



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

**FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT**

**Motions**

12 April 2018

**MATILDAS' HOME BASE PROPOSAL**

**Ms SONIA HORNER ( Wallsend ) ( 16:28 ) :**

I move:

That this House:

*(1) Notes that the Australian women's soccer team, the Matildas, played at the Hunter Stadium before a record crowd of 16,829 people in their 3-2 win over Brazil on 19 September 2017.*

*(2) Notes that the member for Wallsend supports Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes' offer to make Newcastle the Matildas' home base, a plan that brings economic and cultural benefits to the Hunter.*

*(3) Urges the Minister for Sport to consider putting Newcastle forward as the home base for the Matildas.*

I begin by saying that last night the Matildas thrashed Vietnam 8-nil. Australia is well and truly on track in the Asian Cup campaign. Australia's team rocketed to the top of group B, and now our thoughts turn to the game against Japan tomorrow night. We all remember the A-League slogan, "Ninety minutes, 90 emotions". It is the perfect description of a football match, especially the showdown in Newcastle on 19 September 2017 between our Matildas and Brazil. The Matildas put on an incredible show. After sacrificing a goal in the first minute, they came back for a 3-2 win. It was an electrifying game and a true contest between two sides at peak performance. Superstar striker Sam Kerr proved she is one of the best athletes in the game. The team is one of the best, if not the best, in the world. Coach Alen Stajcic told the Newcastle Herald:

I thought the second half we completely dominated the game and started picking them apart and created probably more chances than the two we scored.

He went on:

I think it's good resilience and maturity from the group, even when the game got a bit rough and tumble.

Emily van Egmond, Katrina Gorry, Caitlin Foord, Chloe Logarzo and Sam Kerr were all stand-out players, but the whole side deserves the glory. The victory put the cap on a streak of wins against the Brazilian side and added to the Matildas' impressive win total. The match was something special. Coach Stajcic said:

I think we'll be looking back in 10 years time and saying that this was the week that football really turned in Australia.

To top it all off, the Matildas played to a record-breaking crowd of 16,829 at Newcastle's McDonald Jones Stadium on a Tuesday night. That beats even the stratospheric crowds at the Matildas versus Brazil match in Penrith and comes close to edging out the record for the crowds that watched the Olympic side in 2000. Coach Stajcic said:

To come out on a Tuesday night and have such a big crowd is a testament to how engaging the girls have been.

Given Newcastle's willingness to come out in force to back the Matildas, is it any wonder that locals started to ask me to call for the Matildas to set up a home base in Newcastle? Our city loves sport, particularly football and particularly in the western suburbs. Wallsend is a sporting community and encourages girls and women to get involved. The Matildas would be a perfect fit. Only yesterday I was talking about New Lambton Football Club and the rise in the number of all-female teams in the western suburbs of Newcastle. It is a great game and all of the young women who play soccer will testify to the fact that it is a woman's sport as well as a bloke's sport. Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said that having a home base in Newcastle would be "a fantastic idea for the city". She went on:

Particularly given that we have produced so many high quality Australian women footballers, it's a natural breeding ground for that type of talent. So basing their training camps here would be a really natural fit.

Football Federation Australia's Chief Executive Officer David Gallop told the Newcastle Herald:

We will continue to look for opportunities to play national team matches in Newcastle as part of our commitment to taking these important events to venues around Australia.

He added that he was very impressed with the turnout that night. Mr Gallop noted Newcastle's long support for football and the Matildas. He said:

We know the players felt the crowd was a big factor in their victory over Brazil.

I agree. I was at the game with my mum and we thought that the atmosphere was wonderful—90 minutes, 90 emotions—and you could see it in each one of the 17,000 faces in the crowd. They roared, they cheered, they held their breaths, and they counted every second. It was wonderful. There was an extraordinary sense of community at McDonald Jones Stadium on that Tuesday night. We will all turn our eyes to the Matildas game tomorrow night against Japan. It will be a tough game; Japan is always at the top of the ladder. I urge people to tune into the game at 11.45 tomorrow night.

In conclusion, I ask the Minister for Sport to seriously consider helping to make Newcastle the home base for the Matildas. That would be a cultural and economic boon to our city in the Hunter as well as to the State, and would cement support for one of the State's most successful international teams. I applaud each and every member of the team, as I know all members of this House do, and every person in the Hunter who came to watch the Matildas triumph so spectacularly. I wish the team all the best for tomorrow night's match. I will appreciate the support that I hope I will have from the Government.