

# turf AUSTRALIA

OFFICIAL INDUSTRY MAGAZINE • WINTER 2018

## Learning in the north at NXE 18

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Understanding crisis management  
New consumer website launching soon  
Mites project underway



# CHAIR

## Developing relationships to benefit the industry

It has been pleasing how much activity there has been in and around Turf Australia and the industry the last few months.

Recent activities and events have seen some excellent learning and networking opportunities presented to growers and representatives in our industry, while on a production front, it has been good to see strong turf sales continue through autumn for most of our growers.

The reports from the NxGen Forum held in Cairns last month for our younger growers has been positive. More than 40 industry members attended the two-day event to share their knowledge and learn about various aspects of business and turf growing. The event continues to be popular for our young growers and managers in a more relaxed setting.

*Activities and events for growers has seen some excellent learning and networking opportunities presented to growers and representatives in our industry, while on a production front, it has been good to see strong turf sales continue through autumn for most of our growers.*

Our industry benefits from growers participating in a range of learning experiences and it is pleasing we have another group of eager industry representatives involved in this year's Growing Green Leaders program. There will be another opportunity later in the year for growers to be part of a leadership program through the Australian Rural Leaders organisation.

We had a great response to the inaugural Turf Industry Study Tour to New Zealand in June where growers joined the first Australasian Turfgrass Conference in New Zealand hosted by the Australian and New Zealand Golf Course Superintendents' Associations. The study tour took in the event and its associated trade show along with a farm tour looking at the production side of New Zealand's turf industry.

Some very interesting presenters at the conference gave the growers who were part of the tour plenty of food for thought and ideas to bring back to their own turf farms and the Australian industry. Following tour, the study group will put forward ideas from their experience for research and development projects which could benefit the Australian industry through the Hort Innovation project ideas funnel.

Experiences such as this study tour allow us to draw on the knowledge of other industries to see where we can improve our own, and for our industry to showcase what it does. Growers at the conference were very well received by those there, most of who were turf managers in some capacity.

Building the relationships with end-users of our product is invaluable as it is those people who positively promote our product. It also allows us as suppliers to understand any issues they have with turf to see where we can improve our own production to supply them with a better product.

That collaborative work has been a big part of Jenny Zadro's last few months and the way in which we are fostering new and developing old relationships with other green industries, specifier groups, local government and turf customers can only be beneficial to growers and the success of our industry.

Networking opportunities for our industry don't always need to be in a conference room, and the recent Turf Industry Race Day held at Randwick Racecourse in Sydney is an example of that. The social event attracted growers from New South Wales and Queensland and congratulations must go to Graeme Colless from Dad & Dave's Turf and Evergreen Turf for their role in the event and its fundraising aspect. More than \$400,000 was raised for charities.

The Strategic Industry Advisory Panel (SIAP) has overseen a number of industry projects funded through the Hort Innovation Turf Fund. Most recently, the production-orientated projects involving mites and couch smut have been contracted, while other projects looking at trying to understand the true value of the turf industry have been put out to tender. The continued reinvestment of our industry's levy into valuable research and development projects is important to maintain the best practice for turf growing, managing, and harvesting and business development.

With the introduction of the new National Heavy Vehicle Regulations pushed back until October, it has given growers more time to understand the changes to heavy vehicle and turf transporting operations. It is important growers are aware of how being part of the chain of responsibility impacts them in an even greater way.

With winter now upon us, there have been some cracking images of frosty turf farms on social media. While it slows down the turf growth, winter gives growers opportunity to prepare themselves, their farms and their businesses for another cracking spring and summer season.



ROSS BOYLE, ROSEMOUNT TURF  
CHAIRMAN



NZ study tour inspecting a turf farm.



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Cover photo: The broadleaf carpetgrass, as grown by the Anderlini family's Tropical Lawns, was just one of the things NxGen 2018 participants learned about when visiting Cairns last month.





## New Zealand study tour success

A small group of turf growers have taken part in the Australian Turf Industry Study Tour to New Zealand, from June 25-28, 2018.

It was the first time that Turf Australia has facilitated such a tour, but the feedback from the growers who attended has been overwhelmingly positive.

The *Australian Turf Industry Study Tour 2018* (TU17007) was a strategic levy investment with the aim of assisting the growth and development of the Australian turf industry by providing the opportunity for growers to connect with the wider turf industry, both nationally and internationally, gain valuable industry knowledge and experience on-farm turf production in New Zealand.

The tour program included attending the Australasian Turfgrass Conference in Wellington, which had comprehensive program of Australian and international presenters covering a variety of topics on turf management, maintenance techniques, technologies and best management practices. The annual conference and trade exhibition event is the largest turf trade exhibition in Australasia, showcasing the latest in turf management machinery, equipment, technology and products.

A full report on the tour will be included in upcoming Turf Australia eNewsletters and the spring edition of the industry magazine. Opportunities for strategic research and development projects to benefit the Australian industry will also be put forward from information gathered from the study tour.

(Above, left to right): Delegates Ross Boyle, Rachel Collier, Adam Dunstone, Emma Burstall, Paul Saliba, Jenny Zadro, Justin Burstall, Liz Mecham, Anthony Heilig and Helen Tramacchi.



(Above): Scott McElroy from Auburn University presented on weed control and other management issues at the conference.

(Left and below): Jenny Zadro updated delegates on Turf Australia.



## Have your say on the communications project

Do you often flick through the Turf Australia magazine or have a read through the eNews sent out each month?

Did you know these key pieces of communications outputs are part of the *Turf Industry Communications Programme* (TU16002), which is an Hort Innovation Turf Fund Research and Development funded project?

The communications project is specifically designed to give growers information which helps improve their businesses through on-farm development, production and efficiency, and also deliver information about how the turf levy is being invested through other research and development and marketing projects.

The first year of the new project is almost done, and as such, growers will soon receive an emailed survey asking them about the communications project and how they interact with it.

The survey will inform Turf Australia and Hort Innovation about the effectiveness of the project delivering information to growers.

"We are encouraging growers to give us this feedback through the survey to understand if growers are getting what they need out of the communications project outputs like the eNewsletter and the magazine," project manager, Liz Mecham, said.

"The survey also allows us to see whether we need to tailor these more to grower preferences."

Growers will receive the survey via email in late July and are encouraged to complete it as soon as possible after receive it.



## Finding the value of turf beyond the farm gate

A new project aimed at identifying what value the turf industry gives to the wider community has been put out to tender.

The project *Economic, environmental, social and health impact and benefits of the Turfgrass and Lawn Care Industries in Australia* (TU17006) aims to identify the direct and indirect benefits the turf industry and lawn care industry generate from the production of, and access to turf products.

The project has been developed following on from the *Turf Industry Research and Statistics 2016/2017* project (TU16001) which identified the direct economic value of turf production, however, it also identified that the value of the turf industry extends well beyond production.



This post-production value is generated through the installation, maintenance and rejuvenation of turf products which can generate ongoing economic, social, health and environmental benefits.

Some of these benefits are easily understood and valued such as the economic value of maintaining turf assets through the turf lifecycle (for example cutting turf, watering/irrigating turf, aerating turf, fertilising turf).

Other benefits are less easily defined, measured and valued, including those relating to the social (amenity, green space), environmental (carbon sequestration, urban heating) and health (sport, physical activity) impacts of installed turf products in the Australian landscape.

As part of the project, a number of benefit streams generated through the provision of turf products will be identified, including:

- Economic (turf maintenance, downstream employment)
- Social (amenity, green space, aesthetic)
- Health (physical activity, air quality)
- Environmental (carbon sequestration, urban heat island)

Tender applications for the project closed in early July and further information on the project and its provider will be available in coming months.



# Learning in the north for turf's next generation



THE FORUM ... PROVIDED PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM ONE-ANOTHER, WITH NETWORKING EVENTS PROVIDING EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE IDEAS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE INDUSTRY, GROWING TURF, AND OPERATING A BUSINESS.

**Hort Innovation**  
Strategic levy investment

**TURF FUND**

**Turf Australia**  
Grow Green

Cairns in tropical north Queensland played host to this year's NxGen Forum for young turf growers. The two-day event provided the opportunity for learning, networking and a greater understanding of the importance of selling turf's natural attributes to benefit the wider community and environment. **Liz Mecham reports.**

The turf industry's up and coming growers have come home from NxGen 2018 armed with new information to help them be better growers, better communicators and better at understanding turf's role in the environment.

The forum also provided plenty of opportunity to learn from one-another, with networking events providing excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and knowledge about the industry, growing turf, and operating a business.

In opening the forum, Turf Australia's national market development manager, **Jenny Zadro**, told growers she hoped the event would provide the growers with practical and useful information they could take home and use in their businesses.

For many, the session on communications provided by **Jill Rigney, The Right Mind** (see story on pages 8 and 9) could be immediately implemented into day-to-day business operations.

Similarly, the information **John Neylan, Turf Consulting and Research** (see story on page 10) could also be applied on-farms, literally, when growers returned home.

