagues below this (Division two, three, four, five, etc.) would not be required to have reserve teams or other similar criteria, though promotion/relegation between these leagues should be considered.

The two clubs currently in Division One who are also in Premier League (Kingborough and South Hobart) as well as the 2007 last placed team [outside of these two clubs] should be relegated into what is currently Division Two, thus creating two eight team leagues both supported by reserves competitions. These two leagues should consist of a 21 game season, as well as a summer cup 'pre-season' competition along the lines of what is currently run and the 'Milan Lakoseljak' cup. This could lead to the possibility of some teams playing approximately 30 games. We do not believe this would be excessive, but believe less than 23-24 odd games in all competitions is inadequate value for money for registration fees considering few players will have opportunity to play all games.

Points to be considered include:

**Compulsory underage competition supporting Premier League/Division One**

- We have seen no empirical evidence to suggest compulsory underage teams such as an u21 team develops youth as by this age most players who are capable will already be playing at a high level.
- Compulsory youth teams often leads to players doubling up games.
- If clubs don't develop youth they will suffer over time regardless of the league structure in place

**Teams in Premier League**

- The depth of talent doesn't appear to be there for a ten team competition as evidenced by the gap between first and tenth each season.



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- 8 teams over time will tend to spread the players out more and make for a more even competition

### **Premier League Clubs in Division One**

- Allowing Premier League teams in Division One diminishes its standing as the second tier competition with promotion to the Premier League, encouraging concentration of talent in the Premier League clubs.
- It opens the players selected by Premier League aligned clubs to the suspicion of team stacking (despite team stacking rules this will always be the case).
- Having only non-Premier League clubs in Division One makes the promotion path clear for the top team (does the second team play off if a PL team wins the league? Is it right that a team finishing second in Div 1 can be promoted?)
- Not having Premier League clubs in Division One will tend to spread the talent around the clubs



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**CLUB: NELSON EASTERN SUBURBS**

**SUBMITTED BY: Michael Roach, President**

**DATE RECEIVED: 26/4/07**

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Nelson supports the **Two Tier Option 3** position.

**Seniors & Reserves with an optional U19 league open to both Premier & Division 1.**

*Our actual preference is for an optional U18 league but this is not an option in your paper.*

### **Reasons**

This option provides maximum flexibility for promotion relegation etc & can reward a club with two strong senior teams. We don't see a need for U21 league to replace open age reserves. Current benchmarking requirements for clubs to run youth teams will see senior clubs developing youth players & bringing them through to senior teams.

Running an U21 league as the 2nd tier of a two tier system would be unworkable for current Division 1 clubs. In division 1 players from 17 to 20 will tend to be selected in the senior team & most clubs will not have sufficient players in this age group to field a 2nd tier at all. In fact I don't believe you would have a Div 1 League at present if you placed this benchmark, ie, Nelson, Christian, Cannons, DOSA, Huon would have no ability to field an u21 side as a 2nd tier (or at all at present).

While some very strong (in numbers) clubs may be able to meet this age restriction, ie South Hobart, we feel that adding age restrictions of this kind creates artificial pressures on clubs & players & I would be interested to know the total number of players registered in the south in this age bracket ie, 17 to 20 & the current club registrations (ie, do 4 or 5 clubs have 50% of these players). It would be interesting to see how this might stretch to 16 teams & how sustainable it might be.

Placing this kind of age limit on reserve teams will in fact create fewer opportunities for players rather than greater.

Nelson in fact is building a youth program that should see us with an U17 team in 3 years time (ie, our current U14 team) with youth teams building each year with a new U13 team. We would however not support the pushing of very young non elite footballers to play well above their level to meet an age requirement.

This is in fact not even addressing the issue of limiting opportunities of players in their 20's & the need for clubs to run another team to provide an opportunity for those just missing out on seniors & just past 21 years of age and a numbers problem that might arise there.



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### **8 or 10 team premier league**

Nelson is happy to see premier league clubs out of Division 1 to make mirror 8 team leagues. However we are not totally against the current system that allows strong Premier league clubs, South Hobart & Kingborough at present, to field teams in Division 1 as we don't see that this is lowering the standard & it adds colour & interest to the division. In short we could live happily with either outcome.

### **Interchange**

An additional suggestion we would like to see put in place (as it currently is in Division 1) is for the reserve team in both Premier & Div 1 structure to be run using the interchange rule. This would allow for greater participation & flexibility.



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**CLUB: BEACHSIDE HSC**

**SUBMITTED BY: Daniel Gardner, Vice-President**

**DATE RECEIVED: 27/4/07**

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Beachside HSC would like to thank the committee of FFT for allowing all clubs to prepare a submission outlining our clubs position in regards to the future structure of Premier League/ Division One football in Southern Tasmania. As one of the fastest growing clubs in Southern Tasmania, we are preparing the foundation for our club to play at the highest level and we agree that the current structure could be improved to benefit all the clubs involved.

