

# TURFTALK

BY LAWN SOLUTIONS AUSTRALIA | JULY 2023



## The Container Garden by Charlie Albone

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FLOWER AND GARDEN  
SHOW WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRENT WILSON

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Ben Sims of Lawn Tips sweeping the morning dew on The Par 3 Project





Renee and Lynn Davidson of Jimboomba Turf Group

# Welcome to Turf Talk

Australia's most comprehensive turf magazine. Turf Talk is suitable for all turf professionals, from turf growers to landscapers, golf courses and sports ground curators, to government and related industry organisations.

Turf Talk is here to share with you the latest information on the turf industry, the exciting developments in turf research and to keep you up to date with everything you need to know about turf.

Turf Talk is a free magazine, distributed to over 3,000 landscape and turf professionals.

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# A New Home for the Brisbane Lions

## BRIGHTON HOMES ARENA – SPRINGFIELD, QLD

Australian rules football team, the Brisbane Lions, recently unveiled their new state-of-the-art facility, Brighton Homes Arena. The facility is the result of 10 years of planning which involved finding funding and partners to bring everything together into one modern and multi-functional site.

Prior to this newly built facility, the Brisbane Lions used a range of venues around Brisbane including:

- Giffin Park, Coorparoo – Training Field
- The Gabba – Gym
- Nudgee College and QSAC stadium – Track
- Pre-season games in different venues around Brisbane

Brighton Homes Arena has a capacity of 8,000 spectators with the scope to expand on this in the coming years. The facilities for teams are unique in that the men's and women's facilities are identical, with equal gym, changing rooms, and office spaces to give both teams the same opportunities. This was really important for inclusivity with the new arena being home to the Brisbane Lions AFLW Team for both training and matches.

The Brighton Homes Arena playing surface covers 1.9 hectares and is built on a 280mm sand profile. AFL Queensland were the leading subcontractor on design of the oval and commissioned Labosport to do the specifications for the field and engaged

Twin View Turf for field construction and Irri-Flow Contracting for the design and installation of the irrigation system.

The ground was specified with TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda turf to complete the project. TifTuf was introduced as a new and improved turf variety in recent years with superior drought tolerance, tensile strength, and colour retention benefits the key reasons behind its selection.

The field and surrounds are managed by AFL Queensland, and the principal contractor for the construction was Hutchinson's Builders. AFL Queensland is excited to have a newly developed hybrid bermuda grass on the oval, leading the way in innovation,



and performance, plus it looks incredible. Chris Dalton has been employed by AFL Queensland as a Sports Turf Manager for the last 17 years, including time at Ashgrove and Nudgee golf clubs as well as the Gabba. Chris now oversees the new Brighton Homes Arena as well as other venues around Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

The arena covers a broad home base for several teams, and the oval is used on average 12-18 hours per week for training.

- Brisbane Lions Men's AFL training - three days per week
- Lions VFL – Training and playing, March to November

- Lions AFLW – Training and games, March to November
- Lions Academy program – Training and games plus community and open days

Field construction on the oval began in June 2022 and was completed on 14th October 2022, with the last roll of TifTuf turf laid. AFL Queensland took over maintenance of the field and 10 days later, the oval was aerated and top-dressed with 192 tonnes of topdressing. The first training season for the Lions AFLW team was on the 21st of November, and on Sunday 26th of November, the Grand Final of the AFLW competition was played at the new arena.

The turf is cut at 16mm and water harvesting is undertaken from a 4,800lt under-field tank from drainage water and pumped into a 300,000lt main irrigation holding tank. The end of January 2023 saw the oval scarified again and top-dressed with 64 tonnes of topdressing. A pre-season AFL game was played on 3rd March 2023, with the Brisbane Lions facing off against Geelong.

This new arena has given the Brisbane Lions, both men and women a home base with a world-class facility all on one site.



# The Container Garden by Charlie Albone

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FLOWER AND GARDEN  
SHOW WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRENT WILSON

I first built a garden at The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show back in 2017 and have had the desire to return ever since. With Covid lockdowns and various other constraints, 2023 was the year I was finally able to get a shovel back in the ground, well not really, it's a heritage site and you're not allowed to dig a hole, but you get the idea!

The garden was designed to be an entertainer's delight whilst playing with the use of recycled materials. I feel the use of

recycled materials in a garden always leads to a very rustic space and I wanted to make something contemporary. I started with two 20-foot shipping containers and cut holes in them to make them outdoor rooms. The first is a dining space with a hanging fireplace and a preserved moss wall, and the second is an outdoor lounging area with a dramatic green wall backdrop. To add complexity to the design I also reinforced this container roof and made a rooftop garden accessed by a spiral staircase, complete with a barbeque and raised planters to take in the view of the

royal exhibition building. I kept the recycling theme going and used a scaffold to create a balustrade but painted it matt black to match the internals of the containers.

To modernise the containers, we painted the outside of them with bridge paint (the same as the Sydney Harbour Bridge) and clad the indents with a blackbutt timber that we hand-milled to fit the bumps and bruises of the container. To connect these two rooms was a beautiful TiffTuf Hybrid Bermuda lawn that came in 16-metre length



maxi rolls, the same used on sports fields, so the new joins were minimal. The rolls weighed 400kg so getting them in was a lot of fun! TifTuf provides a great turf solution for families, being a nice hardy grass, plus it has a high drought tolerance and in a show garden situation it looks very impressive.

On the lawn, we also put in two feature mounds of Sir Grange Zoysia, and these were intended to be spaces to sit back and lounge on and take in the garden. Sir Grange is a great grass for this with its ability

to be left unmown creating a unique feature. In preparation for this installation, this particular Sir Grange had not been mowed prior to harvesting for over 18 months!

