

MARMARAS' OYSTER OR SEAMONDS' BABY: THE FORMATION OF THE VICTORIAN SOCCER FEDERATION, 1956-64¹

Roy Hay

**School of Australian and International Studies
Deakin University**

In the twenty years after World War II, association football, or soccer, in Victoria was converted from a basically amateur and social game, primarily enjoyed by migrants from the British Isles as participants, into a mass, though still minority, spectator sport, organised on semi-professional lines, which attracted the arriving waves of migrants from continental Europe. The amateur associations that ran the game in Victoria and the other states of Australia were replaced by 'breakaway' Federations dominated by the leading clubs, which were attracting the largest crowds and the best players.² The split in the 1950s and 1960s has been interpreted variously as a migrant or ethnic takeover, a power play by the leading clubs, a battle to replace amateurism by professionalism in play and administration, the inevitable and progressive reform of a moribund game and a generation change.³

The post-war battle over the code was not the first organisational crisis in Victorian soccer. In 1927 the Metropolitan Association in Victoria became concerned that the available talent had been spread too thinly over the growing number of clubs in its competitions. It decided to create a district-based organisation with ten teams and a series of sub-districts. Not all existing clubs fell neatly under this arrangement and some clubs were expected to amalgamate to form districts or subdistricts. Several clubs objected and broke away to form the Melbourne and District Association. It was not till 1929 that the parties were reconciled, just as the Great Depression overtook the game. The Amateur Association struggled to build the popularity of soccer in Victoria but it remained primarily a social and recreational activity until after World War II.

Post-war Soccer Organisation

The state amateur soccer football associations that ran soccer in Australia after World War II were affiliated to the Australian Soccer Football Association Limited (ASFA) which in turn was a member of both the English Football Association and the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).⁴ The ASFA's registered office was in Wallsend, Newcastle. Its thirteen called-up shares out of 2000 were held by the state associations. Much of the income was derived from a fee paid by the English Football Pools companies for the use of Australian fixtures during the summer season. According to Michael Weinstein, who attended an annual meeting, there was no opportunity for discussion or criticism by individuals concerned with the development of the game.⁵

The Victorian Amateur Soccer Football Association (VASFA), one of the shareholders and a member of ASFA, was probably quite typical in that it was geared to running an amateur and social game based on district clubs many of which had been in existence since the 1920s. In 1952 there were forty-three clubs in four divisions, of whom only thirteen were clearly representative of the new migrants from Europe. By 1961, there were sixty-two clubs and ten of the twelve teams in the State League were based on European migrants.⁶

The constitution and rules as adopted at the end of 1955 by VASFA insisted that clubs fielded only amateur players, who had to pay a registration fee to the Association or League in whose competition they played. Players were not to play for more than one team in any one season in Cup or Trophy competitions. There was no mention of transfers. Players accepting any remuneration for playing, or for advertising, or betting on matches, or accepting other than approved Association expenses were to lose their amateur status. Expenses were limited to travelling costs, meals, overnight accommodation and insurance. The costs of necessary equipment were allowed but only for interstate or foreign tours. All income from

activities associated with sports were effectively banned, with exceptions allowed only for military personnel, sports teachers, and officials of amateur sporting bodies where sanctioned by the governing body of the sport.⁷

The rules would not have been out of place in England in the 1870s but seemed very incongruous to European migrants in the late 1950s.⁸ By 1958 the Association had a transfer disputes committee but the issue still caused problems.⁹ The poaching of players between clubs within Associations, between States and from overseas caused major difficulties for Australian soccer, leading to the suspension of the ASFA by FIFA in April 1960.

In NSW discontent with the amateur associations came to head in the mid 1950s. One of the most successful migrant clubs, Hakoah, felt it had been discriminated against in the matter of promotion. The club, like some others, had begun to win cup matches and lower leagues, but it was prevented from reaching the top level. Selection of players for representative matches was alleged to be biased against the newcomers. Three reasons for the breakaway in NSW have been canvassed: the promotion issue, the style of leadership of some of the officials of the amateur association and perceptions that they were discriminated against on the part of migrant clubs and their memberships.¹⁰

By the mid-1950s, Australian soccer was gaining a significant income from gate collections, donations and sponsorship, but the clubs found difficulty in obtaining enclosed grounds on which to play in front of the increasing numbers of spectators. Most State Associations sought to lease a major venue where the most popular matches might be played. Olympic Park in Melbourne was obtained by VASFA, which benefited from the upgrading of the ground for the Olympic Games in 1956. However, the migrant clubs that drew the biggest attendances began to contest the division of the receipts from the match of the day, as 15 per cent

of the proceeds went to the Association.¹¹ The clubs claimed they were losing income from their most attractive fixtures, but the Association pointed out that it used the resources for administration, publicity and junior development.

The Origins of the Breakaway

Heavy defeats by touring teams and the Melbourne Olympic Games of 1956 have been seen as the catalyst for changes in the soccer landscape in Australia. They showed the gap between the amateur organisation of the game in Australia and the 'professionalism' of the European amateurs in a cruel light.¹² In South Australia matches between 'professionals' had been played in 1955, but it was NSW which took up the running in 1957.¹³

In January 1957, a meeting that led to the formation of the Federation of NSW Soccer Clubs was held in the house of Walter Sternberg of Hakoah and the new body was founded officially on 30 January.¹⁴ For most of the period from 1957 to 1961 the Federation and the Association in NSW were at loggerheads, with the Association initially blocking the affiliation of the Federation to the ASFA. After a considerable period of upheaval, the Federation gradually supplanted the NSW Soccer Football Association Limited. This article is not concerned with the tangled course of events in NSW but with the somewhat different story in Victoria.

