

turfAUSTRALIA

OFFICIAL INDUSTRY MAGAZINE • SUMMER 2018/19

Focusing on turf features

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Heat images show turf's cool performance

Events showcase and educate the public

How waste water and turf make design sense

CHAIR

Positive signs to bring in the new year

With 2018 drawing to a close, our industry can look back on another year where growers had – on the most part – another successful year of turf production.

As with any national industry, there are both positive and negative areas, and while the Eastern States continued to have good sales into the end of the year, Western Australia's market remained slow. The hard work the Western Australian industry is putting in to turn that around should be commended.

The year also ended with some amazing weather patterns across the nation, just to keep us all on our toes.

From a Turf Australia board perspective, 2018 ended with some change and positive discussions.

Hort Innovation CEO meeting

The final board meeting for the year, held at Hort Innovation's Sydney offices late in November, was another great get together of members to discuss our industry's way forward into the new year.

We were also fortunate to be able to meet and have a quick discussion with Hort Innovation's new chief executive officer, Matt Brand.

Matt comes to the job with a background in agricultural industry representative bodies (New South Wales Farmers' Federation) and he spoke to the Turf Australia board about the way in which he planned to lead Hort Innovation with collaborative relationships with industries.

It was pleasing to have him take the time to engage with our industry and give us some details about his aims for simplifying the relationships and paperwork between industries that Hort Innovation represents, and the industries themselves.

He also discussed improving the research outcomes of levy projects with some collaborative work between horticultural industries, to reduce the doubling up of research, and ensuring outcomes of levy-funded projects were valuable to the industries funding them.

Matt also spoke positively about developing a good working relationship between peak industry bodies and Hort Innovation, which all bodes well for our industry going forward and working with Hort Innovation.

New board member

At the board meeting, we welcomed a new board member to the table in Adam Dunstone from StrathAyr Turf in Victoria.

Adam brings to the table some valuable business knowledge, having recently become part of the turf industry after developing an enviable set of business and logistics skills in the retail sector.

We look forward to having Adam at the table and the fresh ideas and perspectives he will bring to discussions and decisions for Turf Australia.

It is also very pleasing to have a Victorian representative on the Turf Australia board to give it more national balance. There remains a position available on the board and we would welcome any members from South Australia or the Northern Territory to come forward and fill that role to give the board a truly national feel.

Load your turf correctly

Turf growers are reminded that the new laws regarding the way in which turf must be wrapped, strapped or curtailed are now enforceable. It is disappointing to see turf trucks still flouting the new regulations despite these being widely promoted before they came into force by Turf Australia, and the other industry groups. Complacency is no excuse. It should not take an incident with an incorrectly secured load for growers to comply with these heavy vehicle load rules.

2019 Turf Australia events

As we welcome in the new year, 2019 is an exciting and busy one for Turf Australia with three industry events planned.

In a new event for our calendar, we have the inaugural Women in Turf event during March in Sydney. There would barely be a business in our industry that does not have a female presence in it – be it in the office, out in the paddock, or as family support – and this event aims to bring those members of our industry together to learn from one another, and engage in some networking of their own.

This year, we welcome back our national conference and we look forward to having a great meet up mid-year in Sydney for this event. The plans for this event will fall into place as we get closer to the date but it is already shaping up to be another event where our whole industry can get together as one united group.

I encourage all members of our industry to participate in one or many of these events this year. They are always a great opportunity to come together and learn.

The ever popular NxGen event will also continue and this year, our younger and newer members of the industry will head to the Adelaide Hills to investigate the South Australian turf industry and benefit from networking with one another.

I encourage all members of our industry to participate in one or many of these events this year. They are always a great opportunity to come together and learn.

Member benefit fund

I would also like to remind Turf Australia members of the Member Benefit Fund.

This cash resource is made available to any member of our turf industry who needs a helping hand – whether that be the grower themselves, an employee, a family member – when going through an unexpected turn of events, like a medical diagnosis, financial hardship or other crisis.

The fund is there to support those within our industry and I encourage those who may need some assistance to contact the Turf Australia office, and make use of this fund as it was intended.

Rounding out 2018

As this new year begins, it cannot go without saying that the peak industry body representing our growers cannot operate without some dedicated people within it, and 2018 was no different.

I would like to thank all of the board members for another year of tireless unpaid work developing our industry and peak body's activities.

Similarly, the staff of Turf Australia – Jenny Zadro, Rachel Collier and Liz Mechem – I thank them for all of their hard work in 2018.

With summer well and truly arriving, I look forward to 2019 being another successful year for the turf industry.



ROSS BOYLE, ROSEMOUNT TURF
CHAIRMAN
TURF AUSTRALIA

Follow us on Facebook! Keep up to date with what's happening in the industry and at Turf Australia.





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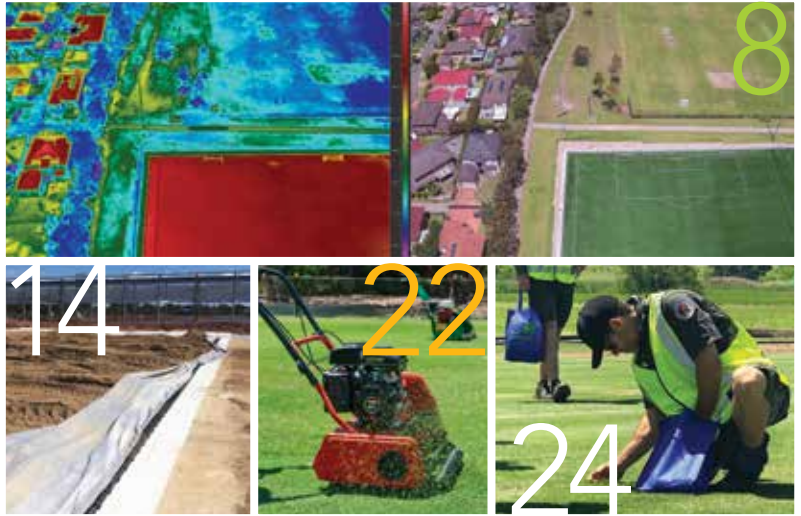
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CONTENTS



New year signals new industry consultation for Hort Innovation	4
Turf to take centre stage at the largest garden show in the southern hemisphere.....	4
SAVE THE DATE.....	5
Compliance all along the turf chain with new program.....	6
Less growers and more valuable production.....	7
Natural turf cooling the urban heat island	8
Turf helps winning designs	13
Wicking beds provide a smart solution for turf irrigation using stormwater	14
Finding leadership qualities in the bush.....	19
Lawn Expo a huge success in the west.....	20
Lawn Fest! Fanatical support for turf in Queensland.....	22
Specifiers connecting with their grass roots	24
Marketing targeting homeowners	26
Making the most of the extremes in Broome.....	28
Turf Talk	
Events, efficiencies and awards in Western Australia	31
Grower engagement, turf statistics and market development activities leading the way in NSW	32
Turf hosts school awards in Victoria	32
Wild weather in Queensland sees out 2018.....	33
Market Development	
Bringing in the new year - celebrating what's great about turf.....	34
SAVE THE DATE.....	36

Cover: Turf specifiers including sports turf consultants, landscapers, local and state government authorities, allied industry and architects attended the first Grass Roots Field Day at Evergreen Turf, Pitt Town, on October 30, 2018.

New year signals new industry consultation for Hort Innovation

**Hort
Innovation**
Strategic levy investment

**TURF
FUND**

Following an annual general meeting, a new chief executive officer, and a performance review in 2018, Hort Innovation is bringing in the new year with a round of industry consultative events and a renewed focus on cooperative working.

Hort Innovation's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 23, 2018, was a watershed day for the company as it worked through a year of significant change, both in leadership and direction.

Newly appointed chief executive officer, Matt Brand, addressed the meeting in one of his first official responsibilities since taking on the role in September.

The AGM considered a number of resolutions which change the way in which Hort Innovation operates, notably one which would allow industry representative bodies – such as Turf Australia – to become non-voting members of Hort Innovation.

While support for the resolution was received by 73.38 per cent of voters, as it was a special resolution, a total of 75 per cent voter support was required for it to be carried.

Resolutions 2, 3 and 4, which all related to updating the constitution to adhere to current mandate and activities of the company were all passed.

These resolutions will see the removal of exclusive language relating to IRB's, the removal of obscure terminologies and references to Industry Export Control Bodies and the deletion of redundant Articles from the Constitution.

The November meeting also elected three board directors – Julie Bird was welcomed as a new director while Stephen Lynch and Sue Finger were re-elected – as well as the appointment of Selwyn Snell as Chair and Dr Mary Corbett as Deputy Chair

Julie Bird's election brought the number of female directors on the nine-person board to four.

The AGM was also the first since the company's four-yearly review of performance in 2018, which saw Hort Innovation adopt around a dozen recommendations to continue to improve business operations and stakeholder engagement.

While the review was an important milestone in the life cycle of performance, Hort Innovation will continue to collect, and act on, feedback and ideas from its stakeholders.

As such, Hort Innovation will host a series of consultation workshops to help develop the direction of the new strategic plan.

The roadshow is earmarked to begin in early 2019, visiting each state until the end of March.

For more information and to register to attend a workshop in your state, visit: www.yourlevy.com



Turf to take centre stage at the largest garden show in the southern hemisphere

In an industry first sponsorship, Lawn Solutions Australia has been announced as the major supporter of the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show in 2019.

In announcing the partnership late last year, Lawn Solutions Australia's Joe Rogers said it would be making sure that show goers are presented with the very best in turf.

The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS) regularly attracts more than 100,000 visitors over the five-day event.

Lawn Solutions Australia will not only be supporting MIFGS through sponsorship, it will also be exhibiting at the show and presenting a show garden at the event.

The show garden will be a return entry of former Show garden gold medal winner, Better Homes and Gardens presenter and LSA ambassador, Jason Hodges, who will present an amazing entry championing the Aussie lawn.



**MELBOURNE
INTERNATIONAL
FLOWER AND
GARDEN SHOW**

PRESENTED BY

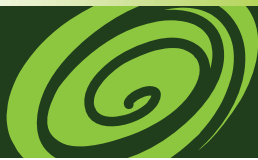


"On top of this, the show will have a strong grass theme throughout, with many turf installations putting grass well and truly on display.

"This is an exciting opportunity for the entire turf industry to get involved and be proud of all the hard work that goes into making the industry so great.

"The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show may be based in Melbourne, but it is a truly national event, with people coming from right across Australia and around the world," Joe said.

The 2019 Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show will be held at the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens from March 27 to 31. More information on the event can be found at www.melbflowershow.com.au



SAVE THE DATE

Save the dates for our industry grower events in 2019

Turf Australia has had the calendar out and set the dates for its major industry events for 2019. Focussing on uniting the industry together to promote natural turf and its benefits to Australians everywhere, the events should be an excellent opportunity for all growers to come together in forums aimed at learning, networking and benefitting growers everywhere.

Keep an eye out on the Turf Australia website www.turfaustralia.com.au and Turf Australia Growers Facebook page www.facebook.com/turfaustralia for more information and registration for on these events.



