

# Only the world game can bring nations together

WITH the Soccerroos in town it is possible to get a taste of the hype and enthusiasm in store as we count down to next June 11, and indications are that 2010 will be an emotional rollercoaster the likes of which this country has never witnessed.

But more importantly, Australia is beginning to discover the sheer size of the world game and its unrivalled capability to touch humanity in a very profound, real and positive way.

Other sports have community programs but football emanates from the global community, originates from the masses, the game played in every locality worldwide by man, woman and child, crossing all racial and ideological divides and bringing



human beings together in peace every day.

Football is not just a game but a religion, a movement, a common language between nations and a bridge to understanding and as the game awakens here, Australia can now witness its amazing social initiatives on a scale which only the globe's largest game can undertake.

Like Australia's ratification of the 1 Goal Project, FIFA's official campaign to help fulfil one of the United Nations' eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015, for all children worldwide to complete primary schooling. Thus, football will be not only a way to show the world's diverse cultures next year, but a chance for Africa to reap a significant social legacy after the mega festival moves on.

Only football has this power.

Australian football now touches our indigenous community through an annual festival with marvellously gifted Aboriginal youngsters learning the delights of playing with the round ball. The first Australians are our own Brazilians in grace and

dexterity, and from our outback towns will spring our first Kaka or Ronaldinho, as they realise the world game is the most joyous pursuit, the game most suitable for the gifted, a galaxy away from simple kick, catch and barge.

Football also connects every migrant to these shores, and there are many programs to support their integration into a strange society. One of the most inspirational is Football United – a refugee and disadvantaged youth football program through the University of NSW, which uses the only game that truly speaks emotionally to the kids to ease their socialisation into a new environment and provide hope for a brighter future.