Other speakers provided information for growers to take home and use in the future, including **Lynn Davidson, Jimboomba Turf**, who spoke not only about the new Australian Standard, but also the importance of continued learning and networking between growers to strengthen the industry (see story on page 11).

## Benefits of education

One of the key messages at the forum was the importance of continued learning, whether practical or personal.

This message delivered by **Lachlan Moncrieff, Paragon Gardens**, was the need for growers to understand why they do what they do, and let that passion drive their business success.

Lachlan presented a graphic which he felt defined the way he now looked at his business, which focussed on why he did what he did, not how.

He also spoke about how valuable further education was for growers to be better individuals and better business people.

Lachlan completed the inaugural Masterclass in Horticultural Business last year, funded through the Hort Innovation Leadership fund.

He encouraged growers to make use of the learning opportunities presented to the industry through Turf Australia, Hort Innovation and other agricultural avenues to become better educated, more motivated, better leaders and overall, better turf growing business operators.

## Educational tour program

The program of events for NxGen 2018 included a visit to Green Island, where attendees experienced the Great Barrier Reef, one of the greatest natural assets which could be influenced by turf's ability to stop soil and sediment entering the ocean.

The on-farm tour program highlighted the challenges of growing and maintaining turf in a tropical environment.

The **Anderlini family's Tropical Lawns** operation was one of the first in Australia to begin growing Zoysia varieties almost 30 years ago (see profile story on pages 22 and 23) while the Denney family from Harden

Park Lawns entered the turf industry after a tropical cyclone devastated their herb-growing operations (see story on pages 22 and 23).

Growers were able gain an insight into the challenge of maintaining turf in the local environment with a walking tour of the Cairns Botanic Gardens.

**Dave Paschetto**, supervisor of **Cairns Botanic Reserves and Conservation Park**, said the biggest challenge for the team was managing the compaction issues from foot traffic on the turf areas and the damage to the surface during event 'bump in and bump out' (set up and take down).

The team manages not just the Botanic Gardens but also sports fields and other recreation and public spaces around Cairns.

Dave said managing turf with the natural soil types created some of their biggest challenges.

"We have to manage a high clay content soils which are acidic... those alluvial type soils lack drainage," Dave said.

"We have buffalo grass, but our default turf variety is carpet grass which is well suited to this environment, but in the wet season, we are moving every week which can be challenging when we have back to back events." 🌱





## Good communication skills – the greatest asset you have in business

In a session that delivered information at lightning speed, Jill Rigney from The Right Mind International gave NxGen attendees a taste of what good communication skills can do for a business, for a boss and for an individual person. Most walked away with a new perspective on how important it is to listen before assuming a position in any negotiation.

When Jill Rigney from The Right Mind took the microphone at NxGen she explained to growers she was going to give them more information in one hour-long presentation than is usually delivered in one day at a training session.

When her presentation was finished, there wasn't a person in the room who hadn't taken something away from her talk on developing the art of good communication skills and understanding how previous experiences and being able to listen in a negotiation can make all the difference to an acceptable outcome.



### Fundamental needs

Jill explained that maintaining dialogue when working through issues with anyone – employees, customers, stakeholders – was of utmost importance.

"Once you lose dialogue, it is almost impossible to resolve things," Jill said.

"It is fundamental to understand what drive most of us, most of the time – that we seek to be seen as significant, to be of value and that we are respected and heard," she said.

Citing the behavioural scientist, Maslow, Jill said that one of the most important things we as people seek once we have been fed, housed and feel safe, is that we will pursue a sense of belonging in the world.

"If we want people to work with us, then addressing this need to belong or be heard is a great place to start.

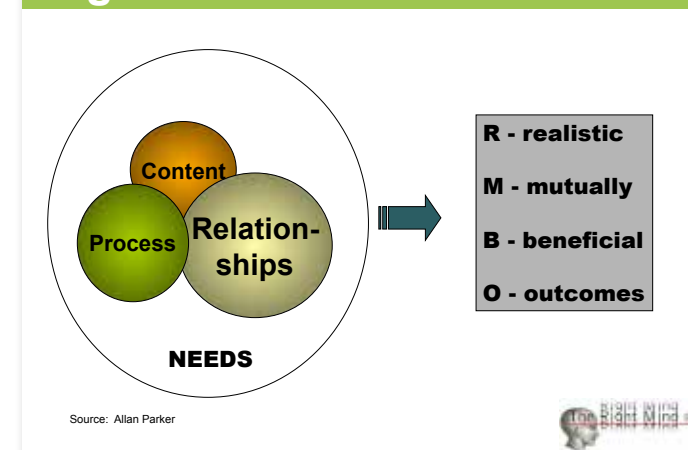
"And when this sense of belonging is not provided or addressed, we will sometimes seek these needs in very irrational ways."

Jill said that meant that people needed to work through processes of keeping the dialogue open in any negotiation because as soon as one party felt like they were no longer being seen as significant, or being heard, then resolution would become difficult.

She also said everyone had needs they wanted to be met, whether that was a customer buying turf, or an employee speaking about a pay rise.

"No one tells you their real needs first up, unless there is a good relationship," she said.

### Negotiation framework



"As soon as a person feels fear and anxiety, they don't hear what is being said – often what happens when an employee is talking to a boss – but by understanding the needs of a person can lead to the issue being resolved."

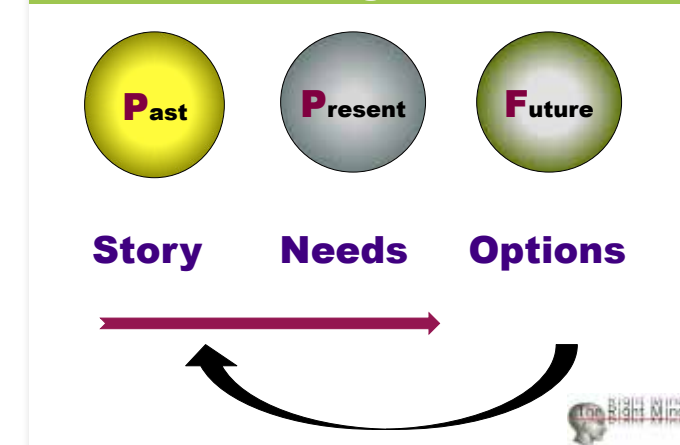
Jill said that did not mean a person needed to compromise their position all the time, more so understand that negotiations aren't always about winning and losing, and that an issue being resolved may have many or no compromises, simply through an understanding of each other's position.

### The proper process

When discussing the way in which people can build relationships through dialogue, the importance of working with people's preferred ways of processing information needs to be acknowledged.

"People have a preference to work in an order by dealing with the past, the present and then the future," she said.

### Problem solving framework...



"Understanding this sequencing when having a difficult conversation can lead to an issue being resolved more efficiently and thoroughly."

Jill said when anyone brought an issue to the table, there was always a past experience that was influencing that position, and unless that was acknowledged and listened to, it was unlikely they would easily agree to something in the future context, and this was often the case between employees and employers.

"The issue is often that there is an unmet need or unmet expectation and people tend to only disclose these when there is a sound relationship in place," Jill said.

### THE ORDER IS IMPORTANT TO MINIMISE STRONG EMOTIONAL RESPONSES, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHAT THE DISCUSSION IS ...

"Once you actually hear what they are – and remember that listening properly means you have to demonstrate that you have heard them, for example reframe or repeat it back to them, so they know you are dealing the real issues.

"The greatest challenge when dealing with the real, present, issues is that you will make the assumption you know what they are ... instead, listen and hear what the other person is saying."

The future state of such a discussion allows options to be created with the intent of addressing as many needs of the parties involved as possible, Jill said.

"The order is important to minimise strong emotional responses, irrespective of what the discussion is, 80 per cent of the conversation is the first two steps.

"And if they aren't resolved, then they will keep coming back," she said.

### Trust the skills you have

Jill said growers needed to trust the skills they already had to be good negotiators and communicators.

"You already have these skills, but by understanding how to use these skills in a better way can lead to much better outcomes in many of the negotiations you have in your business, with employees, with customers..."

"A lot of it is understanding the issue at hand and really listening to what people are telling you, not assuming you understand.

"Don't be too presumptive, assumptive or make unilateral decisions in these discussions."

Jill said the keys to successful discussions and negotiations included:

- Be curious – understand and respect the person you are talking to in any discussions
- Do needs discovery – prepare for the discussion by understanding the needs of the person
- Preparation – understand the process, the order and know the facts of the discussion before proceeding

Jill said in building relationship with an employee, employer or customer, trust was a big factor, and that by understanding basic needs of humans, the process of dealing with issues, asking the right questions and listening to the answers, long standing trust could be established.

"Some people say they don't have the time to build relationships in their business, but they seemly have time lots of time to fix up mistakes from poor conversations and then repeat the same mistakes often," Jill said.

"By getting that relationship right at the beginning, it can avoid a lot of issues going forward and create a relationship where everyone gets their needs met, rather than one party having to compromise their position.

