

## John O'Neill

***Former CEO Australian Rugby Union, Former CEO Socceroos, State Bank of NSW***

John O'Neill has created success running three major organisations in banking and in international sports where mass entertainment and broad community participation are essential features. He speaks with authority on the common elements exemplified in the experience across banking and sport - in doing so imparting important lessons on management, teamwork and strategic direction.



Between 1987 and 1995, John O'Neill guided the State Bank of NSW through the problem loan experience that afflicted all Australian banks in the late eighties, introduced an innovative form of home lending that changed the Australian market for home loans. He actively pushed and promoted the successful sale of the bank to get its ownership into the private sector.

John O'Neill also established and nurtured First State Funds Management within the State Bank, an entity that became a high performing funds manager both within the Bank and subsequently within the Commonwealth Bank Group as Colonial First State.

John was appointed CEO of Australian Rugby Union in October 1995, at the start of the professional era. Over eight years he transformed the sport in Australia from one run by amateurs to one with genuine professional management. In doing so, he established practices that other top Rugby nations sought to emulate, establishing Australia as an international Rugby power and, for much of his tenure, with the Wallabies clearly the best in the world. He took the ARU from being a financially bereft organisation to one with strong commercial revenue and a sound asset base.

During this period John fought for and won the right to host the Rugby World Cup 2003 wholly within Australia and then conducted the immensely successful tournament. As an Australian sporting event in terms of value and world standing it has only been exceeded by the Olympics.

While running ARU John O'Neill established and implemented programs that almost doubled the size of Rugby participation in Australia.

John O'Neill joined the Football Federation Australia, in March 2004 and established the very successful A-League. He took the Socceroos to the World Cup for the first time in over 30 years, and beyond the pool round of the World Cup for the first time ever. Under his guidance FFA revenue rapidly grew to make the organisation more sustainable.



John also identified the need to move Australia into the Asian Football Confederation and personally drove the initiative to success, thereby creating a situation that dramatically improved the competitive and financial opportunities for Australian Football.

In achieving these things at FFA, John O'Neill has been a major contributor to transforming the ethos and image of football in Australia to something far more attractive to the broad community than it was.

In 2007, John O'Neill returned to the Australian Rugby Union CEO and Managing Director.

### **About John O'Neill:**

John was born in Sydney, Australia in 1951, and was educated at St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, and Sydney University. He is a qualified solicitor, as well as a Foundation Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Bankers. John has held numerous directorships, both sporting and business, as well as being involved in a number of community organisations over the years.

John was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO), in the 2004 Queen's Birthday Honours List, for service to Rugby as an administrator, to the financial services sector, and to the community through educational and charitable organisations.

In August 2005, by the decision of the President of the Republic of France, John was awarded the French decoration of Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, in recognition of his assistance in the preparation and organisation of sporting events in Australia and France, and for his contribution to the development of the bilateral relations in the field of sports between Australia and France.

In 2008, John O'Neill authored *Its Only A Game* - a behind-the-scenes look at the business and fun of sport.

### **John O'Neill talks about:**

John O'Neill recognizes the common elements across the international sports arena and finance, that are integral when it comes to achieving success:

- Strategic thinking, focus and good judgement about "the main game"
- The need to identify transactions that transform the business
- The ability to focus effort and staff on winning
- Outstanding feel for consumer markets and consumer response

[VIEW SPEAKER'S BIO ONLINE](#) 