Women In Turf

March 24 – 25 Coogee Beach, Sydney

The beautiful beach, parks, cafés and restaurants in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs will be the location for the inaugural Women in Turf Conference. This event will be a celebration and acknowledgement of the role that women play in the turf industry. Specifically designed to focus on the role that women play in the turf industry – whether that be in the office, managing the accounts, out on the farm, or all these – the event aims to develop a forum that will allow networking, supporting and professional development. The program will be available soon, so ladies, don't miss this chance and save the date now.



Turf Australia National Conference

May 30 – June 1 Sydney Olympic Park, NSW

The return of the Turf Australia National conference will be an all-inclusive industry event. Offering turf growers, staff and families the opportunity to come together as a united industry for both informative and social experiences. Focusing on farm operational issues, topics will include changes to loading and heavy vehicle regulations, updates on turf levy projects, how turf is cooling the planet, water security, new technologies and much more. The event will include informative presentations, venue and farm visits and will conclude with a great industry initiative at Rosehill Racecourse for a charity race day. There will be something for everyone.



NxGen Forum

July 28 – 30 Adelaide Hills, SA

The NxGen Forum will head to South Australia and Adelaide for an event focusing on leadership, team building and business development. This event is targeted at the younger turf producers and people new to the industry. Save the date to join the great community of NxGeners and discover Adelaide, its turf farms and venues. This year's event will offer an extension to the program to keep you connected with the NxGen Team throughout the year.





Compliance all along the turf chain with new program

The high profile turf of Sydney's ANZ Stadium was the launch platform for a new turf production accreditation program, TurfPlus, in December.

Stopping short of any actual sod-turning there was much new-ground broken on the day of unveiling the TurfPlus compliance program, which brought together a huge range of specialists within the turf industry, including turf breeders, curators, facility managers, maintenance operators, turf producers, and specifiers from the landscaping industry.

TurfPlus general manager, John O'Brien, said the wide range of industry representation at the launch was key to the program – supporting turf the entire length of its supply, installation and maintenance chain.

TurfPlus claims to offer more than just being a compliance program, branding itself as an integrated management system that caters to turfgrowers needs, right along the chain of production.

John said the program had been in development for some time by the Greenspace Turf Co-operative, with their initial focus on Work Health and Safety (WH&S) and Quality Assurance (QA) areas.

"In developing the program, we found that the new chain of responsibility (CoR) laws around transport and also environmental management (EMS) compliance were bigger issues for growers, and what gave them even more grief on-farm were concerns around human resources (HR).

"So now it's a more rounded program, we've got a solid compliance and accreditation program that covers these five main areas for growers – WH&S, CoR, EMS, QA and HR," he said.

"TurfPlus gives them the advanced tools and training to achieve compliance and best-practice in these areas."

TurfPlus also sets itself apart from other programs through its cloud-based approach, which links all the components together and takes it beyond a paper-based system.

The online nature of the program allows for everything to be always up to date and keep growers abreast of the latest laws and legislation.

"It's a solid accreditation and training system; there's a set of rules or



procedures to follow and we get growers to levels of best practice – and being audit-read."

"Ultimately what we're about is creating safer, more compliant operations, where growers can realise greater efficiency, profitability and sustainability into the long-term.

"And apart from these benefits for growers, we want to see the end-product that they are producing under the TurfPlus banner is consistently the best turf product it can be, with their customers also major beneficiaries in the long-run," he said.

The TurfPlus program is currently taking its first round of applications to commence training and enquiries can be made at admin@turfplus.com.au or phone 1300 094 577.



Top: Graeme Logan, ANZ Stadium Arena Manager, addressing delegates at ANZ Stadium.

Bottom: TurfPlus launch at ANZ stadium.

Less growers and more valuable production

The levy project investigating the national turf industry's production statistics has shown that while the industry has undergone some rationalisation in terms of grower numbers, there has been a significant increase in the value of the turf produced in Australia.

In the 2017-2018 financial year, Australia's national industry of 176 turf growers produced more than 38 million square metres of turf valued at \$240 million.

The statistical information was gathered as part of the *Turf Industry Statistics 2017-2018 to 2019-2020 project* (TU17005) being completed by Turf Australia and funded as a strategic levy investment project through the Hort Innovation Turf Fund.

The national survey of growers took place in October and successfully contacted and received completed surveys from over 70 per cent of the industry.

The project found the total number of growers reporting production to the levy collection agency (the Federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources) had decreased significantly from the 12 months prior – from 190 to 176.

As part of the national survey – conducted by members of Turf Australia, Turf Queensland, Turf Growers Association of Western Australia, Turf New South Wales and Turf Victoria – attempts were made to contact every one of those 176 growers to complete the survey.


The industry snapshot provided as part of this survey paints a positive picture for the industry, and despite some rationalisation and challenging market and environmental conditions in that period, the overall value of turf production has increased.

Total estimated turf production volume and value for the 176 turf growers in Australia has been completed by project partner, Mind Tap Research, and used survey data and levy information to create the statistically robust industry figures.

Across the 124 turf growers surveyed who reported valid production volumes, an industry total of 38,442,330m² of turf production during the 2017/18 financial year was estimated; a decrease of approximately 100,000m² compared to the 2016/17 figure of 38,541,132m² estimated as part of the TU16001 project in 2017.

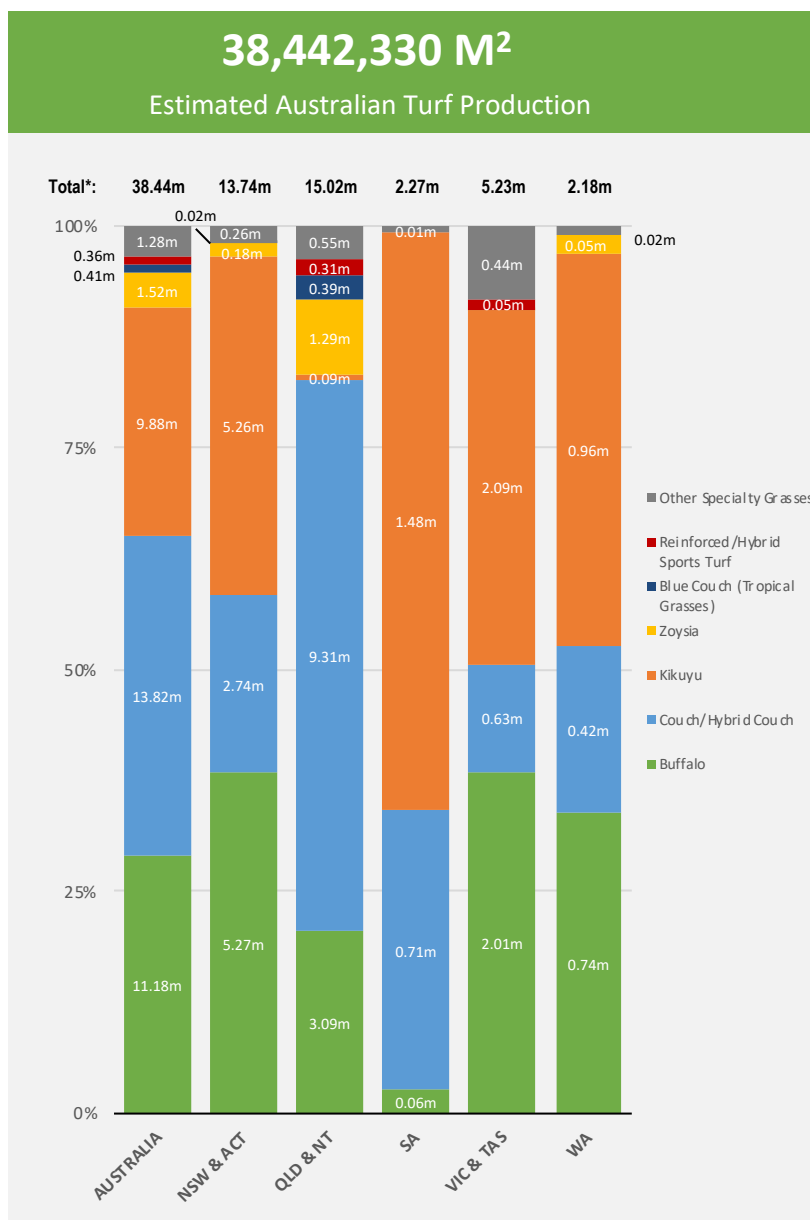
Across the 123 turf growers who reported valid revenue data, the total revenue (farm gate value) for the 2017/18 financial year was estimated at \$240 million; an increase on the 2016/2017 data which estimated an industry value of \$228 million.

The survey results will be further analysed to support individual growers, state bodies, Turf Australia and Hort Innovation to gain a clear picture of the industry's production, and will be released in coming weeks.

Growers who participated in the survey should begin receiving their individual business benchmarking reports at the end of January. 



Australian Turf Industry 2017/18 Snapshot Report



The industry snapshot provided as part of this survey paints a positive picture for the industry, and despite some rationalisation and challenging market and environmental conditions in that period, the overall value of turf production has increased.

Natural turf cooling the urban heat island

The phrase 'hot in the city' is more than just a song lyric in Australian summers. As metropolitan areas rapidly develop and hard surfaces are added to the landscape, the heat emitted from them in the summer months creates huge urban heat islands. Natural turf's ability to absorb, disperse and reverse these heat islands is one of its biggest benefits. Here, we take a look at new research that shows just how effective turf is at cooling cities.

CASE STUDY ONE



WHAT IS AN URBAN HEAT ISLAND AND THE URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT?

Urban Heat Island (UHI) refers to an urban or metropolitan area that is significantly warmer than its surrounding rural areas due to human activities.

The main cause of urban heat island is from modification of land surfaces.

As a population centre grows, it tends to expand its area and increase its average temperature.

KEY POINTS:

- More evidence into natural turf's ability to absorb summer heat has been published.
- A new industry project will deliver the messages about turf's cooling effect in 2019.
- New thermal imaging work has provided a visual message as to how great natural turf is at staying cool.

Mark said the results provided insights into how different approaches to managing turf can provide different outcomes with irrigated turf being much cooler.

Two particular case studies clearly showed the benefits of irrigated natural turf.

Case study one showed the thermal differences between irrigated and non-irrigated green space and while both surfaces produce cooler than average temperatures across the whole of the study area with non-irrigated areas having a cooling effect of 2.2°C and irrigated areas showing 4.0°C of cooling.

Case study two reviewed the impact of artificial turf versus natural turf and The Port Adelaide Hockey Club in Ethelton provides a clear example of this pattern with the artificial turf surface measured at 8.1°C warmer than average surface temperature across the region.

Continued...

The issue of urban heat islands in metropolitan areas is not new, but a new study identifying hot spots in Adelaide last year, and new heat mapping undertaken by Turf Australia, has highlighted again how powerful a tool natural turf is, to combat them.

Many local and state governments are struggling to manage and balance the impact of growth and development in their area without having a detrimental effect on the environment and health and wellbeing of their communities and economic performance.

Cooling Western Adelaide through new government strategies

The positive impact green areas have on the urban heat island was particularly noticeable for researchers when they undertook the Western Adelaide Urban Heat Mapping Project in August 2017.