Between the containers was a long thin water feature that was still and reflective and it helped to add atmosphere to the space. The lawn space created a courtyard feel to the garden where I also installed a huge charcoal cooking grill with cobblestones that came all the way from Belgium. These are recycled cobbles from the streets and laneways of the

major cities over there. The cobbles have been lifted and the tops sawn off to make the streets flatter (too many people were falling over and suing the government) and the by-product is a cobble that is thin, easy to install, and adds instant age to a space – the streets are now very slippery, so I don't know if the desired intent has been reached but it gives us a great product!

The front of the garden was all planted up with sun-loving plants, and three spectacular Fan Aloes took centre stage



towering over the rest of the drought-tolerant planting including Agave Paryii, Disytilium and various Euphorbias. The central courtyard and raised planter box that dominated the space was more of a semi-shaded area, so the planting was different with huge Pyrus Javelin offering screening, a weeping Tropical Birch and a Crimson Acer gave scale to the planting of Gardenias, Hydrangeas, and Ligularias beneath.

I was rewarded very well by the judges getting an award for the best planting at the

show, a gold medal, and the biggest prize of them all Best in Show! I have an amazing team that works with me and I couldn't have done it without them, so thank you to all that chipped in.

The planning of the garden was spread out over about 10 months starting at the design stage back in the office where we workshopped various layouts for the containers and discussed the feel of the spaces I wanted to create. We then sprayed out the whole design and jiggered the sizes

– in the first design the water feature was much larger however this was reduced so it didn't dominate and so we could transport it from Sydney to Melbourne.

We prefabricated as much as we could as the build period is only nine days on-site, so we painted, clad paved and fixed our vertical garden frames to our containers and built our fireplace, then wrapped it all up in protective plastic before it headed off from the NSW Central Coast to the Carlton Gardens in Victoria.





The nine build days were very busy and well planned by my team. Starting at 7am and not usually getting out of the showground until 7.30 – 8pm at night, making sure everything for the day had been ticked off the list to ensure we met the show deadline. To be honest I much preferred being on-site building the garden compared to the accommodation I booked for the team and I. Let's hope the show isn't on the same weekend as the F1 again as it cost a fortune for a horrible house!

It was a great experience building a show garden and it helped to bring my team closer and lift the standard of their daily practices. When you live and work so closely together there is definitely a comedown after such a successful show, but getting back on the tools on our various projects around Sydney helps to ease the desire to build another one.

During the show, the response from all who visited and the comments made were well

received which makes all the hard work well worth it. Building show gardens is a strange concept, yes you get to inspire a lot of people to try different things and unusual plant combinations in their gardens, but you're designing and building a space that is only going to exist for a short period of time before it all gets taken apart. I love that normal gardens are always evolving and that show gardens only exist for a short period and I feel even luckier that I get to enjoy both.



# Composting at Scale for Soil Health

BY ALL TURF SOLUTIONS

All Turf Solutions have had a passion for improved soil health since the start of our turf production operation. Our production facility at Rathdowney QLD is fairly new with our first paddocks planted just prior to Cyclone Debbie washing them away in 2017. We moved a considerable amount of soil around and attempted to salvage the topsoil where economically viable but even then, we found the disturbance of the topsoil layer resulted in poor soil health. Certainly, more could have been done in the early days with setting up the paddocks, but the money just wasn't there.

After a couple of years of turf production, we started to see disease pressure in some of our paddocks that had areas of next to no topsoil in the profile. A downward spiral of reliance on fungicides was beginning to appear and at that point, we reached out to BioHub Solutions for assistance with strategies to improve our soil health. A year down the track with applications of carbon,

worm juice, seaweed, and inoculations with biology developed by Griffith University we reduced our reliance on fungicides. With applications of fresh chicken litter, this was our only source of dry organic material.

We were accumulating turf scraps, so we had some of the ingredients already on the farm to produce compost. Compost based on turf scraps alone wasn't going to work due to the high soil content. This must be balanced out with the addition of green waste or straw and also the addition of animal manure to achieve a favourable carbon-nitrogen ratio.

## The composting process

Composting is a method of speeding up the decomposition of organic materials. The ingredients are made into a heap or in our situation windrows (elongated mounds) to facilitate the composting process. Heat given off by microorganisms inside the heap is trapped there by the insulation provided by the outer few centimetres of the windrow.

Inside temperature rises and so does the rate of decomposition. Composting is most rapid when the heap is made with the right ingredients and turned frequently.