Reverberations of the events in NSW were felt in Victoria, where the problems faced by migrant clubs were not so extreme. Promotion of migrant clubs occurred regularly and, by 1957, seven of the ten clubs in the First Division were non-Anglo-Australian, namely Geelong (even known as the IAMA, the Italian Australian Migrants Association), Hakoah, JUST, Juventus, Polonia, Slavia and Wilhelmina.¹⁵ These clubs were exercised about the organisation of matches and the distribution of income from them.

An unnamed member of the VASFA Council was quoted in Soccer News: 'I think the opinion is fairly general that many aspects of soccer in Victoria have not kept pace with the growth of the game. The Council realise this and have formed this special committee to inquire widely and deeply into our soccer set-up.'¹⁶ The Committee recommended the appointment of a full-time secretary, the addition of extra teams to the existing leagues and the formation of a State League in 1958 as a premier division.¹⁷ Raising the membership of the State League from ten to twelve clubs incidentally saved Box Hill and Brighton, two of the three remaining district and traditionally British or Australian clubs in the First Division, from relegation.¹⁸

By the end of the year the State League clubs in Victoria were demanding self-government. They were particularly exercised about penalties awarded by the disciplinary committee and wanted the State League Committee to handle all transfers. The clubs also wanted to have a major say in the allocation of games to Olympic Park and the controversial issue of national teams was also raised. A suggestion was put to the State League Management Committee that only one club of each nationality be permitted in the State League, the issue having arisen because there were to be three 'Italian' teams in the State League in 1959: Juventus, Geelong and Footscray. Owen Howard noted sardonically in *Sporting Globe* that this might well cause problems if only one Australian team was allowed in the League.¹⁹

The 1961 senior season appeared to have concluded successfully, as Polonia won the State League and Wilhelmina beat George Cross 3-1 at Olympic Park to win its first State League Cup, but there were bribery allegations that were not proved, and there was trouble between the clubs and VASFA.²⁰ 'Clubs were disappointed with financial arrangements, organisation, claiming autocratic control by officials and rumours were circulating of a breakaway by the big clubs.'²¹

During the weekend of 9-10 September 1961, the Chairman and Treasurer of the NSW Federation of Soccer Clubs, Dr Henry Seamonds and F Hoffman, visited Melbourne to discuss plans for a national knockout cup to be played in Sydney starting on 21 October. The scheme was ambitious, with clubs to be flown in for matches that were to be played over a five-week period.²² The tournament did not go ahead, and some in NSW blamed Victoria for its collapse. Seamonds and Bob Clark of the NSW Federation of Soccer Clubs called again in Melbourne on 21-2 October on their way back from Adelaide.²³ They met the VASFA Executive and the State League clubs separately over that weekend.

It was at these sessions that Seamonds and his colleagues announced that they planned to go ahead with the formation of an Australian Soccer Federation based on the leading clubs in each state. According to the memory of certain Victorian soccer personalities, they issued an ultimatum to Victoria: 'Join us, or we will go ahead without you and you will lose your top players to our organisation. If you do not come in now, we will not admit you in future.'²⁴ The Victorian State League clubs responded that 'What happened in Victorian soccer and how it was controlled was none of their business, that the State League clubs were part of VASFA and that the unity of Victorian soccer (possibly the only state with a uniform administration) was of paramount importance to them.'²⁵

Nevertheless, the Victorian clubs had to respond to the NSW initiative. The ASFA had been suspended by FIFA in April 1960, which provided the opportunity for NSW clubs to poach Victorian players with impunity, and the window in which to set up a rival organisation since the ASFA's privileged position of having the FIFA Charter was now in abeyance.²⁶ That the poaching of players was no idle threat was shown on 20 September 1961 when Ron McNeil of Moreland and Devetak of Footscray were black listed for playing in NSW without their clubs' permission. This sequence of events was probably the catalyst that brought

the continuing discontent in Victoria with the Amateur Association to a head. The State League clubs decided that they would sound opinion in the other states before making a move to join the proposed Australian Soccer Federation (ASF).

A deputation consisting of Theo Marmaras of South Melbourne Hellas and Fred Hutchison of Wilhelmina was appointed. Michael Weinstein and Stuart Beaton, Secretary of the Association, were added to the delegation, which thus had the tacit support of the Association, at least as a fact-finding exercise.²⁷ It left Melbourne during the weekend of 28-29 October 1961 and flew to Western Australia. Telegrams had been sent to the various organisations in all the mainland states seeking meetings, but matters had been done in such haste that the delegation arrived in Perth almost at the same time as its messages. On the evening the Victorians arrived, the leading clubs in Perth were holding their own meeting to discuss future organisation. They refused the Easterners permission to attend and put their case. Fred Hutchison believed that the West Australians wanted to settle their own plans before they faced a disruptive move in the East. The Victorians were met by the representatives of the Western Australian Association, not the leading clubs, and though Marmaras did get a chance to speak briefly to his counterpart in Perth, there was no chance to do more.