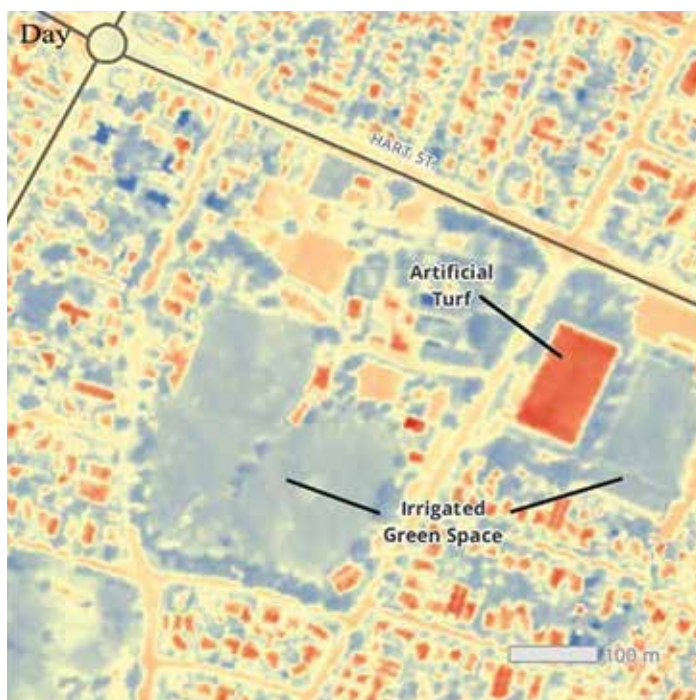
The mapping project, which has led to the development of the AdaptWest Climate Change Adaptation Plan being adopted by three Western Adelaide councils, was undertaken by Seed Consulting Services.

"Local government is wanting to learn how to reduce UHI and this project is giving them a real insight into the impact of heat islands and how they can utilise the information to make informed decisions for the future benefit of their communities," Seed Consulting Services director, Mark Siebentritt, said.

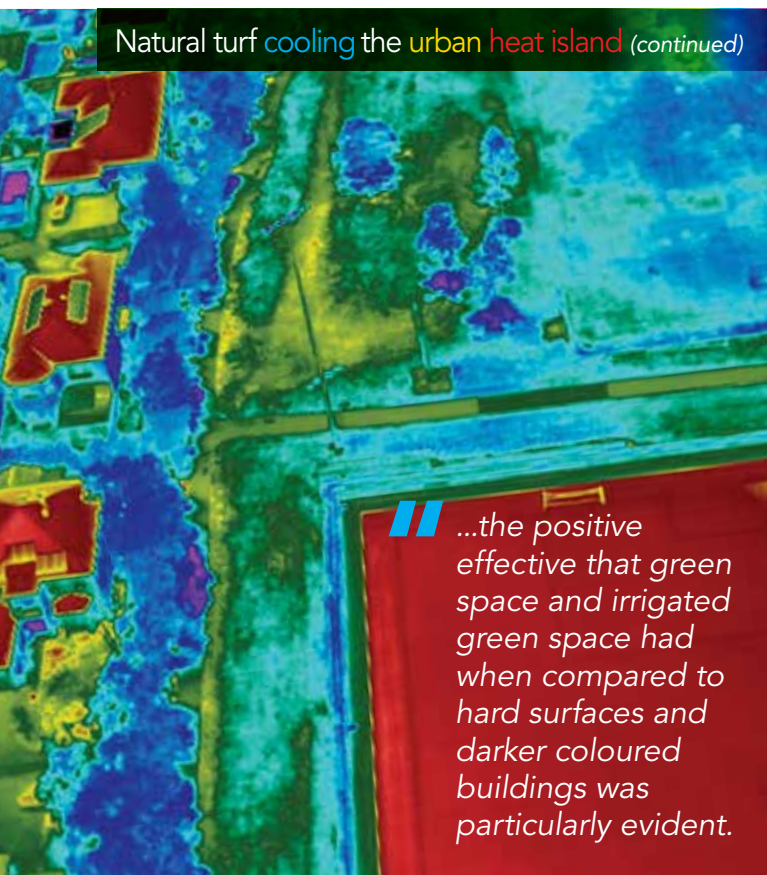
The project noted the significant benefits irrigated greenspace had on the community.

It used land use analysis to show how surface temperatures vary between areas where people are active outdoors and how management of urban areas and material selection for built assets can influence surface temperatures.

CASE STUDY TWO



Natural turf cooling the urban heat island (continued)



Conversely, the surrounding irrigated natural turf surfaces measured 14°C cooler than the artificial turf at the time of data collection.

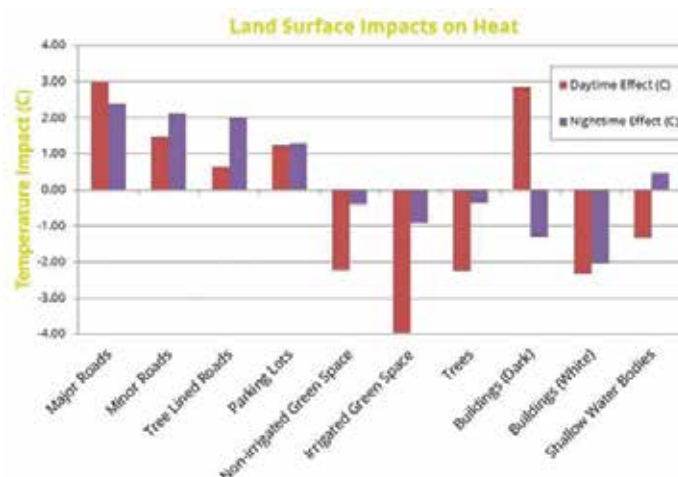
The research also showed the significant difference between land surfaces during the day and night (see graph above right).

Again, the positive effective that green space and irrigated green space had when compared to hard surfaces and darker coloured buildings was particularly evident.

The final report included a number of recommendations that directly related to green space being included in development of council community areas:

- Despite the pressure from infill, the amount of green space and tree cover should at least be maintained, and preferably increased to provide cooling benefits;
- Green infrastructure such as trees, grass and raingardens should be used alongside or to shade bitumen covered surfaces such as major and minor roads, bikeways and footpaths. Where feasible, this green infrastructure should be irrigated in order to maximise its cooling effect;
- Councils maximise the cooling benefit from existing green cover by ensuring sufficient irrigation is provided to urban forests and other green infrastructure networks where available, such as from recycled stormwater;
- Material selection is carefully considered in the design of recreation areas for the young and elderly, with substrates such as artificial turf and rubber softfall covering used only after consideration is given to how heat absorption can be offset e.g. through the use of shade sails;
- Guidelines be developed for the amount of green space and landscaping required and building materials to be used in medium and high-density developments, noting their potential to develop into significant heat islands.

Mark said that development of such an action plan in Adelaide was just one of many similar case studies being undertaken by local governments around Australia and similar outcomes were expected in those areas when results were made public in the near future.



New industry project highlighting benefits

Hort Innovation announced in December a new strategic levy-funded project into promoting turf's cooling effect had been tendered and would be carried out in 2019 by Seed Consulting Services.

Seed will manage the delivery of the project *Conveying the benefits of living turf – mitigation of the urban heat island effect* (TU1800).

"We are very excited to be awarded this project and look forward to providing the turf industry with some value information," Mark said.

Mark confirmed that the project would cover a number of aspects comparing natural turf and synthetic grass, including:

- How local climate might impact thermal performance;
- The relationship of surface temperature and air temperature;
- Outdoor activity scenarios and thermal stress;
- The heating and cooling impact load on buildings, such as schools.

When discussing the types of information that will be generated as part of the project that would be of value to the wider community when understanding how beneficial natural turf is, Mark raised the interesting question of whether Councils and sporting organisations should consider reviewing their heat policies, specifically for players using synthetic surfaces.

Heat mapping gives vivid display of turf's benefits

Turf Australia has recently undertaken its own investigation into the difference of temperatures in natural turf and synthetic surfaces.

Thermal imaging consultants SkyMonkey, utilised specialised thermal monitoring software and a drone to provide accurate comparison of temperatures over a range of surfaces on a relatively mild spring day in Sydney, where the temperature reached 28 degrees Celsius.

A sporting complex was chosen to allow for the imaging to include a wide combination of surface areas including natural turf sports fields, synthetic ovals, soft fall play areas, car parking areas and surrounding homes.

While the ambient temperature on the day was 28°C, the imagery clearly shows the synthetic grass to be significantly hotter than the natural turf, creating a damaging impact on urban heat island, reaching over a dangerous 54°C.

Images 1, 2 and 3 (opposite page) show the extreme differences between the synthetic field and natural turf surface temperatures. The synthetic surface recorded temperatures well over 50°C compared to the natural turf readings of between 28°C and 33°C, depending on the turf coverage.

IMAGE 1

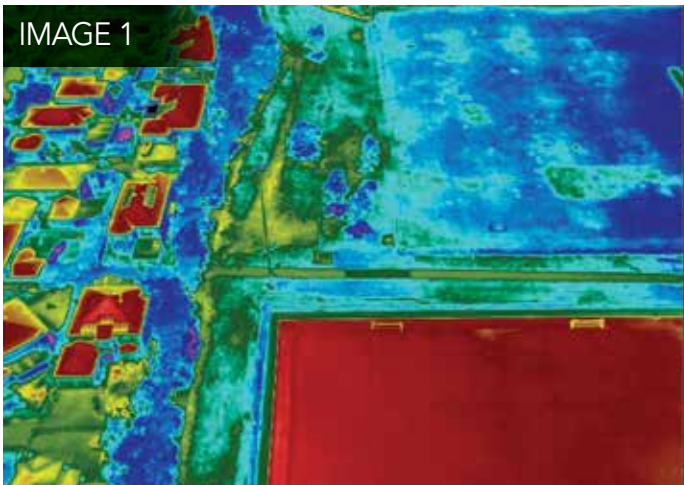


IMAGE 2

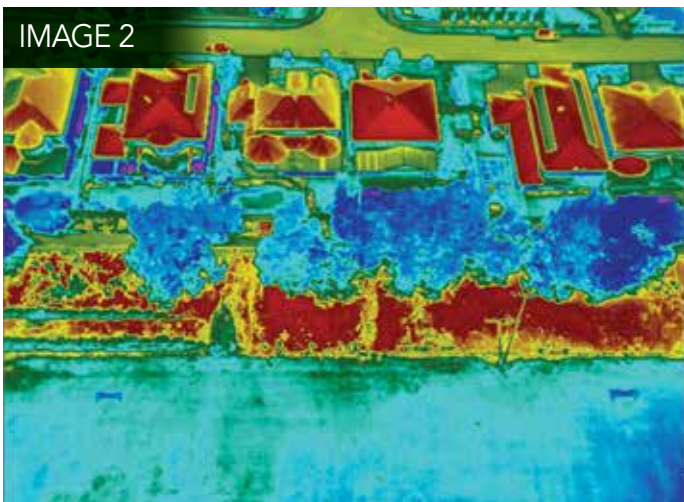
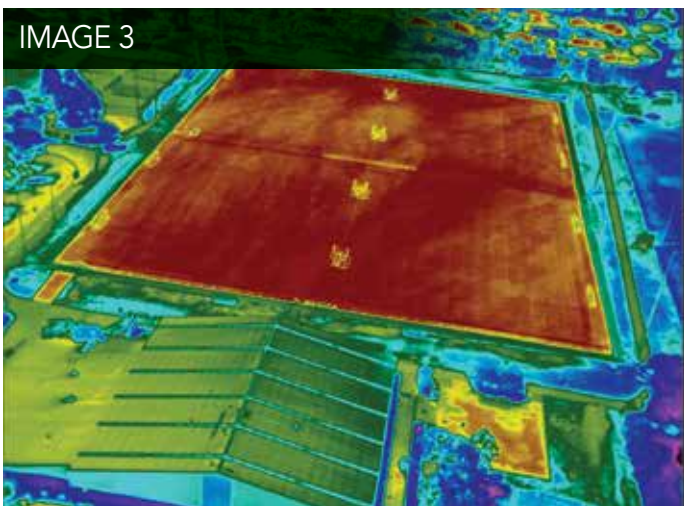


IMAGE 3



The difference in good turf coverage compared to bare or dry areas is quite apparent in the imagery, with the temperature of the natural turf sports field around 30°C compared to a barren embankment area, which measured over 55°C.