In general we agree with the structure preferred by the FFT board, as outlined in their discussion paper. We do however have a few amendments/ proposals which we feel could fine tune the proposal outlined;

- Whilst we agree that the strongest leagues would be made from having 8 teams in premier league and 8 teams in Division one, we query whether a nine team competition, with a bye each round, may ease the scheduling problem.
- We strongly agree with the boards preference to a championship (or div 1) league being restricted to non-Premier league teams
- A two tier system with the second team being under 21 has its merits, although we believe that 3 over age players should be allowed to play in this division.
- We agree with the proposal for an U18 league, open to all clubs.
- We believe that promotion and relegation should be automatic, not subject to a play off. A team gaining promotion is likely to attract new premier league players who would not play with the club at the division one level, and thus the team should be far stronger at the start of the following season than when the playoff is scheduled. Given that both the premier and the division one leagues will be strengthened from the proposed restructuring, the gap between the two divisions should be reduced and an automatic promotion would reward a club for a successful season.

We look forward to reading the submissions made by the other clubs and wish FFT success in the restructuring process



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**CLUB: PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS GROUP SUBMISSION**

**SUBMITTED BY: Brian Dale, President, Kingborough Lions**

**DATE RECEIVED: 30/4/07**

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**Preamble**

This paper is a response to the discussion paper (undated) circulated by the CEO of Football Federation Tasmania.

**Background**

The CEO of Football Federation Tasmania has circulated a paper indicating the Board's preferred direction of the game's development in Southern Tasmania.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2007 the Presidents of the nine Southern Premier Clubs (one apology) met to review the Southern Competition Review Discussion Paper as circulated by the CEO Football Federation Tasmania.

This document is based on the debate and subsequent resolutions adopted by the Presidents.

**Background**

The Board is to be commended for recognizing the situation and initiating steps to remedy the position

The Discussion paper clearly sets out the unacceptable situation that has to be faced by either a Promoted or Relegated Club.

All would agree that the "rules" governing Division 1 Clubs should either mirror or be similar to those in the Premier League.

The views of Division 1 Clubs have also been taken into account of allowing Premier Clubs to make up the numbers in Division 1. However it must be understood that anecdotal rather than empirical evidence formed the basis for discussion.

It should be noted this is not at the making of Premier Clubs but due to but the fading away of Clubs outside Premier level.



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### ***Discussion***

The document circulated by the CEO seeks answers to three questions.

- a. How many teams in Premier League and Division 1.
- b. The number of tiers in the system
- c. Premier league Clubs playing in Division 1

### **Promotion and Relegation Two tiers or Three.**

The Presidents preferred option is, Number 1 with the third tier being under 18. It was agreed that parity with other Federations was desirable and as it is understood that this third tier is already operative in Northern Tasmania thus we would achieve uniformity across the State.

The replacement of current reserve teams by under 21 (with a 3 adult option) will result in an imbalance of under 21 players in the top echelon. Talented players aged over 21 will have fewer opportunities to play at top level. It could be inferred that one is over the hill at 22. Currently many clubs fill a large proportion of their teams with U21 players so that a dedicated U21 league would not be achieving a great deal other than protecting those U21 players who may not make it in open competition.

Prior to further consideration of the Boards wishes statistical data showing the number and spread of available under age players should be examined.

### **How many teams in Premier League and Division 1.**

The Club Presidents by a majority agreed to support the Board's wish to reduce the number of Premier to eight.

This action will enable the existing Division 1 (Championship) league to be settled at eight teams.

### **Premier League Clubs participating in Division 1**

The meeting agreed that it was undesirable that Premier Clubs should be represented in Division 1.

It is recommended that until the above plans are operative an embargo on future involvement by Premier Clubs in Division 1 should be instituted.

### **Time Frame.**

It is believed that any changes should be effective Season commencing 2010 rather than 2008.



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To announce an unheralded change of such a radical nature with the expectation that it will be operative at the end of a Season already in progress is unfair to all.

### **Promotion and Relegation – Roster- Other Competitions**

Prior to fully endorsing the proposals advice is sought on the above points.

Will the current method of promotion and relegation continue or on the presumption that the overall competition will be stronger will it be one up one down automatically.

The Boards needs advise on the format of the proposed roster and the impact on other competitions, The Summer Cup, State Championship play off and Statewide Cup.

The Northern Roster will now differ by either plus 6 or minus 3 rounds.

### ***Conclusion***

The majority of the Clubs attending the meeting gave in principle support to the Board's proposals subject to the following issues being addressed.

- Will the current method of promotion and relegation continue or on the presumption that the overall competition will be stronger will it be one up one down automatically.
- The format of the proposed roster and the impact on other competitions, Summer Cup, State Championship play off and Statewide Cup.
- The means by which the Northern and Southern Rosters will terminate on the same weekend.

In the event of the Board pressing ahead with ahead with option 4 it is believed that statistical data showing the number and spread of available under age players should be made available to all Premier and Division 1 Clubs.

Anecdotal evidence shows a considerable imbalance in the spread of Under Age players. It therefore follows that option 4 will select against the Clubs that have spent time and effort in developing strong Junior structures.

This paper is submitted for the Boards consideration.

