

# turf AUSTRALIA

## Green Space Alliance forms in Dubbo



A voice for green industries

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Telling turf's good news story

Turf's value continues to rise

Cross-industry collaboration increases

# CHAIR



*Turf industry representatives meet in Sydney*

## Welcome to 2020.

I would like to start off by saying our thoughts are with those who have been impacted by the bushfires that are devastating our country at the minute. I hope everyone is and remains to be, safe amidst this crisis.

As we bring in the New Year, it's a good opportunity for industry to take stock of where the turf industry is at and look at what's to come.

## Challenges

Across Australia, the dry weather and water restrictions continue to be a central issue for the turf industry. We are seeing general reluctance from consumers to lay turf due to cost and lack of water.

Our turf farms are starting to run out of water and are looking closer at what they're watering and how it can be limited. Without some good rains, this will significantly impact turf production and create supply challenges in several months' time.

With availability and accessibility to water continuing to have significant impact on the industry, Turf Australia's Market Development Manager, Jenny Zadro and I recently attended a meeting in Sydney, bringing together stakeholders from across Australia to unite over the issues facing our industry and develop an awareness campaign for the value of the wider turf industry plan to be presented to government.

With turf farms, sport fields and playgrounds often the first to suffer from water restrictions, it was great to see the cross-industry attendance from state industry body members and representatives from across the sporting industry. Although this is a work in progress, it was a great step towards taking a united approach to issues.

More details on this meeting and next steps appear in this edition of the magazine.

## Member Benefit Fund

During these particularly challenging times, I'd like to remind industry of the Member Benefit Fund.

Though I haven't heard of any turf farms directly affected by the current bushfire crisis, if there are farms, employees or extended family who have been, the Member Benefit Fund may be able to help.

This fund is made available to support Turf Australia industry members in times of need. If you would like to place a request, please contact Jenny Zadro at Turf Australia.

## What's to come?

There has been great buzz and excitement around the upcoming Women in Turf event, following the success of the inaugural event in 2019, which saw strong engagement and participation from women in the production industry.

The event will take place in Williamstown, Melbourne from Sunday, 9 February to Monday, 10 February.

I strongly encourage all women within the industry to attend the event this year. This is a great opportunity to bring together growers and wider industry professionals and stakeholders, to network and share their experiences and insights.

Finally, the Turf Australia Board is set to meet in late February, with plenty of items already on the agenda for discussion.

## Acknowledgements

I'd also like to take this opportunity to make a couple of acknowledgments.

First off, thank you to Jim Vaughan who recently resigned from his role as Executive Officer for Turf Queensland. Jim has been an integral member of the turf industry for nearly 20 years. We wish you all the best in your retirement Jim, and sincerely thank you for all the work you've done over the years. Jenny Zadro will take on the day to day responsibilities for Turf Queensland, until a more permanent plan can be made moving forward.

It cannot go without saying how integral our state peak industry body representatives are in advocating for the interests of our industry and providing practical support to growers in challenging conditions.

A huge thanks must also go to Jenny Zadro and the Turf Australia team for their tireless work advocating for our industry and members.

As we take on 2020, it's important that we take stock of our key priorities for the future of our industry. With changing environmental conditions and challenging water restrictions, we must continue to look for ways to better support growers with local water issues, keep the benefits of natural turf in people's mind, and explore drought resistant turf varieties.

Wishing everyone a safe and wet start to the New Year.



ROSS BOYLE, ROSEMOUNT TURF  
CHAIRMAN  
TURF AUSTRALIA

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# 2020 Women in Turf



Connect • Share • Grow

9-10th February 2020

Williamstown Victoria

## PROGRAM

Sun 9<sup>th</sup> Feb Welcome Dinner  
5:30pm Relaxed and fun evening to connect with the group

Mon 10<sup>th</sup> Feb Conference  
8:30am Tea & Coffee to start the day  
9am – 4pm Presentations and collaboration covering topics such as:

- Industry stories and experiences
- Health and wellbeing
- Communication
- Sales skills

**Jill Rigney, Right Mind International** will be a presenter at the 2020 Women in Turf Conference. Jill is a very engaging presenter and will focus on the challenges of communication with staff and family. Jill is experienced with the turf industry and specialises in engagement, self mastery, communication, conflict and negotiation.



## SUPPORTING REGIONAL GROWERS

Turf Australia is pleased to offer regional growers, travelling long distances to attend the event, an opportunity to apply for Women in Turf Support. The support program will offer a limited number of free registrations.

For more information, email [admin@turfaustralia.com.au](mailto:admin@turfaustralia.com.au)

## THE LOCATION

Williamstown is a coastal community just 30 minutes from Melbourne's CBD and 40 minutes from Tullamarine Airport. A great location to escape yet close enough to entertainment and shopping should you wish to extend your trip.

Pelicans Landing will host the event in the function room which overlooks the marina and a cityscape of Melbourne. Quest Apartments are connected to the venue and a special accommodation rate has been obtained.

## ACCOMMODATION

**Accommodation should be booked directly with Quest Apartments, Williamstown.**

*Quote the Turf Australia event while booking.*

Cost: \$219 for one bedroom apartment  
Contact: 03 9393 5300



## COST

Members: \$380 inc GST  
Non Members: \$435 inc GST

Registration included welcome dinner and catering for the duration of the conference.



## WHY ATTEND?

This event will provide you with a friendly, welcoming community of women working in the turf production industry who understand your turf world.

The event will provide you with practical tools to support you and your work.



## TO REGISTER

[www.turfaustralia.com.com/associationnews/women-in-turf-2020](http://www.turfaustralia.com.com/associationnews/women-in-turf-2020)

OR

Contact Nadene Conasch: [admin@turfaustralia.com.au](mailto:admin@turfaustralia.com.au)



... it was great to hear stories and connect with others who know exactly what they are experiencing and that they aren't alone.

**Women  
in Turf**   
Connect • Share • Grow

# Urban heat island project concludes

The levy-funded project *Conveying the benefits of living turf - mitigation of the urban heat island effect (TU18000)*, conducted by *Seed Consulting* has been completed with the successful delivery of a National Seminar Series presenting the findings to state and local governments, town planners and landscapers across the country.

The findings from the conclusion of this project are cause for concerns for stakeholders that are tasked with town planning and building cities that are comfortable, sustainable and safe.

With cities already heating up across the country, the finding that synthetic turf is raising surface temperatures by a further 11°C needs to be addressed and Dr. Mark Siebentritt, the project lead reported that there is a real appetite for the research.

“Whilst we are now at a point where the concept of the urban heat island is understood, stakeholders are still blown away by the magnitude of difference between living surfaces and synthetic grass or bitumen. They are hungry for this data and want to continue the conversation.”

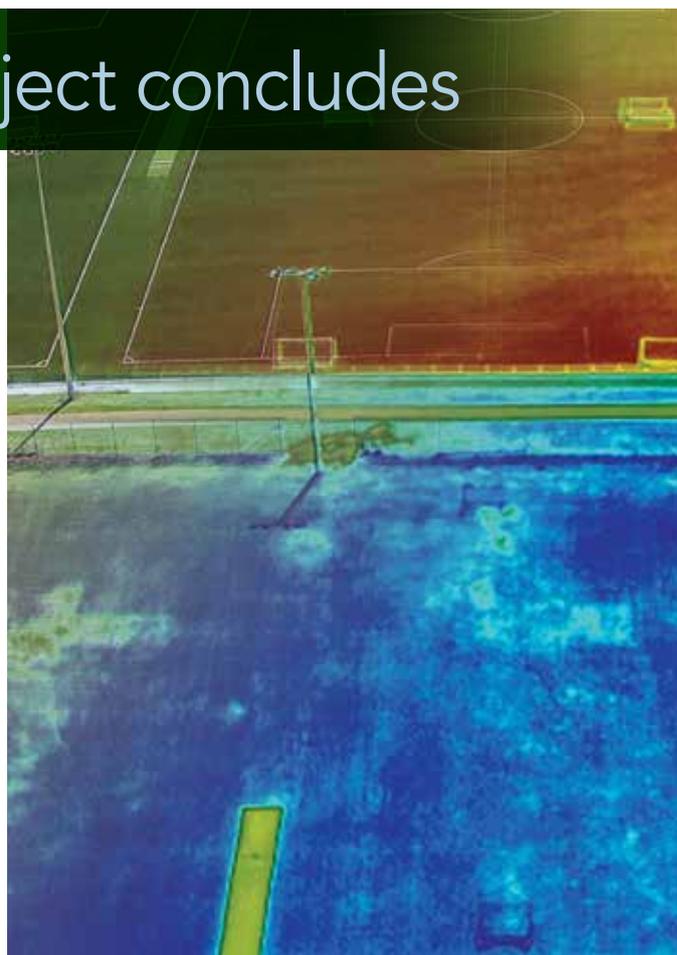
“Whilst we are now at a point where the concept of the urban heat island is understood, stakeholders are still blown away by the magnitude of difference between living surfaces and synthetic grass or bitumen. They are hungry for this data and want to continue the conversation.”

Embarking on a National Seminar Series, Dr Siebentritt traversed the country, holding talks in five cities to share the findings from the study. A cross-section of change makers attended each of the sessions including state and local government stakeholders, town planners, developers, landscapers and growers.

Interest in the findings by each of the stakeholders is incredibly high, with dozens of attendees committing to continuing the conversation and advocating for change.

## FAST FACTS:

- Sydney's two largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne have both recently recorded official temperatures over 47°C.
- In Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide it was found that the surface temperature of living turf was nearly 5°C cooler than regional averages, whereas bitumen was nearly 5°C warmer than average and synthetic turf nearly 11°C above average.
- Rubber infill used in many synthetic sporting fields can raise field temperature by up to 20 degrees above field temperature.