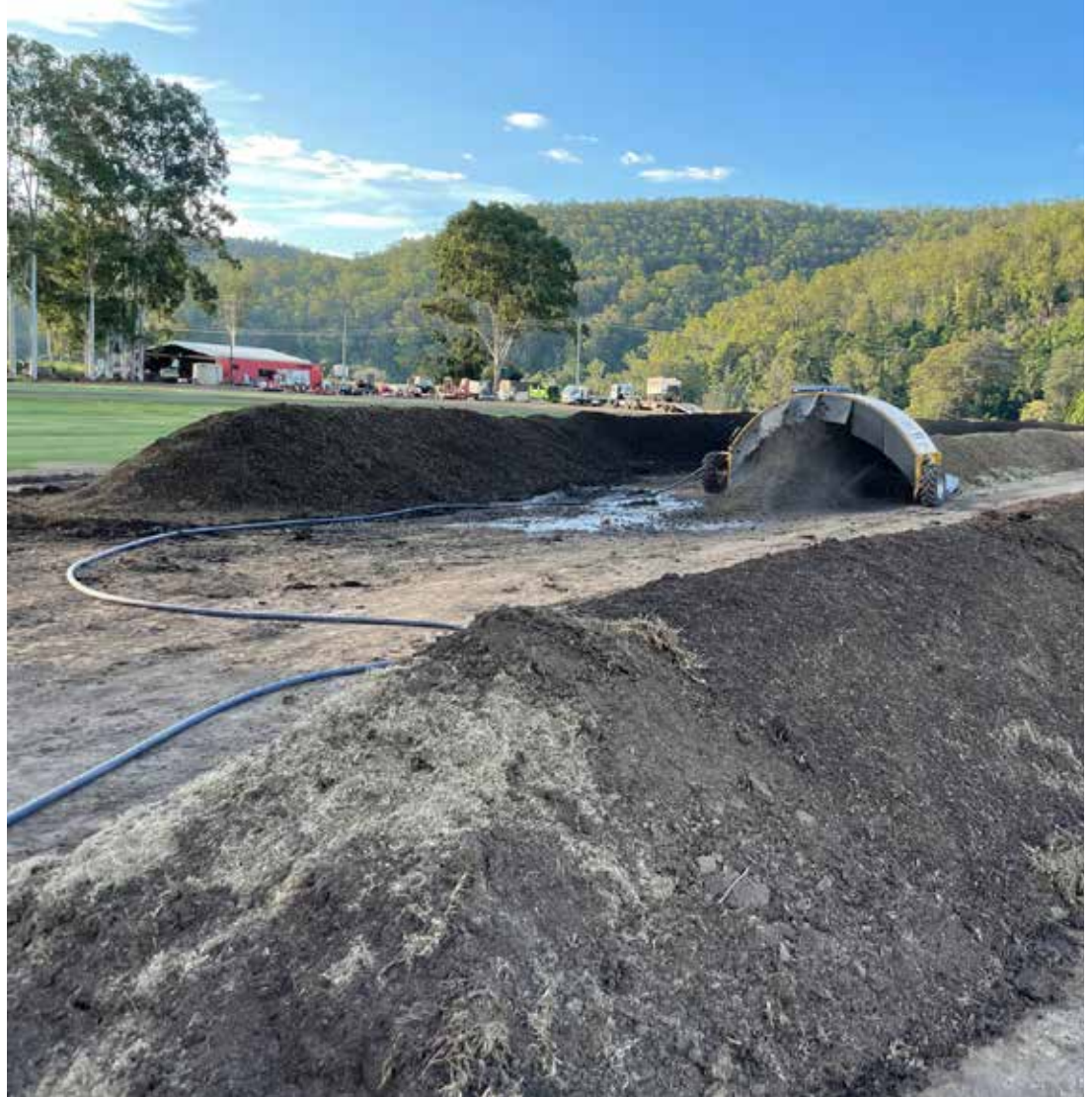
## Key requirements

If provided with the right conditions, microorganisms will do the work.

- Plenty of organic matter for energy
- Enough nutrient elements, especially nitrogen
- Oxygen - those microorganisms that are best at decomposing plant materials need plenty of oxygen
- Moisture - not too much and not too little
- A source of cations, especially calcium to stabilise the compost

## Decomposer microorganisms

The main microorganism species responsible for decomposing organic material are bacteria, fungi, and actinomycetes (branching bacteria).



### Organic materials and nutrients

Any organic material that is of plant or animal origin can be composted, with several factors that will dictate the quality of the product produced.

- The size of the material will determine the length of time for break down
- An adequate level of nutrients C: N ratio minimum of 5:1 is a large factor for composting
- A moisture level of 55% to 65%
- Oxygen - At least 50% of the heap should be air for maximising oxygen for the microbes
- Calcium level - added as gypsum or lime depending on the pH

Depending on air temperatures and the size of the heap, finished compost should be available in 6-12 months.

Manure from grain-fed animals (e.g. poultry) will supply phosphorus used at around 7kg per cubic meter. Poultry manure and litter

will also supply nitrogen though it should be tested as nitrogen content can vary widely.

Turned compost heaps should be no more than 1.5-2.5m high and 2-3m wide. Larger quantities should be in the form of windrows.

### Volume Change

Of the carbon in each bite from the materials from microbes, about 60% is converted to CO<sub>2</sub>, about 33% is made into microbial cells, and the rest is discarded as soil wastes. When these microbes are used by others as food about 60% of their carbon is converted to CO<sub>2</sub>, and so on. The heap gets smaller. Loss of carbon means that the concentrations of other elements in the remaining material increase meaning a richer source of elements.

### Temperature and pasteurisation

The temperature inside composting heaps can range from 45 °C to 75 °C, decomposition is most rapid in a range of 45-50 °C. Eventually the amount of

undecomposed material decreases, so microbial numbers and the temperature of the heap fall.

The moist, hot, oxygenated conditions in an active compost heap are just right for killing plant and animal pathogens and parasites. At 65 °C most plant parasitic bacteria, viruses and insects are eliminated.

Our first batch consisted of approximately 60% turf scraps, 30% green waste (scarifying material from a paddock we needed to renovate) and the rest included chicken litter and Ag lime.

Subsequent batches have included the addition of gypsum and or calcium silicate. We further inoculated the rows with "BioForce, MicroLife Rapid Compost". The opportunity to have waste from a paddock stripped with a Field Topmaker was ideal as this increased the nitrogen ration required to help activate the rows. Once turned and water added the rows heated up within



**Customer**

All Turf Solutions

**Paddock**

Compost

**Lab Number**

K6583/1

**Manure Type**

Scraps

**Sample Moisture %**

32

**Application Rate (t/ha) @ Sample Moisture**

5

	Lab Analysis Dry (w/w)	Wet Analysis %	Nutrient Applied (kg/ha)
Nitrogen %	0.79	0.54	27
Phosphorus %	0.35	0.24	12
Potassium %	0.56	0.38	19
Sulfur %	0.13	0.09	4
Calcium %	1.56	1.06	53
Magnesium %	0.33	0.22	11
Sodium %	0.11	0.07	4
Chloride %	0.1	0.07	3
Zinc mg/kg	162	0.011	0.6
Iron mg/kg	19497	1.326	66.3
Manganese mg/kg	588	0.040	2.0
Copper mg/kg	40.5	0.003	0.1
Boron mg/kg	9.37	0.001	0.0
Organic Matter %	11.4	7.75	388
Electrical Conductivity dS/m	2.33		
Organic Carbon %	6.7		
Estimate Organic Carbon %	6.6		217
Estimated C/N Ratio	8.4		

**Unit Converter**

Nutrient mg/kg or ppm

20100

Nutrient %

2.01

a day and maintained at 70 degrees for a little over a week. We turned the rows daily adding more water as needed. I think the soil component of the rows shortens the time the rows will remain at temperature. While the textbooks indicate an aerated composting process should be around four weeks to ensure good compost production and weed seed control, we haven't found any weed seed germination and no turf grass survival or germination. We have a couple of resilient turf grass strains that have their own rows to minimise any contamination possibilities.