"While ever there is dialogue, there is the possibility of a resolution, issues are likely to arise when that dialogue stops," she said.



BY GETTING THAT RELATIONSHIP RIGHT AT THE BEGINNING, IT CAN AVOID A LOT OF ISSUES GOING FORWARD AND CREATE A RELATIONSHIP WHERE EVERYONE GETS THEIR NEEDS MET, RATHER THAN ONE PARTY HAVING TO COMPROMISE THEIR POSITION

### KEY POINTS:

- Understand that good communication can ensure businesses are successful and staff are happy
- Maintaining dialogue in any negotiation is critical
- Understanding that past experiences often influences current negotiations



## How growers can lead the fight against herbicide resistance

Complacency about herbicide resistance issues in the turf industry could lead it to become one of the biggest challenges growers face in coming years according to turfgrass researcher, John Neylan.

But growers can face the challenge head on, and implement some simple management practices to avoid resistance issues impacting farms sooner than it needs to.

John, from Turfgrass Consulting and Research, told growers at the NxGen Forum that herbicide resistance issues had been creeping into the broader agricultural industry for a number of years, with the instances of resistance rising significantly since the 1970s.

“Herbicide resistance is the biggest agronomic challenge the turf growing industry has behind water availability,” John said.

“Weeds impact turf production, turf quality, presentation and surface playability, and all of that impacts the industry in a big way.”

Poa annua is identified as one of the weeds showing greatest resistance to the widest range of herbicide Modes of Action (MoAs).

“Poa annua is a weed that has shown resistance to B, C, D, M and Z class chemicals,” he said.

“That is only behind annual rye grass, which is the most herbicide resistant weed in Australian agriculture.”

John said while that resistance had been increasing, and provided examples of why that was occurring, he told growers their management practices on farm was one of the greatest assets in the fight against that resistance increasing even further.

Some of these, he said, were simply paying attention to what was happening on farm and taking proactive action.

This included avoiding using herbicides with the same MoAs, understanding what was presenting in the turf paddocks and going



so far as physically removing plants which seemingly have survived herbicide applications.

“Lots of what we advocate is good farm biosecurity – washing down vehicles to avoid weed seed transfer and encouraging the same of visiting or contractor vehicles.

“An integrated approach is the best one to avoid herbicide resistance becoming a problem on farm, and the wider industry,” John said.

### Best management practices to reduce herbicide resistance risk in turfgrass

- Understand the biology of the weeds present
- Focus on preventing weed seed production and reducing the number of weed seed in the soil bank
- Use weed-free turf, soil, seed, etc.
- Scout routinely – if it isn’t dead, dig it out!
- Follow Crop Life Australia & HRAC resistance management guidelines
- Use multiple herbicide modes of action (MoAs)
- Apply the labelled herbicide rate, at recommended weed sizes, with correct conditions, adjuvants and water volumes.
- Emphasize cultural practices that suppress weeds by using turf competitiveness
- Use mechanical and biological management practices where appropriate
- Prevent movement of weed seed or vegetative propagules
- Prevent an influx of weeds by managing fence lines and surrounding areas
- Develop a plan and maintain records – an invaluable reference guide

## Selling the Standard and learning from others

Speaking at the NxGen 2018 Forum, Lynn Davidson, Jimboomba Turf, urged the young growers to make full use of the Australian Standard AS 5181:2017 *Use and installation of turf as an erosion, nutrient and sediment control measure*.

Lynn explained to growers the long process behind the development of the Standard and the large number of people involved with bringing it to fruition.

“Only one of the people involved with the creation of this Standard had a commercial interest in it being created – Turf Australia – but all those very intelligent people gave up many, many hours of their time in the creation of it,” Lynn said,

“It is now up to you guys to drive the use of this Standard by the new generation of engineers who will be writing the contracts and need to include this,” he said.

Lynn said the Standard did not mandate the use of turf, but when turf had been specified in a project contract, it specified how that turf was to be installed and used.

“We need to make sure this number – AS 5181:2017 – specified in as many contracts as we can, because that means the project manager has to use turf, and they must consult local providers as to the best turf for the local application.

Lynn said this first version of the Standard would evolve as the practical applications of it were developed and he encouraged the growers to “find the holes, tell us what the holes are so we can strengthen the document”.

“We want this document to work and better the industry, so give the feedback, but right now, go out and sell this document so it can work for the industry.”

Lynn also used the opportunity speaking at NxGen to encourage young growers to use the knowledge of the older generation of growers to ensure its longevity.

“An older man will always take on a young man’s problem if its presented properly,” he said.

“Get yourself some mentors – it might be three or four who all give advice on different aspects of what you need for yourself or your business – but learn from one another.”

Lynn urged the young growers to take advantage of events such as NxGen and the national conference to learn from one another, but to also benchmark themselves against one-another regularly to ensure their businesses were operating as effectively as they could all through the year.



### KEY POINTS:

Minimising herbicide resistance:

- Use multiple herbicide Modes of Action (MOAs) that are effective against the most troublesome weeds or those most prone to herbicide resistance (e.g. Poa annua).
- Rotations – rotate between MoAs, not different brand names
- Mixtures – for maximum benefit, herbicide mixtures must not only have different MoAs, but also have similar efficacy and persistence, allowing them to act simultaneously ... contact and systemic herbicides are often no effective tank-mix partners
- Sequential applications – for example, the ‘double knock’ tactic

### KEY POINTS:

Key points of AS 5181 Use and installation of turf as an erosion, nutrient and sediment control measure:

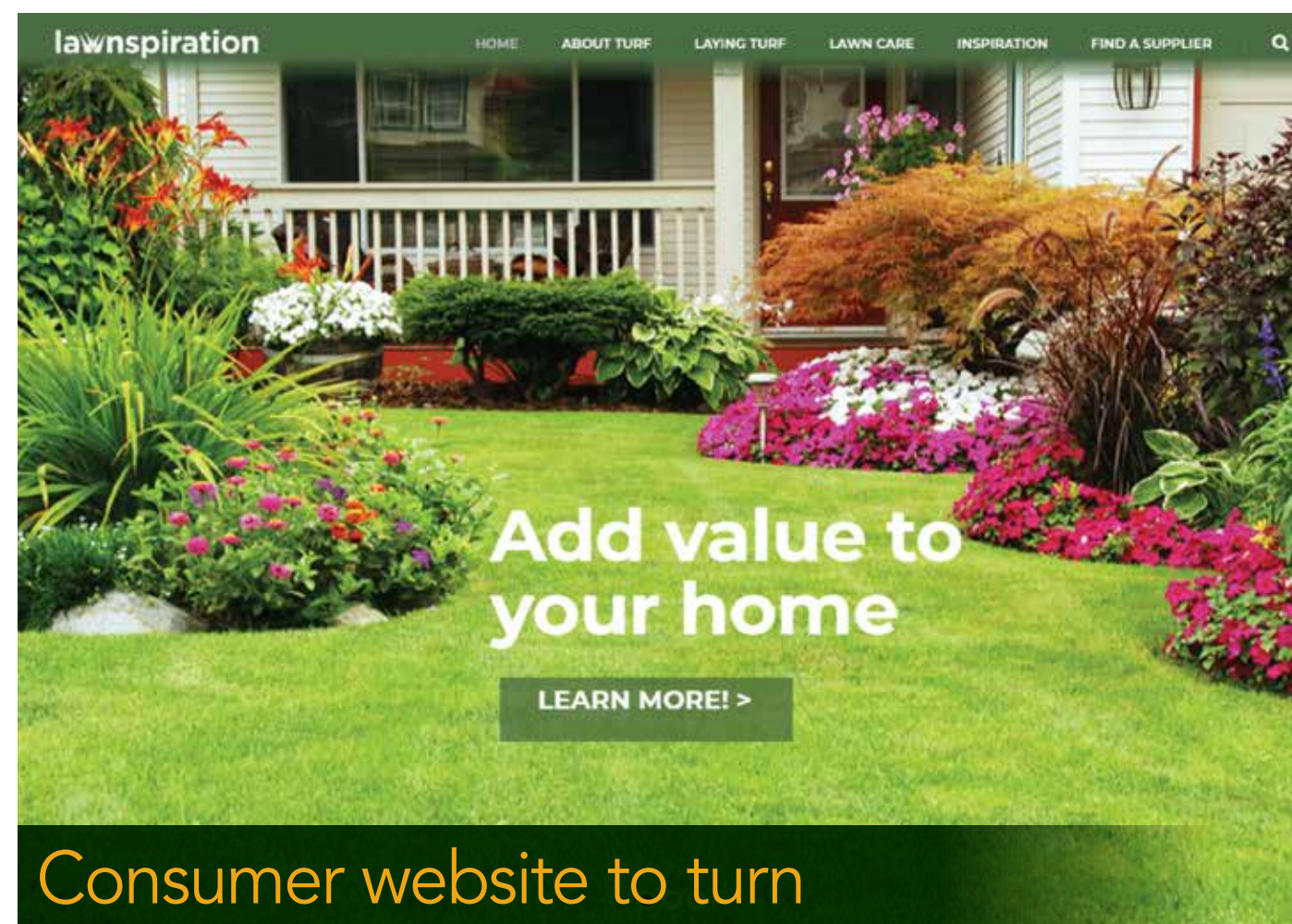
- It is not a document dictating that turf will be used on disturbed lands
- The Standard is intended to be specified in contracts
- It calls for local advice on turf selection from local suppliers

- Certification is addressed and covered so as industry standards are upheld
- Preparation section calls for 75 millimetres of topsoil be used
- Provision for soil testing to meet AS 4419









## Consumer website to turn online support into sales

A new consumer-orientated website for the turf industry will be launched by Hort Innovation soon. One of the key components of the new turf marketing strategy, the Lawnspiration website aims to turn social media support for natural turf into sales for the industry.