Alarming, the imaging also highlights that even building rooves and the bitumen carpark and paths around the sporting complex are cooler than the synthetic playing field.

In addition to these images, Skymonkey has produced a video showing live comparison temperature monitoring of both natural turf and synthetic surfaces, and the surrounding sporting complex area.

"The video is available for viewing on the Turf Australia website and growers are encouraged to share the video and continue to promote why natural turf is the only option," Turf Australia Market Development Manager, Jenny Zadro, said. 🌱

While the ambient temperature on the day was 28°C, the imagery clearly shows the synthetic grass to be significantly hotter than the natural turf, creating a damaging impact on urban heat island, reaching over a dangerous 54°C.

18 million m² of certified turf

from 140 growers and resellers

Australia-wide... and counting.



Turf helps winning designs

The winners of the 2018 Australian Urban Design Awards, presented in October last year, have recognised the rightful place of natural turf within excellent and functional community spaces.

Presented at a ceremony in Sydney, the Australian Urban Design Awards were established to recognise “contemporary Australian urban design projects of the highest quality and to encourage cities, towns and communities across the country to strive for best practice in all projects.”

Turf was a key feature in three of the winning designs, which came from both regional and metropolitan areas.

Taking out the Built Projects – City and Regional Scale category was the **Bendigo Hospital Project** which has created a health precinct with turf at the heart of the redevelopment of a historically significant building.

The former **South Sydney Hospital Site – Stage 1** was named one of the winners of the Built Projects – Local and Neighbourhood Scale category, with the jury impressed by the transformation of a formerly impenetrable area into a vibrant, open and accessible precinct.

The jury noted the “integration of carefully curated installations with a collection of heritage buildings gives the community a platform for enjoying new activities and celebrating the history of inner-city Sydney.”

In the same category, Western Australian project – **Railway Square, Midland, Western Australia** received a commendation from the jury with its large open turfed area in conjunction with water installations which completely transforms an old railway yard space.

The project made a big statement in its place as part of a long-term urban renewal project in the Perth suburb of Midland.

The jury noted that: “By carefully considering multiple points of access, promoting a variety of uses and basing the design on the industrial heritage of the railway yards, the designers have created an active precinct that will form an important part of the community fabric over the next hundred years.”



Top: South Sydney Hospital Site – Stage 1, NSW.

Middle: Bendigo Hospital Project, Victoria.

Below: Railway Square, Midland, Western Australia.





Wicking beds provide a smart solution for turf irrigation using stormwater

Using smart urban design and ancient water engineering techniques, the solution to sustainably watering green public open spaces might be right under our feet. **Liz Mecham** looks at how wicking beds can be an effective irrigation design option in metropolitan areas where stormwater runoff is available from nearby paved surfaces.

KEY POINTS:

- Wicking beds for turf use a plant's natural ability to send down deep root systems to access available water.
- With the right design, stormwater can be redirected from paved surfaces to a storage beneath turf areas, creating a reservoir to support healthy turf.
- When turf areas are being built or redeveloped, the inclusion of wicking beds can be a cost-effective irrigation solution and a great way to utilise an alternative water source.

Sourcing sustainable irrigation water for turf is the common challenge that urban designers and open space planners face when looking at options for green public open spaces.

But Australian-based ecological engineering company, E2Designlab, may have found a solution to accessing, retaining and reusing stormwater in urban areas, that allows turf to be irrigated without ever turning a sprinkler on.

Wicking beds are a design solution presented and discussed at the International Parks and Leisure Congress held in Melbourne late last year by director of E2Designlab, Sally Boer.

The concept is a relatively simple one – provide water for turf below its root zone so the plant can take up the moisture as it needs it – and create this water reservoir by redirecting stormwater flows under the turf surface.

“Wicking bed systems are something that have been used in agriculture and by home gardeners for years,” Sally said.

“So the concept itself isn't new, but by combining together technologies that we have at hand, we can find a solution that uses stormwater as a resource, irrigates turf effectively, and allows the turf to access water and nutrients as it needs them. This results in healthier and more resilient turf and reduces maintenance and operational needs.”

The design removes the need to schedule irrigation of public spaces, avoids sprinklers and associated water loss to evaporation and also provides a separation of stormwater from the public, making it a very safe form of stormwater harvesting.

Creating an underground reservoir

Essentially, wicking beds are simply an artificial aquifer under the turf and topsoil, Sally said.

"In contrast to other stormwater harvesting methods that require water to be retained in a tank or pond and then pumped out when its used, this type of system retains the water under the root zone of the plant and allows the plant to grow and extend its root system to where the moisture is, and use the water as necessary."

Essentially, wicking beds are simply an artificial aquifer under the turf and topsoil.

The wicking beds use the natural process of soil capillary rise, driven by evapotranspiration, to draw water reserves held in shallow artificial aquifers to the active root zone thereby ensuring optimal soil moisture conditions for healthy turf growth.

"By combining a subsurface water storage zone with overflow relief drainage, it means that when it rains, water passes through the soil under the turf, and into the retention area. When the reservoir is full, excess water freely drains away without creating bogging or water logged conditions ... and in dry times, the water stored in the reservoir can be accessed by the plant."

Sally said the design uses clean-washed sand within the reservoir to promote wicking of moisture up into the topsoil layer, and a network of distribution pipes to ensure stormwater can be readily directed from paved surfaces into the reservoir and allowed it to escape in times of high flow.

The 'passive irrigation' of the turf allows the turf to be maintained without the need for another irrigation system. This is a zero energy, low maintenance irrigation system that helps to sustain lawn areas between rainfall events and increases the usability and resilience of these areas after heavy rainfall events through improved sub-soil drainage.

Theory into practice

The design principles have been put into practice in Queensland with great success, when the Gladstone East Shores Parklands area installed a large-scale wicking bed under its kick and throw turf area.

Constructed in 2014, the wicking bed has consistently kept the turf flourishing in dry periods and significantly decreased the fertiliser and maintenance requirements associated with the turf.

"The system is completely scalable," Sally said, "the Gladstone wicking bed was the first large-scale one installed and it has stood the test of a few summers now. A smaller house-lot scale system was installed more recently at Innovation House 2.0 located in Townsville."

For Gladstone East Shores Parklands Superintendent Graham Gambie the wicking bed had led to a more consistently green turf area, and one which requires less inputs.

"The turf accesses the stormwater and the nutrients within that water, meaning we have less need for fertiliser on the turf," he said.

"The turf is a more consistent green colour, maintains that colour better through the year than other areas in our parklands, and is generally a healthier plant."

The Gladstone East Shores wicking bed installation was within a much bigger redeveloped park, with the wicking bed installed on the kick and throw area of the parkland, a high use area.

Continued...



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Wicking beds provide a smart solution *(continued)*

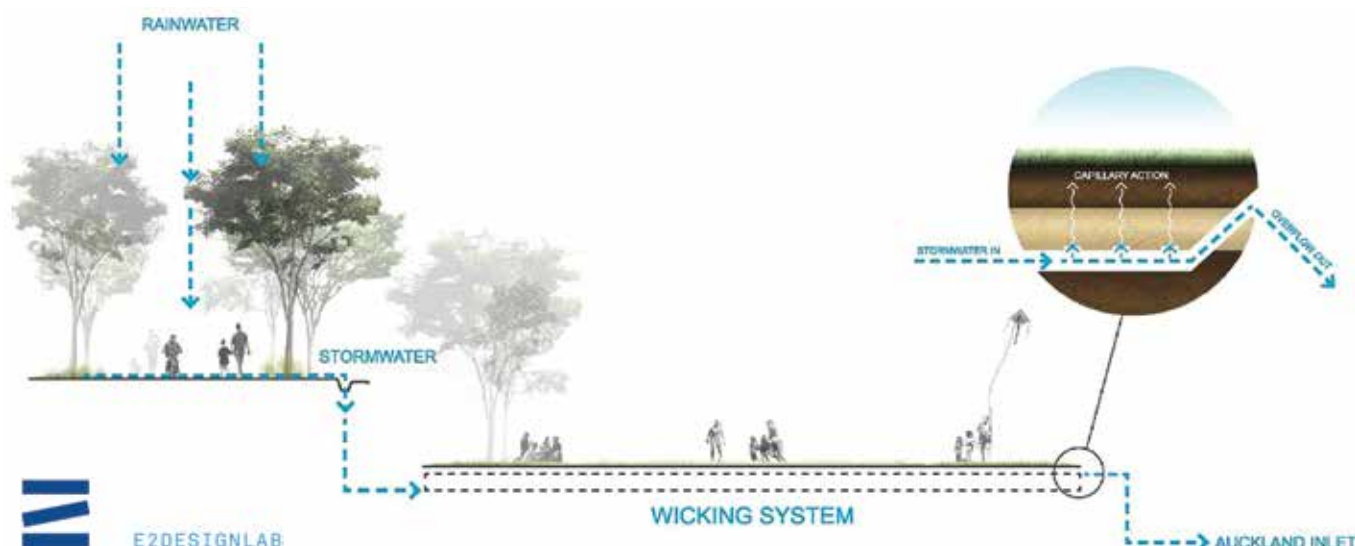
In collaboration with Urbis, E2Designlab led the concept and detailed design of sustainable water management initiatives to promote the 'passive irrigation' of landscapes using stormwater harvested from hard surfaces within the parklands.

The integrated parkland design features the 'wicking bed' technology to store locally harvested stormwater runoff from the adjacent road and shade structures for passive irrigation of the high use lawn area.

"Turf can access water while the space is occupied during the day, irrigation does not need to be scheduled," Graham said "and the use of stormwater and associated nutrients reduce pollutant loads to the environment."

From a management perspective, the system also allows for overflow relief and increased drainage through the sand-based soil profile reducing compaction and increasing the usability of the space after heavy rainfall, which then provides improved access for mowing.

There are also the additional environmental benefits that healthy, well-watered turf has through increased CO2 capture, and significant community benefit from the local cooling created by inclusion of irrigated grass in urban areas. 





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Cooling effect

The temperature on a green lawn in summer can be **10°C less** than bare soil, **20°C less** than asphalt, concrete or pebbles and **40°C less** than synthetic grass!

Reduces erosion

Australian Standard 5181 details the use and installation of turf as an **erosion, nutrient and sediment control measure**.

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Promotes wellbeing

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Uses less water than you think

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Compared to the total cost of synthetic sporting fields over 25 and 50 years, **natural turf fields are cheaper to install and maintain** in all sports, except tennis*.