The Presidents await the Boards early response.



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**CLUB: TILFORD ZEBRAS**

**SUBMITTED BY: Livio Candon, Secretary**

**DATE RECEIVED: 30/4/07**

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**New Structure For 2008**

**Southern Premier League - 8 teams with mandatory reserves and under 19's**  
**Southern Division One - 8 teams with mandatory reserves and under 17's**

In Division One no Premier League teams and the mandatory Under 17 will help the side that is promoted with an Under 19 team for the following season.

Three rounds would be fantastic but two rounds and an extra four games along the line of the AFL roster would suit.

We would like to see a mandatory **Premier Junior** competition for premier league clubs from under 13 through to under 16. This could be played on a Sunday with all teams playing at the same ground.

All other junior competitions would still be played on Saturdays. It would also be encouraged for division one sides to participate along the same line.



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**CLUB: GLENORCHY KNIGHTS****SUBMITTED BY: Zac Baltic, President****DATE RECEIVED: 30/4/07**

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The Glenorchy Knights Football Club has considered the options provided in the Southern Competition Review Discussion Paper and would like to provide our views on the proposal.

Firstly, we agree there have been issues with the current relegation structure, especially with the Under 19's where clubs being promoted have to find a team and the clubs that are relegated may lose a team. We are also conscious that the youth need to be given every opportunity to make the top league while also conscious of the need to cater for those players who are happy being in the reserve team or social teams at each club. We feel that it is a matter of demographics where each club is different in the amount of players it has in their age groups. These demographics will change over time in each club, so whatever structure is out in place will currently hinder growth in some clubs and benefit other clubs at this particular time. The only exception, as stated in the paper, may be University, where it relies solely on players that are currently attending or have attended the University in the past. It does not rely on youth teams to develop into their senior ranks.

The Glenorchy Knights current Premier League Team structure for instance currently has a:

- Senior team with an average age of 25 years old
- Reserve team with an average age of 22 years old
- Under 19 team with the average age being 17 years old.

We also have an Under 16 and Under 13 side and are looking to develop a permanent youth structure in the next three years with teams in each age group.

The Glenorchy Knights would still prefer a three tier structure as this is the most equitable structure to cater for ALL players between the ages of 16 and 25 plus those a little older, not just the up and coming youth. Whether the third team is an Under 19 or Under 17 team will not make much difference, as you have stated in your paper most of the current U19's are playing above their actual age.

We understand the benefit of older players playing in younger teams however this is fraught with danger as some teams will have a lot of experienced older players where others will not and those clubs that do not have these experienced older players will be penalised in this competition for not having them. This competition cannot be established as a true age competition as it clearly is not.



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The paper states that other state federations have moved to option 4, which includes Seniors, Under 21's and Under 18's. Again, this could mainly be due to demographics and a lot more players at the Under 18 and Under 21 levels on the mainland. As can be seen from the current 2007 Youth Divisions in Southern Tasmania, the Southern Leagues tend to shrivel up around the Under 16 and Under 17 levels. Until we get more youth teams at an Under 18 and Under 21 level we cannot be seen to be the same as mainland states and therefore should not take on their competition structures at this time.

The question of how many teams Premier League should have we found more difficult to answer however we agree that an 8 team competition would be better for Soccer in Tasmania with its limited top flight players.

The paper states some good points for and against maintaining or reducing the number of teams. We are a little concerned that if an eight team competition is introduced, and creative rostering cannot be initiated resulting in a 21 game roster, then a 14 game season will become the default. We would **not** be pleased if this was the final outcome. There is the perception among clubs that each winter season is getting shorter with a final five series no longer being played and matches on some weekends not being played at all. Easter this year is an example.

Newer the less, we agree that an eight team competition would be stronger and the bottom two teams may be better off in a lower division where they can regroup and rebuild, if they wish to.

We provide no comment on the issue of Premier League clubs also playing in the Division One competition. It seems a shame to extend to you and the Board an invitation that the two clubs affected, who have obviously worked hard to establish their player base, should be penalised for doing so. However, we understand the need for consistency.

We trust that the views of the Glenorchy Knights Football Club will be given a fair hearing and would like to extend to you and the Board an invitation to discuss our views further if required.



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**CLUB: CLARENCE UNITED**

**SUBMITTED BY: Leigh Mayne, President**

**DATE RECEIVED: 30/4/07**

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Southern Competition Review Discussion Paper. Clarence United FC (CUFC) has considered the options presented in the discussion paper and wishes to provide the following comments.

We agree that there have been some issues with the current promotion and relegation system and the effect that promotion has on the club that will be required to fulfill the Premier League benchmark of an under 19 team and the possibility for the relegated team to lose a developed under 19 team. It would appear that the best solution to address these issues would be to mirror the competition structures for both Premier League and Division 1.

CUFC further believes that players of all standings should be afforded the best competition possible and that both youth and adult players need to be catered for. CUFC is therefore opposed to any change to the current competition that will result in the removal of the Reserves competition and prefers that a three tier competition remain in place. The third tier of this competition should be youth in nature however it does not necessarily have to be under 19. The third, or youth, league should remain a true youth league and CUFC does not believe that the ability to play 'over-age' players should be considered.