The Victorians flew back to South Australia, and then to Queensland via Sydney, and back to Sydney before returning to Melbourne. Discussions were held with representatives of the leading clubs in Adelaide and Brisbane and with the Federation officials in Sydney. Michael Weinstein's impression of the trip was that in all states there was strong support for the notion of a federation of the leading clubs, but grave suspicion of NSW.

Marmaras and company returned to Melbourne and presented their report on 6 November. It had been prepared by Fred Hutchison, who had taped all the discussions and acted as secretary of the group.²⁸ The general thrust was that Victoria should join the ASF. The hope was that this could

be achieved within VASFA. The doyen of Victorian Soccer, Harry Dockerty then President of the Association, made an appeal for unity before the meeting of State League delegates. He accused the breakaways of using threats and bluffs to sabotage soccer for their own glory. Admitting that there were faults in VASFA, Dockerty claimed that administration had improved tremendously over the previous two years and that changes could and should be brought about through the ballot box: 'For to allow rebellious outsiders, aided by a few of their local quislings, to smash our association so painstakingly built up over many years through trial and error will not correct a single fault and will not solve a single problem.'²⁹

The following weekend, 10-11 November 1961, Henry Seamonds summoned a meeting of all state representatives to Sydney to establish the Australian Soccer Federation formally. Later, Marmaras was to claim that the group that represented Victoria had the blessing of VASFA, subject only to its achieving satisfactory voting rights for the Association within the new Federation.³⁰ Seamonds' subsequent account of the meeting at the Manhattan Hotel gave the impression that there was unanimity among the delegates and the ASF was set up in an atmosphere of cordial cooperation. 'The feeling of mutual goodwill and confidence that pervaded the meeting was a welcome change from much that has happened in Australia's turbulent soccer tradition.'³¹ Morrie Buckner's report in the Melbourne *Sun* reveals, however, that the NSW leadership received a nasty shock:

Victorian official Mr Theo Marmaras was chairman of the breakaway Australian Federation of Soccer Clubs for ten minutes today. He handed over the position to Dr Henry Seamonds of Sydney after an outburst by two NSW officials. Dr Seamonds declined to comment on the incident at the luncheon adjournment and the minutes of the morning session were later discussed in camera. At its first meeting yesterday the convention banned poaching of overseas players.³²

This followed an extended debate on whether the new body should attempt to rejoin FIFA or not. Some delegates felt that the domestic game would be best served by attracting the best players available as cheaply as possible, even if this meant continued ostracism by the official world of soccer. The view that gained approval in the end was that overseas tours and the attractions of the best international teams were essential for the future health of the sport and that every effort should be made to reach an accommodation with FIFA and through it with the aggrieved European associations - hence the ban on the poaching of foreign players. It is noteworthy that there was no similar ban on domestic activities, while the battle with the Associations remained unresolved. To be fair to the participants in this historic meeting, it is misleading to overemphasise the divisions, for there was enough self-interest, if nothing else, among the leading clubs to ensure that there would be unanimity on the principles of club control of state and national organisations, with the financial rewards flowing to the clubs that generated the resources.

Seamonds was quite correct in another remark in his account of events: 'But now came the hard part of the battle - and a battle it was. These delegates had to return to their respective states and persuade other men to share their own unquenchable resolve to fight under the same banner.'³³ The battle was soon joined.

On 18 November, Alex Barr of the *Age* reported that all State League clubs in Victoria had been summoned to a special meeting to discuss certain contentious points. Some Victorian clubs had already joined the ASF:

With the Victorian Soccer Association yet to give its blessing to the move, it is probable that some delegates will move for the formation of a new controlling body in this State. The bulk of soccer revenue comes from the State League games, and it seems inevitable that whichever way the top clubs go will decide the future of the code here.³⁴

Barr's instincts were correct and the Victorian Federation of Soccer Clubs was formed. What brought some of the waverers over was the suspension of all the State League clubs and four officials by the Standing Committee of VASFA on 20 November.³⁵ The State League clubs concerned claimed they were still members of the VASFA. They proposed lodging an immediate demand for a total payment of £4000 to State League clubs and £2000 to Metropolitan clubs. Weinstein of Hakoah moved that VASFA pay the £300 affiliation fee to ASF. Marmaras was appointed Chairman, with all clubs represented on the Committee. If the Metropolitan clubs were to join they would have five votes, and the juniors, the country associations and the referees would have one vote each.³⁶ The new body appointed a panel to meet VASFA after Jim Demetrie of Hellas stated that 'We must act quickly before the soccer council blackens our name and possibly damages the good reputation we have with other clubs in Victoria'. It was also decided to apply for the use of the No. 1 Oval at Olympic Park, which then housed the VASFA. The VASFA Chairman, W R (Bill) Thomas, said that the matter would be discussed at a Council meeting the next Thursday and that a certain course of action would have to be taken. He would not specify the action, but Alex Barr thought it would be a move to disaffiliate the clubs for breaching the VASFA Constitution by stating an intention to join another body.³⁷

The Council meeting on 23 November 1961 attracted over a hundred delegates, which supported a VASFA suspension of the twelve State League clubs, with only one dissenting vote. Demetrie's fears were justified as the delegates set about criticising the breakaway clubs. W Bynion of South Yarra stated that the State League clubs had 'used Gestapo methods'. Dr Charles Walker of Polonia contended that the trouble began when the State League clubs in Victoria began to live beyond their income. Polonia had received £5200 from Olympic Park the previous season, but this had only met 60 per cent of the club's expenditure. Walker complained that two people had appeared from Sydney and tried to undermine the clubs

in Victoria: 'These people cannot run their own clubs and now they want to run us'. John Oliphant, Chairman of the State League, stated that he thought there was still a chance of unison (*sic*) in Victoria, but criticised the new chairman of the Soccer Federation, Dr Seamonds of NSW. Cecil Beaurepaire of Brighton referred to 'renegades and desperadoes'. 'Soccer has always been run on democratic lines here', he contended, 'the people who have broken away have done so on very undemocratic lines.'³⁸