(*Research conducted by the Department of Sport & Recreation, Government of WA)

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Finding leadership qualities in the bush

In October last year, two growers put their turf farming duties aside for nine days while they challenged themselves in the Australian Capital Territory wilderness as part of an Australian Rural Leadership Foundation leadership course. Here, we take a look at what **Paul Saliba**, Qualturf, and **Wayne Smith**, Dargle Turf, found in the bush.

When Turf Australia received \$50,000 funding through the Federal Government's Leadership in Agricultural Industries Fund in November 2017, the challenge was to find the best way to spend the funding to develop leaders in our industry.

The funding was restricted to training provided by the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation (ARLF).

In October, two growers took up the funded places (valued at \$9000) in the nine-day ARLF Training Rural Australians in Leadership – Emerging Leadership program, complete with its challenging four-day experience in the bush around Canberra.

The course itself is promoted as a cross-sector, challenge-based leadership program. The program takes diverse people from different occupations, communities and backgrounds and expands their leadership skills.

For Wayne Smith, Dargle Turf, NSW, the decision to take such an extended period away from the farm was difficult, but one that paid off.

"As the farm manager, it was a very hard decision to leave the farm for nine days in hope to make it better for the future," he said.

"I must say I was very anxious on departure!

"But upon arrival, we met a very likeable and diverse group of rural leaders from all over the country.

"We embarked on what was a very learned and challenging adventure and were rewarded with a wealth of useful knowledge of ourselves, our environments, work and community."

Wayne said the opportunity to participate in such a leadership development course was one he was glad he took up with the clear benefits he found to both himself personally and his skill set.

For Paul Saliba, Qualturf, NSW, the opportunity to broaden his thinking was a key outcome of the course.

"The course provided opportunities to build on your own skills and consider a broader and wider-range of thinking about your business ... for me, I can see the skills I learned during the course will be of ongoing, long-term benefits.

Like Wayne, Paul said the quality of the course meant he would highlight recommend the opportunity to other growers, as the benefits are far reaching.

Boardroom training in 2019

Turf Australia Market Development Manager, Jenny Zadro, said the second funded element would take place in the first half of this year.

"The TRAIL course has received excellent reports, while the training course to develop skills to lead in boardroom situations should help up-skill members of our industry to ensure Turf Australia has good governance going forward as the industry's peak body," Jenny said.

The "In the Boardroom, Responsibilities and Practice" course examines the roles of the board, directors and management, as well as the composition and structure of the Board. Participants revise why the separation of management and control contributes to good corporate



NSW turf growers, Paul Saliba (top), Qualturf, and Wayne Smith (bottom), Dargle Turf, with Scott Goringe, Program Manager (left) and ARLF Chair, Michael Carroll.

governance and therefore the long-term viability of organisations.

The one-day training course is aimed at board members from turf state associations and anyone who is a director of their company, or other industry organisations.

There will be two key learning components with the training:

Role of the Director and the Board: Introduces the role of the Director and the Board in establishing the Governance of the organisation. It outlines the duties, responsibilities and rights of Directors. The roles or various regulatory bodies are also discussed.

In the Boardroom: This course examines the separate roles of the Board, Directors and Management, as well as the composition and structure of the Board. Participants revise why the separation of management and control contributes to good corporate governance and therefore the long term viability of organisations. 🌀



Participants at the conclusion of the nine-day leadership course.

Lawn Expo a huge success in the west



This was an educational day, to encourage best practice behaviours. The focus was not on selling turf on the day but rather to educate homeowners on the essentials to ensuring success with their lawns.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA



The inaugural Lawn Expo in Perth set out with the aim of educating home lawn lovers on the best ways to tend to their lawns in times of reduced water availability. The day turned into an amazing showcase of the Western Australian turf industry and highlighted the support natural turf still has within the wider community.



Helping lawn owners understand the best way to install, maintain, and manage their turf, along with showcasing the Western Australian turf industry and how its supporting businesses could help lawn owners, was a clear winning combination in Perth in October.

The first ever Lawn Expo for the community was held in the magnificent grounds of the South Metropolitan TAFE in Murdoch on Saturday, October 27.

This free event was sponsored by the Turf Growers Association Western Australia (TGAWA) and coordinated by its executive officer, Eva Ricci. The inspiration for the event came after a meeting with the administrator of the growing Facebook group, *WA Lawn Addicts*, Kerion Ralph.

"It was hugely successful for an inaugural event, abuzz with families enjoying the sunshine and a day on the green turf, all wanting to learn how to have a fantastic lawn all year long," Eva said.

"This was an educational day, to encourage best practice behaviours. The focus was not on selling turf on the day but rather to educate homeowners on the essentials to ensuring success with their lawns."

The *WA Lawn Addicts* is a group of like-minded lawn enthusiasts in Perth and Western Australia and the online community has now grown to a membership of 3500 members. The members of the group offer advice to one another and those wanting help with their lawns, while also showcasing members' efforts to have the best lawn in the street.

"The page has been a great source of confidence for WA turf growers," Eva said.

"Turf in WA has been struggling from the negative government and media messages that portray turf as a water guzzler and space waster, together with the increased urbanisation for the Perth metropolitan area and the governmental goal of saving water, this has promoted smaller blocks with less lawn areas and hardscaping."

Eva said the huge turn out on the day was an amazing show of support for the industry.



“Having Perth’s metropolitan residents show that there is still pride in having the greenest lawn in the street has given the TGAWA members great confidence that its worth fighting back against the negative messages.

“The WA Lawn Addicts are right on board helping us to send out our message that lawn is worth having and fighting for,” Eva said.

Eva said one of the most important aspects of education about lawns to the general community was accurate information, and the WA Lawn Addicts page had been a great ally in that respect.

The expo built on that, and rather than offering sales, was designed as an information day, to ensure accurate and relevant information was provided to the general public.

Speakers, demonstrations and exhibitors focussed on best practice management and covered:

- Quality soil amendments
- Reticulation audits and best practice irrigation
- Correct use of wetting agents and soil moisture retainers
- Fertilising best practice
- Weed control
- Mowing best practice
- Turf renovations

There were also formal information sessions with horticultural media personality Colin Barlow, and Tim Richards from Richgro.

TGAWA members also had a display stand where different brands and types of turf were exhibited, however individual farms were not the focus.

“The growers who manned the TGAWA site were kept extremely busy educating householders on the different varieties of turf available in WA and their suitability for conditions,” Eva said.

“There was great camaraderie and support from the metropolitan based turf growers at this event. It was great to witness the focus on the entire production sector, rather than individuals vying against

“The growers who manned the TGAWA site were kept extremely busy educating householders on the different varieties of turf available in WA and their suitability for conditions.”

each other for business. It really was a great team effort for which the growers must be applauded,” Eva said.

Every exhibitor supplied a give-away for the event. Prizes included five smart irrigation controllers, a petrol blower, mower service voucher, a fertiliser spreader, bag and bags of fertiliser, soil amendments, and bottles of liquid wetting agents, including the TGAWA supported Biagra and Aquaforce products.

Thanks must go to the team at South Metropolitan TAFE for their support and generosity in providing a magnificent venue, together with the commercial supporters of the day who had stands at the event - Irrigation Australia LTD (WA Region); Reece Irrigation; HR Products Irrigation; Rainbird Irrigation; Hunter Industries Irrigation; Total Eden Irrigation; Baileys Fertilisers; Richgro Garden Supplies; Scotts Fertilisers; Ezflo Fertigation Units; Mowmaster; T-Quip and MTD Products (Mowing equipment); Water Corporation; SERCUL (Fertilisewise). Funds through the *National Market Development project* (TU16002) were also provided to support the event.

“The day was a definite success thanks to WA Lawn Addicts for giving the turf growers the confidence and platform to promote why we love and need lawn,” Eva said. 🌿

Fanatical support for turf in Queensland

What happens when you take a turf farm, a small group of passionate people who love their lawns and a large group of supporters? You end up with over 400 people celebrating Lawn Fest 2018.

The celebration of lawn on October 20 was the second time the event had taken place, and in 2018, included a huge attempt at the most people mowing lawn at the same time.

The event is the brainchild of the Australian Lawn Fanatics, a social media group of proud lawn lovers with over 30,000 followers on Facebook.

Australian Lawn Fanatics organisers, Dallas 'Rusty' Garton and Lenny Lawler, put together a great family event, embracing lawn education, for their members at the Heilig family's Go Turf farm on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

"Lawn Fest 2018 was a great success for the Australian Lawn Fanatics," Rusty said.

"The day was made possible thanks to Go Turf and a lot of people and businesses who supported the event.

"The trade stalls, educational talks from Nadeem Zreikat and Matt Roche were highlights for the day along with our giant mow off," he said.

The event received national attention, with Channel Nine's Weekend Today show making live weather crosses to the event, every half hour between 7am and 9am.

Plans are already underway for the 2019 event including an expansion to take it nationally and give more opportunity for people to be involved with celebrating turf. 🌿

Below: Nadeem Zreikat from Colin Campbell gave a presentation during the Lawn Fest activities.



Lawn Fest!





Lawn Fest!



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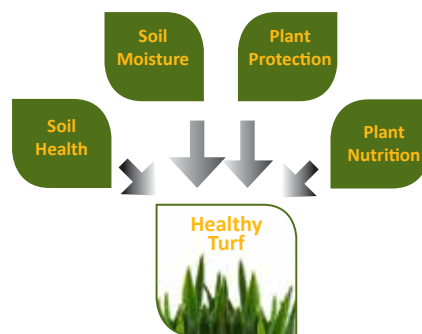


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Specifiers connecting with their grass roots



Helping the people who work with turf, and those who specify turf, truly understand the production process was the basis behind a field day in New South Wales late last year. We take a look at what happened when the specifiers went to the farm.

Almost 50 turf specifiers including sports turf consultants, landscapers, local and state government authorities, allied industry and architects went back to the farm in October when they attended the first Grass Roots Field Day at Evergreen Turf, Pitt Town, on October 30, 2018.

This event was the first of its kind and was coordinated under the National Market Development project with an focus on educating the 'specifier' group of allied professionals who work with natural turf.

The field day was run by Turf NSW with support from Turf Australia and Sports Turf Association, NSW.

Turf NSW industry development officer Matthew Plunkett said: "The aim of the day was to show specifiers and end users all the methods that go into growing, harvesting and marketing a quality turf product."

Guests were treated to a variety of practical talks and demonstrations in an on-farm situation to better understand how turf production farms are managed.

Chris Chapman from Evergreen Turf spoke about the history of Evergreen Turf & Dad N Daves's Turf operations and the importance of understanding which varieties of turf are suited to different applications.



Right and below:
Dr Peter McMaugh from
Turfgrass Scientific
Services demonstrated
his trial plots.

The field day was a great success and it is hoped that it can develop an army of advocates within the industry and wider community to promote the huge benefits of natural turf when specifying jobs

Dr Peter McMaugh, Turfgrass Scientific Services, demonstrated his trial plots and work on the performance of different couch varieties and their different performance characteristics.

Mick Battam, Ag Enviro, discussed the importance of soil management and the benefits of using organics such as compost to improve sports field playability.


A key discussion point as part of Mick's talk and between those there on the day was the importance of matching soil types from the farm to where the turf purchased is being laid to ensure the best result.