Until recent seasons the number of teams that have competed at age groups higher than under 15 has tended to fall away. There are now more players continuing their football career and CUFC believe that the time may be appropriate to increase youth leagues to include an under 18 age group that is open to all clubs.

The paper also states that a number of state federations have moved toward a senior and under 21 competitions. Whilst this may be true of other state competitions the paper only canvasses a review of the southern competition and not a state position. If FFT wishes to move to a state-wide structure for all leagues this should be canvassed with all clubs; not just southern clubs. However; if the third, or youth, league of the three tier competition is to move to an under 21 competition this should be introduced over a number of years to allow clubs an appropriate planning horizon.

The number of teams in the Premier League is a vexed issue and requires careful consideration before any proposed reduction in team numbers is considered. The primary driven for a proposed reduction in teams appears to be a lack of 'quality' players. Whilst this may be true at present and a reduction in teams may spread the 'best' players over fewer teams it may not be the best solution in the longer term. As stated players may also not move due to club loyalty and any reduction will just result in less teams with the same quality players. CUFC believe that a reduction in team numbers may also unfairly disadvantage any team that has recently gained promotion from Division 1. It would



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appear totally inequitable that a promoted team may face automatic relegation the following year simply because they finished in ninth position on the league table.

CUFC has previously stated that they do not believe that Premier League teams should be able to compete in the Division 1 League. To allow Premier League teams to compete at Division 1 imposes a barrier to non Premier League clubs gaining promotion that should not exist.



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**CLUB: KINGBOROUGH LIONS UNITED**

**SUBMITTED BY: Brian Dale, President**

**DATE RECEIVED: 30/4/07**

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### **Background**

The CEO of Football Federation Tasmania has circulated a paper indicating the Board's preferred direction of the game's development in Southern Tasmania.

The Discussion paper clearly sets out the present situation that has to be faced by either a Promoted or Relegated Club.

All would agree that there needs to be parity between certain competitions to facilitate a relegation and promotion system..

### ***Discussion***

The document circulated by the CEO seeks answers to three questions.

- d. How many teams in Premier League and Division 1.
- e. The number of tiers in the system
- f. Premier league Clubs playing in Division 1

### **Promotion and Relegation Two Tiers or Three.**

KLUSC's preferred option is, Number 1 with the third tier being under 18. It was agreed at the time the three tier structure was introduced in about 2001 that the third tier was to be Under 18, however, due to a number of Clubs not being able to meet that criteria, the third was introduced as an Under 23 competition with agreement that each season progress would be made to achieve the ultimate aim of an Under 18 Competition.

KLUSC sees no point in replacing the existing Reserves structure with an Under 21 with or without overage players. This option seems totally unnecessary and does not address any issue as there are none.

A third tier in Division 1 will address the problems recently highlighted by the promotion then relegation of Hobart United when there were times that Club was unable to field an U19 team due to lack of players.



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### **How many teams in Premier League and Division 1.**

Reducing the number of teams in the Competition will not guarantee an increase in standard as no one can predict where the player base will rest if the reduction is effected. Club loyalty may see players stay with their Clubs rather than migrating to another.

Ten teams certainly provide the opportunity of playing an eighteen week competition which seems to be the ideal scenario considering Tasmania's fickle ever changing weather patterns.

An eight team competition necessitates three complete rounds which may require the third round to be played on a neutral ground to ensure that a level playing field is maintained.

### **Premier League Clubs participating in Division 1**

KLUSC sees no problems with Premier League Clubs participating in Division 1. It is worth noting also that South Hobart, University & New Town Eagles Clubs have all filled Division 1 teams in recent times with no detrimental effect on the competition or upon its results.

KLUSC is firmly of the opinion that the Relegation & Promotion Rules can be drafted in such a way that permits the existing make-up of Division 1 to remain. No Club should be severely disadvantaged by a Competition Review that may impact on its player base.

Premier League Reserve players on returning from injury or lack of form should not be forced to play Division 2.

Division 1 is not broken, hence does not need major surgery.

The Relegation and Promotion Rules need refining. The Rule could be as simple as the highest non-Premier League Club Team has the right to play-off for promotion assuming the aim is to find the next highest Team for consideration to the Premier League.

Non – Premier League Clubs with Division 1 Teams should be using matches against the Premier League Club's Division 1 Teams as a method of measuring their march towards the top League.

### **Time Frame.**

KLUSC is of the opinion that any changes (if any) should be effective Season commencing 2010 rather than 2008.

Division 1 Clubs with little or no youth development need time to address that problem and teams cannot be found overnight.



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### ***Conclusion***

KLUSC is strongly of the view that very little of the present structure needs addressing, however, agrees that a third tier for Division 1 Clubs will certainly assist those Clubs being either relegated or promoted.

Reducing the number of teams in Premier League does not automatically guarantee a higher standard of competition.