One of the core selling points of the findings is the simple fact that outside of their professional remit, attendees often had personal anecdotes of ways that the urban heat island was present in their personal lives – whether that be playing football on synthetic fields, or needing to hose down surfaces before letting their dogs or children outside.

According to Dr Siebentritt the heatwaves of the summer of 19/20 are a further reminder of the urgency of the situation.

“Despite our knowledge of what causes urban heat island we are still designing, building and extending cities in ways that produce hot cities, not cool cities. Decisions are being made today that will impact ourselves and our children in the future and condemn us to live in hotter cities.”

And while clearly both local and state governments have a major role to play in reducing the urban heat island effect, in terms of planning and development policy, individual households also have an incredibly important role to play.

“Households should be reminded that the decisions they make within the confines of their own properties have real impact on the temperature of the cities they inhabit. Homes surrounded by lawn are significantly cooler and that applies to the neighbours as well.”

With the conclusion of the project the green industries are now armed with data and information that clearly defines the role of turf in mitigating the urban heat island and all growers are encouraged to help share the findings and implore customers to consider their role in helping cool our cities. [@](#)

*Seed Consulting Services is an environment and sustainability consulting firm specialising in the technical, planning and engagement services needed to build liveable cities.*



# Telling turf's good news story

We know what makes turf so good. Every day we see the ways it enriches the lives of our children and pets as they play on the lawn. We admire, sometimes with jealousy, the neighbour's green, lush front yard and we love the feeling of calmness when we're surrounded by greenspace.

But how do we turn these warm feelings into cold hard truths that we can use in conversations with customers, decision makers and other stakeholders about the benefits of turf?

A levy-funded project, ***Economic, Social, and Environmental Benefits of the Turfgrass and Lawncare Industry*** (TU17006) has concluded and provides the facts and figures to help growers have these conversations.

Individuals, businesses and the wider community are all beneficiaries from the installation of turf. Ultimately, these benefits can be boiled down into five categories:

- The financial benefit achieved by not having to install and maintain pavement, asphalt and synthetic turf
- The environmental impact of the carbon dioxide removed from the air
- The mitigation of the urban heat island effect
- The increase in house value and rental returns associated with turf
- The social and health benefits that come with public turfed areas, whether it be a place for competitive sport or the local meeting place.

Another core output from the research was the development of a tool which breaks down the benefits down to the individual suburb level (in Greater Melbourne and Sydney). Having access to this level of detail enables both Turf Australia and individual growers to have targeted, pointed conversations that are relatable and relevant for customers and decision-making stakeholders.

### More turf means higher rents and higher house value

In Australia, there are many things we go crazy for. Each year, various sporting events bring the nation to a standstill, we love to rave about democracy sausages at election time and we will passionately advocate that we have the best coffee in the world.

But there's one thing that consistently dominates the media, as well as the typical barbeque conversation. One topic that holds a special place in the hearts and minds of most adult Australians. Our one true national obsession – talking about house prices.

And with homeowners obsessed with talking about the value of their home, it's important that landscapers are talking to them about turf. According to Hort Innovation, Australia's peak body for horticulture, having a natural turf lawn can boost property value by over \$100,000.

That finding is based on a survey of Raine & Horne agents, with respondents saying a nicely presented lawn could increase the value of a home by up to 20 per cent. Based on a median house price of \$519,000, this equates to an extra \$100,000 in value.



This project has corroborated these findings and extrapolated them to rental conditions. According to the research, homes with turfed lawns attract a market premium as they are desired for the benefits they provide.

The research, which is a strategic levy investment under the Hort Innovation Turf Fund, calculated the extra rent a property earns as a result of installing turf. This ranges from \$1.55 per square metre a year in Hobart up to \$4.45 per square metre a year in Sydney.

### A surface for the whole community

We all know that public turfed areas provide an amenity to the community. At one end of the spectrum, it provides an area for amateur athletes of all ages to train and play sport year-round. At the other end, it offers a soft, natural environment for dog walking, meeting with friends or simply a place for the community to read a book in the sun.

For the first time in Australia, work has been done to quantify this benefit. The researchers describe this as "Willingness to Pay", but this could roughly translate to the value that the community place on turfed areas.

As an example, the study has found that in Sydney, the public place a value of \$31.51 for every m<sup>2</sup> of turfed community sports field. At an average of 9000m<sup>2</sup> for a football field, the study tells us that the public value turfed sporting fields at approximately \$283,590.

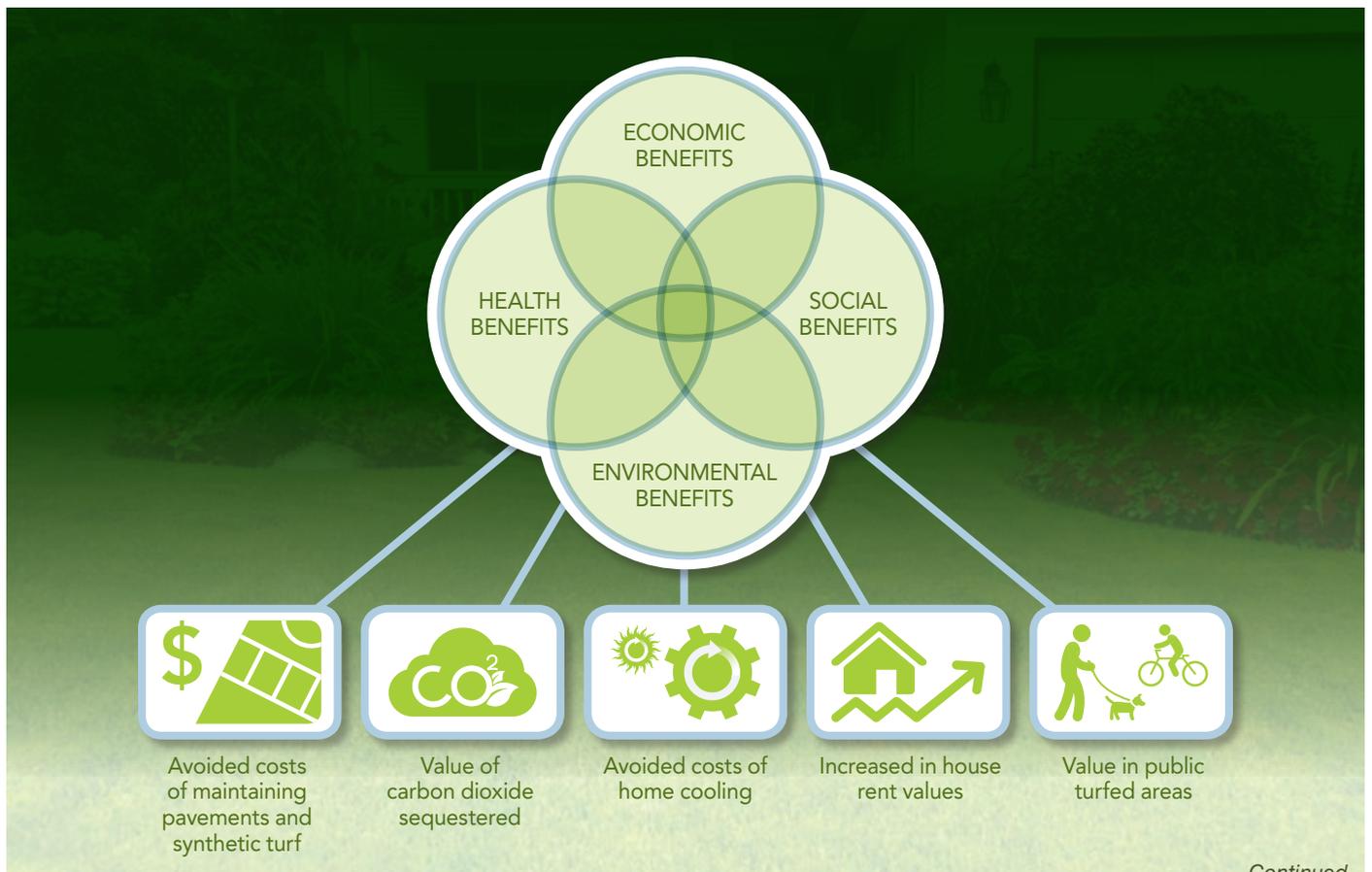
A quick drive around suburban Australia will tell you that's a lot of value to the community being created by the turf industry.

### But what about the environment?

Carbon dioxide emissions are a global issue, affecting almost every facet of the natural and human environment. It's the number one priority for many businesses, governments and even households. This study has used economic modelling to showcase the powerful role that turf can play and position the industry as an important player in improving environmental outcomes.

Turf has been proven to be a productive sequester of carbon dioxide. Previous research found that during the first 25-30 years, turf can be expected to sequester 0.34-1.4 tonnes of carbon per hectare per year.