Martin O'Malley from Hydro Technics Irrigation also gave a practical talk on trouble-shooting irrigation systems and viewing first hand a variety of irrigation controllers on the market.

Of particular interest to many there on the day was the demonstrations of the automatic harvesters and the washing plant in operation.

"The field day was a great success and it is hoped that it can develop an army of advocates within the industry and wider community to promote the huge benefits of natural turf when specifying jobs," said Matthew.

The day's success was thanks largely due to the host property, Evergreen Turf and Dad N Dave's turf, and specifically Chris Chapman, Graeme Colless and David May for their assistance, and Turf Australia and Sports Turf Association NSW's Sophie Devine.

It is hoped that another similar event will be held in the City of Sydney in 2019 so keep an eye out for Turf Australia and Turf NSW communications. 





Main pic and immediate left: Mick Battam, Ag Enviro, discussed the importance of soil management and the benefits of using organics

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Rugby League personality and Fox Sports Presenter Nathan Hindmarsh (and wife Bonnie) are part of a national promotion of turf.

Marketing targeting homeowners

The use of high profile sporting celebrities, the re-engagement of Facebook and the continued development of the Lawnspiration website are the key focusses of the **Turf Strategic Marketing program** for 2019. **Liz Mecham** reports.

The turf industry's strategic marketing program, run by Hort Innovation using the marketing funds from the turf levy, is rolling into 2019 with a renewed focus on homeowners and the value a lawn can make to a home.

This year's campaign will have the added support of high profile sporting personality, Nathan Hindmarsh, and his renovation-loving wife, Bonnie, as the faces of a campaign aimed at both home owners, sellers and buyers.

A national survey of real estate agents last year showed the value of a home could be increased by as much as \$110,000 – simply by having a lawn – and the marketing strategy this year will focus on promoting that.

The rolling out of the marketing campaign has begun with an increased social media presence, and will continue through 2019 with a roll out of information from this national survey and the Hindmarsh family's support for turf through a public relations (PR) campaign.

The value of a lawn for home owners trying to sell their home featured on Channel Nine's Today show in mid-December, with the segment promoting the financial benefit of a home lawn and was the start of the high-profile national promotion of turf.

Targeting real estate markets

The strategy is based on information gathered as part of a national survey of Raine and Horne Real Estate agents in October/November 2018¹, which has once again highlighted the importance of turf when it comes the buying and selling a home.

The survey revealed a lawn was the most popular surface for family buyers (first choice for 63%), over decking (21%), synthetic turf (7%), paving (5%) and concrete (3%).

The national survey conducted by Hort Innovation with Raine & Horne

real estate agents nationally revealed a lawn attracts buyers to a house, so much so, that 93 per cent would recommend clients improve their lawn before selling a home.

The survey also showed 40 per cent of agents surveyed believe a nicely presented lawn can boost a house's value by more than 20 per cent. In fact, almost one quarter (23.3%) said it can add more than 30 per cent value. Based on the Australian median dwelling price, 20 per cent equates to \$110,000.²

Marketing activities will also focus on the survey results which showed real estate agents promote installing a lawn to their clients as an easy, and cost-effective selling strategy to attract potential buyers.

High profile support for lawn

To support the case for installing a lawn, Rugby League personality and Fox Sports Presenter Nathan Hindmarsh and his wife, professional renovator and interior designer, Bonnie Hindmarsh, have been engaged to be part of marketing the benefits of turf to home owners.

The couple, who have recently built their dream home for their family of four boys and two dogs, are avid lawn supporters and their new house features plenty of grass ... even if Nathan himself admits he's learning about its maintenance.

“Having a nice lawn was important to us for many reasons – it looks gorgeous, is the perfect surface for our family and helped add value to our home.”

“Having a nice lawn was important to us for many reasons – it looks gorgeous, is the perfect surface for our family and helped add value to our home,” Bonnie said.

“Renovating a garden with new turf is a simple way to transform the space. And it's something many of us can do ourselves, which saves money and adds instant appeal to your home.”

Nathan said the new lawn was one of his favourite spaces.

"Having four boys, our lawn plays a big part in our everyday life. The boys are always outside mucking around with friends, which is awesome because it keeps them active and outdoors.

"I spend a lot of time outside working on the lawn, mostly because it's a great way to escape the craziness of our family!

"My mates are sick of hearing me rave about my turf - not that I'm an expert but I am enjoying learning as I go."

Nathan Hindmarsh and his children will also feature in several videos that will be promoted via the Lawnspiration Facebook page. The videos talk to the value of turf in an engaging and entertaining way to drive shareability and talkability with our target audience.



Nathan Hindmarsh.

Online presence

Last year, a new website was developed by Hort Innovation to be the focus of its marketing activities, and it has proved a popular destination for lawn lovers.

Lawnspiration.com.au has information for consumers to educate themselves with, including varietal information, installation and maintenance information and links to growers around Australia with a 'find a grower' feature.


Usage from the first few months of the website has provided some interesting insights:

- 'varieties' and the 'turf supplier finder', as well as the home page, are the most visited pages
- the average session duration at nearly 2 minutes is positive

- visitors to the site since the website launched are:
 - 72% male, 28% female
 - primarily from Sydney (33%) and Melbourne (17%)
- 44% of traffic driven by smart phones

Olivia Grey, the marketing manager for Turf at Hort Innovation, said the fact that almost half the traffic on the Lawnspiration website was coming from smartphones was a key insight that the turf industry should leverage for their individual business websites, with smart phone compatibility impacting both the overall user experience and website search rankings.

In conjunction with the website development, the Lawnspiration Facebook page continued to be updated with information and will direct users of the page to the new website.

The ramping up of the social media presence will align with the rolling out of the PR campaign in traditional and online media. 

¹ Follow up survey was developed by Hort Innovation and conducted with 60 Raine & Horne real estate agents nationally in November 2018.

² This equates to an estimated \$3175 investment to turf a 100m² backyard. If turf delivers a 20% value return on the median price of an Australian dwelling (\$550,610), this equates to a \$110,000 increase. This is a 34:1 return on the initial \$3175 investment.

Australian median house price at September 30 2018 was \$550,610

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Making the most of the extremes in Broome

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Ancient soils, industry booms and laying the playing fields of the Aussie Rules stars of the future are all part of what growing turf in the Kimberly looks like for the only turf growers in Broome, **Derren (above) and Cher Greenhill. Liz Mecham** found out what turf farming looks like in remote Western Australia

GROWER SNAPSHOT:

Business:	Greenhills Turf Farm, Broome WA
Owner:	Derren and Cher Greenhill
Varieties:	Sir Walter Buffalo DNA Certified. Trialling Zoysia and previously grew Wintergreen Couch.
Markets:	Servicing all markets in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of WA, growing turf on some of the oldest soils in the world in some of the most remote locations.

When Derren Greenhill set up his Greenhills Turf Farm business in 1996 as an enthusiastic 21-year-old, it was with a plot of turf growing on an empty housing block in Broome, Western Australia.

It wasn't very big, but it met the needs of the market.

Then, the family-run business rode the wave of the 2000s mining boom and expanded to almost 12 hectares as the demand for turf within the infrastructure, housing and public developments as part of that boom popped up all over the Kimberly and Pilbara regions.

Now, there is a two-hectare plot of Greenhills turf servicing the wide expanse that is the far north-west of the WA, scaled down to meet the new demands of a post-mining boom sector.

"We're just growing and shrinking to meet the demands of the market – and that's good, because when it was big, we were big, and now it's smaller, we are smaller," Derren said.

"It costs too much to be growing turf when there's not a market for it up here, we don't have the location to be able to offload excess turf easily."

In fact, there is only around 100,000 people in the entire Kimberly and Pilbara regions – scattered across a geographical area as bigger than Tasmania.

“With what we have now – it’s not big, but its sustainable, and meets the needs of the market as it stands now.”

Riding the highs and lows

Derren, wife Cher and sons Steel, West and Nash, are now the only employees of Greenhills Turf Farm as they happily negotiate the new market space post-mining boom.

At its height, the business employed six people and was growing Wintergreen Couch and Sir Walter Buffalo, harvesting four cuts from the couch, and two from the buffalo on a farm 11.5ha in size.

“We’ve done the full circle in 22 years...”

It was a rapid development from the small housing block of turf Derren started with, but a growth he was happy to ride while it lasted.

“We’ve done the full circle in 22 years,” Derren said.

“From the housing block, we bought a five-acre block, and met the market demand as it grew.

“But then the mining boom in 2007-2008 ... we simply couldn’t keep up with the demand so we got bigger.”

Derren said the housing and infrastructure development that went along with that boom was extraordinary.

“The demand for turf for houses, and schools, and public open spaces – it was incredible and we grew to keep up with demand by putting in another 10 hectares.

“But you’ve got to be realistic about it all too, because once the downturn in that boom started three or four years ago, we started looked at scaling it all back.”

Greenhills now grows turf on a 2.2ha block – its original holding.

“Our delivery range and decline in population locally means that it quite simply cost way too much to keep nice looking lawn with no one to sell it to.”

Extreme turf growing

The sheer scale of things in the Kimberly region make for logistical challenges – if turf isn’t sold locally within Broome, then it’s got a sizeable ride on a refrigerated truck ahead of it before reaching its destination.

The closest towns to Broome are Port Headland 660 kilometres away and Karratha 900 kilometres away, and its 1000 kilometres to send turf inland to Newman.

To make sure the turf is viable by the time it gets to those locations has taken a fair amount of management by Derren over the years.

“Any time we harvest turf, its cut, put into a freezer pan at -1 before being put on a refrigerated truck and sent to where it needs to go.

Continued...



Greenhills Turf Farm at the height of its production, April 2013.

GROWER PROFILE

Making the most of the extremes in Broome (continued)

“Even when we do all of that, the internal temperature of the turf by the time it gets to Karratha can be 10 degrees, simply because the turf is a living thing.”

The environment of Broome makes for some interesting production issues not many other growers in Australia would even have to contemplate.

“We’ve got some of the oldest soils in Australia here, possibly the world,” Derren said, referring to the Pindan soils on his farm.

“The Pindan soil is like nothing else – it has two percent organic matter, when its hard its sets like concrete and water just runs off it and you need a jackhammer to dig it ... and when its wet, you can bog a tractor in it – but it grows everything.”

It’s an environment which successfully grew Wintergreen Couch for many years, but Derren has shifted away from the variety due to a red mite issue that is seemingly impossible to control in the public space.

Derren said their greatest fear was their growing and selling of couch turf would lead to an uncontrolled outbreak of mites in the local area, which had the potential to decimate the native couch grass that pastoralists relied on for cattle feed on waterways, and public open spaces.

“We’ve got some of the oldest soils in Australia here, possibly the world...”

“The red mite ... it has a breeding cycle of 10-14 days and while we could try and control it on the farm, if the home owner or the council didn’t control it properly, we could see it become the cane toad of Western Australia and we didn’t want to be responsible for that.”

Now, the farm concentrates on growing Sir Walter Buffalo (DNA certified) and has trialled zoysia grasses, which Derren said they were likely to invest in growing more of in the coming year.

The 600-millimetre annual rainfall of the region, recognised as a semi-arid, can come in the space of just 28 days early in the year.