No Club should be disadvantaged by a review and the implication on all Clubs must be fully investigated prior to making “temporary” decisions that we see too often have been ill formed or did not fully address the identified problem.

Years of hard work in developing a wide player base that supports a Club’s Youth and Junior Development Program should be not be overlooked.

The Club looks forward to participating in future discussions.



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**CLUB: HUON VALLEY**

**SUBMITTED BY: John O'Toole, President**

**DATE RECEIVED: 30/4/07**

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With reference to the discussion paper from FFT, the Huon Valley Soccer Club wishes to submit the following.

- An eight team Premier League which includes Seniors and Under 21
- A Championship League restricted to non-Premier League teams but including Seniors and Reserves
- A two tier system – with Seniors and Reserves, Division One only
- An Under 18 league that is open to all clubs that wish to enter teams, whether Premier League or Championship. Where rosters coincide, the Under 18's to play before the Seniors/Under 21's.
- Promotion and relegation based on the current system.



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**CLUB: UNIVERSITY**

**SUBMITTED BY: Andrew Zacharek, Chairman**

**DATE RECEIVED: 30/4/07**

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TUSC agrees that there is a need to improve the operation of the current structure, and supports FFT taking a leading role in analysing the options and leading change. It is FFT's role to take a lead in promoting a vibrant, viable and unified football competition with increased profile and the role of clubs to support and advise FFT.

The primary goals in a competition review should be to improve the standard of the top level of competition, develop better facilities and increase the sport's profile and attendances. This requires careful analysis and planning with a medium to long term view.

The challenge is to develop the model that best works toward these goals without unfairly disadvantaging and limiting a particular club or sector of the football community. The structure should consider how the full range of current clubs would fit. At the same time, clubs should have an open mind toward a league structure different to what is currently known.

TUSC supports the continuation of a top flight and second flight with promotion and relegation as this allows clubs to find their natural level. Clubs should be in either league but not both. To minimise impacts on clubs moving between leagues, there should be identical requirements for the top flight and second flight.

A decision on two tiers or three depends on the number and quality of players both now and in the foreseeable future to populate the leagues. We agree with the view that requiring both Premier and Division 1 clubs to field under 19 sides would result in intense competition between clubs for a limited pool of quality under 19 players (many of which might already be the senior teams). This argues for two tiers over three.

The discussion of option three recognises the difficulties that clubs such as TUSC face recruiting under 19 players. From the club's point of view, TUSC would prefer option three based on our current premier reserves age profile. However we recognise the importance of youth development and alignment with a national standard, (providing states other than Victoria and NSW have a seniors and under 21 structure). If it is decided that option four is the best overall, University support this option.

University supports the notion of a non-mandatory under 18s league open to all clubs.

TUSC recognises the arguments for an eight team league, but does not have strong views. A match between the top and bottom sides will not draw much of a crowd if the differences between the sides are great, and the chance of an upset is low. An eight team



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league would concentrate the better players and gate revenues between the small set of clubs, and would assist them to improve their facilities.

In the decision on the top league structure, FFT should consider possible flow-on effects on the lower leagues. The effect of moving current premier reserve players aged over 21 to lower leagues would make the next league below the second flight strong, but if too strong it would take away from the status of the first division.

TUSC looks forward to being involved in further consultation on the competition structure.

TUSC encourages FFT to continue to pursue other big ideas to grow the sport in Tasmania including:

- a showcase ground / home for football in southern Tasmania;
- a Tasmanian representative men's team in a league such as the V-league;
- greatly increased media profiles; and
- continuing to grow women's and youth football.



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**CLUB: TAROONA**

**SUBMITTED BY: Barry Hagan, President**

**DATE RECEIVED: 30/4/07**

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The current structure as it stands has several problems. These being;

- An unequal tier structure between Premier League and Division 1
- An option for teams in Premier League to “stack” and possibly influence the result in Division 1
- The slow decline of playing standard and as a result spectators

There are several interrelating issues that need to be addressed, these being;

- An equitable structure for promotion/relegation to the Premier League
- Age limit of youth and reserve team
- Clubs that field teams in both the Premier League & Division 1.
- Number of teams in Premier League

### **Structure**

The current structure is not practical in application. A Division 1 club which gains promotion to the Premier League must put together an U19 team, knowing that if relegated, it may have to disband it at the end of the same season. This scenario is impractical, stressful and does not give clubs a chance to develop and retain its junior players. If promotion and relegation between Premier League and Division 1 is to continue, it makes sense that the same structure is in place for the Premier League and Division 1.

This is why Taroona considers a two tier structure of Seniors and Reserves is best, plus an under age competition that both Division 1 and Premier League clubs have the option to field a team in. To expect all teams in Premier and Division 1 to field a specific under age team (eg U19, U17) is also not practical. There are occasions when a club may not have the existing numbers to field a particular under age team, such as if they have been newly promoted to Division 1. Under the current structure, the ten teams in Premier League and the 6 other teams in Division 1 (excluding the 2 clubs in both Premier League and Division 1); need to find roughly 15 juniors each, totalling 240 under age players divided between the 16 clubs.