We had our first batch tested by Southern Cross University in Lismore and were suitably surprised by the results.

See to the left the results from our compost and nutrient calculator based on five tonnes per hectare; This is our third year of compost production, and we are still perfecting our procedures and learning from our mistakes. In our second year, we had some failures primarily due to not having the nitrogen ratio high enough to keep the temperatures high enough for any longer than three days. This resulted in rebuilding the rows and starting them off again. The addition of fresh grass clipping has given us our best results to date.

Due to the size of our operation, we prefer to get everything in place to carry out our turning once per year as this allows time to accumulate waste and materials and set aside the time to run the turner. Moving

forward we would like to grow a green manure crop we can harvest and add to the rows at the time of turning. This would lift the nitrogen ratio required to compost the turf scraps.

The compost produced can then be used throughout the following year for amending soils now with the inclusion of our trace elements, lime, gypsum etc. We have been regularly checking stockpiles for weed germination and apart from a few broadleaf weeds, we have seen no evidence of grasses germinating.

## ENDURA PK40

(0:20:40)

KEY TO

HARVESTING

STRONG & HEALTHY

GRASS!

- ✓ Increases Turf Health & Strength
- ✓ Increases Turf Harvestability
- ✓ Decreases Wastage
- ✓ Increases Profits

### Buchanan Turf

Todd Hagan

We started using Turf Biosolutions and their **Endura PK40** because of the ease of dissolving the product compared to similar products. Since using **Endura PK40** and more targeted nutrition, our turf strength has increased due to the high availability of the nutrients which allows earlier harvest due to sod strength and substantially less wastage.

### Jimboomba Turf

Alana Davidson

The use of **Endura PK40** has resulted in a notable reduction in fungal disease pressure in our Sir Walter Turf, leading to lower chemical expenses and an overall improvement in the health of our farm. **Endura PK40** has had a remarkable impact on the development of fibrous roots, as we have observed significant improvement within just a few weeks of application on our turf.



A High Analysis  
Water Soluble  
Potassium and  
Phosphorus  
Foliar Fertiliser

Phosphorus is immobile in soil, and Potassium can easily leach from the soil profile, so **FOLIAR APPLICATION** delivers P & K directly to the turfgrass when needed FAST.

The Potassium in **Endura PK40** will help *increase runner strength and thickness* while the Phosphorus *increases root development*.

Good levels of P & K will help turfgrass recover quicker in times of heat and cold stress.



# Growing Businesses Now and Into the Future

**BY DR RUTH MANN BSC (HONS), MSC, MBA, PHD  
HEAD OF INTEGRATED CROP TECHNOLOGIES AT AGRII**

Maintaining a successful business growing and supplying turf in the current environment and business climate is increasingly difficult due to unpredictable weather patterns, loss of traditional synthetic chemistry, and increasing commodity prices. Additionally, consumer demands for more sustainable products often result in increased production costs without the corresponding increase in selling price, squeezing gross margins. To make life even more complicated, enabling technologies, such as robots, AI and machine learning bring an unknown but

huge opportunity to disruptively innovate our global farming industries. Therefore, we must continue to look at current management practices and maintenance programmes with an open mind to change and the competitive advantages those changes may bring while maximising current gross margins.

Origin Enterprises is an international agronomy services group with operations in Ireland and the UK, continental Europe and Latin America. The group supports growers and professionals in agriculture, amenity, landscaping, and ecology

markets through the provision of specialist advice, inputs and digital solutions. Agrii, part of the Origin group, harnesses the power of skilled agronomists and the best intelligence to deliver unrivalled expertise and support for sustainable and profitable farming systems in the UK. As a leading provider of agronomy services, technology and strategic advice, Agrii combines excellence and innovation with the latest research and development to ensure our customers can meet today's farming challenges with knowledge and confidence. Agrii extensively researches



A drone capturing field data

every aspect of sustainable and profitable food production through trials conducted in accordance with integrated pest management principles at their core.

Integrated pest management (IPM) is a coordinated and planned strategy for the prevention, detection and suppression of pests, weeds, and diseases. It is about taking appropriate actions using a combination of cultural, biological, or chemical measures appropriate for the situation while ensuring the resulting product is profitable. IPM aims to limit dependency on plant protection products, reducing unnecessary use

whilst ensuring risks to the environment and human health are mitigated. It allows growers to demonstrate competency in considering a range of methods in which to control pests on farm. This could mean cost savings and potentially reduce pesticide resistance, safeguarding active ingredients for future use while enhancing crop yield and so gross margins.

Maximising the growth, yield and quality of any crop, be that wheat, potatoes, or turf, starts with the health of the soil underneath. Agrii focuses on methods that improve soil health to help farmers

improve land quality. We examine the impacts that different rotations and cultivation methods have on soil health, and therefore crop quality. For example, Agrii has researched mycorrhizal fungi and plant growth-promoting bacteria in our trials, looking at ways to improve soil health. We noticed an increase in nitrogen uptake from the soil and found increased greening and protein in wheat plants. This research has helped us improve nutrient efficiency and soil health.