On 27 November the *Age* reported that the new body had suffered its first setback when only five clubs attended a meeting on 25 November, while the VASFA meeting had attracted 114 delegates from forty-four clubs.³⁹ Meanwhile in South Australia it was reported that the ten breakaway clubs decided to re-affiliate with the Soccer Association. Don Sutherland opened a meeting of the Victorian Metropolitan clubs by stressing the need to avoid a damaging split in soccer administration in the state.⁴⁰ One hundred and fifty members representing twenty clubs attended and were told by Bill Thomas that the VASFA would back them with up to £14 000. Marmaras stated that his group had the complete support of VASFA until 18 November and had been asked to obtain full voting power for Victoria in the ASF and had succeeded in doing so.⁴¹ The meeting was very stormy but eventually the delegates decided to defer any decision.

The Popularity Contest

By early December it appeared certain that there was to be a major split in Victorian soccer. The suspended State League clubs had set up their own organisation. The *Sporting Globe*, noting that soccer fans would have the choice of following games under different controlling bodies, tried to draw a parallel with the Victorian Football League and the Victorian Football Association. The *Globe* suggested that the determinant of success or failure was likely to be the tenancy of Olympic Park the main soccer ground with a capacity of 30 000 spectators. Stuart Beaton, the Secretary-Manager of VASFA, turned down an offer of more than £2000 to become

Secretary of the Federation and signed a two-and-a-half year contract with VASFA saying he preferred to work with an established body that believed in the principles of constitutional administration. The Association decided to press ahead with its pre-season night series at the Showgrounds in January.⁴²

The VASFA held its annual meeting on 11 December but was dealt a body blow three days later when the Committee of Management of Olympic Park refused to decide which soccer body should have use of No. 1 Oval 'in order to avoid injecting further complications into an already delicate problem'.⁴³ As the Committee dithered, Weinstein and Marmaras approached the Chairman of the Olympic Park Trustees and Lord Mayor of Melbourne, (Sir) Maurice Nathan. Marmaras offered him £3000 for his Lord Mayor's Appeal, whether the Victorian Soccer Federation (VSF) got Olympic Park or not.⁴⁴ Three newly elected members of the VASFA Council, Morrie Buckner, John Oliphant and Fred Villiers, resigned. Buckner stated that the Committee of Management's action was a body blow against the possibility of a negotiated settlement. It deprived the Association of its main bargaining counter, the tenancy of Olympic Park. Buckner's main objection was to the State League clubs' demand for a permanent majority on the sport's governing bodies.⁴⁵ Buckner blamed Olympic Park management for sinking the ship. The Olympic Park Secretary, E A Avery, stated: 'We decided not to complicate matters by allotting Olympic Park grounds at this stage and our final decision has been deferred. The Committee believes that there is an excellent chance that the two factions will compose their differences.'⁴⁶ A combined meeting of Association and Federation clubs was called for 9 January 1962. The meeting proved inconclusive and another was called for 17 January.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, on 23 December the Federation was able to announce its own night series at the South Melbourne Cricket Ground, involving all twelve State League teams, including Polonia and the newly promoted Croat, formerly Preston.⁴⁸ It opened with a match between Victoria and

NSW, with a 6s entry fee, which attracted 14 968 who paid £2758.⁴⁹ The VSF embarked on a publicity campaign, taking large advertisements in the *Sporting Globe*, aimed at Australian Rules Football fans and explaining the laws of soccer. Alex Barr of the *Age* was signed up to commentate and explain the rules of the game during the night series. In a bold move, a contract was offered to Stanley Matthews to play eight matches in Melbourne for £2500 between June and August, when he was in Australia to enable his son to receive tennis coaching from Harry Hopman.⁵⁰ Fred Villiers now emerged as publicist for the Federation, asserting that it had netted more than £5600 in gate takings from its night series after only three rounds.⁵¹ Villiers, who claimed backing by leading Melbourne businessmen, announced plans for an interstate tournament and to send a representative side to Western Australia on 3 March.

The Association for its part used national teams sponsored by the Metropolitan clubs-Greece (Alexander), Holland (Dandenong), Germany (Richmond), Great Britain (Box Hill), Italy (Fiorentina), Austria, Croatia and Macedonia.⁵² It was clear that a popularity contest was underway and about 500 spectators attended the first Association double header at the Showgrounds to see Germany beat Holland 3-0 and Alexander beat Macedonia 4-1.⁵³ The Sun reported:

A significant sidelight of the match was that 5500 people went to see this opening Summer Cup program of the breakaway soccer Federation at South Melbourne Cricket Ground. Only 1050 people paid to see the Association matches the previous night, bearing out the predictions that the attendances would be 5 to 1 in favour of the new Federation.⁵⁴

The writing was on the wall, however, when the *Globe* noted that 'Olympic Park Trustees have given a pointer towards the tenants of No. 1 Oval for next season by allotting the next two Sundays to Federation fixtures'.⁵⁵ The first round Federation matches attracted around 6000 fans.⁵⁶