*Results from the 2016 Turf Usage and Attitudes study, which showed that websites are the number one source of information and advice for both existing and intended buyers of turf.*

The new turf consumer website, one of the major pillars in the three-year turf marketing strategy, is now getting its final touches to begin selling the benefits of natural turf to consumers and turn their online research into turf sales for growers.

Now live at [www.lawnspiration.com.au](http://www.lawnspiration.com.au), the website aims to deliver broad information about turf and its many and varied benefits, as well as linking customers to growers.

Hort Innovation's turf marketing manager, Olivia Grey, said the development of the website had come from results from the 2016 Turf Usage and Attitudes study, which showed that websites are the number one source of information and advice for both existing and intended buyers of turf.

However, the research also showed that consumers are currently visiting numerous websites, and that there is no single authoritative website that turf buyers and intended buyers visit.

"The new website is a comprehensive, engaging site for existing or potential turf consumers," Olivia said.

The sitemap of the new website is split into five key sections, and houses content that has been developed in collaboration with industry:

- **About turf:** a guide to the major turf varieties and the key benefits of turf
- **Laying turf:** guides to choosing and laying turf
- **Turf care:** tips on lawn maintenance including seasonal maintenance advice
- **Inspiration:** pictures and articles to inspire people to add and improve their lawn

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- **Find a supplier:** a sophisticated google plugin, allowing consumers to type in their postcode to find their nearest turf supplier, as well as their phone and email details and website link

Olivia said the Inspiration section of the website will house content that will inspire homeowners to use turf in their home renovation plans.

"It will be used as a way to provide consumers with landscaping tips and ideas that will encourage them to purchase turf to create the ideal outdoor space for their family," Olivia said.

Additionally, some of the features of the website include:

- A link to the Lawnspiration Facebook page
- An industry link at the bottom of the site to direct growers who access the page to the Turf Australia website
- A turf cost calculator

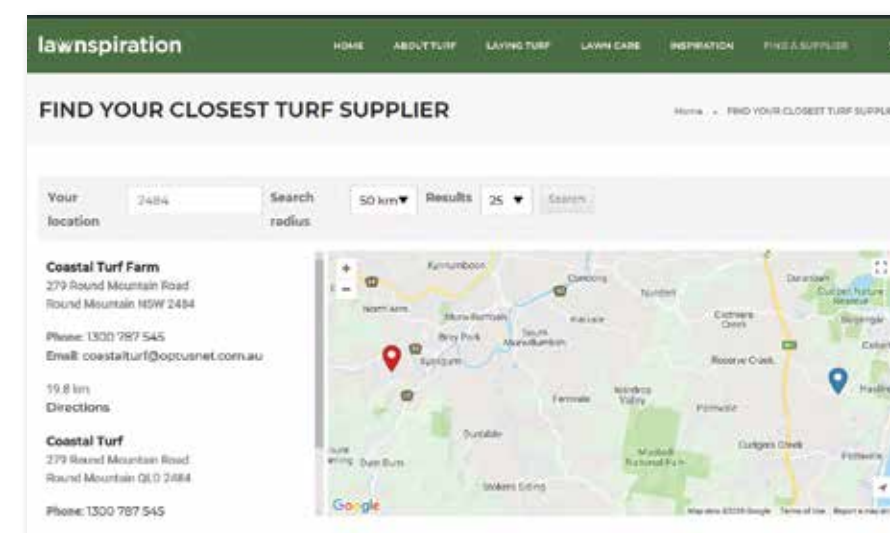
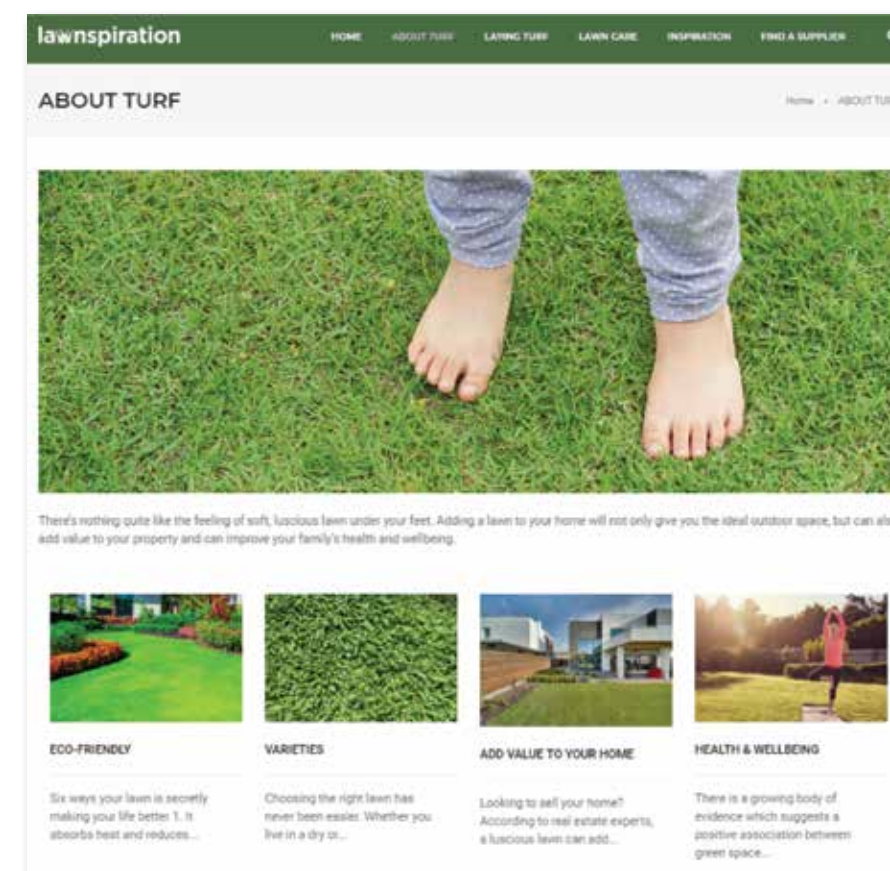
Once the website is live, Olivia said consumers would be driven to the site through the marketing activity in the 2018/19 season, including digital advertising (such as paid Facebook advertising) as well as through a PR campaign.

"The objective of the digital and PR campaigns will be to drive awareness of turf among our target audience, being home owners who are renovating their new or current home, as well as educating them on the social, health and financial benefits of turf, and inspiring them to improve their home and lifestyle with turf," Olivia said.

"The digital marketing campaign will leverage our existing Lawnspiration Facebook page, with content developed to target broad recruitment of new and potential turf buyers as opposed to deep engagement of existing turf owners."

The PR and digital advertising campaigns will be sourced through the Hort Innovation procurement process in coming months.

*Olivia is encouraging turf growers to send in any photos or landscaping tips that could be used on the website. You can contact her directly at [Olivia.Grey@horticulture.com.au](mailto:Olivia.Grey@horticulture.com.au).*



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## From NSW Farmers to Hort Innovation

Hort Innovation has announced its new chief executive officer as **Matt Brand**, known to some growers from his time leading the NSW Farmers Association.

Matt will take up the position with Hort Innovation in September, following on from the organisation's inaugural CEO John Lloyd who oversaw the transition of Horticulture Australia Limited to Hort Innovation.

Matt comes to the position with a wealth of experience, most recently from his role as the long-term CEO of NSW Farmers, Australia's largest state farmer organisation.

In that role between 2010 and 2018, he drove a strategic, structural and cultural change agenda within NSW Farmers.

He has also held senior marketing, commercial and sponsorship roles in the 'fast-moving consumer goods' industry and professional sport and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Hort Innovation Chairman Selwyn Snell said Matt was a formidable choice based on his long-standing commitment to Australian agriculture and his qualifications across agriculture science and marketing.

"Mr Brand has a solid track record of strong agricultural organisational leadership and driving a strategic change agenda - these attributes made Mr Brand an excellent choice to lead Hort Innovation into the next phase of its exciting future," he said.

"Mr Brand has made an outstanding contribution while heading up NSW Farmers, repositioning the company to reflect a more modern-day approach to a member-based organisation.

"I look forward to welcoming him formally to the role when he takes office early in September this year."