The desert-like environment includes temperatures in the high 40s during summer which can mean evaporation rates need to be taken into consideration.

In December on a 42-degree day, Derren measured 19mm of evaporation. To counter that, he needed to make sure 40mm of water was put over his turf.

Irrigation water is drawn from bores with pumps at a depth of 65 metres.

But that comes with its own challenges – the water is ‘too pure’ with levels of salt at 180 parts per million, it essentially has no minerals in it, and it has extraordinary powers of disintegrating metals.

“The water wrecks your machinery worse than taking it for a drive in the ocean,” Derren said.

“The water eats through steel, brass ... it will rot a galvanised star picket in the ground in three years.”

Most recently, the Greenhills have transitioned to direct feed solar pumps, which Derren said may have limited their irrigation times, the off-grid aspect also means there is significant power savings for the business.

Building fields of dreams

Back in 2000, Greenhills Turf Farm began to be involved with Government programs delivering natural turf ovals to remote indigenous communities of the Kimberly region.

Frustrated that while the programs delivered a wonderful asset to these communities, they often failed to consider the ongoing costs



or training requirements associated with them, Derren has set about being part of delivering sustainable ovals to communities.

This more sustainable model includes working with community members to construct and install the sports ovals, complete with formal qualifications.

“Those first ovals we did were fantastic, but what we realised was there wasn’t the training or education or funding with them for the ongoing care and maintenance of the oval – so they were great, but they weren’t lasting,” he said.

“These communities have the most amazing footy players coming out of them and the ovals they are playing on are hot bare dirt or rocks that are over 50 degrees .”

Derren now works with communities and focusses on delivering “whole of concept” ovals.

“We work on having the communities involved right from the beginning, and then training community members with recognised training programs so that once the oval is there, they can maintain it.

“And what we find is, that when the community has members that are fully involved with its development, they take much greater ownership of it than something that is simply gifted.”

Greenhills works with other contractors and the communities to understand what they need and it is the community’s responsibility to source the funding for the project.

Once funded, the earthmoving element of the project might allow for community members to get a range of earthmoving qualifications, like a bobcat operators ticket; when the irrigation system is installed there is training in reticulation irrigation systems; once the turf runners are planted and the maintenance of the turf begins, employees can be trained horticultural qualifications.

“Its really a whole approach to building something – the community members are getting formal qualifications, and at the same time, being paid for doing the work, and the end result is something that is very beneficial to the whole community.

“Once the ovals are in and able to be played on, its amazing to see the transformation in the communities – the schools that have no green space themselves can use it, the footy team can play on it instead of bare dirt, and all of those things help the bigger community health issues that a lot of these communities are impacted by.”

Derren said while the sheer logistics of getting earthmoving equipment so some of the communities can be staggering, the complexities of the culture can similarly be challenging with the projects.

“There are cultural challenges with negotiating with all the parties involved in a community to make sure they get an oval that suits their needs,” Derren said.

“But there are such huge benefits to the community when we get that right and there ends up being a sustainable natural turf oval in a remote community.”

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Events, efficiencies and awards in Western Australia

The biggest event on the turf calendar in Western Australia occurred on Saturday, October 27, when the first ever Lawn Expo for community at the beautiful South Metropolitan TAFE in Murdoch was held. This free event was sponsored by the Turf Growers Association Western Australia (TGAWA). A full report on the event can be found on pages 20 and 21 of this magazine.



Above: WA Turf Award winners.

EFFICIENCY PROJECT FOR GROWERS

Perth Natural Resource Management have successfully secured a grant from the National Landcare Program (NLP) to work with volunteer growers over two summers (2018-20) to help them improve irrigation and fertiliser use using the latest digitally enabled technology. Four TGAWA members who produce turf on the Gnangara Mound to the north of the Perth metropolitan area have volunteered to be involved with this project funded under the *Smart Farms Grant – Fertiliser and Irrigation Efficiency* program.

There is no cost to growers for equipment or the one-on-one training with respected agronomist Neil Lantzke, other than time, it is expected that these turf producers will have efficiencies and savings from being involved.

This project builds on the success of Perth NRM's recent project Healthy Soils, Healthy Rivers (2015-2018), that assisted intensive horticulture growers in the Perth peri-urban area to improve their fertiliser efficiency and prevent nutrient leaching. This project will add real-time predictive management tools to grower's skill sets, with the methodology applicable across all intensive horticulture sectors.

This project aims to increase knowledge and capacity of growers through the use of adaptive management tools and land management practices.

The project will help growers to manage their businesses in the face of reductions in water allocation, due to climate change.

The on-farm trials will help growers irrigate their production systems more efficiently and refine their fertiliser use reducing production costs.

This project is supported by Perth NRM through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and the City of Wanneroo, Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development, Wildeye and VegetablesWA

RESEARCH DAMAGE AND BAD MEDIA

The WA Turf Industry, has been battling against a series of bad press and research findings over recent months, with articles suggesting turf is an "environmental hazard and water guzzler". As a result, the state industry has been required to crisis manage these circumstances.

Media comments and interviews have been addressed and a formal response to a particularly damning research paper, which cited northern hemisphere data and released out of the University of Western Australia, have been developed and circulated to government and other relevant parties.

Addressing these issues has been time consuming but important to counter this misinformation which is often driven by an agenda, and often in the quest for a message about saving water, the holistic and wider benefits of turf are not being considered.

SPORTS TURF ASSOCIATION WA AWARDS

On October 30, 2018, the WA turf industry came together to celebrate the annual Sports Turf Association Western Australia Industry Awards night. Supported by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of Western Australia and the Turf Growers Association of Western Australia, the event was attended by more than 80 people at the Hartfield Country Club.

Guest speaker for the night was the 2018 Golf Course Superintendent of the year, Phil Moylan, who is Superintendent at Gosnells Golf Club.

Congratulations must go to the winners of awards on the night:

- **Best Student in Certificate of Trade Studies in Turf Management:** Jax Battye, Meadow Springs Golf Course.
- **Lecturer's Choice Award:** Cameron McDonald and Jarod Fry both, Wanneroo Golf Club.
- **Best Student Technical & Further Education Award - CH Bailey & Sons Perpetual Shield:** Haydn Hamilton, Programmed Property Services.
- **Best Sports Turf Apprentice Award 2018:** Daniel Baker, WACA.
- **Best Golf Apprentice 2018 Award:** Jax Battye, Meadow Springs Golf Club.

For more information contact Eva Ricci

M: 0422 120 990, T: (08) 9437 2180 or E: eva.ricci@turfwa.com.au



From top:

Terry Sellick, Lawn Docter (centre) with Cameron McDonald and Jarod Fry, Wanneroo Golf Club.

Jax Battye (right) and Tony Guy, STA WA.

Haydn Hamilton (left) with Clint Betts, Baileys Fertilisers.



On-farm visit for the project Integrated Pest Management of mites on turfgrass project.

NEW SOUTH WALES



Grower engagement, turf statistics and market development activities leading the way in NSW

New South Wales growers have experienced strong sales over the busy spring period leading into Christmas. This has led to a shortage of stock in most growing regions.

Despite early spring rain in most growing regions and cooler conditions, the impacts of the drought are still being felt across most of the state. Growers are urged to contact Matthew Plunkett if assistance is required accessing services and support.

It has been a busy time for the association with a number of projects and field days held in the past few months.

Turf NSW facilitated a series of on-farm visits for the *Integrated Pest Management of mites on turfgrass* project with IPM Technologies. Following these visits, predatory mites have been released on a couple of farms to determine the impact on plant pest populations as a follow on to the workshop held in August 2018. Further results will be communicated to growers later in the year.

Thank you to Jenny Zadro and Rachel Collier from Turf Australia for all their assistance organising and promoting the event. Thanks to Sophie Devine at STA NSW and all the speakers and sponsors.

Matthew Plunkett has also been busy networking with the Sports Turf Association, Allied Industry and groups such as LNA Master Landscapers, Horti-Group, Nursery & Garden Industry Association and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects as part of his role. Plans are underway for several events throughout 2019 to grow interest in natural Turf and hence sales.

Turf NSW also attended the Sports Turf Association of NSW Innovation Day held at the University of Sydney on December 4. A number of innovations were demonstrated including the use of drones to map soils and crop health. The STA are to be congratulated on a well organised and attended event during the busiest time of the year.

Turf NSW also attended the launch of the new Turf + Plus Accreditation program at ANZ Stadium in December. One of the key messages was the importance of Work Health and Safety for growers, employees and everybody in the supply chain. Everybody home safe and well every day must be the number one priority.

For more information, please contact Matt Plunkett M: 0434 147 988 or E: info@turfnsw.com.au

VICTORIA



Turf hosts school awards in Victoria

The Victorian School Gardens Awards have again delivered funding and garden items to schools to encourage greener education areas at its presentation ceremony, held in December.

In perfect weather conditions, the presentation of the Victorian Schools Gardens Awards at Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, the rain cleared and the sun shined on the 350 students, parents and teachers in attendance, who sat upon the Oak Lawn in the gardens for the presentation ceremony.

The awards each year offers a Turf Victoria Award prize of 300m² of Kikuyu turf donated by a grower. The 2018 turf grant and awards prizes were donated by Coolabah Turf. Doncaster Primary School was the recipient of the award in December.

Berwick Lodge Primary School, in pursuit of its 'Learning for Life' vision, secured the main Kevin Heinze Perpetual Award for its outdoor area. The school incorporates a variety of garden settings, including a community garden, sensory garden, Anzac memorial garden and soon-to-be-developed Outdoor Common Room, to contribute to an overall learning environment that heavily engages students and the broader school community.

Berwick Lodge was one of three state award winners and narrowly

Turf NSW would like to thank all 43 growers who participated in the Turf Statistics project. This three-year project provides valuable information on the size and scope of our industry.

Turf NSW would like to thank all 43 growers who participated in the Turf Statistics project. This three-year project provides valuable information on the size and scope of our industry. Each grower who participated in the survey will receive a benchmarking report with the results of the surveys comparing their performance with that of their fellow growers.

In partnership with Turf Australia, Turf NSW held with a successful Grass Roots Field Day held on October 30, 2018 in north-western Sydney. A series of interesting and informative talks were given on turf varieties, soil and irrigation management and demonstrations of turf varieties, harvesting and washing turf. A full report on this day can be found on page 22 and 23 of this magazine.

Many thanks to Graeme Colless, Chris Chapman and all the team from Evergreen Turf and Dad N Dave's turf farm for hosting this event.

QUEENSLAND



Wild weather in Queensland sees out 2018

Firstly, Turf Queensland hopes all our turf production industry colleagues and the national and state associations had a happy new year, we hope it turns out be beneficial in line with your targets.

Over the last few months of 2018, QLD had primarily drought conditions and very dry with the odd fierce storm thrown in just to keep it interesting. In some areas in Central Queensland, water shortages were at a point where some turf farms could not produce turf at all due to a lack of available water. As we headed in Christmas cyclones and storms came across the whole of the state and alleviated the critical conditions, and in some areas, filled the storage systems that had not seen rain for four years.

Over the past couple of years, the turf production industry has been very much aware of the dry continent status and worked hard on on-farm storage of water and lifting their capacities where possible. Limiting run-off is a pre-requisite as all turf farms wish to contain and recycle their water use due to the high amount of nutrients already applied to the property and water efficiency needs.