While Taroona understands the need for all clubs to support the development of junior players, perhaps the application of the relevant benchmark of at least an affiliation with junior teams is a better way to enforce participation in development of juniors. Surely it will be in the best interest of a Premier League club to nurture its own pool of talent?

Having an optional competition would allow smaller clubs to move into Division 1, build their juniors and then compete for promotion to the Premier League. If these clubs are able to field a team in the youth competition, this would expose their juniors to a higher standard of football and hopefully improve the standard of the their club and as a result the competition in the long term, when these junior players are challenging for selection into seniors.



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## **Age limit for Youth Competition**

The age limit of the under age competition we feel should be U18. This would allow for the development through each age group and give players a possible option to play in under 18s to develop if need be.

### **Age limit**

Taroona believes that an open age limit in the reserve competition would be best, as we feel limiting this competition to under 23's with a few over age players is counter productive and restrictive. While most clubs generally field a young team in reserves, why force all clubs to do this? There may be a number of reasons why clubs choose not to, such as they have senior players coming back from injuries, senior players who can no longer compete at the highest level, or juniors who have not achieved the reserve level yet. It should be the clubs decision if they want to promote and develop their youth through the reserves, not a rule forced onto them which may not always be able to be complied with for various reasons.

Taroona considers an open age policy will have the benefits of: increased learning opportunities for all players, better support for younger players through interaction with senior players, and will allow clubs to retain is older players who can still compete at a higher level. To automatically categorise players who are over 23 as too old for the top level, not having the ability to reach premier league or not having any benefit to a club in the senior ranks seems excessive. Surely this should be a club decision?

### **Number of team in the Premier League**

Taroona feels that while not ideal, a 10 team competition would be the best option. This is due to the fact that a 10 team comp creates an equal home & away structure and does not give any team an unfair (while minimal) home ground advantage. Probably more important is the financial aspect, with a club positively (or possibly negatively) affected by extra games at home or away.

If there were 8 teams in Premier League, it may improve the level of competition theoretically, but it does not take into account such things as club loyalty, where players may decide to stay with their club regardless of the Division.

While an 8 team competition only extends the season by three games, this could cause problems with ground availability due to local councils restricting use of grounds to between March and September, and leaves little room for Statewide Cup and possibly matches postponed by weather or ground closures.

### **Teams in Premier League and Division 1**

While generally there is no problem with team "stacking", if there is a perceivable chance that a club could affect a match result then it shouldn't be allowed. To be a true two league structure there should not be teams from the same club in both divisions.

### **Timeframe**

We feel to give clubs sufficient time to prepare for the changes, and as the current season is underway, implementation of the revised structure should be done in the 2010 season.

### **Conclusion**

After discussion within our committee, Taroona's position is the less impediments/rules for clubs the better.



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If a clubs' ambition is to be the best club (in the south), then that club will endeavour to do everything they can to attain the best structure, players etc.

We feel that a three tier structure would require too many players to function properly and overly penalise smaller "regional" clubs that may not have the population to support all the players but have ambitions to play in the top flight.



### SUMMARY DOCUMENT OF CLUB VIEWS

CLUB	HOW MANY TIERS?	SECOND TIER	THIRD TIER/YOUTH LEAGUE	HOW MANY TEAMS IN PREMIER LEAGUE	PREMIER LEAGUE TEAMS IN DIV ONE?	OTHER COMMENTS
New Town Eagles	Three	Reserves	Separate Under 19's leagues for both Premier and Div 1	No view expressed	No view expressed	
DOSA	Two	Reserves	No view expressed	Eight teams	No.	
Nelson Eastern Suburbs	Two	Reserves	Optional Under 18's open to all clubs	Prefer 8 team	Prefer 8 team league to mirror Premier League, but does see some benefit to allowing PL clubs in Div One.	Interchange for Reserves competitions
Beachside HSC	Two	Under 21 with three over-age players	Optional Under 18 open to all clubs	Eight teams	No	Promotion and relegation to be automatic, not via play-off.
Premier League Clubs Group Submission	Three	Reserves	Separate Under 18 leagues for each division	Eight teams	No	New structure to start in 2010. Asked for statistical data showing the number and spread of available under age players Asked about

Tilford Zebras	Three	Reserves	Under 19 for PL Under 17 for Div One	Eight teams	No	promotion/relegation- will it be the same or automatically one up one down?  Asked about the format of the proposed roster and the impact on other competitions, Summer Cup, State Championship play off and Statewide Cup. Asked about the means by which the Northern and Southern Rosters will terminate on the same weekend? Premier junior competition for Premier League clubs
Glenorchy Knights	Three	Reserves	Under 19 or Under 17	Eight teams	No view expressed	Would not be happy if roster is only 14 games.
Clarence United	Three	Reserves	Mirroring third tiers for PL and Div One- 19's or 17's)	Further consideration required before any reduction	No	8 team comp may be unfair to recently promoted teams.
Kingborough Lions	Three	Reserves	Under 18's for both divisions	Prefer ten teams	Yes	Changes to commence 2010

Huon Valley	Two	Under 21 for PL, Reserves for Div One.	Under 18 league open to all clubs	Eight	No	
University	Two	Reserves	Under 18 league open to all clubs	No strong view expressed	No	
Taroona	Two	Reserves	Under 18 league open to all clubs	Ten teams	No	Changes to commence 2010

## **SUMMARY OF VIEWS**

### How Many Tiers

There was an even split between the submissions provided – six supporting two tiers while six supported three tiers. All clubs supporting three tiers were from the Premier League, while the majority supporting two tiers were from Division One.