Sally Holmes, Executive Head of Governance and Risk and Company Secretary, will take on Acting CEO responsibilities from July 9, during the interim period before Matt formally begins his new role. 



## Passion for sports leads to passion for turf



A passion for producing and maintaining quality turf on sports fields has earned 23-year-old **Mark Patterson-Hill** the title of Sports Turf Australia Graduate of the Year for 2018.

The awards, run by Sports Turf Australia in conjunction with awards sponsor Toro, recognise the efforts of young members of the sports turf community who are working their way towards being the next generation of natural turf promoters.

This year, it was Mark's passion for wanting to create quality turf for sports fields that lead the judges to giving him the national award, after he took home the New South Wales state award for apprentice of the year.

Working for HG Sports Turf as the company's New South Wales turf farm operations manager based in Windsor, Mark's passion for a good quality sports field surface was ignited back when he was a sports-playing teenager.

"I was always playing sport when I was younger, playing soccer and cricket, so I knew playing on a good turf field was a good thing," he said.

While playing on a turf field was something Mark enjoyed, working on one was a far cry from his suburban upbringing.

In fact, he almost fell into the industry by accident, taking on a casual greenskeeping job locally after he finished school looking after cricket and rugby league fields.

Mark's formal training in turf management began with an apprenticeship with Sports Turf Specialists (STS) in 2014 and education through Ryde TAFE from 2015 to 2017, and it was Ryde TAFE who put him forward for the award.

In his time at STS, he worked with HG Sports Turf in a sub-contracting capacity with STS helping HG to complete some of its biggest international sports turf projects, including stadiums in Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.

Mark began working with HG Sports Turf in 2017 when he completed his studies and is now responsible for preparing, establishing and maintaining ready to play sports turf from the company's newly established NSW base.

This includes preparing turf solutions for ANZ stadium, Newcastle stadium, the soon to be opened Western Sydney Stadium at Paramatta.

"It's a pretty niche market that we work in but working with a company like HG Sports Turf who are the market leaders brings great experiences," he said.


*... it was Mark's passion for wanting to create quality turf for sports fields that lead the judges to giving him the national award, after he took home the New South Wales state award for apprentice of the year.*

The farm operations in Windsor are small compared to other turf farms in the region at just two hectares, but Mark and two other employees, are responsible for tending to the turf there like it was a top-level stadium.

"The farm at Windsor is kept in meticulous condition like any stadium sports field, so it's ready to be harvested and installed whenever a stadium needs it," he said.

Mark's prize for winning the national award is a trip to the US next year as a guest of Toro.

The whistle-stop tour will take in Toro's manufacturing facilities, and a number of large scale gridiron and baseball stadiums.

"It will be good to see where the gear we use come from and how its made, and then see how its used over there on different sports fields and how that compares to how we do things over here," Mark said. 



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For further information on turf types, site preparation, installation and ongoing turf maintenance for your next project, contact AusGAP on **1300 287 599** or go on line to [www.ausgap.com.au](http://www.ausgap.com.au).

## Understanding and responding to an industry crisis



Just what risks are there to the turf industry and could any of them develop into an industry-wide crisis that needs management? **Liz Mecham** reports on the project and training undertaken this year to ensure the industry is prepared in the event of a crisis.

Just how would the turf industry respond if a crisis crippled production and swept through social media or the general public like viral wildfire?

And just what are the risks in the turf industry of this actually happening and the industry dealing with such a crisis?

These questions were just some of those posed as part of the industry's *Crisis management awareness program* (TU16003) workshop, facilitated by project leader, Duncan Hall from Biologic.

The training workshop was held in Brisbane in April and included representatives from the State bodies, Turf Australia board members and staff.

It followed on from an industry survey completed by growers, and on-farm visits by Duncan, completed earlier this year.

"The project aims to develop a crisis management response plan for the industry, which is essentially a broadly agreed approach, and the process for when a crisis befalls the industry," he said.

"While there cannot be a step by step approach that is the same for each and every instance, there can be a generally accepted model which guides the way in which a crisis is responded to."

Duncan said the key to successfully managing an industry issue or crisis was not only understanding the issue itself, but also having a good understanding of industry risks – those which are at high risk and likelihood of occurring, and those which are lower – before they occurred.

The training workshop in Brisbane included identifying some of those industry risks and explaining how the management of a crisis can determine how it impacts an industry.

*Above: Queensland Turf's Jim Vaughan is put in front of the video camera as part of the media training.*

*Inset: An assessment of the risks and their likelihood of occurring according to those at the training day, showing the differences in opinions about risk and likelihood.*

"The key with any risk assessment plan is that it identifies the known industry risks and it is continually assessed and reassessed," he said.


"It's the same with any industry crisis management plan – its no good sitting on a shelf, it needs to be regularly reviewed so that if and when a crisis occurs, all the information that plan is relevant and current.

"It's not possible to identify unknown risks, but by having a good management plan means it is easier to deal with and potentially minimises the damage of that crisis."

### KEY POINTS:

- A Turf Industry Crisis Management Plan will be developed as part of the project
- \* The plan will assist and guide who, when, where and how the industry can respond to a crisis and identify risks which could become an industry crisis.

The workshop training also included media training, with Duncan putting those at the workshop on the spot in front of microphones and video cameras and creating scenarios where the industry might be called on to address an issue.

The project is now at a stage where an industry risk assessment and crisis management plan is being developed and will be given to Turf Australia to include all of the relevant information, including who key management staff are, internal and external contacts who would be needed in the event of a crisis. 





Australia's largest network of turf specialists

## Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show announces Presenting Partnership deal with Lawn Solutions Australia.

The Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show has announced that Lawn Solutions Australia, Australia's largest network of turf specialists, will become the Presenting Sponsor of the Show.

The Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show is an industry platform and a critical vehicle to drive and grow public interest in gardening, whilst fueling the industry and employment of its many small businesses.

The Show has established itself as the event to foster young garden and floral designers, displaying their creative talents, and provides professional development for training institutions and universities all over the country.

In relation to the new partnership, **Marcus Gale, IMG Events Director, said:** "We are delighted to amplify our partnership with Lawn Solutions Australia to the level of Presenting Partner. Lawn Solutions Australia has been present at the Show for many years and now becomes its most prominent partnership. Lawn Solutions Australia is leading the way in education, innovation and sustainability. These themes are a shared focus and the partnership will no doubt enable each party to further their achievements and highlights in this space. Together, we plan to enhance and grow the experience for all involved and for the 100,000 people that consistently attend the Show each autumn. Our Show is the largest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and this partnership with Lawn Solutions Australia will only continue to maintain and improve its position on Melbourne's highly acclaimed major event calendar."

Over the past few years, the Show has evolved to not only showcase design but to enhance its educational offering and inspire its attendees to achieve great results in their own lifestyles.

The Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show presented by Lawn Solutions Australia, will again be staged at the world heritage listed Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens between 27 – 31 March 2019. Now in its 24th year, the Show will continue to delight and inspire enthusiasts with a curated blend of living art and Australian lifestyle, as the country's leading landscape and floral designers demonstrate their skills and imagination through an array of innovative and creative designs.

"Lawn Solutions Australia has enjoyed being an exhibitor the Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show for many years, and we are very excited to now come on board as the official presenting partner. The Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show features the best landscape and floral talent from Australia and around the world, and Lawn Solutions Australia is proud to be a big part of that," said **Gavin Rogers, Director of Lawn Solutions Australia.**

**For further information please contact  
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Tess Fisher M 0433 057 600**

### About IMG

IMG is a global leader in sports, fashion, events and media, operating in more than 30 countries. The company manages some of the world's greatest sports figures and fashion icons; stages hundreds of live events and branded entertainment experiences annually; and is a leading independent producer and distributor of sports and entertainment media. IMG also specializes in sports training and league development, as well as marketing, media and licensing for brands, sports organizations and collegiate institutions. IMG is part of the Endeavor (formerly WME | IMG) network.

## RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

## Integrated approach to managing mites

The turf industry's latest research and development project into mites and the damage they do to turf will take a new look at how the pests can be managed. **Liz Mecham** spoke to the researchers in charge of the project.

**T**urf mites and the costly damage they inflict on turf has been an ongoing issue for some turf growers, but a new levy-funded project aims to cast light on whether an integrated pest management (IPM) approach might be the best option for growers.

And the new project, *Integrated Pest Management of phytophagous (plant-feeding) mites on turfgrass* (TU17003) headed up by IPM Technologies, will be looking to growers for the most appropriate research direction.

IPM Technologies, a small company of entomologists with over 25 years' experience in helping growers from a wide range of industries change to sustainable control of invertebrate pests, is aiming to have the research direction determined by what growers' needs are.

*IPM Technologies has an approach to solving pest problems and the development of IPM strategies that includes the collaboration of growers and consultants, which ensures that the solutions are practical and that the uptake of results is high ...*

Project lead, Jessica Page, (right) said the company approached industry pest issues with the aim of providing practical solutions to growers.