While keeping the soil as healthy as possible to support the growth of the crop,

Throws farm; one of Agrii's technology hubs in the UK



we need to ensure we prevent any possible pest, weed, or disease outbreak as much as possible. The first method to consider in the prevention of problems is crop rotation. Rotations involving different crop families help to break up pest, weed, and disease lifecycles and so reduce the carryover of inoculum in susceptible crops. Rotation should be accompanied by good hygiene principles including regular cleaning of machinery or equipment. The disposal of diseased crop debris is important to prevent harmful pathogens, weeds, or pests from spreading between fields. It is also important to be able to remove any volunteer plants during the break crop to ensure pests or diseases are not spread via volunteers harbouring inoculum.

Cultivation practices should also be considered to disturb pest, weed, and disease lifecycles. For example, rotational ploughing can be used to manage weed seed populations. Seedbed preparations can help with getting the crop established quicker to aid stronger and more resilient plants. Stale

seedbeds can also force the germination of any weed seeds that have been disturbed during cultivation practices, allowing these to be removed before the crop is sown.

Now we have worked through long-term multi-season preventative measures of reducing the potential ingress of pests, weeds and diseases, we need to think about in-season control measures. These start with crop variety choice as the cornerstone of cultural control of pests and diseases. Growing pest or disease-resistant varieties can enable a crop to grow that is more tolerant to any pest or disease damage. Alternatively, we may need a variety that has increased vigour to help smother weeds and aid establishment. Agrii has developed a variety sustainability rating to test how technically robust varieties are, which varieties offer consistent yields and quality, reduce agronomic risk and allow us to understand if they provide the flexibility to use crop protection products more efficiently and so provide growers with increased environmental and financial

benefits. Additionally, buying certified seeds free from disease inoculum and weeds seeds ensures the crop has the best start.

Following the variety choice, feeding the growing crop is the next important consideration. All nutrient plans should begin with a broad-spectrum soil analysis to determine the available nutrients already present. This will also determine if the pH is suitable and allow planning for long-term alterations over the rotation plan. Consider the release pattern of the fertiliser and how it fits with management practices as fewer applications of controlled-release fertiliser may be more cost-effective compared to more regular applications of readily available nutrients. Many companies are now looking at improved technology within fertilisers. For example, Agrii has developed a range of enhanced efficiency fertilisers to help us to be more environmentally conscious when applying nutrients. Agrii-Start Liqui-safe, for example, is a urease and nitrification inhibitor for liquid fertiliser which has proven yield enhancement whilst reducing



# How are Agrii's Variety Sustainability Ratings calculated?

Individual weighted scores are added together to give the high, medium or low sustainability rating:

## WINTER WHEAT

VSRs are based on:

- + Foliar disease resistance
- + Lodging
- + Orange wheat blossom midge resistance
- + Yield resilience and consistency
- + Grassweed competitiveness
- + Specific weight
- + Latest optimum sowing date
- + Second vs first wheat performance

## WINTER BARLEY

VSRs are based on:

- + BYDV tolerance
- + Foliar disease resistance
- + Lodging
- + Yield resilience
- + Grassweed competitiveness
- + Specific weight

## OILSEED RAPE

VSRs are based on:

- + Autumn and spring vigour
- + Height
- + Stem stiffness and lodging
- + Maturity
- + Disease resistance
- + TuYV tolerance
- + Pod shatter resistance
- + Nitrogen use efficiency

environmental impact and benefitting soil biology. Leaf tissue testing throughout the growing season can also ensure any changes in nutrient availability can be remedied proactively, enhancing crop yield.

Once the crop is sown and we have the maximum yield potential in the ground, everything we now do keeps that yield or allows it to diminish over the growing season. Therefore, being vigilant and monitoring the crop regularly for pest, weed, and disease ingress is paramount. These records can then be reviewed in relation to weather to predict potential pest, weed, and disease problems. Enabling technologies, such as drones and satellite imagery can make this monitoring process easier allowing us to identify potential problem areas more quickly.

Thresholds for pests, weeds, and diseases should be set to help guide when intervention is necessary to prevent economic crop yield from being impacted. This helps to protect against the unnecessary use of Plant

Protection Products (PPP's). The use of online decision support systems may replace setting of thresholds in the future to determine the right time for appropriate intervention.

When proactive intervention is necessary, understanding the modes of action and longevity of any plant protection product is important to ensure optimal activity keeping all potential yield available. For example, every product is more effective at certain points in the pathogen's lifecycle. If the product is more protectant and works optimally on spores, preventing germination and infection, there is little point applying it when disease symptoms are apparent as the spores have already germinated and mycelium is growing through the plant. In this case, a curative or eradicator product that prevents mycelial growth is required. Biosolutions are increasingly recognised as evolving technology that can complement and, in some cases replace traditional PPPs. They can often be active at the very early stage of disease development, allowing

synthetic chemistry to be used for curative and eradicator applications, where necessary.

Where PPPs are required, care should be taken to ensure maximum efficacy for the input cost including machine calibration, nozzle selection, setting correct boom height, use of surfactants to aid retention, appropriate timing of application, and during appropriate weather conditions.

Throughout the whole growing season, enabling technology is emerging in the form of digital tools to aid decision-making by providing actionable insights. Specifically, digital tools can support decisions on if, when, where and what to apply to achieve optimal growth and yield for each input, ensuring margin over input cost remains as favourable as possible. Continuing to evaluate and robustly test these technologies will future-proof all IPM programmes and ensure we continue to gain competitive advantage supporting our businesses into the future through these challenging and continually changing times.



# Jimboomba Turf Group: From Sheep and Cattle to Leading Turf Suppliers

## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF JIMBOOMBA TURF

Some 50 years ago, a born and bred grazing family from Longreach decided life was pushing them for a sea change. The family had been working on the land since 1914, after generations of fighting against the droughts and enduring the harsh Western Queensland landscape, the idea of a property with a never-ending water supply seemed almost too good to be true. It sounded so good, in fact, they would pack up their lives and all that they knew to brave a new industry, a new way of life, and a new direction. This brave and bold choice today sees them as a leader in the turf industry and pioneers of methods and techniques that have changed how we grow, understand, and use turf grass.