By the end of January the Association night series was in jeopardy. No games were to be played on 2 February, and the previous week's matches had attracted only 285 spectators who had paid £57.⁵⁷ Federation representatives toured Melbourne and Geelong to try to get clubs to switch allegiance to the Federation.⁵⁸ The *Globe* announced the 'Federation have won the soccer battle in Victoria. They now have thirty-six clubs, ten more than the Association. This means the dominating power in the State this season will be the Victorian Federation of Soccer Clubs.'⁵⁹ Bill Curran announced that he would not referee that season as he was the referees' representative in the Federation. After a three-hour meeting, Olympic Park Management agreed to the Federation having tenancy of the ground.⁶⁰ Ted Avery stated that 'The Federation is now the stronger body of the two and, in fairness to the public, its application was granted. It appears that of the 62 clubs last season, 45 have joined the Federation.'⁶¹ The Association cancelled its night series 'owing to insufficient public support'.⁶²

At a special meeting of the VSF on 30 January 1962, the new office bearers were elected. Theo Marmaras of South Melbourne Hellas was Chairman; Don Sutherland, Deputy Chairman; Eric Heath, Treasurer; and John van Hoboken and John Dixon were also elected.⁶³ Relations between the Federation and the Association reached their nadir early in February and eventually the State League clubs and the four suspended officials took the matter of their suspension to the Supreme Court.⁶⁴

The clubs claimed that they only sought reinstatement and a declaration that their suspension was unconstitutional. Counsel for the clubs, Mr Minogue, stated that the rift stemmed from the Australia-wide dissatisfaction over the administration of the ASFA. The *Sun* reported that in Victoria:

Threats were made to form a new State League and to spend the Association's assets said to be £14 000, for that purpose. Since then 43 of the 62 clubs associated with the Association had applied for affiliation with the Australian Soccer Federation. Mr M V McInerney QC, for the Association, said he did not concede this.⁶⁵

According to Fred Hutchison, the intervention of the judge, Mr Justice Hudson, was critical when the hearing resumed on 14 February. Seizing on the fact that the letter suspending the State League clubs and the officials had referred to them as an 'illegal organisation', the judge indicated that the Association's chairman, Bill Thomas, had exceeded his authority. He strongly urged the parties not to continue to waste their money in fighting the case through the court, but to meet to try to compose their differences. The action was called off and both sides agreed to ask the VASFA Council to convene a meeting of all clubs to settle the future course of soccer administration in Victoria.⁶⁶

The meeting was summoned for 27 February and, according to Buckner, ended the era of VASFA:

The clubs gave Victorian Soccer Federation control of soccer by a 2-1 majority last night. This ended the reign of the Victorian Amateur Soccer Football Association which had administered the game for fifty years. The meeting ratified the terms of the out-of-court settlement which ended the recent legal battle between the bodies. It also voted to seek affiliation with the Australian Soccer Federation. But a motion that the State League clubs be granted a 12-9 majority on the council was lost by one vote. The VASFA chairman W R Thomas and four other officials said they would resign in a move to achieve soccer unity.⁶⁷

And so the war in Victoria came to an end.⁶⁸

Stuart Beaton became Secretary of the VSF and moved back into his old offices in his new role.⁶⁹ On 31 March 1962, the new season kicked off with a record number of 202 soccer teams, 108 seniors and 96 juniors. Even so thirteen clubs had to be turned away by the VSF and invited to play friendly matches for the 1962 season.⁷⁰

Since the settlement between the contending parties had been reached by agreement, the 'breakaway' did not eventuate. The Victorian Soccer Federation was thus in direct continuity with the Victorian Amateur Soccer Football Association. The assets of the latter were transferred to the former. The name of the body was changed.⁷¹ The old office bearers resigned and were elected life members of the new organisation. Only then was the Constitution changed and the club control, which had been sought for so long, confirmed. In the end there was no breakaway in Victoria, but rather an uneasy and rocky compromise, whose consequences can still be felt in Victorian soccer in 1994.⁷²

Consequences

The takeover over by the Federation did not solve all the problems of Victorian or Australian soccer. In 1963 FIFA refused to readmit Australia until fines of £48 000 were paid. Gradually, relations improved. FIFA dropped its demand to £30 000, and the ASF Annual Meeting on 9-11 March 1963 was invited to vote on a return to FIFA.⁷³ In early April the Federation agreed to send a £5000 bond to FIFA and ASFA handed over its operations to the Australian Soccer Federation in Sydney.⁷⁴ The final settlement by FIFA and ASF did not come until mid-1963.