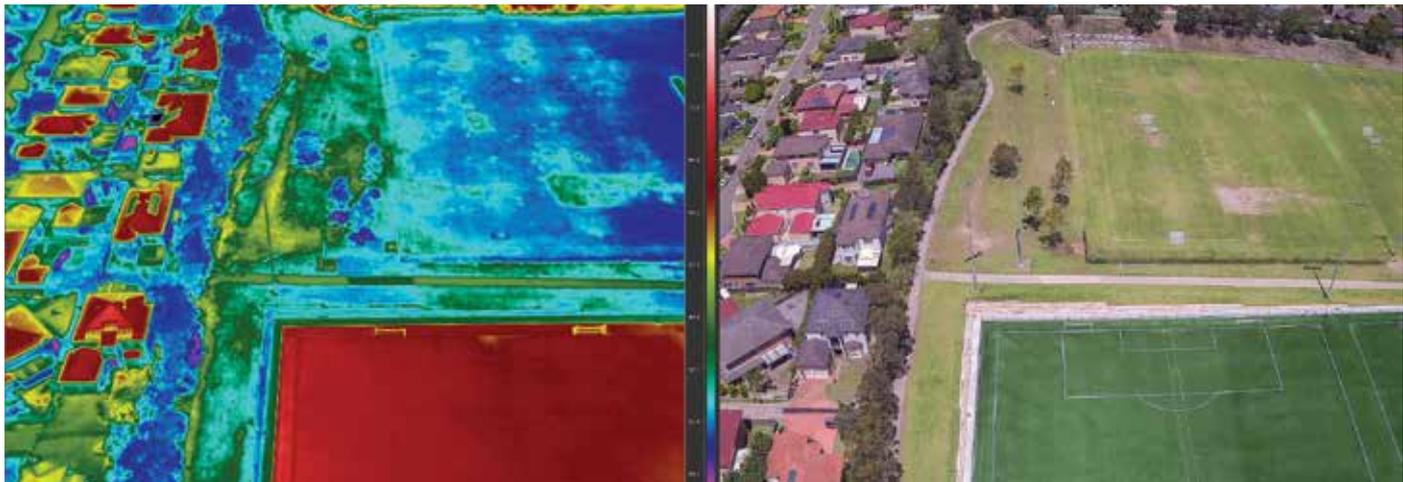
*Continued...*



*Continued...*

# RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

## Telling turf's good news story (continued)



Temperature difference between living and artificial turf

According to Sam Miller, project lead at Balmoral Group, the company responsible for delivering TU17006, it's important to put the impacts into a wider context.

"Given that the average car contributes about 4.5 metric tonnes of carbon a year, it's safe to say that the Australian turf industry is removing hundreds of cars off the road."

Jenny Zadro, Market Development Manager, Turf Australia, agreed and urged growers to share these positive stories.

"Whilst the contribution at an individual household level may be nominal, like all activities relating to climate and the environment – every bit counts and households, large businesses and government should be encouraged to leverage the positive environmental impact of turf."

### Urban heat island

We have covered the topic of the urban heat island effect in this magazine, through the levy-funded project *Mitigation of the urban heat island (TU1800)* and it's interesting to cross-reference some of the evidence that a lack of green space heats up our urban environments (see page 5) with tangible proof of the impact of that heat.

It's known that the impacts of urban heat islands go far beyond hot summers and sleepless nights. It is well established that extreme heat is a major cause of death, particularly for children younger than four and adults over 65. Those impacts can be hard to attribute solely to the urban heat island, but an easier conversation to have revolves around the financial impact.

Put simply, turf reduces the average temperature of the surrounding neighbourhood, reducing the need for people to resort to air conditioning, which saves them money.

Looking at the two biggest cities of Sydney and Melbourne and extrapolating the reduced need for cooling across the cities, \$1.4m and \$0.8m respectively is saved each year from turfing public parks.



### The Big Picture

The benefits of turf that have been quantified in this economic study become truly powerful when we aggregate them to demonstrate the positive financial impact that turf provides. Unfortunately, we were only able to accurately measure the aggregate impact for Greater Melbourne and Greater Sydney due to existing data on the total turf cover.

However, the insights from Melbourne and Sydney tell a truly impactful story.

In Melbourne, the total benefits of turf cover across each of the five benefit categories is a staggering \$6.02B per year. In Sydney, it is \$5.32B.

*These figures might not mean much to the average consumer, but they are significant values. As we build an arsenal of robust statistics and findings, we can begin to have conversations with stakeholders and decision makers that are based on fact, not feeling.*

According to Ms Zadro, these figures are invaluable ammunition for the industry, particularly when the role of green space is threatened by tightening water restrictions across much of the country.

"These figures might not mean much to the average consumer, but they are significant values. As we build an arsenal of robust statistics and findings, we can begin to have conversations with stakeholders and decision-makers that are based on fact, not feeling.

"Looking ahead, Turf Australia will continue to share datapoints from this robust research project to arm growers with the proof they need to demonstrate turf's good news story." 

### Additional resources

*Did you know that the findings uncovered in this report can be broken down by individual suburb? Leveraging a powerful data tool called Power BI, Balmoral Group developed a dashboard which allows individuals delve deeper into specific data points relevant for their location, and the specific benefit category.*

You can access this tool via the following URL:  
<https://www.balmoralgroup.us/turfau2019>  
(password is: TurfIndustryPBI)

Also available via QR Code >



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# Region in focus: The Kimberley



Derby Golf Course

**Eva Ricci**, WA Turf Industry Executive Officer, recently travelled north to visit Broome and the surrounding region. One of the most unique climatic regions in the world played host to a tour of some incredibly interesting sites including a very special golf course and a fantastic turf farm operation. We caught up with Eva to find out more.

If Western Australia was a sovereign country it would be the world's tenth largest and its sheer size is matched by its climatic and environmental diversity. From the fertile plains in the south, the tropical north, the vast, arid interior and its isolated cities, the state is a complex land.

According to Ms Ricci, it's the diversity that makes her role so interesting and rewarding.

"Working with growers from all corners of this great state is challenging but incredibly rewarding, each region comes with its own story but tied together with that unifying Western Australian spirit we all recognise here in the West."

Towards the end of 2019, Ms Ricci headed to Broome, in the state's Kimberley region. She travelled the area, meeting locals from the turf industry and learning about their daily challenges and understanding their refreshing perspectives on life.

One of the most fascinating components of the tour was the first-hand look at how various mutations of couch turf thrived in the region, as the grasses adapted to the unique heat of the Kimberley.

"In studying turf in public spaces in Broome and nearby Derby, we came across four different mutations of couch turf grasses. Some had long bamboo like nodes, growing in 50°C sunbaked clay pans, whereas on the Derby Golf Course greens we came across couch with multiple fine leaf nodes, tightly grouped together.

"We are keen to find out more about how these sub-species evolve, and I have taken one of the mutations back to Perth to see how it grows in the sandy soils in the South West."

The region is not without its own specific challenges too, with the False Spider Mite wreaking havoc on couch grasses in public spaces. Unlike other spider mites, this critter is big. It is visible to the naked eye and very difficult to control, becoming a significant issue in the region.

Ms Ricci also toured one of the most unique golf courses in the state, and a fantastic example of the way green space can unite a community.

The Derby Golf Course was the result of WA's Water Corporation needing to offload wastewater and was conceived and developed by a volunteer golf course committee.

**Working with growers from all corners of this great state is challenging but incredibly rewarding, each region comes with its own story but tied together with that unifying Western Australian spirit we all recognise here in the West.**

With an annual budget of just \$40,000 and a workforce composed entirely of volunteers, the fairways have not been fertilised since installation in 2003. However, as a result of carefully planned installation, the grass remains healthy and playable.

"The soil type for the course in Derby was altered, with learnings from the Broome Golf Course taken on board. Dune sands were used in Broome which led to algae growth issues. So, in Derby, local fine river sands were brought in and blended with Pindan red soils. The course is Pindan based, but there are patches of marsh grey, clay sands and even some pockets of gravel."

## Greenhills Turf Farm

Turf Growers WA's tour of the Kimberley region would not have been possible without the support of **Derren Greenhill** from **Greenhills Turf Farm**, who played the role of tour guide during the three-day visit.

Like many turf farms in regional areas, the success of Greenhills is the result of keen entrepreneurialism and an eye for growth.

Mr Greenhill (*below*) had embarked on a gap year of travel following the completion of an apprenticeship at Capel Golf Course in Bunbury. Three months after leaving his home in the state's South, Derren found himself in Broome and on the lookout for work.



The eye for opportunity kicked in when he noticed no-one had a cylinder mower in the city, so he bought one and started a lawn-mowing business, but it wasn't long before a simple lawn-mowing business expanded into a turf empire.

"It was clear from my short time in Broome that it was a town on the up and I knew that turf had a major role to play in the growth of the town, so I bought a block of land in the middle of town and used it as a turf farm. It looked like a pristine golf green and was the best advertising for the product I could have hoped for," Mr Greenhill said.

Soon enough, business was booming and Mr Greenhill expanded onto a new block of land to the north of the city. Mr Greenhill and his wife, Cher, ran the business incredibly well and were successful in winning numerous tenders over the years including for installation and maintenance of Port Hedland Golf Course, Broome Golf Course and Derby Golf Course.

Turf was being moved across the Pilbara with daily deliveries to Parabadoo, Newman, Marble Bar and Karratha and although the downturn in the mining boom slowed the business significantly, the farm continues to be successful today.

According to Ms Ricci, Turf Growers WA is incredibly proud to call the Greenhills one of their own.

"The Greenhills hold a valued and respected place in the local community. Recently Cher cut her long and much-loved hair off to raise funds for a friend who suffered from a significant health issue, whilst Derren is heavily involved with Aboriginal Corporations and the Kimberley Land Council. 🌱"

*"A sincere thank you for hosting us and we look forward to working closely with all our members in 2020."*

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# Value of Australian turf industry continues to grow

## AUSTRALIAN TURF INDUSTRY AT A GLANCE:



36,394,436 m<sup>2</sup>

Estimated turf production



\$243,858,209

Estimated farm gate value of turf



8.1

Average FTE employees per farm



\$237,133

Average revenue per FTE employee

It's no secret that it has been a challenging year for the turf industry. Macroeconomic conditions on the west coast continue to affect growers while the east coast deals with the worsening drought and subsequent water restrictions. But in a testament to the resilience of our growers, the value of the industry continues to increase.

The downward trend on the volume of turf production continued in 2019, with a 5% drop in production recorded. Despite 2018-19 recording a further 5% drop in turf production across the country, the overall value of the turf sold in Australia rose for the second consecutive year. This confirms that Australians are recognising the true value of turf and are willing to pay for it.

That's the headline finding from the second year of a levy-funded project *Turf Industry Statistics 2017-2018 to 2019-2020* (TU17005).

This important project aims to paint a picture of the state of the Australian turf production industry by surveying industry stakeholders. It highlights our successes and uncovers our challenges.

