

# QAFL opens doors for Pies to go to Brisbane

by GREG STOLZ

SOUTHPORT Magpies have at last been given the green light for their long-awaited entry into next year's Queensland Australian Football League Brisbane competition.

All that remains for the Gold Coast competition big guns to land a city berth is for a special Southport committee meeting to agree to the final admission conditions listed in a QAFL letter expected to reach the club in a couple of days.

The letter, from QAFL general manager Ken Murphy, allows Southport 60 days to accept the invitation.

But the Magpies decision — almost certain to favour the move — is likely to be made in a matter of weeks, depending upon the club's constitutional laws governing the notice given for extraordinary meetings.

A similar letter will be sent to Sherwood, the other club invited to join the Pies in an expansion of the QAFL competition to 10 teams.

If the two clubs accept the conditions laid down in the letters, it will be up to the QAFL board of directors to make a final vote on their admissions.

However, QAFL spokesman Ken Hose said a board 'yes' vote would be a mere formality.

"We decided a long time ago that we wanted a 10-team QAFL competition," Hose said.

"It was really only a matter of thrashing out the recommendations and conditions with Sherwood and Southport and reaching an agreement."

The 'thrashing out of recommendations and conditions' has dragged on for months and the QAFL has come under heavy fire for keeping Southport and Sherwood in the dark.

But after a decision breakthrough at a league board meeting on Monday night, Hose defended the delay. He said the expansion is 'a big thing' and is not one that warrants a rushed vote.

"I suppose the league has taken a long time to make up its mind but it's a big thing to expand the competition," he said.

"There have been a lot of matters to sort out and we have a big obligation to the other teams in the competition to decide what will be the best move.

"We would rather take a while and have everything run smoothly than rush a decision only to see it flop and people say, 'see, I told you so'."

## 'We're in'

Southport Australian Football Club president Alan Mackenzie yesterday expressed relief and elation that the protracted admission affair had reached its final leg.

"It looks like we're in," the Magpie boss said. "I'm pretty happy — it has been a long and drawn out wait."

Mackenzie said there will be a general Southport committee meeting on Monday night when a date for the extraordinary club assembly to discuss the final invitation will be set.

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