Philip Mosely has argued that large-scale migration has always resulted in conflict between groups involved in soccer. He suggested, in particular, that 'migrant groups were opposed to the district system favoured by local-born officials, a system common to all codes of football in Australia but not to British football'.⁷⁵ In Victoria there is no doubt that the attitude of some local officials – the demeaning of the behaviour and aspirations of the migrant clubs and their representatives – did have a part to play in exacerbating tensions that existed, but it is inadequate to characterise the breakaway of the VSF clubs as simply a struggle to escape from local control.⁷⁶

The move was led by people like Weinstein representing Hakoah, one of the oldest of the migrant clubs and almost part of the Victorian establishment by 1961, while some of the 'Anglo' clubs were also part of the breakaway, including Moreland and all the Geelong clubs.⁷⁷ Stuart Beaton was sought as Secretary of the Federation, though he was a pillar of the Anglo-connection, and after an initial refusal he finished up as an influential figure in the Federation in the subsequent few years, though his effectiveness was later reduced.⁷⁸ Harry Dockerty became President of the VSF, while all but two of the State Federations in Australia had 'Anglo' Secretaries. So there was not a simple split between migrants and 'Anglos', but perhaps one between different generations of migrants, with those who had been established having to share power with the relative newcomers. It is noticeable that many of the migrant clubs still had a strong 'Anglo' presence in their committees, particularly secretaries, who often wielded considerable influence.⁷⁹ The precise locus of power in the clubs and the Federations remains to be assessed. Some of the figures who appeared at meetings were representing power brokers behind the scenes; others were able to run their clubs by controlling the agenda and doing the detailed, hard work, without which rhetoric would never be turned into policy. If the movement was inspired by migrants, it did not simply result in a migrant takeover of the game.

The issue of professional standards and the need to raise the quality of Australian domestic soccer by international contacts was a key issue for many of the participants. Virtually all Federation informants stress the overwhelming desire to produce a higher standard of soccer, to develop the domestic game and to attract overseas tours by quality teams were central in their vision for the sport. VASFA officials emphasised junior development and the continued health of the smaller clubs as essential to progress in the sport.

On the contentious issue of ethnic politics, much touted by critics of the Federation takeover, the evidence is also ambivalent. It is true that the clubs still continued to represent particular communities, rather than districts on the Australian Rules Football or Rugby League models, but it would appear that the migrants were forced into this pattern as much by native preconceptions as by deliberate selection.⁸⁰ There is much to be said on this issue, but it is worth pointing out that, though it may have been window-dressing, the ASF and the VSF agreed as early as December 1961 that 'throughout Australian Federation circles there would be no more games played between sides bearing national titles, such as in the World Cup Series played here in Melbourne'.⁸¹ These games in the Sunday International League had been organised by the old Association, so the decision may be seen as little more than belated revenge, rather than a considered act of policy, for it was to be breached many times in the future. However, when the decision was being considered in 1962, it is fascinating to find three pillars of VASFA – Harry Dockerty, Charles Walker and Morrie Buckner – lined up in support of the international games, and Theo Marmaras, the Chairman of the VSF, arguing that 'After all this is the Commonwealth of Australia, and I do not think it wise to perpetuate the differences in nationality here'.⁸²

The change of the early 1960s was also a change of generations, as young men from Europe and the United Kingdom and a very few Australians tried to make their way in and through the game. They had the vitality and the vision to turn a social and recreational game into a semi-professional one with the prospect that Australia might one day compete on the world stage. Many issues remained to be addressed, including the junior development on which the long-term future would have to be based.⁸³ Also, the relationships between the clubs and the new organisations had only been outlined and the inevitable tensions between the self-interest of the top clubs and the broader needs of the game were to confound some of the hopes of the new generation, as they had those of the old.

NOTES

1. Theo Marmaras was President of the South Melbourne Hellas Soccer Club in Melbourne, a wholesaler and a pillar of the Greek Orthodox Community. The former Executive Director of the Victorian Soccer Federation says he was known as 'The Oyster Ring'. Henry Seamonds was an English-born Sydney gynaecologist, who grew up in a Rugby Union environment. Watching Sydney Hakoah one day, he responded to the call for a doctor when a player was injured. Asked if he would become club doctor, he declined but became involved in administration of the game, becoming Chairman of the New South Wales Federation of Soccer Clubs. He was Chairman of the ASF from 1961 to 1963. He died in Melbourne on 18 Feb. 1963 after suffering a heart attack during the lunchtime adjournment of a particularly heated soccer meeting on the issue of the readmission of Australia to FIFA. *Sporting Globe*, 20 Feb. 1963.
2. For the broader context of these changes see Roy Hay, 'British Football, Wogball or the World Game? Towards a Social History of Victorian Soccer', John O'Hara, ed., *Ethnicity in Soccer in Australia*, ASSH Studies in Sports History No. 10, Campbelltown, NSW, 1994, pp. 44-79.
3. All these interpretations have been suggested by participants and others whom I have interviewed in connection with this project. I am indebted to George Wallace, Michael Weinstein, Don Sutherland, Eric Heath, Andy Kun, John van Hoboken, Fred Hutchison for allowing me to record their memories of this transition. Tapes of these recordings are in the possession of the author.
4. The Victorian Amateur Soccer Football Association was founded in 1908, replacing the Anglo-Australian Football Association, founded in 1884. *Victorian Amateur Soccer Handbook*, 1984, p. 155.
5. See also Circular 1/68 containing the Minutes of the meeting of the Council of the Australian Soccer Football Association Limited, 4 Nov. 1961, p. 3, which distinguishes between issues to be considered by the Council and those to be dealt with by the Shareholders, Wallsend, NSW, 18 Nov. 1961. I am indebted to Don Sutherland, Vice-Chairman of the VSF in 1962 and currently a Trustee of the Federation, for allowing me to consult his collection of documents, which includes records of meetings prior to the establishment of the VSF and the minutes of the meetings of the first year of the Federation. Items from this source are indicated in footnotes by DSC. The author has copies of all these items.
6. *VASFA Handbooks*, 1952 and 1961.
7. At club level these rules were being surreptitiously ignored. Juventus regularly divided the net gate money among the players. 'The Association was probably aware that such practices existed. Egilberto Martin, *Juve! Juve!*, Elabor Helena, Brooklyn Victoria, 1990, p. 12.
8. Don Sutherland pointed out that the rules were adopted in preparation for the requirements of the Olympic Games. Letter to the author, 1 Feb. 1994.
9. The view of the transfer system presented here derives largely from people who were critical of this aspect of the VASFA administration. The career of Angus Drennan in the 1940s and 1950s shows that it was possible for a player to move from club to club for expenses which amounted to the equivalent that could be earned from employment on a Saturday afternoon at the time. Drennan played for Nobels (ICI), Brighton, JUST and Sunshine United. Interview with Angus Drennan, 6 Oct. 1993. Jim Greenhill, on the other