Turf Australia and the Strategic Industry Advisory Panel (SIAP) review the survey findings and insights uncovered each year to help shape the pipeline of levy-funded strategic research, development and marketing projects through the Hort Innovation Turf Fund.

Unfortunately, there was a drop in the number of respondents that submitted data to the survey and although we reached a volume that ensures the findings are still statistically viable, more respondents mean more robust data.

Jenny Zadro, Market Development Manager, Turf Australia is encouraging growers to prioritise participation in the survey next year.

"It's really important that we have a comprehensive picture of the state of our industry, and even more so when we're facing a number of challenges in production and dealing with a drop in volume.

"Having an accurate snapshot of these challenges means we will be better placed to develop resources and implement appropriate solutions but most of all it is imperative to have robust data to present to government authorities and decision makers on industry issues, such as water restrictions."

### The true value of turf

Many of the levy-funded projects undertaken by Turf Australia and service providers are centred around the concept of proving and demonstrating the true value of turf. Whether that be articulating the far-reaching benefits of living grass, exploring the urban heat island effect and its impact on our health or the positive impact a lawn has on house prices.

According to Ms Zadro, this study indicates these projects look to be working.

"Even though the volume of production has continued to trend downward over the last couple of years, total value of the industry based on revenue of our growers continues to increase. This tells us that Australian households, councils, and businesses are willing to pay more for a product which serves a functional purpose as well as plays an important part in their lives."

# Prices to rise despite tough year

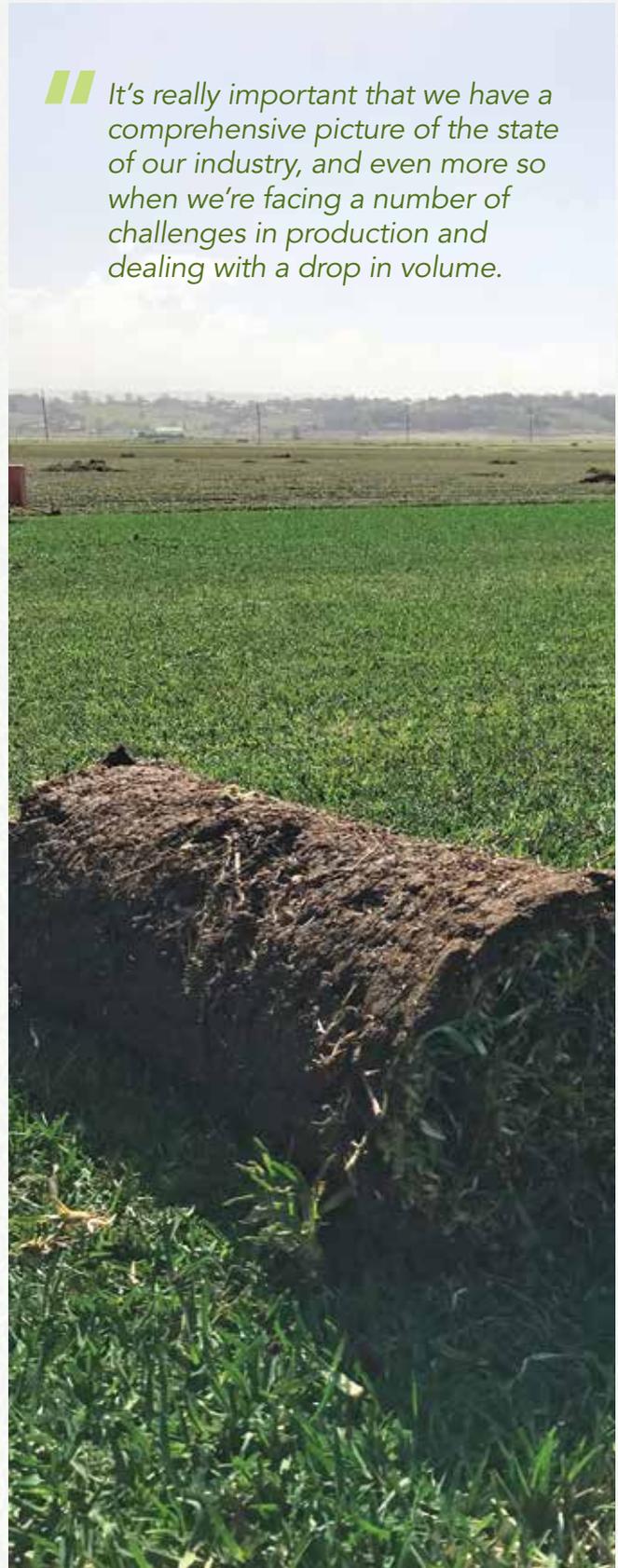
## Traditional varieties remain the most popular

Buffalo and couch grass remain the most popular breeds on-farm and with consumers, with kikuyu a close third. Together these three species represent 88% of all grass produced and sold in Australia. These staples of the Australian landscape continue to dominate market share, with buffalo and couch recording modest growths in production, and Zoysia production being flat, albeit with strong growth in Queensland and Victoria.

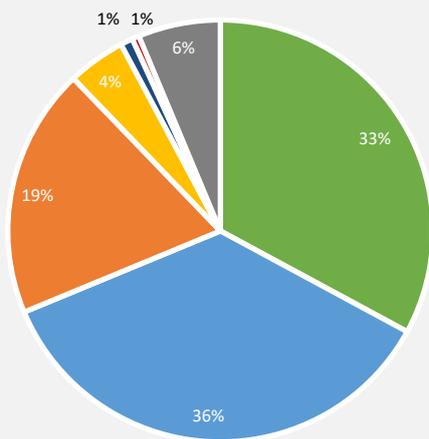
According to Ms Zadro this is evidence that as trends come and go, the traditional Australian lawn, park or field will always have a place in Australian hearts.

*Continued...*

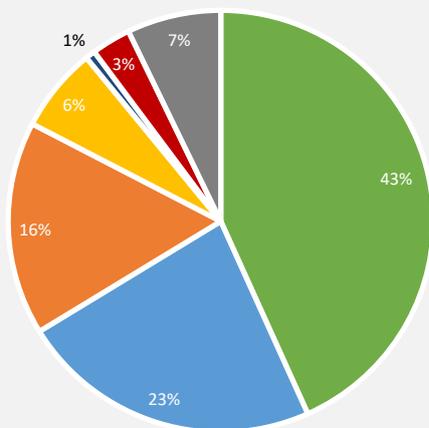
*It's really important that we have a comprehensive picture of the state of our industry, and even more so when we're facing a number of challenges in production and dealing with a drop in volume.*



Volume of turf produced by species



Value of turf produced by species



- Buffalo
- Couch / Hybrid Couch
- Kikuyu
- Zoysia
- Blue Couch (Tropical Grasses)
- Reinforced / Hybrid Sports Turf
- Other Specialty Grasses

Value of Australian turf industry continues to rise despite tough year (continued)

There has also been a 7% increase in the average wage in the turf industry, which given stagnant wage growth across the nation's economy is particularly pleasing. Our industry values its people and will always strive to ensure they are paid fairly.



"Despite the study telling us that turf production fell across the country, the popularity of buffalo and couch picked up the slack with production increasing nationally by 9% and 6% respectively. As drought resistant varieties, they continue to be the workhorse of the industry."

Our people story

According to the study, the Australian turf industry continues to invest in its people and for Ms Zadro, this sends a positive message to any young, talented professionals that may be considering a career in the turf industry.

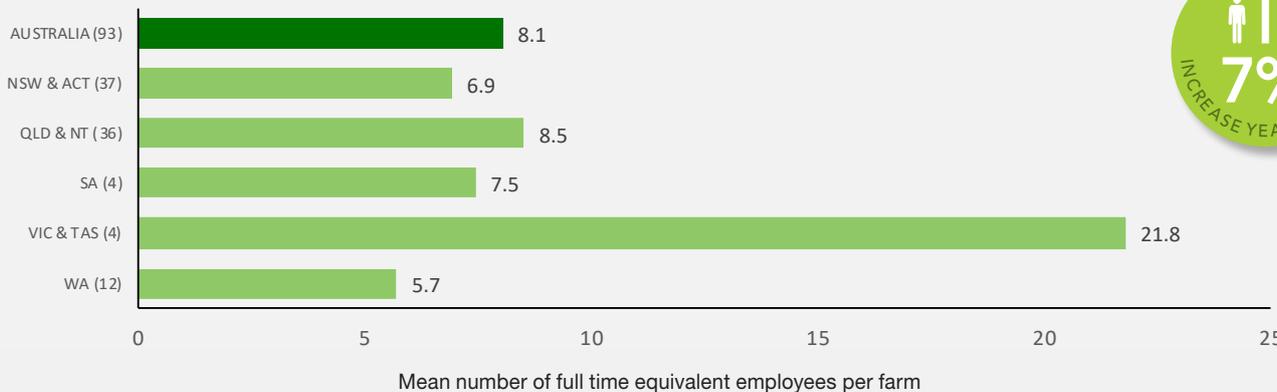
"While conditions have seen turf production drop slightly across the country, we have actually seen the number of average full time equivalent (FTE) employees per farm increase nationwide by 8%. This tells us that our employers see the value in continuing to hire top talent, and to retain their staff even if production levels have decreased slightly. Our industry values its people more than any other resource and so this is incredibly pleasing.

"There has also been a 7% increase in the average wage in the turf industry, which given stagnant wage growth across the nation's economy is particularly pleasing. Our industry values its people and will always strive to ensure they are paid fairly."