### Second Tier

There was an overwhelming majority of clubs that preferred the second tier to remain as a Reserves competition rather than an Under 21 competition.

### Third Tier

Clubs supporting a two tier structure supported an optional Under 18 league open to all clubs.

Clubs supporting a three tier structure supported separate mirroring under age leagues for Premier League and Division One, with a spread between Under 19's and Under 18's being the preferred age group. Only one club suggested separate age groups for the third tier (Under 19's for Premier League and Under 17's for Division One).

### How Many Teams in Premier League?

The majority of clubs that expressed an opinion on this issue preferred an eight team competition, though a number expressed a preference for ten teams.

### Premier League Teams in Division One?

Once again, a majority of clubs preferred that Division One be restricted to non-Premier League teams only.

# ANNEX A

## ORIGINAL DISCUSSION PAPER DISTRIBUTED BY FOOTBALL FEDERATION TASMANIA



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**ORIGINAL SOUTHERN COMPETITION REVIEW DISCUSSION PAPER**  
**DISTRIBUTED TO CLUBS BY FFT**

**BACKGROUND**

Late last year the Board decided that the time was right to conduct a review of our competition structure for the 2008 season and beyond. The introduction of promotion and relegation has highlighted the need to ensure that our Premier League and Division One structures enable easy movement between the two divisions, which currently isn't happening. We also need to ensure that the structures we have in place adequately enable clubs to provide opportunities for young players as they work their way towards Premier League, as well as for the social player who simply wishes to have a game on the weekend.

This paper should provide an indication to the clubs of the issues to be considered and some possible alternative structures. The clubs will then be given an opportunity to provide feedback to FFT before any final decisions are made.

**PROMOTION AND RELEGATION – TWO TIERS OR THREE?**

The introduction of promotion and relegation has brought with it the difficulty of a Division One club moving from a two tier league into a three tier league, and vice versa for the Premier League club that is relegated. This means that a promoted club needs to establish an Under 19 team, where there previously wasn't one, while the relegated club needs to shed an Under 19 team, as they are not required for Division One.

Clearly, neither is an acceptable situation. Clubs that are relegated should not be put in a situation where they are forced to dismantle a structure they have worked hard to establish, while promoted teams face a tough enough task without having to produce an extra team out of thin air.

Most would agree that in the interests of fairness to all clubs the structure in Division One needs to be similar to the structure of Premier League. If Premier League is three tiers, then so should Division One. If Premier League is two tiers, then so should Division One. This is the only way that clubs can move freely between the divisions without causing large disruptions to their playing staff. The question becomes, should it be three tiers or two?

Division One clubs have held strong views on their right to enter teams into the Under 19 competition, while Premier League clubs have held equally strong views on the disruption caused by having non-Premier League clubs involved in the Under 19 league. Having said that, it should be noted that in the past two years only one Division One club has entered an Under 19 team, while two clubs have entered teams in the Under 17 league. They are currently requesting the right to be able to enter teams in the Under 19's without actually having the responsibility to do it as a mandatory part of their entry into the league. By providing a structure that requires the same number of tiers for both divisions we will be requiring a similar commitment from Premier League and Division One clubs to the development of football, whatever that level of commitment is.



As it currently stands, some of the Division One clubs do not have the established junior structures that most premier League clubs have, though that is not to say that efforts aren't being made by most clubs to do so in future years.

The options that are available in establishing a consistent structure for Premier League and Division One are:

### **Three Tiers**

#### *Option One*

Premier League – Seniors, Reserves, Under 19's (Premier League clubs only)

Division One – Seniors, Reserves, Under 19's (Div One clubs only)

This option provides Div One clubs with an opportunity to establish an Under 19 team and compete on a weekly basis in their own league. This would cater for both promoted and relegated clubs.

#### *Option Two*

Premier League – Seniors, Reserves, Under 19's

Division One – Seniors, Reserves, Under 17's

This option provides an opportunity for Div One clubs to establish a third tier team that will be able to move smoothly into the Under 19 competition if promoted. It does not work as well for the relegated team, though many players currently competing in the Under 19 league are under 16, and would still be eligible for an Under 17 league the following season.

### **Two Tiers**

#### *Option Three*

Premier League – Seniors, Reserves. Offer a non-mandatory Under 19 league open to Premier League and Div One clubs.

Division One – Seniors, Reserves. Non-mandatory Under 19 league open to Premier League and Div One clubs.