Lynn Davidson, in his mid-twenties and manager of the family's sheep and cattle station at the time of the big move, shares his story of this fascinating journey and the lessons he has learned along the way.

### Lynn Davidson – Managing Director, Jimboomba Turf

I'd been running the station since I was 19, it was a lot to take on as a young man. 10,000 sheep and 1,000 head of cattle kept me busy. However, I had met a great lady named Carolyn, but she was not just any woman, she was an excellent stockwoman, a great horsewoman, a great cook, and was tough as nails in the bush. She later became my wife and we were ready for the steep learning curve that Western QLD had to offer.

Along the way our family circumstances changed, and rural commodities were changing, which prompted a change in life. My dad saw an ad in the paper for a turf farm and suggested we consider it; the rest is history. We were captivated by the turf farm's constant water source, courtesy of the river that ran along it.

We sold our western holdings and came here with zero knowledge of grass, possibly less than zero, as we didn't have much 'lawn' around the homestead on the station. The lifestyle change was hard, being in a much smaller, more intense environment was a challenge, we were used to big open spaces with not many trees, and to this day, Carolyn and I still miss the bush.

The turf farm was already established, and we took over with the existing team still embedded to help the transition. This really helped ease the pressure. Over the next couple of years, my family worked together to learn the ropes and became ready to take on everything. That said, we kept many of the original team members on, in fact, the original mechanic only retired in 2022!

### What did the journey of growth look like?

Learning to understand the turf market was



Lynn with the farm's FireFly ProSlab 155 Harvester

a significant and foreign change – in sheep and cattle, you took the market rate, turf was a very different game. Marketing was then and is to this day our biggest challenge and everchanging part of the business.

Back then, the marketing strategy was to have as many full-page ads in the Yellow Pages as possible – things were pretty simple then and are very different now.

Apart from that, we didn't have a great deal of strategy. In the mid-'80s, the golf course boom happened, we were fortunate enough at that time to have enough credibility to get a lot of that work, but this meant we didn't focus enough on our domestic consumers. When the golf course boom ended, we needed to work on our consumer market and build back that relationship, which took a lot of work and effort.

The big lesson there was to ensure you can keep the bread and butter going simultaneously if

you take on larger projects. To this day, we pass on some projects if we know they cannot run in parallel with core demand.

Later came the golf course boom in Asia, which served us well as many of the same people we worked with locally in Australia were building the Asian golf courses. They respected our capabilities, so it was just a matter of putting the grass on the planes. To start with, this was not a simple procedure, dealing with customs, airlines, etc., but as time passed, we established relationships with all the parties in the supply chain, and it became a relatively simple procedure. To this day, there are golf courses in Vietnam, Indonesia, China, Singapore and UAE that have Jimboomba turf grass.

Over the years since we have had some exciting things happen that have helped us grow. New grasses have been significant on that journey. Sir Walter gave us a unique

solution to help people with shady areas. Before this, turf was a bit one size fits all, now we are heading to an era where we have grasses that can be matched to different and unique needs. We were very active in the market, had good land and had a lot of drive to succeed, so these were factors that were complemented by these new grasses.

The products available to us now, such as TiffTuf Hybrid Bermuda, Sir Grange Zoysia and the new Zoysia Australis, are prescription-grade products for unique situations. Through excellent education, the consumer quickly becomes aware of these fit-for-purpose characteristics.

We have also tried new things, from commercial and international supply to landscaping and revegetation contracting, but we have evolved into a primarily consumer-focused business over recent years. Concurrently the forming of Lawn



Solutions Australia (LSA) has helped support us in our choice to be a premium turf supplier, supplying only premium quality grasses.

#### **Lessons learned over the years**

Turf farming is several businesses rolled into one, marketing, farming, logistics and administration. Unfortunately, these skills rarely all come in one head, so skill diversification is an essential part of the game.

It is critical to have these four pillars functioning at a high level. We were fortunate to have my sister Cherie administering the Finance and Administration function for many years before her passing in May 2020. She was a huge pillar of support in keeping things running smoothly.

Forecasting in this industry is complex, there are so many variable factors impacting the business each year, weather, for example, is a tough one, and when you add to this managing CAPEX and depreciation on a never-ending list of new machinery, complexity arises.

#### **Trends/Advancements in the turf industry**

There have not been big trends so much. Significant advancements have come in the form of machinery. Like everyone else, we used to hand harvest, these clunky hand-held things we pushed around, then tractor harvesters and pallets, that we could load the grass onto

came. Eventually, auto harvesters, which were average to start with, but now they are an excellent product.

Looking forward, the next significant evolution will be in mowing, auto electric mowers, which are GPS programmed, will have a substantial impact on the mowing function cost, especially fuel burn. There will be a labour save here, but the management cost of these assets will determine the significance of that. They're still a little way off, but they will happen soon enough.

#### **What stands out as your significant milestones as a business?**

Sir Walter was significant, it was a massive thing for us, and as history will tell, so it was for a considerable portion of the industry. Being a grower of Sir Walter also has had a significant knock-on effect, it has connected growers across the country. This has resulted in great friendships being created, but also a tremendous amount of knowledge sharing.

During our first ten years in the industry, there were no industry associations or social contact with other growers, which is light years away from where the industry is today. This is probably hard for those young in the industry now to comprehend.

Also, having wonderful staff knowledge to begin to understand which products work best for the QLD landscape, this understanding has meant we have been able to intentionally plant and nurture a range of the best grasses for the local area.

#### **What have been your prominent successes or failures?**

One of the big ones was probably STAYTURF®; it's a concept we created where we grew the grass on a jute matting, and it could be used in drains (like on the sides of a road for erosion control) to stop dirt and debris washing down, it was a fantastic product. It was scientifically tested and proven to work nearly as well as hard armour, concrete etc., but unfortunately, once we created the product and created the market, cheaper alternatives came along, which were half as good and half the price. STAYTURF® even won an award on the ABC TV Inventors program.