Looking to the future

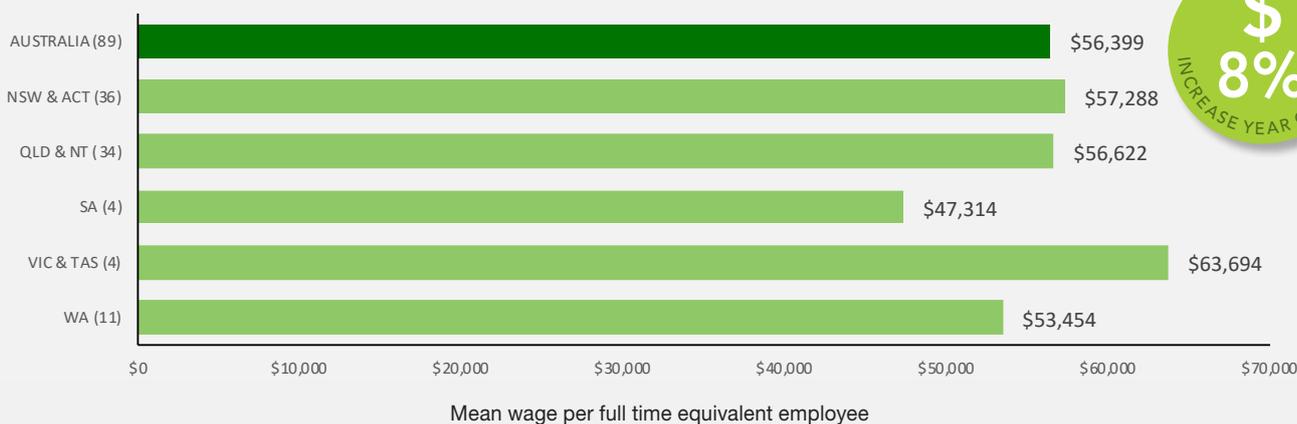
Turf growers were also surveyed about business and industry confidence, with the findings varying greatly from state to state. As with last year, the Western Australia industry is struggling, and this is reflected in the level of confidence that Western Australia growers have in the future of their businesses and the industry.

Average number of full time equivalent employees per farm



7% INCREASE YEAR ON YEAR

Average annual wage per full time equivalent employee per farm\*



8% INCREASE YEAR ON YEAR

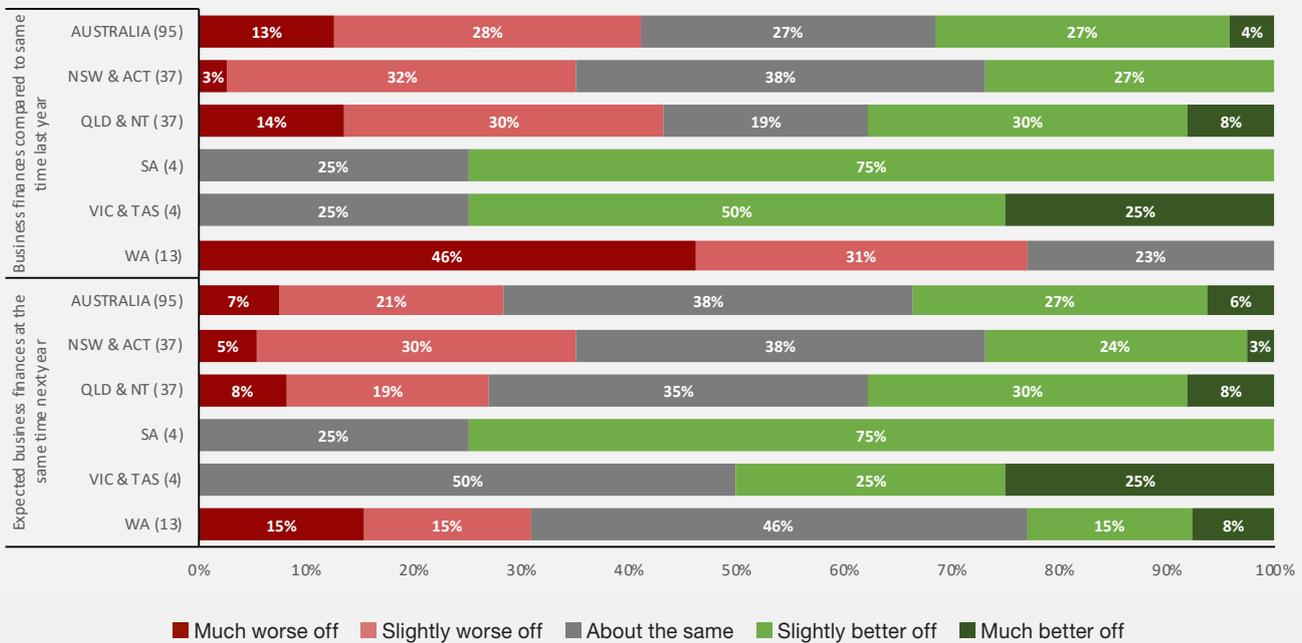
Ms Zadro reinforced that the Western Australia industry remains an important focus for Turf Australia.

“Turf Australia is committed to working with each of the state associations on the issues that are unique to the regions. Eva Ricci is doing a tremendous job in supporting our industry in Western Australia and telling the good turf story. Turf Australia continues to support Eva and we remain dedicated to the industry in the West and are confident that industry growth will return.”

Despite trying climatic conditions, growers in the east of the country remain mostly optimistic about the future of the industry. Growers in the Northern Territory, Queensland, NSW and ACT collectively hold a fairly neutral view on the future growth prospects of the industry, whereas the most positive outlook is seen in the southern states of South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania.



### Current and future confidence in turf business



Victoria in particular has been a bright spot with high demand for turf leading to production increases across traditional species like buffalo, couch and zoysia. The state has reported a decline in other speciality grasses, despite the overall strength of the market.

According to Ms Zadro, the insights from this report will be vital in shaping the future strategy for the industry.

“They say to really understand where you are headed, you need to understand where you are and where you’ve been. By regularly taking stock of the industry we have been able to identify the areas that we need to focus on moving forward and make decisions accordingly.

“Thank you to all the growers who participated this year, and again we encourage other growers to take part next year. The more growers that participate, the more accurate the findings, and more accurate findings will better influence our strategic direction from 2021 and beyond.”

*Turf Australia has developed a snapshot report which includes all the findings from the statistics report. To download the full snapshot report visit the Turf Australia website or contact Jenny Zadro at [jenny.zadro@turfaustralia.com.au](mailto:jenny.zadro@turfaustralia.com.au)*

“They say to really understand where you are headed, you need to understand where you are and where you’ve been. By regularly taking stock of the industry we have been able to identify the areas that we need to focus on moving forward and make decisions accordingly.”



# Hort Innovation launches new Extension & Adoption Framework

To support the future growth of the entire horticulture industry, Hort Innovation is constantly refining business practices to service growers and the industries they work in.

At the recent Hort Innovation Annual General Meeting, Dr Anthony Kachenko, General Manager, Extension & Adoption Hort Innovation outlined a new Extension & Adoption initiative to ensure communications and extension activities support business decisions and enhance on-farm practice.

Research is only as good as the communications and extension activities that support it but recent feedback from levy payers across industries was that more coordination and resources are needed to ensure that growers benefit from research through tangible and implementable outcomes.

*/// This new approach to extension and adoption is designed to make sure that communicating the outcomes of research reaches each and every grower.*

As a result, Hort Innovation has created the Extension & Adoption (E&A) Framework to act as a roadmap to ensure growers are getting the maximum value for their levy dollars. To support this framework, a dedicated E&A unit has been created within Hort Innovation to support current researchers and service providers to ensure that good theoretical research makes its way to on-farm practice change.

The unit will enhance the coordination, communication and application of research and development outcomes and will include a team of regional coordinators, who will work in the regions. Unlike other Hort Innovation staff, these employees will focus on regions of Australia rather than on specific funds.

These new E&A coordinators will aim to link growers and research providers and build a collaborative approach to solving on-farm problems that makes best use of existing and ongoing research. The coordinators will have a 'two-way' function. They will be out in the field, working directly with growers to build tailored E&A strategies as well as listen to growers to identify challenges and issues that require cross-industry support.

Dr Kachenko told attendees of a workshop following the AGM in Sydney that the new E&A initiative is all about making sure that levy payers are getting the most value out of their investments.

"Hort Innovation invests in research and development in order to ensure all our horticulture industries are as productive and profitable as they can possibly be. This new approach to extension and adoption is designed to make sure that communicating the outcomes of research reaches each and every grower, that the information is relevant and timely, and that the pathway to on-farm practice change is clear and defined." 

*Want more information about the Hort Innovation Extension & Adoption Framework and how it applies to you? Head to [www.horticulture.com.au/extension](http://www.horticulture.com.au/extension)*

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## Another successful WA Lawn Expo

November saw Western Australians flock to the WA Lawn Expo in good numbers for the second consecutive year. This expo is an event coordinated and run by **Turf Growers Association Western Australia** (TGAWA) and provides an opportunity for homeowners to meet turf experts, get advice on how to look after their lawns and check out the latest equipment. Turf Australia caught up with **Eva Ricci**, Executive Officer of TGAWA to find out more.

The WA Lawn Expo launched in 2018 to connect WA homeowners with experts in the field and showcase the latest innovations available to consumers. According to Eva Ricci, despite the continuing tough conditions, locals were still enthusiastic about their lawns.

“It was great to meet local homeowners all of whom take incredible pride in their lawns. Water efficiency was naturally a focus for many of the conversations and it was good to be able to share some of the water efficient innovations available to them, whether it be in smart irrigation systems or drought resistant turf.”

Despite some ominous weather earlier in the day, the sun came out as the event kicked into gear as families wandered the grounds of South Metropolitan TAFE mingling with experts and exhibitors and sharing their own perspectives on turf.

Education was a major focus of the day and several information sessions took place under the gazebo. Whether it be lessons on which turf to install where, best practice for fertilisation or efficient irrigation methods, each attendee left with a little bit more turf knowledge than when they arrived.

The theme of the event was ‘Do something today that your future self will thank you for’, which in the view of Ms Ricci was particularly poignant, especially given some of the difficult conditions throughout the state.