"IPM Technologies has an approach to solving pest problems and the development of IPM strategies that includes the collaboration of growers and consultants, which ensures that the solutions are practical and that the uptake of results is high," she said.

"The project aims to develop a sustainable control strategy for all invertebrate pests in turf, including mites.

"This will be an integrated pest management (IPM) strategy that can be modified to deal with different sets of pests in different regions," she said.

An IPM strategy is based on combining three types of control options:

- biological control which refers to insects and mites that eat pest species,
- cultural control which is any management technique such as variety, irrigation or weed control that either favours beneficial species or is less favourable to pests, and
- chemical control

Jessica said in an IPM strategy, chemicals are used to support the other control options by using IPM compatible products.

"Although the project is primarily aimed at mites in turf, any successful IPM strategy must include all pests to ensure that the control of one pest is not creating other pest problems," she said.

Some of this information already exists so this project is part research and part extension.

Jessica said at this stage, little was known about potential biological control or selective miticide options for the key mite pests in turfgrass.



### KEY POINTS:

- A new levy-funded project will investigate turf mites and their prevalence in the industry
- Workshops in NSW, WA and QLD will determine the needs of growers
- At the conclusion, the project will deliver practical management options for mite and pest control to growers and the industry.

"As such, the research part of the project will conduct trials to find out what options are available by testing commercially available mite predators as well as investigating the efficacy of some selective miticides."

A series of IPM workshops will be run in NSW, Queensland and WA for turf growers and advisors in coming months.

"The aim is that at the end of each workshop, participants will leave with a workable draft IPM strategy based on existing knowledge and currently available tools," Jessica said.

"The workshops will also highlight gaps that may require further research or chemical permits. Following the workshops anyone interested in trialling an IPM strategy on their farm will be provided with support for the duration of the project."

*More information about the workshops will be provided to growers through Turf Australia communications channels, however, growers keen to participate or gain more information about the project can contact Jessica directly by phoning 0408 308 809 or emailing [jessica@ipmtechnologies.com.au](mailto:jessica@ipmtechnologies.com.au)*



# Leading the way with Zoysia

NX<sup>GEN</sup> 18



It could be argued that when **Terry Anderlini** planted his first sods of Zoysia grass on his Cairns property almost 30 years ago, they were amongst the first commercial plantings of Zoysia in Australia.

**A** former agricultural researcher in the sugar industry, Terry took an interest in a number of untried species of Zoysia when he began to understand that they were highly sustainable, and that some species were native to the area, having been collected by the Brisbane Botanic Gardens more than 100 years before.

The farm had been in Terry's family for 67 years growing sugarcane and when he returned from a stint working for a bio tech company in the US, in 1989 the transition to a turf farm began.

Now Terry, his wife Robyn, and three of their four sons, are all involved with the turf industry in some capacity and operate Tropical Lawns on the original family farm, and three other properties in the local area, and continue to push the boundaries on variety selection to improve them.

The Anderlinis now have two of their sons – Craig and Troy – managing the farm and sportsfield projects, while another son, Mark, has an erosion control and turf installation business in the local area.

Terry explained to the NxGen Forum tour group the evolution of the Zoysia varieties which had seen the farm now grow five different types of the grass – Zoysia Macrantha and Zoysia Matrella (the only two species of turf native to Australia), Zoysia Japonica, Zoysia Pacifica, and a hybrid variety (a combination of the Matrella and Japonica species).

When he began growing turf varieties, Terry trialed a number of them and noticed Zoysias generally required less fertiliser and were more salt tolerant, however, the plants were slow to establish when compared to other turf species.

"The challenge was to find a zoysia that grows fast enough to make money but stays low in its growth," Terry said.

*The challenge was to find a zoysia that grows fast enough to make money but stays low in its growth ... When first planted, Zoysias grow slowly, but once a good rhizome system has established, especially in subsequent crops, re-growth is much quicker.*

"When first planted, Zoysias grow slowly, but once a good rhizome system has established, especially in subsequent crops, re-growth is much quicker.

"It also requires fewer inputs compared to other turf, like most native plants its not a big fan of fertiliser (phosphorus) so it grows in our climate with just water and maybe a little bit of nitrogen," he said.

The farms also have extensive areas of a Broadleaf Carpetgrass locally known as buffalo, a very tropical grass which thrives in the local area.

"Carpet grass is the lazy man's lawn," Terry said.

Basically it only needs fertilising once/year, and mowing eight months of the year.

"It doesn't have some qualities of other species like good drought tolerance, it is quick to dry out in August ... after winter it looks dead! But when the monsoon rains arrive, it greens up and runs quickly. Hardly anyone bothers to water it



## GROWER SNAPSHOT:

Grower: Tropical Lawns, Cairns

Owners: Terry and Robyn Anderlini

Varieties: Five varieties of Zoysia grasses, Tropika blue couch, Greenlees Park couch and carpet grass

Markets: Domestic residential sales and commercial sales – sports field establishment and golf courses, growing-in contracts for local government, landscaping and erosion control.

in the dry times, for those people it is a nil or very low water use lawn.

"In the wet season it grows an inch a day, is easy to mow, can be cut low, it performs well in the shade, and out-competes weeds."

"There is a big learning curve with producing sod that harvests well, it requires careful management of each stage of growth. Competition keeps the price low, and a few farms have closed the doors trying to cut prices of carpetgrass.

Carpetgrass is the standard in the wet tropics on clay based soils, and easily the most popular, which Terry said makes selling higher priced species more difficult.

With a small domestic market for turf farms in the Cairns local area, with only two farms on the coastal fringe and two on the Atherton tablelands, the Anderlinis have moved into sports field establishment and growing in contracts for local councils to supplement their business.

Terry said irrespective of the the varieties grown over Tropical Lawns' 65 hectares (160 acres) of turf on four farms, customer education was one of the biggest factors in their business.

"Every grass has its place, its just finding the right variety for each situation," Terry said.

Tropical Lawns turf finds its right place in a very broad geographical area, with turf installed from as far north as the Torres Strait and Cape York, and as far south as golf courses in Sydney.

"Our biggest challenge with growing turf is the seasonal conditions in the local area," Terry said.

The farms this year have already received eye watering rainfall figures – 450 millimetres in January, 400mm in February and 1200mm in March.

"Sometimes rainfall can exceed 100mm in an hour and then it pours out of the surrounding hills into the rivers. We are farming well drained soils which allow us to still supply turf year-round – if the customers can do their prep-work, we can usually harvest," Terry said. ☺

Above: The Anderlini family (left to right): Craig, Troy, Robyn, Neil and Terry.

Below: Robyn (top) and Terry Anderlini share their knowledge and experience with delegates attending NxGen18.





# From herbs to turf thanks to a cyclone



When **Melissa and Michael Denney** bought their farm at Cairns in 2002, there was just a small area of turf on what was a horse stabling and agistment property.

The turf was a sideline income generator next to their main business of growing potted herbs, under the brand Simply Herbs, which were supplied to major supermarket chains.

That was until Cyclone Larry decimated their greenhouses and herb stocks in March 2006. It left them with no power or water for three weeks, and the pressure of a supermarket deadline to have herbs back on shelves within one month of the catastrophic event.

"It was then that that we began to look at turf as a full-time business option," Melissa said.

Now, Harden Park Lawns is a turf business outright, growing 30 hectares of turf which is sent out to customers in a massive 800,000 square kilometre delivery zone.

The Cairns property is also the trial location for varieties being tested by the Lawn Solutions Australia group, a group which the Denney's joined after gaining a licence to grow the Sir Walter Buffalo variety in 2006.

## GROWER SNAPSHOT:

Grower: Harden Park Lawns, Cairns

Owners: Michael and Melissa Denney

Varieties: Sir Walter Buffalo DNA Certified, Sir Grange Zoyzia and Broadleaf Carpet Grass

Markets: Commercial and residential turf sales with a delivery zone of 800,000 square kilometres across Queensland, islands of the Great Barrier Reef and the Torres Strait.

The step from herbs to turf wasn't a big one considering Michael had a background in turf farm management, but the reality of turf being their main source of income following the cyclone had some physical and mechanical challenges.

Because it had been a side-business, there was no large scale machinery, Melissa told the visitors as part of the NxGen Forum farm tour.

"We hand rolled and hand stacked one metre lengths of turf while the turf was cut by a walk behind cutter," she said.

The development of the business has seen it double in size from those early beginnings, and Melissa said they were proud of the product and service they delivered to customers around Queensland and the adjoining tropical areas.

Michael said the challenges of growing and delivering turf to such an expansive area meant they had to overcome some challenges.

"Everyone has their challenges with turf growing, for us its things like dealing with three metres of rain a year, and the environmental challenges of growing turf in an environmentally sensitive area alongside the Great Barrier Reef where we can have no run-off from the farm.

"But we have also had to overcome the challenge of delivering turf in the heat and ensuring it arrives in good condition to customers a long way away."

This has included changing from icing turf for long-haul deliveries, to paying closer attention to moisture levels of turf when it was harvested prior to delivery.

"We used to go through a tonne of ice a day, and it just wasn't sustainable," Michael said.