As time went on in the erosion control space, we added some hydromulching trucks to the mix. At that point, we were very active in the commercial area, and this equipment closed the loop for many of the requirements of civil projects.

The civil space was becoming crowded, so the hydromulching assets were redeployed out to the Surat Basin, to work in the coal



Lynn Davidson, Leo Vanderhoek, and Darryl Pearce



seam gas industry. This was rewarding work, revegetating massive dam batters and hundreds of disturbed creek crossings where the gas pipelines went.

We followed the pipeline construction crews from Dalby up to Injune, some 500 kilometres of offroad work. However, nearly overnight, the price of oil and gas collapsed, and all the gas exploration work stopped.

**Who has been influential in growing your business?**

It's a funny one, when we took on this business, we knew nothing about growing turf. We knew a bit about cattle and sheep but nothing about turf. The significant skill I took from the west was asking the 'old blokes' for advice.

If I had a vexing issue, I would ask one of the older men or women what they thought, they always had advice built from experience, which is the good advice. I took this tradition with me to the turf world. The only trouble was there weren't any old blokes around.

Along the line, I met Bill Cassimaty from Strathayr in Melbourne, Bill was always inspirational to speak to, a wonderful industry stalwart.

I met up with Bill at a conference in the US once, and he introduced me to a bunch of the American 'old blokes'. It might not seem

like much in today's world of near-instant information, but in those days, the spoken word, and relationships with the folk of vastly superior knowledge and experience were gold. I cherish the conversations with those folk over the years. The holistic industry advice and wisdom they gave me helped shape how we worked and grew the business.

**What makes Jimboomba Turf different?**

I think we are different because of how we approach the market. We only take to market the top-end products. We aren't in the lower price point game; we only sell and grow the best premium and highest quality products. Lower price point turf is what some people need, and that's ok, but we are not the people to buy that from.

LSA support these quality products and helps us educate the consumers on why they should choose a premium product, and which is most likely suitable for their circumstances.

**Advice for others looking to run a family business**

Recognise different and individual skills. My sister, Cherie, and I worked well like that. I never questioned her administration, and she never questioned if I needed a new machine, we knew what each other did best and supported that.

The landscape is littered with failed family businesses, and from my observation, the different skills within the family may not have been exploited to their potential.

**The next five years**

Strengthening our premium products in the market, maintaining our premium position, and helping educate the market on why to choose premium lawns. I'll move away from the business and work on some diversified projects, within our other business interests. Renee (my eldest daughter who now primarily oversees things) and her partner will continue to care for and grow the business. They're both very creative and have lots of exciting ideas and plans for novel product offerings etc.

**If you could give every turf customer one piece of advice for their new lawn, what would it be?**

Water your turf, the second it comes, lay it, and water, water, water. It happens too often, people get it, then don't lay it for a few days, then don't really water it and wonder why it dies off.

*"Just water your new lawn, and you'll be set for success!"*

However, I guess every turf farmer in the country would also give the same advice on this one.



# The Great Golf Show

**ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER, ORLANDO FLORIDA**

The Golf Industry Show has the largest exhibit floor in the golf industry, which combines education, the latest products and services, networking opportunities, and business solutions.

## **Lawn Solutions Australia and the GCSAA**

The Lawn Solutions Australia (LSA) team including Gavin Rogers, Simon Adermann, and Joe Rogers were fortunate enough to attend GCSAA in 2023. LSA members and staff have been attending the US Golf Show many times over the past decade sourcing new and improved cultivars of turf amongst other things like lawn care products.

The trade show component of the GCSAA Conference and Trade Show is one of the

largest in the industry, featuring hundreds of exhibitors showcasing the latest products and services for golf course management. Exhibitors include manufacturers of turf grass equipment, irrigation systems, pest control products, and other golf course management supplies. This is an excellent opportunity for attendees to learn about the latest technologies and equipment available in the industry and to network with industry suppliers and peers.

One of the key benefits of attending the GCSAA Conference and Trade Show is the opportunity to network with other professionals in the turf management industry. The conference attracts golf course superintendents, assistant superintendents,

equipment technicians, and other industry professionals from around the world. Attendees can meet and connect with others in the industry, exchange ideas, and build relationships that can be valuable in their careers.

Over the years, LSA's visits to the GCSAA have brought about such things as the importation and understanding of cultivars TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda and Sir Grange Zoysia, as well as wonderful lawn care products such as ColourGuard Plus. This year was the first time LSA has been at the GCSAA for about five years due to Covid. This year's edition was massive, with lots of turf farms and turf breeding institutions exhibiting. The highlights of the show from



an LSA perspective, other than the exciting new turf cultivars hitting the market, were the advances in automation within our industry. There was plenty of automatic mowing and turf care equipment on display which is exciting to see.

Further to this, it was great for LSA staff to catch up with some long-term friends and colleagues including Dr. Brian Schwartz and the team at the University of Georgia, Billy Skaggs and Terry Hollifield from ITGAP, Ken Morrow and Bill Carraway from The Turfgrass Group and David Doguet from BladeRunner Farms to name a few. Our US colleagues are based all over the country, so the Golf Show provides the perfect

opportunity to have everyone under one roof enabling the opportunity to catch up socially as well as conduct some business!

There was a large contingent of Australians present this year as well which was great to see. The Syngenta welcome dinner was a great opportunity to catch up with some Australian Golf Course superintendents, turf researchers, turf farmers, and chemical manufacturers to discuss all matters of the Australian turf industry. Again, there aren't many events globally that allow all these people within our industry to be together, so it was fantastic to catch up.

Another significant benefit of attending the conference is the educational sessions and

seminars that provide a wealth of information on topics ranging from new technologies and equipment to best practices in turf grass management and sustainable practices. This information can be invaluable for us to stay up to date with the latest trends and advancements in the field.