“We believe the use of hard surfaces, such as synthetic lawn, is a particularly short-sighted approach. Our message to homeowners is that an investment in turf is an investment in the health and happiness



“Our message to homeowners is that an investment in turf is an investment in the health and happiness of their families. Speaking to attendees on the day, we’re feeling confident that this message is starting to get through.”

of their families. Speaking to attendees on the day, we’re feeling confident that this message is starting to get through.

“Thank you to all the TGAWA members and industry allied businesses who were present and supported on the day. The engagement and interaction with locals was incredibly invaluable, and without the dedication of these members and supporters the event would not be possible.”



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## Could fungicides be the key to fighting couch smut?

Research continues into reducing the spread and improving the management of couch smut. Slowly but surely, more information is coming to light about this disease along with strategies to mitigate the impact. We caught up with **Dr Andrew Geering**, University of Queensland for an update.

Couch smut is caused by the fungal pathogen *Ustilago cynodontis* and is one of the most widespread and persistent diseases of green couch in Australia, affecting both quality and quantity of the plant.

Dr Andrew Geering and his research team at the University of Queensland have been studying the disease as part of a strategic levy-funded project *Integrated disease management of couch smut* (TU17002). The team has concluded initial glasshouse trials designed to explore the impacts of the disease.

“...it does seem that the plant can outgrow the infection, as some stolons tested negative for the pathogen. This result gives us some hope that we may be able to cure the plant of infection, perhaps using fungicides.”

“In the trials, infection reduced the rate of stolon extension by up to 50% and the total plant dry weight shoots and roots by 30–40%. We’re also noticing that diseased plants are significantly more erect in habit, which spoils the appearance of the turf, especially for more prostrate varieties.”

Dr Geering’s team found that the weaker network of roots and stolons also reduce the tolerance of the turf to wear. Additionally, the level of wastage during harvest is much greater, as the roll is prone to break at points of infection.

Outside of the integrity of the plant, the black spores on smutted inflorescences are released into the air and can aggravate or cause allergies, as well as contaminate shoes and clothing.

With a good understanding of the impacts of the disease, the team at the University of Queensland has turned its attention to investigating different methods to control couch smut.

“It is often assumed that mowing to remove the smutted inflorescences is a way of at least removing the visible effects of the disease, but studies we have done suggest that the fungus moves throughout the plant and using sensitive molecular assays, can even be detected in the roots.”

“However, it does seem that the plant can outgrow the infection, as some stolons tested negative for the pathogen. This result gives us some hope that we may be able to cure the plant of infection, perhaps using fungicides.”

Surveys of turf farms have been conducted throughout Queensland and New South Wales, and Dr Geering’s observations suggest that only common couch varieties such as ‘Wintergreen’ and ‘Greenlees Park’ are susceptible to the disease, there have been no instances of the disease appearing in the newer hybrid varieties. It should be noted, however, that those observations do need to be confirmed by glasshouse inoculation studies.

Trials to assess the efficacy of systemic fungicides have begun and there are some promising signs.

“We’re seeing good results from our preliminary testing with fungicides. Importantly, several of the fungicides we are testing are already registered for use on turf in Australia to control other fungal diseases. So it should be possible to extend the registrations to cover couch smut once efficacy data has been generated. Pot trials in the glasshouse are completed and a field trial is currently underway, to be completed by the end of January 2020.”

The research team is due to present the final findings of the project, including an integrated disease management plan by the end of 2020. 🌱



Fungicide pot trial

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# Brisbane's biggest lawn

It's not every day that a commercial turf installation is mainstream news, but that's what we saw in Brisbane last October, when the Courier Mail covered the turfing of the area surrounding Brisbane Airport's second runway.

We caught up with **Hugo Struss**, General Manager, Tinamba Turf to talk about the project.

With a stretch of grass that could cover more than 200 Suncorp Stadiums, the general public might well think that the Brisbane Airport job was abnormally large. But the reality for Hugo Struss and Tinamba Turf, is that projects of this scale are not out of the ordinary.

"We specialise in large commercial projects like stadiums, race tracks and large council parks, sports grounds, and with 1000 acres of turf farm and 18-20 truckloads of turf sent out each day, we rely on these large volume jobs," Mr Struss said.

However, it was certainly one of the more logistically, complex and demanding jobs that the team at Tinamba Turf and HL Landscapes has worked on, battling everything from bird strike risks to sea spray and high winds off Moreton Bay, as well as aircraft movements and jet blasts.

**||** *...by working with such a professional and knowledgeable team at HL, we're ensuring the success of the turf lay, which builds the credibility of the product, not just for Tinamba, but for the entire turf industry.*

One of the more challenging considerations for this job was the inaccessibility of parts of the area being alongside an existing operational runway. There are very specific protocols and times that the lawn can be installed, mowed and maintained, and any jobs must be scheduled in advance as aircraft movements will always take priority.

Normally, basic green couch would be the natural choice for the climate and soil profile, but after consultation with the customer, and an understanding of the level of maintenance the lawn would receive, Mr Struss and his team determined that Grand Prix was the better option.



Brisbane Airport covers a huge area – equivalent to 200 Suncorp Stadiums.

"Green couch tends to go to seed fairly quickly without regular maintenance, but Grand Prix excels even with low or irregular up-keep. And with little to no seed heads, the grass is much more resistant to foraging insects and animals and there's less opportunity for bird strike."

Conditions certainly were trying, but the consultation process was made smoother by working with a trusted, professional and knowledgeable landscape partner in HL Landscapes.

"HL made what could have been very challenging, much easier to be a part of. They really were up against it in many respects with this project. Outside of the unique accessibility conditions and size, they also had to manage very salty conditions, shallow brackish water tables, temporary water allocations and consistently hot and dry weather and wind."

"As turf growers it's important to be selective about who we work with. And by working with such a professional and knowledgeable team at HL, we're ensuring the success of the turf lay, which builds the credibility of the product, not just for Tinamba, but for the entire turf industry." 

*Have you just completed an interesting or complex project? Get in touch with Turf Australia at [Samuel.cox@coxinall.com.au](mailto:Samuel.cox@coxinall.com.au) to be featured in the Turf Australia magazine.*



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# Is your payroll software up-to-date?

In each edition of the Turf Australia quarterly magazine we shine a light on some of the elements of your business that aren't related to soil, grass or machinery. In our latest instalment of *From The Office*, we look at payroll and the importance of ensuring that software is up-to-date and inclusive of current legislation.

According to the Australian Payroll Association's 2019 benchmarking report, more than four in five employers across the country haven't updated their payroll software in twenty years. That's a long time by anyone's measure, let alone in fields as dynamic as technology and tax legislation.

Having payroll software that is up-to-date is incredibly important for several reasons. Not only does up-to-date technology provide a more efficient, seamless experience for managers and payroll staff, it also better protects your business from issues that could lead to underpayment.

According to Tracy Angwin, CEO of the Australian Payroll Association, the lack of up-to-date payroll software has 'undoubtedly' been a major contributor to the wave of underpayment scandals that have made headlines in recent months.

The Fair Work Ombudsman agrees saying that it has seen an increase in self-reporting of underpayments from complex payroll errors.

A lot of these errors occur when a business is using payroll software designed for businesses with only a few staff but being implemented in larger, more complex operations. We know that although many turf farms are small businesses, there are many others that have grown from just a couple of staff to become larger, more complex businesses.

## STEPS TO TAKE TO ENSURE YOU ARE GETTING THE BEST OUT OF YOUR PAYROLL:

1. Visit the Australian Payroll Association's website for a list of providers on the market ([austpayroll.com.au](http://austpayroll.com.au))
2. Compare products based on your business and its size and complexity
3. Seek independent advice from reviews, colleagues and accounting experts
4. Conduct a regular 'self-audit' of your payroll to ensure staff are being properly paid.

It's imperative that as your business grows, you are auditing the backend technology you use to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

Ms Angwin said that businesses of all sizes are still shying away from new technology that will drastically streamline their operations.

"These days, technology is being developed at a rate unlike we have seen before, and there is now payroll software being delivered on handheld devices and smartphones.

"Despite these developments, our benchmarking report has found that many companies still have manual tasks in their payroll processes. The increased security and human error risks associated with these types of processes is concerning."

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# Collaboration is the key to addressing water crisis

Dubbo's recently formed **Green Space Alliance** group is leading the charge for green industries in drought-affected communities. The group is looking to set a precedent for all regional and rural communities, hoping to inspire them to deal with the tough conditions in a way that has towns and councils collaborating effectively.

**F**ounded by Alex White from Dubbo Turf Supplies, the group brings together stakeholders from green industries including turf, nurseries, and landscapers and aims to be a united voice for the industry in some of the most trying times in the town's history.

Prior to the formation of the Green Space Alliance, Dubbo was facing level 4 water restrictions which prohibited any watering of new or existing turf, putting a huge strain on lifestyles and businesses.

*“Instead of blaming local government, we went and met with them, discussed what the issues were and how we could resolve them.”*

But on November 5, Dubbo Regional Council announced changes to the conditions which included two half-hour windows per week where turf could be watered. New turf can also be watered in the establishment phase. In fact, the Dubbo Regional Council executive officer, Michael McMahon announced that these changes were made as a direct result of engagement with groups like the Green Space Alliance.

That's an exceptionally quick result for a group that was formed only a month prior. According to Mr White, the rapid success of the group could be attributed to its positive, solutions-focused approach.

“We wanted to work with all the different stakeholders to be able to come up with solutions that would benefit everybody. Instead of blaming local government, we went and met with them, discussed what the issues were and how we could resolve them. We were still focused on reducing water consumption but there needed to be a solution that allowed businesses to continue,” Mr White said.