- hand, had great difficulty in obtaining a transfer from Park Rangers to Sandringham after joining the former within a few days of arrival from Scotland. See J Greenhill to Council of VASFA, 5 May and 27 June 1961, DSC.
10. Phillip Mosely, A Social History at Soccer in New South Wales, 1880 -1956, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1987, pp. 331-6, see also Stuart Beaton, 'The Breakaway in New South Wales' *Soccer News*, 6 July 1957, which emphasises the promotion issue.
 11. In 1961, it was 15.9 per cent of gate takings or 20.6 per cent of net receipts, VASFA Accounts 1961, Schedule No. 7, DSC.
 12. Egilberto Martin asserts that 'European migrants [were excluded] from the [Australian] Olympic representative team, for fear there were no naturalized players with a true amateur status', *Juve! Juve!*, p. 25.
 13. *Adelaide Advertiser*, 25 Apr. 1955.
 14. Sid Grant, *Jack Pollard's Soccer Record*, Jack Pollard, Sydney, 1974 ed., p. 91; *Sun-Herald*, 6 Jan. 1957, p. 21; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 Jan. 1957.
 15. *VASFA Handbook*, 1957, p. 8.
 16. *Soccer News*, 6 Apr. 1957.
 17. *VASFA Handbook*, 1958; see also *Soccer News*, 17 Apr. 1957; 31 Aug. 1957.
 18. *Sporting Globe*, 18 Sept. 1957; 26 Mar. 1958.
 19. *Sporting Globe*, 24 Sept. 1958.
 20. *Sun*, 26 Sept. 1961. The allegations by three Juventus players against another player was that they had been approached to throw a match against Polonia on 12 Aug. 1961.
 21. *Soccer Year Book*, 1962, published by *Soccer World*, 1962, p. 56. 'The 1961 Season', by L K Stone.
 22. *Sporting Globe*, 13 Sept. 1961.
 23. Statement by State League Clubs prior to meeting of Metropolitan League Clubs on 29 Nov. 1961, Publicity and Public Relations Committee of State League Clubs (n.d.), hereafter referred to as Statement, 29 Nov. 1961, DSC.
 24. Michael Weinstein, Andy Kun and Fred Hutchinson all confirm that the initiative came from NSW and that Victoria was presented with a 'join or else' scenario.
 25. Statement, 29 Nov. 1961.
 26. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 Aug. 1961, 29 Sept. 1961.
 27. The Association was aware that the State League clubs intended to go ahead no matter what VASFA did, so it decided to send Beaton to keep an eye on developments on behalf of the Association
 28. Report of Interstate Visit, 1961, included in circular to all Metropolitan League Clubs, 20 Nov. 1961, DSC.
 29. *Sporting Globe*, 7 Nov. 1961.
 30. *Age*, 30 Nov. 1961.
 31. *Soccer Year Book*, 1962, p.5.
 32. *Sun*, 13 Nov. 1961. Buckner's bye-line was 'Sydney Sunday', and his report is confirmed by Michael Weinstein and Andy Kun, who were present. The Victorian delegation consisted of Marmaras, Weinstein and Beaton, with Andy Kun and John D'Andrea as observers. See Circular to all club officials and members and the soccer fraternity in general, prepared for the State League clubs in Victoria, n.d., but written between 25 and 29 Nov. 1961, DSC. This document contains a detailed record of events between 21 Oct. 1961 and the date of composition