This option would provide opportunities for all clubs that wished to have Under 19 teams as part of their structure. There are some clubs that will always struggle to field Under 19 teams because they are not community clubs, but are linked with institutions within the community, such as University or DOSA. If they can field two teams of sufficient quality to compete in the Premier League, should they be held back because their institution makes it difficult for them to field teams in the Under 19's?

#### *Option Four*

Premier League – Seniors, Under 21's. Offer a non-mandatory Under 18 league open to all clubs.

Division One – Seniors, Under 21's. Non-mandatory Under 18 league open to Div One clubs.

This is an option that a number of state federations have moved towards. Rather than having reserve competitions, the second tier is an Under 21 competition, which allows for clubs to continue the development of young players who have the potential to play senior football but haven't yet reached that standard. Most competitions allow a set number of over-age players



(three is how I remember the NSW League) to play for a dual purpose – firstly to allow overage players from outside the top 15 of the senior squad to maintain match fitness in case they need to be called up and secondly to provide some experienced players who can help young players develop into senior players.

The down side to a change to this structure would be that there are a large number of Reserves players who would need to be catered for with a division outside the Premier League structure.

### **HOW MANY TEAMS IN PREMIER LEAGUE?**

The Premier League currently consists of 10 teams. Some would question whether there are enough players of Premier League standard to fill ten teams, and consequently the talent is being spread too thin. Would a reduction to 8 teams provide a league of a higher standard and encourage a more tightly contested competition?

The benefit of an eight team competition is that, in theory, the talent is condensed into fewer teams, therefore raising the standard of the competition. Of course, this theory only works if players of Premier League standard leave the bottom two clubs that are relegated. If they stay with their clubs out of club loyalty, then the league is no stronger, just two clubs less. The reality is probably somewhere between the two, with some players moving in order to play premier League football, while some stay to play with their local club.

One of the effects of an eight team league is that you would have a significant change to the league season. Currently each team plays the other teams in the league two times, resulting in an 18 game season. With eight teams in the league, you would have to play each team three times, resulting in a 21 game season – to play each other twice would only give a 14 game season. While the extra three weeks doesn't sound like much, it would require a change to how we currently roster our season. It is difficult to start any earlier, as clubs don't have access to grounds prior to April, while to finish later causes problems with ground availability and end of season matches (eg Cup Finals, State Premiership, North-South games and a possible clash with AFL Grand Final Day). Some creative rostering could overcome this problem, but may involve a double-header weekend over the Easter long weekend.

*Option One – A 10 team Premier League*

*Option Two – An 8 team Premier League*

### **PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS PLAYING IN DIVISION ONE**

Another aspect of any competition review that needs to be considered is which clubs are eligible to play in Division One. Currently, there are a number of Premier League clubs that also enter teams Division One, which has caused comment in the past. With clubs able to drop players from the Premier League set up to play in Division One matches there is a perception that the Division One championship can be affected by Premier League standard players playing in certain matches. Whether that is the case is arguable, but the perception exists.



In 2006, there were six non-Premier League clubs that played in Division One, with four Premier League clubs also entering teams in Div One. For 2007 the mix has changed to seven non-Premier League clubs, with two Premier League.

#### *Option One*

Maintain the current system of allowing Premier League clubs to enter teams in Division One. No change required.

#### *Option Two*

Restrict the Division One to non-Premier League clubs. As there are currently only seven non-Premier League teams, this would only be practical if there was a reduction of the Premier League to eight teams, causing two teams to drop down to form a nine team league.

This would effectively create a two league structure at the top of our competition structure that would cater for the top (two or three, depending upon which tier option is chosen) teams of each club within the competition, and would set those teams up as the flagship teams for their club. They would be the teams that would be vying for positions in the Premier League, or if already there, vying for the Premier League title. For the sake of further discussion and to distinguish them from current structures, we can borrow the terms used by English football, and refer to them as the Premiership and the Championship.

Outside of the Premiership/Championship structure you could then have a series of single team leagues that catered for players who were not within the top teams at their club but still wished to play football – League 1, League 2, League 3 and so on depending on how many we need.

If a two tier option was selected, with Under 21's as the second tier, and combined with this structure it is probable that League 1 would be quite a strong league, as it would be made up of a combination of players that played the previous season in Premier League Reserves or Division One (either with a Premier League club or in Div One Reserves with a non-Premier League club). This league could still cater for the player who wished to play a level above a social league, but wasn't catered for in the Premiership/Championship structure.

### **CONCLUSION**

The above comments cover the main options that are available to FFT in any re-structure of the leagues. The structure that is preferred by the Board is as follows:

- An eight team Premier League
- A Championship league restricted to non-Premier League teams
- A two tier system – with Seniors and Under 21's
- An Under 18 league that is open to all clubs that wish to enter teams, whether Premier League or Championship. Where rosters coincide, the Under 18's to play before the Seniors/Under 21's.
- Promotion and relegation based on the current system



Please take this to your club committee and discuss the options that have been presented so that you can provide us with your club's views on the competition structure review. At the upcoming AGM we can agree to a date by which clubs will need to provide their views on this proposal.