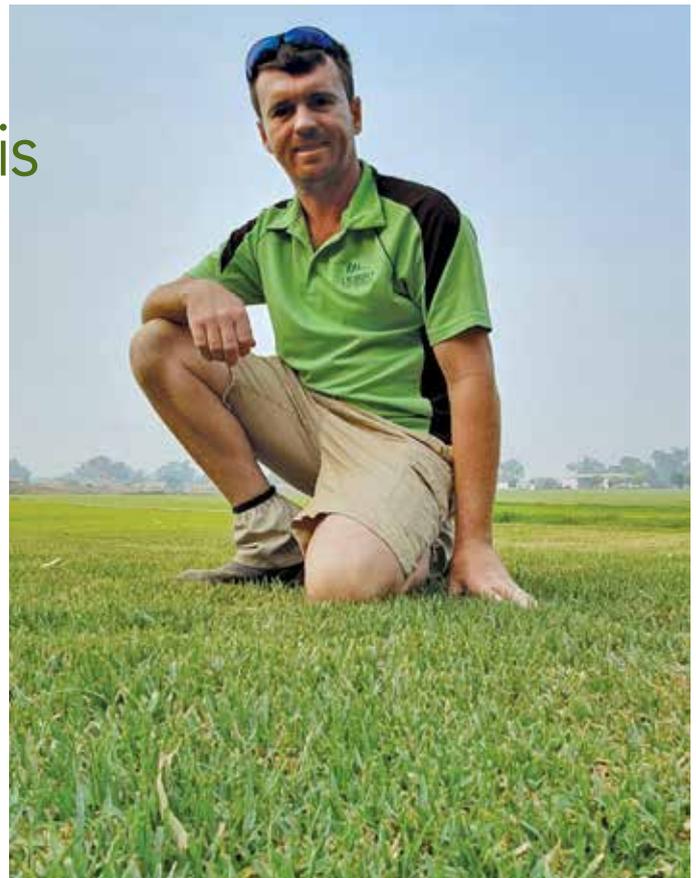
In taking on this project, Mr White wanted the people of Dubbo to understand how water affected the community they were working within.

“We met with representatives from different areas of the horticulture industry and then high-water users such as aged-care and the hospitality industry. Despite being the Green Space Alliance, we really were trying to work for the entire community of Dubbo,” he said.

But Mr White and the Green Space Alliance weren't alone in their plight, they had support from the entire industry. In particular, Eva Ricci from Turf Growers Association of WA, has been instrumental in collaborating with Mr White and ensuring he has the facts and figures to support the campaign.

“Eva went above and beyond to help someone on the other side of the country and without her help I don't think we would have got the result we did. An important side of this story are the emotional, mental health and economic benefits that green spaces provide. Eva presented facts to support this which helped frame our discussions with council.”

But there is still work to be done for Mr White and the Green Space Alliance as it looks to ensure that the dialogue it has opened with the council and community continues to evolve.



Green Space Alliance founder Alex White from Dubbo Turf

“From here, we're looking at what we can do to secure more water, as we seek to identify what the trigger points will be to come back to level 3 restrictions, and how we can work with the council on those guidelines. In saying that, we're also being mindful about what may trigger level 5 restrictions,” said Mr White.

Tough conditions such as drought and subsequent water restrictions can have a real impact on a community, but the incredible work the Green Space Alliance has undertaken can be achieved anywhere, all it takes is someone to take the lead and start a positive conversation. ☺

## HOW TO START A MOVEMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

- **Start the conversation** – organise a meeting between stakeholders. Find a couple of strong people who share the same vision and are passionate about the cause.
- **Get together** – have a small meeting and from there, try and get as many people as possible on board, there's always power in numbers. Bring in different perspectives too.
- **Know your community** – run a survey to understand how the problem is affecting people. Look at the impact on jobs, the community's economy and where it's going to hit hardest. Be empathetic to opposing views.
- **Be positive** – recognise and understand the problem but be solutions focused and positive. Foster collaboration amongst different stakeholders and work towards a common goal.

# Better Together: Turf associations meet in Sydney



## FIVE SHARED CHALLENGES FOR THE ENTIRE TURF INDUSTRY:



Water security and climate



Education, training and attraction and retention of staff



Alternative surfaces such as synthetic



Pests and disease



A lack of collaboration between stakeholders

A new working group has been formed to create a common voice for the entire Australian turf industry. Growers, sports turf, golf and lawn bowls industry representatives recently met in Sydney, heralding a new era of collaboration between the different sectors. We caught up with **Jenny Zadro** from Turf Australia to find out more.

**T**he turf industry is a resilient community, but to continue to flourish in challenging times, Turf Australia recognised a greater level of communication with other members of the turf community would be crucial. More cooperation would lead to greater influence in public policy and ensure that organisations could better serve their members.

In December, a forum was held with representatives of national and state turf industries including turf production, sports turf, golf course and bowls greenkeepers. Other industries, including the racing industry were not in attendance but have pledged support of the concept moving forward. This initial meeting had one core objective – to start a conversation that would lead to a more united front for the wider turf industry.

According to Jenny Zadro, Market Development Manager, Turf Australia, having stakeholders in the same room was an important level-set for the industry.

“Starting this conversation was long overdue but absolutely invaluable for the future development of the industry. The first step was simply to agree on our industry’s most pressing concerns, so we can begin to build a voice to address those issues collaboratively.”

Several core challenges were discussed at the forum, with five priorities agreed upon by attending representatives:

- Water security and climate
- Education, training and attraction and retention of staff
- Alternative surfaces such as synthetic
- Pests and disease
- A lack of collaboration between stakeholders.

Although it’s water security and climate that has dominated headlines recently, the most engaging discussion centred around issues relating to the most important resource of all, our people.



*Starting this conversation was long overdue but absolutely invaluable for the future development of the industry. The first step was simply to agree on our industry's most pressing concerns, so we can begin to build a voice to address those issues collaboratively.*

“Attracting and retaining quality people is a constant challenge. As everyone in the industry is aware, turf growing and maintenance is a deeply technical vocation, but there’s an image problem which means attracting keen minds to our industry is challenging. The group agreed that addressing this image problem was a high priority,” Ms Zadro said.

The lack of a clear, defined and united image is preventing the turf industry from having a strong voice to adequately address these issues.

*By pooling our research, experience and knowledge we will be able to better collaborate on our shared message to all stakeholders.*

To borrow a cliché, not everyone was ‘singing from the same hymn sheet’, and according to Ms Zadro, the working group would be looking to address this.

“We agreed that each association or sector had their own ways of doing things, their own way of expressing their position on each of the challenges we discussed but that our impact was diluted operating as individual entities. In order to have the loudest voice amongst the

most important stakeholders, whether that be customers, partners or policy-makers, we need to be united.

“First and foremost, we want this group to be a knowledge and information sharing group. By pooling our research, experience and knowledge, we will be able to better collaborate on our shared message to all stakeholders.”

The group identified the importance of the establishment of the political legitimacy required to shape the industry’s identity and build a voice for the industry across all levels of government and lead to positive outcomes for the future of natural grass.

“The goal is to collate information and create material that can be provided to local government, councillors, state and federal politicians, which will highlight the importance and benefits of turf. There’s a lot of information out there but it’s not getting through to who it needs to.”

Looking ahead, the members will commence the development of a ‘position-paper’ which articulates the shared and agreed positions on the various challenges identified by the group.

The working group is planning to meet quarterly in order to continue the momentum generated from the first meeting. 

*If you have any suggestions or feedback for the working group to consider please get in touch with Jenny Zadro ([jenny.zadro@turfaustralia.com.au](mailto:jenny.zadro@turfaustralia.com.au))*



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## WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Western Australia continues to experience incredibly trying conditions as hot and dry weather plagues much of the state. Water efficiency measures are also impacting the state and a drive around the suburbs of Perth does not paint a pretty picture with dead lawns and synthetic lawns being more common than lush living grass.

The financial realities of the conditions are biting and turf production is drastically reducing.

Times are incredibly tough but we continue to work hard and our community over here in WA have been busy advocating for the industry. Here's a snapshot of what we've been up to

### Presentation to Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

We held a very successful event in the picturesque King's Park where 39 members of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects heard from a program of speakers talking about how to include turf in urban design.

It was an incredibly successful event with speakers like John Forrest, a turf consultant who engaged the audience with insights into irrigation techniques. Other speakers included Susan Worley from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Adrian Pitiskas from Greenacres Turf and Darren Kirkwood, chairperson of TGA WA.

### Western Australia Lawn Expo

The WA Lawn expo is always hotly anticipated and the 2019 edition was another successful and high-impact event.

Whilst numbers were down slightly on the previous year, the quality of delegates was absolutely first-class. We had a fantastic range of exhibitors ranging from fertilisers, spray equipment, irrigation products, mowers and even the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

The event was a fantastic opportunity for attendees to receive genuine advice and to sort out issues with the lawns and irrigation. Delegates left with the right information on what turf varieties to use and where and feedback on the day was incredibly positive.



WA Lawn Expo in full swing

The TGAWA executive team sends its heartfelt thanks to the industry for its support of this event.

### Western Australia Turf Awards

In tough times it's important to recognise the incredible work that our members continue to do. It was a fantastic opportunity to honour and appreciate graduating apprentices with great food, good company and some much-needed laughter. All graduates should be proud of their achievements.

A special thanks to Tony Hemming, Arena Manager, at Optus Stadium for presenting on the night.

This was a joint event and is proudly sponsored by STA (WA), the Turf Growers Association WA and the Golf Course Superintendents Association WA.

For further information or details on any of the upcoming events, please contact Eva Ricci M: +61 422 120 990 or E: [eva.ricci@turfwa.com.au](mailto:eva.ricci@turfwa.com.au).

## NEW SOUTH WALES



2019 was a very challenging year for our members, particularly in regional areas as drought and fires continue across the state. This is having a significant impact on residential and commercial sales. Our primary concern is the health and wellbeing of our members and please get in touch if you require assistance.

### Water Restrictions

Many areas of the state are now on Level 4 water restrictions with the outlook not promising in the short term for widespread rainfall.