33. *Soccer Year Book*, 1962, p. 5.
34. *Age*, 18 Nov. 1961.
35. *Sun*, 13 Feb. 1962.
36. *Age*, 20 Nov. 1961.
37. Fred Hutchison recalls that the circular summoning the meeting was accompanied by a letter from Bill Thomas referring to the break away group as an 'illegal organisation'. 'This document was to play a significant part in the subsequent court case between the suspended group and VASFA. Stuart Beaton, Circular to Metropolitan and State League Clubs, 22 Nov. 1961, DSC.
38. *Age*, 24 Nov. 1961.
39. *Age*, 27 Nov. 1961.
40. Notes for opening remarks at meeting of Metropolitan clubs on 29 Nov. 1961, DSC.
41. *Age*, 30 Nov. 1961.
42. *Sporting Globe*, 6 Dec. 1961.
43. *Sporting Globe*, 27 Dec. 1961.
44. Interview with Michael Weinstein, 1 Apr. 1993. *Age*, 11 Dec. 1961, reported that the VSF planned to hold a floodlight carnival prior to the beginning of its night series, with all clubs participating and the proceeds to go to the Lord Mayor's Hospital Appeal.
45. *Sporting Globe*, 27 Dec. 1961. Buckner was correct, the Chairman of the Federation was reported as saying that 'We are merely being courteous. We stated our requests many weeks ago and unless they are met we will continue in our present capacity.' *Age*, 14 Dec. 1961.
46. *Age*, 16 Dec. 1961.
47. *Sporting Globe*, 17 Jan. 1962.
48. *Sporting Globe*, 23 Dec. 1961; *Age*, 10 Feb. 1962 Croat was the product of an amalgamation between Preston and Croatia Geelong in 1959.
49. *Age*, 15 Jan. 1962.
50. *Sporting Globe*, 10 Feb. 1962; Minutes of VSF meeting, 8 Feb. 1962, DSC.
51. *Sporting Globe*, 14 Feb. 1962.
52. *Sporting Globe*, 17 Jan. 1962.
53. *Sporting Globe*, 20 Jan 1962 Both bodies took display advertisements on the back page of the *Age* on 19 Jan. 1962. The VSF competition was sponsored by Ampol and the prize money was £1000, while the *Sun* presented the Cup for the Association series.
54. *Sun*, 22 Jan. 1962. The *Sun* was sponsoring the Association games, so its crowd estimate of 1050 may be an exaggeration.
55. *Sporting Globe*, 20 Jan. 1962.
56. *Age*, 22 Jan. 1962.
57. *Sporting Globe*, 31 Jan. 1962.
58. Minutes of VSF Committee of Management, 20 Jan. 1962.
59. The Federation clubs were Azzurri, Alexander, Bell Park, Box Hill, Croydon, Collingwood, St Albans, Oakleigh, Moonee Ponds, Ringwood, Libertas, Kensington, Sicilia, Florina, Croatia, Corio, Richmond, Triestina, Heidelberg, Geelong, Sandringham City, University, Femtree Gully, Norlane Olympia, Bayswater, Bendigo United, and Trident, plus the previous year's State League clubs. *Sporting Globe*, 31 Jan. 1962; see also *Age*, 26 Jan. 1962, where the affiliation of thirty-eight teams to the Federation is claimed.
60. *Sporting Globe*, 3 Feb. 1962.

61. *Age*, 2 Feb. 1962. Rental of the ground was to be £50 or 15 percent of the gate, whichever was higher.
62. *Sporting Globe*, 7 Feb. 1962
63. *Sporting Globe*, 3 Feb. 1962
64. *Sun*, Tuesday 13 Feb. 1962; *Age*, 13 Feb. 1962.
65. *Sun*, 13 Feb. 1962.
66. *Sun*, 15 Feb. 1962.
67. *Sun*, 28 Feb. 1962.
68. By April 1962, 204 clubs had joined the ASF and only 43 remained affiliated with the ASFA. The State breakdown at that point was NSW Federation 84 /Association 0; Victoria 64/0; Queensland 22/12; WA 18/6; SA 16/15; Tasmania 0/10, *Adelaide Advertiser*, 6 Apr. 1962.
69. *Sporting Globe*, 28 Mar. 1962.
70. Stuart Beaton, Letter to applicant clubs, 22 Mar. 1962, DSC.
71. Minutes of Special General Meeting of the Victorian Soccer Federation, 31 May 1962, DSC.
72. The problems of the Association remained to plague the Federation: 'We have always criticised the old Council for talking too much and doing too little. We must realise we are sailing in the same boat, if not worse. All we ask you to do is to realise that the way we have been going is wrong and worse than it has ever been before.' Address by Theo Marmaras to Council of the VSF, 1 May 1962, DSC.
73. *Sporting Globe*, 2 Mar. 1963. It was rumoured that Ampol money might be used to meet the FIFA demands. W G Walkley of the Ampol company was elected President of the ASF at its annual meeting. *Sporting Globe*, 23 Mar. 1963.
74. *Sporting Globe*, 10 Apr. 1963. Weinstein claims that he negotiated the agreement in Zurich and London, with Sir Stanley Rous. Fred Villiers confirmed the substance of this in the *Globe*, 10 Apr. 1963, quoting Mannaras to the effect that Walkley had telephoned London to say that the £5000 was available.
75. Philip Mosely, 'Soccer in Australia', Wray Vamplew et al (eds), *Oxford Companion to Australian Sport*, OUP, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 316-23.
76. See for example, Morrie Buckner, 'Would you burn down your house to get rid of a handful of fleas', a polemical document printed in November 1961 while Buckner was a member of the VASFA Council.
77. According to Andy Kun, Kurt Defris, Secretary of Hakoah, was against the formation of the VSF, Laurie Schwab, 'Andy Kun - A True Pioneer', *Soccer Action*, 18 Sept. 1985.
78. Don Sutherland, then and now, praised Beaton's administrative efforts, but Michael Weinstein was very critical of the later years of his administration.
79. *VSF Handbook*, 1962, p. 8.
80. I have addressed this issue inter alia in 'Making Aussies?' or 'What soccer is all about?': Soccer and European migrants to Australia, 1945-93, Bradman, Barellan, Balmain and Bocce: The culture of Australian Sport Conference, Canberra, 8-9 Oct. 1993.
81. *Age*, 11 Dec. 1961. 'A national register of players in the Federation will be compiled to prevent illegal transfers and the poaching of talent between the States.'
82. *Soccer Weekly*, 28 June 1962.
83. For a very perceptive analysis see John van Hoboken. *Soccer News*, 29 July 1961.