"We will still ice turf when we are sending it to Torres Strait because that's a seven day trip to get the turf there.

"But now for deliveries within 1250 kilometres, we harvest the turf with the bare minimum levels of moisture required for harvest and we make sure there are absolutely no clippings on the turf.

"It's been a bit trial and error, and we have had to change our management a bit in terms of irrigating at the right time, using a zero

turn mower which blows the clippings off the turf ... but it's meant we can now send turf with carriers over 1200km per week and be confident it arrives in good condition."

The Denney's farm is now almost completely covered by turf, surrounded by sugar cane farms, which they use to their soil's benefits, and they have managed to overcome many of the production issues their local environment throws at them.

*Everyone has their challenges with turf growing, for us its things like dealing with three metres of rain a year, and the environmental challenges of growing turf in an environmentally sensitive area alongside the Great Barrier Reef ...*

"We use the mill mud – a waste product from the sugar cane industry – to replace the top soil after on our turf areas," Michael said.

"We use pivots to irrigate the turf (from a bore using four megalitres per hectare annually) to make sure we are efficient users of water when we need to be, but then we have three metres of rain so we can't get on the paddocks to harvest for three months of the year during the wet season.

"Also, with that much rain, we find pre-emergent is not always effective, during the wet season," Michael said.

"After the wet, we use a strong post-emergent program followed by a new pre-emergent program." ☞



Above: Melissa and Michael Denney of Harden Park Lawns.

Opposite: NxGen 2018 delegates inspect the Harden Park Lawns - LSA trial plots with an example of the farm's use of 'mill mud' in the background.

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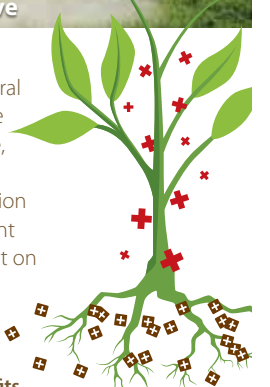
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When an initiative to increase the amount of urban green space is being promoted, it cannot exclude turf in the discussion.

And including turf and its value within public open spaces and urban areas is being promoted by many of the speakers who have taken the stage as part of the Green Light tour.

The Green Light has been a five-stop national tour conducted to build capacity in local councils by sharing the latest policy updates, best-practice case studies and up to date research on greening.

This has included may councils identifying turf as a key element in the reducing urban heat, increasing the green space, and the liveability of urban communities.

Almost 400 people have attended the events held in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Sydney.

Turf growers can see how the industry was promoted by reading through the presentations at the events, available to download online.

Growers can take out information about how local government is planning green space, projects which have successfully delivered additional green space using turf and trees, and understand how the process for its development is being undertaken.

For more information and to download the presentations from the tour go to: <http://202020vision.com.au/help-hub/green-light-tour/>



KEY POINTS:

- The 202020 initiative aims to increase the amount of green space in cities by 20 per cent by 2020
- The initiative is supported by Hort Innovation through the Hort Frontiers Green Cities Fund
- Turf's value in urban space is being highlighted by a number of keynote speakers



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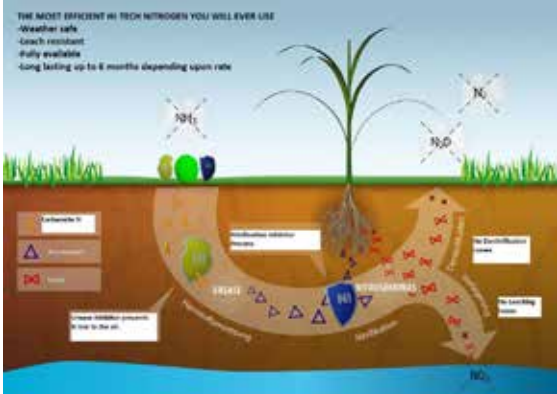
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# TURFTALK

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## VICTORIA



### New turf transforms schools

The success of the Victorian Schools Garden Awards putting more natural turf into schools has continued with the most recent announcement of Turf Establishment Grant winners.

The Awards, which deliver schools grants for products early in the year and awards with products in the second half of the year, are run by the Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria.

The 2018 winners of the turf establishment grant supplied by Coolabah Turf has just been announced as Toolern Vale and District Primary School.

In an example of how the turf can transform the recipient school, last year's winners of the turf establishment grant, Northside Christian College in Bundoora, had their turf delivered and installed in December, by last year's award supposers, StrathAyr Instant Lawn (above and below).

An eager group of Year 7 students gave up a day of their holidays to come and help lay 300m<sup>2</sup> of instant turf in a number of areas of the College's grounds.

The grass is now well established and has brightened up the College. Students and staff are enjoying some much more usable and lush areas.

The Victorian Schools Garden Awards (VSGA) recognise the importance and value of gardens and outdoor spaces in progressive modern education.

Established by Paul Crowe OAM and the late Kevin Heinze in 1977, the Victorian Schools Garden Awards have a long history of bringing the joy of gardens and gardening to school aged children.

Held annually, the Awards program recognises and rewards the achievements of students and school communities in their school gardens. A review of the VGSA program in 2014 led to the introduction of a Grants program which is held in tandem with the Awards program.

The Grants program is designed to encourage school to start new gardens and provides funding towards school's garden projects.

The Awards and Grants programs are open to all State Government, Catholic and Independent Schools.

Entries to the Awards close on the Friday, September 7, 2018. More information is available at [www.schoolsgardenawards.org.au](http://www.schoolsgardenawards.org.au)

For more information contact David Reid T: (03) 9576 0599



Before



After



# TURFTALK

INFORMATION FROM YOUR STATE TURF INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

## QUEENSLAND



### Industry projects, biosecurity and frosts in Queensland

It is exciting that the Turf Queensland website has been finalised and is now up and running at [www.qtpa.com.au](http://www.qtpa.com.au).

The website includes the following landing pages: homepage, about us, knowledge portal, accreditation, project page and members directory. The members directory has been designed to enable each member to modify it for their business through appropriate protocols and passwords.

The *Rural Water Use Efficiency* project has been completed to June 2018. The project highlighted and confirmed many of the critical areas surrounding turf production in the state of Queensland. This could not have occurred without the assistance of the Queensland government.

**The Rural Water Use Efficiency project has been completed to June 2018. The project highlighted and confirmed many of the critical areas surrounding turf production in the state of Queensland.**

The project has highlighted the ability to improve water and energy efficiencies, productivity and waste reduction improvements as well as confirming the amount of turf grass produced in state along with the annual GDP.

An environmental project idea has been provided to the Queensland government for their consideration that includes the use of the Australian Standard for erosion control installation utilising turfgrass as well as the development of a standard specification for the use of tenderers and specifies particular landscape architects and regional council engineers.



With winter upon us and frosts (above) occurring turfgrass production has slowed considerably resulting in shortages across the country. Queensland even with normal weather it is currently no different with unusual frost and cold levels being received – growers should be beware of shortages and plan ahead.

Growers should also be aware of biosecurity issues impacting the state, with the red imported fire ants in south-east Queensland and the yellow crazy ants in North Queensland. Turf producers and installers are the eyes and ears on the ground and Biosecurity Queensland has



asked for their assistance in identifying any new potential outbreaks.

The Turf Queensland Accreditation Program (TAP) continues to receive new members and renewals. It is pleasing to note that TAP is being specified by many regional councils.

Turf Queensland also held its first regional board meeting in Cairns in June 2018 with excellent results and attendance.

For further information on the above projects visit [www.qtpa.com.au](http://www.qtpa.com.au) or contact Jim Vaughan M: 0407 131 025 or E: [jim@qtpa.com.au](mailto:jim@qtpa.com.au)

## NEW SOUTH WALES



### New face for Turf NSW

Turf New South Wales has a new face heading up grower extension activities, however, it is not a new face to many.

Matthew Plunkett (right) has recently been announced as the industry development officer (IDO) for NSW turf growers.

Matt is well known and respected by many growers through his work with Greater Sydney Local Land Services and also in his role on the Turf NSW Committee.

In a change from previous IDO appointments, TA and Turf NSW have come to a collaborative arrangement where Matt will be employed by Turf Australia in a casual capacity.

In making the announcement, both organisations acknowledged the expertise and experience Matt will bring to the turf industry, and the valuable asset his knowledge of and connections in the agricultural and horticultural industries will be.

Matt said he is excited to be working closely with turf growers in NSW and is keen to engage with and support them in their pursuit of profitable and efficient turf production.

Matt can be contacted by emailing [info@turfnsw.com.au](mailto:info@turfnsw.com.au) or by phoning 0434 147 988.

The development of a safety rail for hand stack harvesters has continued with a design completed and testing undertaken.

Turf NSW and Turf Australia members will be able to access these designs for free, non-members will need to purchase the design or become members to access them.