In the Greater Sydney region, Turf NSW together with industry experts have negotiated a 28 day watering exemption for new lawns. Level 2 water restrictions have come into effect from the 10th December. Please see further details at: <http://www.sydneywater.com.au/SW/water-the-environment/what-we-re-doing/water-restrictions/level-2-water-restrictions/index.htm>

Please discuss with your local water authority regarding specific restrictions for your area.

### Fire Assistance

Members are reminded that if you have been affected by bushfires, you may be eligible for disaster recovery assistance. Other assistance measures including low interest rate loans can also be viewed at: <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/>



It's disappointing to see households in Western Australia surround their homes with fake grass

**In the Greater Sydney region, Turf NSW together with industry experts have negotiated a 28 day watering exemption for new lawns. Level 2 water restrictions have come into effect from the 10th December.**

### Mental Health Resources

It is important to look after yourself and others in tough times. Please see the following link if you require further information or access to services available at: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/Pages/support-contact-list.aspx>.

### Buffalo Yellows Project

This project has been re-scoped with a project to be contracted early in 2020. This project is welcomed by Turf NSW after significant effort in developing the concept proposal with Turf Australia and Hort Innovation throughout the year.

### Turf NSW Annual General Meeting

The Turf NSW Annual General Meeting was held in September in Windsor with a number of presentations given by Sydney Water, Hort Innovation and Turf NSW.

The following members were elected to the Committee for 2020.

Paul Saad, President (Southern Cross Turf), Steve Vella, Vice President (A View Turf), Anthony Muscat, Treasurer, (Greener Lawn Supplies), Neale Tweedie, (Grech's Turf Supplies), Michael Mifsud, (Rivers Edge Turf), Joe Muscat, (Greener Lawn Supplies), Joshua Muscat, (Greenlife Turf Supplies), Patrick Muscat, (Musturf), Troy Franks, (Dad N Daves Turf) and Paul Saliba (Qualturf). Non voting members are Josh Stephenson, (Windsor Rural) and John O'Brien, (Turfplus). The Committee welcome Michael Mifsud and John O'Brien and thank David Raison for his service to the Committee.

### Voluntary Levy

With various challenges confronting our industry and increasing costs, Turf NSW have recently requested the payment of a voluntary levy to help fund member activities and resources in the future. Without this funding, Turf NSW can not operate effectively and will not survive long term to represent you and our industry.

The Committee are also looking at sponsorship from allied industry and other funding opportunities in the next few months. If you would like to contribute to the voluntary levy, please email [info@turfnsw.com.au](mailto:info@turfnsw.com.au)

Thank you to all our members for your support in 2019, and those who have pledged further support for the voluntary levy.

On behalf of the Turf NSW Committee, wishing our members and families a joyous festive season and a happy new year.

For further information, please contact Matthew Plunkett on 0434 147 988 or [info@turfnsw.com.au](mailto:info@turfnsw.com.au)

## QUEENSLAND



The year 2020 will see some changes for Turf Queensland, with the resignation of Jim Vaughan, in December, from his position as Executive Officer that he had held since 2000.

The Board would like to pass on their sincere thanks to Jim who has worked hard for the Queensland turf growers for many years. He has lifted the industry profile to all levels of government. Jim has always been available for growers when needed, especially in times of water restrictions around the state, for various awareness projects and in highlighting the potential of the industry in more applications such as erosion control.

Members of the Turf Queensland Board are working hard to ensure that growers continue to be supported throughout this period of

adjustment and operations will continue with the assistance of Turf Australia, whilst we determine the ongoing plans in early 2020.

As the drought situation worsens for parts of Queensland, Turf Qld were represented at a recent meeting with SEQ Water to ensure there is a clear understanding of the value and importance of the turf industry. A collaborative approach is being taken with STA, Qld Landscapers, Qld Nursery and Qld Irrigation, to promote the message of water efficiency over water restrictions.

A meeting of Queensland Turf industries was held in November for the planning of the combined industry field day on 25 August 2020. This event will be held at Twin View Turf and will see the various turf association groups including Turf Qld, STA Qld, Irrigation Qld, working together to create a great expo for the industry covering many aspects of turf production and maintenance. Stay tuned for more information in early 2020.

Contact for Turf Queensland will continue at [info@qtpa.com.au](mailto:info@qtpa.com.au) and calls can be made to either Turf Australia office (02) 4588 5735 or Jenny Zadro on 0408 441 119.

I would like to thank all Queensland Growers who continue to support the association through membership and wish everyone a successful 2020.

Anthony Heilig, President

## VICTORIA



It has been another busy quarter for the Victorian turf industry, with plans and priorities being set for the year ahead.

The change of seasons has been challenging for growers, particularly with warm season production.

Though most turf businesses are doing well, production for turf growers is under pressure following two poor spring seasons in a row. This has created challenges with supply over the last couple of months.

Advocacy will continue to be a primary focus for in the New Year, to support grower interests are being heard at the state government level.

Melbourne Water predicts that with high use and demand for water and changing environmental conditions across the state, metro Melbourne will be water deficit by 2028.

**Melbourne Water predicts that with high use and demand for water and changing environmental conditions across the state, metro Melbourne will be water deficit by 2028. With current and anticipated long-term water issues, it's vital that we are being proactive in addressing these issues and future restrictions. Keep an eye out for updates to come.**

With current and anticipated long-term water issues, it's vital that we are being proactive in addressing these issues and future restrictions. Keep an eye out for updates to come.

Finally, I wanted to remind growers that applications for Agriculture Victoria's on-farm energy grants are still open. These grants are available to eligible producers until March 2020. To find out if you're eligible to apply, head to: [vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/agriculture-energy-investment-plan/grants/tier-1-grants](http://vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/agriculture-energy-investment-plan/grants/tier-1-grants)

For further information on the above projects contact David Reid T: +61 3 9576 0599 or E: [david@ngiv.com.au](mailto:david@ngiv.com.au)

# Market Development 2019 wrap

Throughout 2019, I was fortunate to attend conferences and meetings that showcase the great work that is being done around the country to improve communities.

The recent Parks and Leisure Conference in Perth is a perfect example of this. There are organisations, including government groups, that are doing amazing work in the greenspace area, they acknowledge how important greenspace is for the community and the mental, physical and environmental benefits. They are planning future developments to include well thought out parks and community spaces to assist in reducing the huge medical funds needed for diabetes and mental health issues, not to mention the stress of our cities getting warmer with more grey and less green.

There are organisations, including government groups, that are doing amazing work in the greenspace area, they acknowledge how important greenspace is for the community and the mental, physical and environmental benefits.

However, it is astounding to see how quickly other authorities will dismiss all this information to target turf and gardens in water restrictions. Despite working with authorities to change mindsets, it still seems the direction to stop watering lawn becomes the first port of call in many jurisdictions. Outdoor water usage makes up a small percentage of overall household usage, and despite the benefits it provides to communities and the environment – it seems to be the quick fix.

A report prepared in 2008 showed the impact that water restrictions have on a community. 'Irrigation of Urban Green Spaces: a review of the Environmental, Social and Economic benefits' revealed that water restrictions and reduced urban irrigation has contributed to a decline in urban green space and may have a significant impact not only on the environment but also the public health of Australian society. Lessons are not being learnt. We will continue to work for the industry to change those mindsets.

On a more positive note, there has been some great research coming out of Turf Levy projects that we have shared with you in this edition and past magazines. This information is utilised in the ongoing promotion of the benefits of turf.

Developing leadership skills is a big part of training today for the growth of companies and industry. There is one more final opportunity to take part in the TRAIL for Emerging Leaders program. The course is designed for emerging leaders who are ready to develop their leadership skills and gain from the experience of learning with others. Three other turf growers have attended the course, and all have found it to be very beneficial to their work and personal life. The program will be held in Canberra from 13-20 March 2020. The course is valued at \$9,500 but through funding from the Department of Agriculture, one turf grower or employee of a turf farm can attend at no cost. Please contact me directly or the Turf Australia office for more information.

In early December, Turf Australia invited members of all the various turf and sports turf associations to attend the inaugural Australian Turf Industry Associations Forum. As part of the National Turf Market Development Program, the meeting was called to get a better understanding of the different associations and the issues they are dealing with. I believe that this is the first time that the various groups have come together to talk about the industry and how as a united



Participants in the 2019 Women In Turf event.

Ladies of our industry don't miss the opportunity to come together at the Women In Turf event in Melbourne on 9-10th February. The networking and knowledge gain from each other and our presenters is well and truly worth the challenges of getting away from the office and family.

group we can work to make changes. The outcome of the day was successful, and it was agreed to continue this meeting quarterly to ensure that the group stays focused on resolving issues and working together. More information on the meeting can be found in the article in this magazine and I hope to be able to provide some positive outcomes in the near future.

Ladies of our industry, don't miss the opportunity to come together at the Women In Turf event in Melbourne on 9-10 February. The networking and knowledge gain from each other and our presenters is well and truly worth the challenges of getting away from the office and family. All the event information is available on the Turf Australia website.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board of Turf Australia and state associations for their support and hard work throughout 2019. Thank you also to our member growers and sponsors who continue to support the value of the association and allow us to achieve our objectives. I hope that 2020 is a successful year with the right amount of rain and sunshine and plenty of turf to harvest and sell. ☺

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)

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# GROWING MATTERS

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# THANK YOU

...to all our members for your support throughout 2019 and into the new year

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Dargle Turf  
Deans Turf Supplies  
Dubbo Turf Supplies  
Earls Turf Supplies  
Grech's Turf & Atlas Turf  
Green Life Turf  
Greenacres Turf (NSW)  
Greener Lawn Supplies  
Greenway Turf  
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Roberts Turf Supplies  
Rosemount Turf  
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Tinamba Turf  
Top End Turf  
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Turf Central  
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TA Members as of 19 December 2019