A number of levy-funded projects are working well in conjunction with Turf Australia and Turf Queensland, most recently, the Turf Industry Statistics Project where a large number of turf farms were surveyed through the month of October. This will provide excellent data on which to promote our industry to various parties who are involved provide an accurate current position of the industry which will open a few eyes.

Load restraints and commercial vehicle inspections continue to be undertaken by the authorities and in most instances where turf industry vehicles were involved, the company involved and transport operators were assessed as undertaking the correct processes.

Turf Queensland has been involved in a number of industry events at the end of last year, involving a number of allied industries and groups such as the Sports Turf Association, Australia Golf Course Superintendents, the Lawn Fanatics. These events involved promotion and education around the purchase, maintenance, laying and preparation of grounds utilising quality natural turfgrass.

Turf Queensland's Turf Accreditation Program (TAP) continues to go from strength to strength and pleasingly, has been called upon by many regional councils and some architects in their tendering process. TAP Accreditation members cover the whole of Queensland and members are always nearby to assist the specifiers in meeting their requirements.

The TAP system is a third-party audited program that protects the end user. It covers the regulations and legislation requirements of business, the production areas of farm operations and mapping, soil health and properties, water and irrigation system and performance, fertiliser nutrients and environment, pest weed and disease management, cutting and installation, waste management, energy use, workplace health and safety, business management, performance and communications. Accredited members should provide the tenderer or customer with a copy of the Current Accreditation Certificate and ensure the accreditation is displayed visually to take full advantage of it.

Comparisons on fertilisers and chemicals continued to be discussed at length by growers and opinions vary widely within our turf producer group. To make sure that the costs of these remains within the reach of the business, or to assess whether adjustments to turf prices need to, or can be, made, producers are encouraged to regularly check the turf cost calculator online. The turf cost calculator continues to be updated can help growers achieve the optimum in cost and sell price on the farm.

For further information on the above projects visit www.qtpa.com.au or contact Jim Vaughan M: 0407 131 025 or E: jim@qtpa.com.au



Doncaster Primary School representatives with the CEO of Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria, Craig Taberner.

beat out Cornish College (located in Bangholme) and Swan Hill Specialist School for the main prize.

This year, 30 schools in total won awards for their garden programs and shared in \$43,000 worth of vouchers and in-kind products.

The Victorian Schools Garden Awards encourage school communities to develop, grow and celebrate their gardening achievements.

The awards foster a lifelong student connection with the natural environment and promote the value of outdoor spaces in progressive modern education.

For more information on the start-of-year grants program and the end-of-year awards, visit www.schoolsgardenawards.org.au

For more information contact David Reid T: (03) 9576 0599 or E: david@ngiv.com.au



Victorian School Gardens Awards ceremony on the Oak Lawn of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens.



Bringing in the new year celebrating what's

As 2019 rolls into gear, Turf Australia's Market Development Manager **Jenny Zadro** looks back at how last year finished with some fantastic turf industry events, and looks forward to what this year will bring.

Happy New Year and I trust that you have had a great Christmas and had the opportunity to stop and enjoy some family time. Here's hoping that 2019 is a productive and profitable one for the whole industry.

As the industry's *Market Development project* (TU16002) approaches its first 12 months, this is a good opportunity to review the outcomes to date, and look towards the plans for 2019. The project has many facets but predominantly focuses on promoting the benefits of turf and engaging with the wider turf/greenspace industry.

I was impressed while attending some great events at the end of 2018 supported through the market development project. The inaugural Turf Expo in Perth (put on by the Turf Growers Association of Western Australia) was an outstanding success and demonstrated the value of collaborating with the wider green space industry to showcase turf. It was great to see growers come together to promote and talk about turf, regardless of their brands. The Turf Expo had a great community and family feel about it and everyone seemed to thrive on all the information they had available on the day.

The project has many facets but predominantly focuses on promoting the benefits of turf and engaging with the wider turf/greenspace industry.

The Turf NSW Grass Roots Field Day was another event held at Dad & Dave's /Evergreen Turf providing landscapers and sports turf managers the opportunity to see firsthand the operations of a turf farm including harvesting, turf washing, turf varieties and much more. Developing a strong relationship and understanding client and contractor needs is important to successful business operations. An effective and engaging event.

Whilst not part of the Market Development project, it was great to experience the Australian Lawn Fanatics members day held at GoTurf on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. A fun day for all involved and particularly the members who take so much pride in their lawns.

In October, Turf Australia exhibited at the International Parks and Leisure Congress held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The event attracted more than 700 delegates from all over Australia and many international guests and presenters. The message of ensuring we have



Top: Western Australian Turf Growers Association executive (from left) Adrian Pitkasis, Con Paino, Graeme Ferguson, Bec Sellick, Darren Kirkwood.

Above: Author Dr Jason Fox was a dynamic keynote presenter at the International Parks and Leisure Congress held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The second day of the event saw some industry groups, including turf, showcase their products in Parliament House...

greenspace in our community was not new to most of the delegates there but there was a very strong message of the value of greenspace and why it is crucial to maintain a healthy and happy community. The event shed a light on the number of organisations across the globe working to ensure authorities and developers put greenspace first.

Turf Australia had the chance to network with many people from councils all over the country as well as engage with other exhibitors. The impact of attending this type of event is not always apparent or easily measured, but in the following weeks we had several follow up calls and enquiries and from this and other events attended throughout the year, creating a stronger awareness of Turf Australia and its representation of turf growers.

Collaboration with other organisations that have a connection to turf has continued with new relationships developed with the International Erosion Control Association, who are happy to work with Turf Australia to promote the Australian Standard for turf as an erosion control method, and Irrigation Australia, who Turf Australia will partner with



Turf Australia display at inaugural Hort Alumni conference and industry showcase, Parliament House, Canberra.

some urban heat island mapping projects he has undertaken and the impressive results of turf. Seed Consulting have recently been awarded a new turf levy funded project and this will further provide the industry with some useful resources to advocate the value of turf to the community.

2019 will be a very busy year for Turf Australia that will include three industry events, an update of the Turf Australia website and general review of our operational systems.

great about turf

next year for the Landscape Irrigation Conference. Partnering in this event will allow us a voice in the programming of presentations, specifically for turf related talks as well as access to many landscapers, sports turf managers, golf courses and councils.

During 2018, a new concept through the Hort Frontiers Funding program, was developed to encourage industry leaders, and late last year, this led to the inaugural Hort Alumni conference and industry showcase. Members of the Hort Innovation industry groups who have attended leadership training were invited to join the Alumni group and participate in the conference in Canberra. The second day of the event saw some industry groups, including turf, showcase their products in Parliament House and members of Parliament were invited to attend. The event was a success and a great opportunity for the different industries to share ideas with one another. The showcase, while only small, worked well and hopefully in the future will expand to be a good representation of the horticultural industry in Australia.

At the end of 2018 Hort Innovation held its Annual General Meeting where Chairman Selwyn Snell reviewed the year and focused on the independent review of Hort Innovation and the 14 key recommendations. The Chairman confirmed that the Board had agreed to adopt the recommendations and work was already underway. The meeting was a great opportunity to hear from newly appointed CEO, Matt Brand. Matt's message was clear that Hort would simplify its processes and work closely with industry representative bodies. This message was further reiterated at the Turf Australia board meeting held in October when Matt Brand came along to meet the Board, along with, John Vatikiotis and Bianca Cairns. Turf Australia looks forward to working closely with Hort Innovation to continue to strengthen its relationship.

Speaking of the Board, I would like to welcome Adam Dunstone, Business Manager, Strathayr, to the Turf Australia Board. While Adam is fairly new to the industry, he is very passionate about the opportunities available for new concepts and growth.

As you will see in this edition of the magazine, the Market Development project, has funded the acquisition of some beneficial thermal images for the industry (see page 8-12). Turf Australia engaged Sky Monkey to undertake the images using their specialised software and drone. The images speak for themselves with turf, particularly irrigated turf, proving its value in cooling our communities. In support of this work, a meeting was held with Mark Siebentritt of Seed Consulting Services reviewing

2019 will be a very busy year for Turf Australia that will include three industry events, an update of the Turf Australia website and general review of our operational systems. Like any business, the behind the scenes processes and structure help support the outcomes and, whilst cumbersome, these reviews are important. We hope to bring you a new updated website that is more user friendly for accessing resources and managing your membership and events.

This year will also see the introduction of the inaugural Women in Turf conference that is designed for all women working or involved within the turf production industry. I ask that you give this event your strong consideration and support so that we can build a bigger united network for the industry and address some of the roles that may not be looked at during other conferences. This concept is popular amongst other industry, particularly those that are predominately male driven industries and it is important that the turf industry is also recognised. The Turf Australia Board agreed to provide support for women travelling long distances to attend the Women in Turf conference and more information and applications will be available soon.

Along with the return of the Turf Australia National Conference and NxGen Forum, members will be provided with several opportunities to come together as a united industry and we hope that you can join us at these events to celebrate this great industry.

Lastly, I encourage you to provide Turf Australia with suggestions for our event presentations, concepts or just general industry feedback. Don't hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance to you or your business. ☺

I welcome any turf producer to contact me to discuss issues or ideas by phoning the Turf Australia office on (02) 4588 5735 on mobile 0408 441 119 or by emailing me, jenny.zadro@turfaustralia.com.au



**Hort
Innovation**
Strategic levy investment

**TURF
FUND**



SAVE THE DATE

Save the dates for our industry grower events in 2019

Turf Australia has had the calendar out and set the dates for its major industry events for 2019. Focussing on uniting the industry together to promote natural turf and its benefits to Australians everywhere, the events should be an excellent opportunity for all growers to come together in forums aimed at learning, networking and benefitting growers everywhere.

Keep an eye out on the Turf Australia website www.turfaustralia.com.au and Turf Australia Growers Facebook page www.facebook.com/turfaustralia for more information and registration for on these events.



Women In Turf

March 24 – 25 Coogee Beach, Sydney

The beautiful beach, parks, cafés and restaurants in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs will be the location for the inaugural Women in Turf Conference. This event will be a celebration and acknowledgement of the role that women play in the turf industry. Specifically designed to focus on the role that women play in the turf industry – whether that be in the office, managing the accounts, out on the farm, or all these – the event aims to develop a forum that will allow networking, supporting and professional development. The program will be available soon, so ladies, don't miss this chance and save the date now.



Turf Australia National Conference

May 30 – June 1 Sydney Olympic Park, NSW

The return of the Turf Australia National conference will be an all-inclusive industry event. Offering turf growers, staff and families the opportunity to come together as a united industry for both informative and social experiences. Focusing on farm operational issues, topics will include changes to loading and heavy vehicle regulations, updates on turf levy projects, how turf is cooling the planet, water security, new technologies and much more. The event will include informative presentations, venue and farm visits and will conclude with a great industry initiative at Rosehill Racecourse for a charity race day. There will be something for everyone.



NxGen Forum

July 28 – 30 Adelaide Hills, SA

The NxGen Forum will head to South Australia and Adelaide for an event focusing on leadership, team building and business development. This event is targeted at the younger turf producers and people new to the industry. Save the date to join the great community of NxGeners and discover Adelaide, its turf farms and venues. This year's event will offer an extension to the program to keep you connected with the NxGen Team throughout the year.