For more information contact Matt Plunkett M: 0434 147 988 or E: [ido@nswturf.com.au](mailto:ido@nswturf.com.au)



## WESTERN AUSTRALIA



### Marketing plan to drive sales

Turfgrowers Association of Western Australia (TGAWA) members have made a decision to seek professional assistance in changing the image of lawns/turf following the continued downturn of the industry in Western Australia as a matter of urgency.

A marketing consultant will be selected by the TGAWA to undertake a proper analysis of the industry, competition and target market. The branding will be tailored specifically to speak directly to the identified target market, to ensure marketing and promotion activity can be more effective.

This industry analysis will include research and analysis to produce a marketing plan to achieve the desired outcome of a marketing planning sequence is that includes;

- Business positioning
- Competitor and industry analysis
- Target market identification
- Branding, point of difference/unique selling proposition
- Marketing considerations report
- Branding guide
- Marketing action plan
- Marketing initiatives implementation

Initially the gathering key information through a series of four face-to-face industry meetings will occur, this will be followed by further desktop research.

The information gathered, together with application of marketing

concepts and theories, will shape the marketing considerations report for review/clarification by key stakeholders. After that has been completed, a branding guide will be developed along with and a marketing action plan with detailed activity for a set period.

TGAWA members have also committed to the issue of synthetic turf in the urban landscape head on. This is an ongoing project that industry executive officer, Eva Ricci, will be working on over coming months.

On a lighter note, the Perth Garden Festival in April. TGAWA member, Graeme Ferguson, presented a well-received talk on best practice turf installation and maintenance, on behalf of the association. He also distributed a number of fliers advertising contact details for Association members.

Also, at this event, well-known and respected WA turf care specialist, Nick Bell, was honoured with a book on his life and contributions to the state's turf industry.

At 85 years old, Nick is still active in the industry. The TGAWA and the Sports Turf Association (WA) co-funded this book along with the Landscape Industries Association WA. It's a short read, 46 pages, and was developed as a historical record of an industry elder statesman. It is proposed that further, similar books will be developed over the coming years on other industry stalwarts.

For more information contact Eva Ricci M: 0422 120 990, T: (08) 9437 2180 or E: [eva.ricci@turfwa.com.au](mailto:eva.ricci@turfwa.com.au)



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# Collaboration, cooperation and contact with growers

**Hort  
Innovation**  
Strategic levy investment

**TURF  
FUND**



The recent WA grower dinner in Perth, a positive meeting with growers and representatives of the wider turf industry.

The last three months have seen a focus on bringing together the turf industry for Turf Australia's National Market Development Manager, **Jenny Zadro**. Here, she reports on the extensive collaborative work she has been undertaking to connect the different industry organisations with the growers.

There appears to be a consistent direction and message across many associations – collaboration and co-operation to achieve a louder voice to be heard by decision makers and develop stronger industry organisations.

Over the past few months of meeting with organisations within the turf and green space industry I have been enthused by the approach that groups are wanting to work together and acknowledging the benefits of a collaborative approach.

Recently I was invited to present to the members of Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA), informing them on the turf industry and the activities of Turf Australia. The response was positive and the AORA members were interested in TA's direction and strategies and importantly how the two organisations can work together.

## Challenges in the west

I was fortunate to spend a few days in Perth, meeting with growers and representatives of the wider turf industry. It was a very informative trip and my fabulous host Eva Ricci, Turfgrowers Association of Western Australia Industry Development Officer, planned an extensive itinerary of turf farms and a welcoming dinner.

This visit confirmed the challenges faced by WA turf growers compared to the eastern states, such as the soil composition and water issues. The turf industry in WA is a very collaborative and connected one and they are doing amazing work together to promote the industry. I would like to thank Eva and Turf WA for their hospitality and a great trip and particular thanks to Bec and Terry Sellick for hosting the dinner at Brookleigh Estate.

## Lawn Fanatics support

After a meeting with Dallas 'Rusty' Garton (pictured at right with Jenny Zadro left) from Australian Lawn Fanatics, it is clear that the work Rusty and Lenny Lawler do through their Facebook page is having a very positive impact and creating a large crew of people passionate about their lawns.

The Fanatics' next adventure is the Lawn Fest event to be held at GoTurf in Queensland on 20th October.

Turf Australia is pleased to support this event which will showcase trade stalls, educational talks and lots more, but the main focus will be on raising funds for Empower Golf.

## Researchers get together

Over 12 months ago, a discussion was held on the idea of turf researchers getting together to review the industry and what is research and funding is needed. Through the *Turf Industry National Market Development Project* (TU16002), Turf Australia was able to turn that idea into reality and on May 8 a group of our esteemed turf researchers meet in Sydney to discuss what they considered to be the top 5 issues for the industry. The process was very informative, and

everyone collaborated to determine the issues that they felt were the most crucial focus for the industry.

The 'top 5 issues' has been a theme of my discussions with many industry groups over the last few months.

Research so far indicates that the common focal points across the industry include:

- Collaboration – resources, knowledge, research & data, associations, a united industry;
- Employment and education – low wages, poor staff retention, struggling education system, lack of recognition as a profession;
- Industry best practices – Accreditation programs, standards, fit for purpose, reality vs perception;
- Pest, disease & weeds – Herbicide resistance, controls, research
- Sustainable industry – Water security, climate change, plant breeding, succession plan for future workers across all levels of the industry.

Collecting this information assists in determining what the wider turf industry believe are the key focus areas that need to be addressed. Further investigation will be undertaken to ascertain to best processes for managing these issues.

## Industry in good hands

This year we had some great quality applicants for the Green Industry Leadership Group and the selection process was challenging. This year's group includes: Dale Baertschiger, Lilydale Turf; Katrina Elsdon, Twin View Turf; Alex White, Dubbo Turf; Rachel Collier, Turf Australia; and Corey Clark, Turfcare. This year's participants have already undertaken the first face-to-face workshop session as part of this program.

The recent NxGen Forum held in Cairns confirmed the dedication to learning by the future of our industry. All delegates were engaging and enthusiastic, and this was confirmed by the positive feedback from the presenters at the event who spoke highly of the group. What is apparent is the passion the delegates have for the NxGen event and the benefit they get by connecting with one another each year.

## Strategic planning

A strategic planning session for Turf Australia (below) provided the board and industry representatives an opportunity to set goals for the future and reassess the key issues for the association. This plan will become a regular part of meetings to keep a clear direction for the industry body moving forward.

A new mission statement was developed "Turf Australia's mission is to support its members and lead a profitable sustainable natural turf grass industry".



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](mailto:jenny.zadro@turfaustralia.com.au)



## Engaging directly with clients

Continuing to review new opportunities for a business is vital in staying fresh and innovative. StrathAyr Instant Lawn in Victoria (above) introduced an event for landscapers to learn about their latest turf choices available as well as marketing ideas for business, and while on the day the weather wasn't kind, it was great to see the interest in the event and it was a very professional approach to engaging with clients.

## Leaders challenge coming up

Later this year there will be another opportunity for turf industry members wanting to challenge themselves and develop their leadership skills through the *Trail For Emerging Leaders* program. This project is funded through the Commonwealth Grant Agreement, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

This eight-day challenge-based program offers participants the opportunity to meet and work with a diverse range of people from different occupations, communities and backgrounds and to inspire each other and learn the value of collaboration and review the key issues affecting rural Australians. Further information can be found at the Turf Australia website.

## Politically correct

Recently I attended a Meet the Politicians seminar in Canberra and found the experience to be really informative. The group was given a behind the scenes look through the press gallery and we had several politicians and media experts presented on the day.

It was made quite apparent that the best way to connect with a politician was to address issues that impact their constituents, so it was very beneficial that I had the chance to meet Susan Templeman, the Federal Member for Macquarie, which happens to include the Hawkesbury area and many turf farms! A good contact for the future.

## Welcome to the industry

Welcome Matthew Plunkett to the role of industry development officer for New South Wales turf growers. Matt is a wealth of knowledge and highly respected within the turf and agricultural industry. He will be a great asset for Turf NSW and the turf industry. (see story page 28)

## 5 KEY ISSUES FROM INDUSTRY DISCUSSION:

- Collaboration
- Employment and education
- Industry best practices
- Pest, disease & weeds
- Sustainable industry



# Why natural turf is the best choice

**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**.

**Environmentally friendly** Turf improves water quality by filtering run-off water and it **reduces greenhouse gases** by absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen.

**Promotes wellbeing** Open greenspace **promotes physical exercise, improves mental health** and **enhances the sense of community**.

**Uses less water than you think** With many different turf types and varieties to choose from, **drought tolerant and water efficient options** are available. **Turf grows well using recycled water** and can be more water efficient by the incorporation of compost and/or water saving crystals.

**Natural** Turf self-replenishes, **is biodegradable**, provides a natural fire barrier, reduces noise and **can increase home values by up to 18%!**

**Cheaper than synthetic alternatives** 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)*

**Embrace the many benefits of natural turf!**

For more information, or contact details for your local professional turf grower, contact Turf Australia.

T: Turf Australia (02) 4588 5735

E: [admin@turfaustralia.com.au](mailto:admin@turfaustralia.com.au)

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