



HELPING HAND

# Vietnam Swans kick in to aid NZ quake victims

ADAM McNICOL

**T**he football community around Australia played a big role in raising money to help the victims of the floods that ravaged Queensland and Victoria over the summer.

Many people involved with the game overseas have also been doing their bit to support those impacted by natural disasters around the globe, and the Hanoi-based Vietnam Swans have been leading the charge.

A number of Swans players, along with the club's executive, played a key role in raising almost \$100,000 for the Christchurch earthquake appeal.

"The morning after the earthquake struck New Zealand, the Vietnam Swans contacted the New Zealand ambassador and consul-general to offer our condolences and full support should they wish to organise



**FUNDRAISER:** New Zealander John Gardner, holding a Sydney Swans jumper that was auctioned, is pictured with Vietnam Swans national president Phil Johns (left) and national treasurer Danny Armstrong.

a fundraiser," club president Phil Johns said.

"Given the close relationship between New Zealand and Australia, we knew we would start to find people in the club who would be directly or indirectly affected by the tragedy. Inevitably, we did."

Among the fundraising initiatives was an auction of two signed jumpers donated by the Sydney Swans.

"The challenge was to get the two jumpers, along with a signed Wallabies jersey, from Sydney to Saigon prior to the fundraiser," Johns explained.

"The Vietnam Swans activated our network, and in the space of a couple of hours we had tracked down someone who could bring them here. It was a wonderful example of people coming together to support a cause.

"The AFL does a great job at supporting many worthwhile causes, but even a small footy club like the Vietnam Swans can make a difference."

Johns and his fellow members of the Swans have inspired other Australian Football clubs in Asia to follow their lead, and the Tokyo Goannas recently set up an online appeal to raise money for those affected by the earthquake in Japan.

Meanwhile, the Swans are preparing for one of the most significant matches in their short history.

On April 23, they will play the Hong Kong Dragons in the inaugural Anzac International Friendship Match.

The game will take place in the town of Vung Tau, where the Australian Army was based during the Vietnam War.

A large crowd is expected, including many Vietnam veterans, some of whom played a match there during the conflict.

**“Even a small footy club like the Vietnam Swans can make a difference”**

VIETNAM SWANS PRESIDENT PHIL JOHNS