With our continued collaboration and relationships with international turf scientists and turf breeders only getting stronger, attending events such as the GCSAA is becoming more important than ever. LSA will look to attend around every second year to continue to be at the forefront of the Australian and international turf industry. The next edition is expected to be held in the month of February 2024.



# The World Ag Expo

BY MAX STEPHENSON,  
TWIN VIEW TURF

The World Ag Expo is held on a dedicated 26-hectare site near the town of Tulare in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley in California, USA. The San Joaquin Valley is a huge central valley in California producing 13% of the state's agricultural produce.

The World Ag Expo first started in 1968 and has been on every year since inception in some form or another. Impressively in 2021 during Covid, the expo was run entirely online as a digital show. The World Ag Expo commences on the second Tuesday of February every year and runs for three days.

At its peak, the expo would have over 1,400 exhibitors and over 100,000 attendees

who would come from all over the USA and from many countries across the world. The expo has been slowly building momentum again post-Covid, with this year's expo able to feature agricultural exhibitors from 56 different countries.

Every year exhibitors are invited to submit either equipment or ideas to the organisers for the innovation awards which are then judged by a panel, with 10 'Top New Products' being selected every year for special recognition in the program.

Along with the 1,400-plus exhibitor displays, there are many education seminars covering all aspects of agriculture. There

is also a tractor pull held in the Tulare Fairground on Wednesday night with some of the tractors on display at various stands during the show.

Max Stephenson from Twin View Turf here in Australia, was fortunate enough to visit the World Ag Expo back in 2002 and again in 2023. Having been to a few ag shows in Australia it was a real eye-opener back in 2002 with the size of the show and the mechanisation of some of the processes, even back then. Many of these technologies and equipment have made their way to Australia since.





“You don’t go to the Ag Expo just for turf equipment, you go there to see a broad overview of everything on offer, with interest in farm equipment and mechanisation across all agricultural sectors,” Max said.

On a previous trip, Max was able to attend the tractor pull for the first time. This is a night not to be forgotten, as it can be incredibly entertaining to see. Impressive tractors pull a heavy drag or sled along a 100m track to see who can pull the drag the furthest. Sadly, due to trip timing, Max along with the rest of his touring party only had one day at the show this year, so the tractor pull was missed.

This year, Max attended with a handful of other Australian turf farmers including those from Harden Park Lawns and Lilydale Instant Lawns, as part of a larger US Study Tour. Of particular interest for Max and his delegation was a company called Bluewhite. Bluewhite specialises in autonomous systems that can be fully fitted to standard tractors. Bluewhite has a team of engineers, farmers, and technicians who are working with a range of different farming sectors to support more profitable and sustainable farming.

Another highlight for the Australian delegates and for many of the attendees at this year’s

Ag Show was being able to see a robotic tethered drone fruit-picking machine. This machine can pick apples and pears among other tree-growing fruit and was one of the ten winners of an innovation award.

The goal of these trips visiting events like the World Ag Show is to learn as much as possible about emerging trends in farming and turf research. The ultimate outcome is to find newly developed products that can be introduced into our own turf production processes back here in Australia to improve efficiencies and quality.



# Introducing Zoysia Australis

## NEW ZOYSIA GRASS ON THE MARKET

Lawn Solutions Australia is continually researching and developing new strains of turf to find grasses that offer real points of difference. Zoysia Australis is the perfect example of a grass that offers unique traits and characteristics unlike any other, which is why we are so excited we are now able to launch this incredible new variety.

Zoysia Australis was bred at the world-famous University of Georgia, Tifton

Campus by Dr Brian Schwartz. Dr Schwartz is renowned as the scientist behind the release of the highly successful TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda. Zoysia Australis arrived in Australia back in 2018 with a range of other elite zoysia grasses. After extensive trials in a range of conditions and applications, Zoysia Australis was selected for commercial release. Zoysia Australis offers significant benefits and a real point of difference from the other turf varieties available to consumers.

Zoysia Australis is a zoysia japonica with a medium texture, blue/green leaf, superior wear tolerance and recovery when compared with other zoysia and is a great alternative to other commonly available warm season grasses.

In a recent independent trial conducted by the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) 'Screening new Zoysia turfgrasses under Australian conditions', Zoysia Australis



showed some exceptional qualities. For speed of establishment, Zoysia Australis (16-TZ14114) was one of the fastest cultivars to reach establishment in the first 12 months of evaluation reaching 97% of establishment. Turf plugs were planted four plugs per plot in a 1.5m<sup>2</sup> area, with 24 different zoysia cultivars assessed, and replicated four times. All plots were treated equally with the same amount of irrigation at the minimum amount of 10mm per week

until full establishment. Zoysia Australis was the fastest to establish, with many of the other cultivars consistently slower in this phase of the trial. Zoysia Australis also showed an exceptional speed of recovery after a spring renovation.

These results demonstrate the unique characteristics that Zoysia Australis has, traits that are not normally associated with zoysia grasses. Zoysia Australis

provides a zoysia solution for families and backyard situations that require quicker establishment and recovery. It's a great all-rounder and a new alternative to grasses like Kikuyu.

**Key traits:**

- High shade tolerance
- High wear tolerance and recovery for a zoysia grass



- Soft medium leaf
- Versatility in a range of conditions and climates
- Fast establishment
- Good colour (green/blue)
- Strong rhizome growth
- Deep root system
- Less mowing requirements
- Disease resistant

One of the key benefits of Zoysia Australis is its ability to tolerate a wide range of growing conditions. This grass is highly drought-tolerant, making it an excellent choice for areas with low rainfall or water restrictions. It is

also highly tolerant of salt and shade, making it ideal for coastal or shaded areas where other grass varieties may struggle to grow.

In addition to its hardiness, Zoysia Australis is also highly attractive and low maintenance. Its fine texture and dense growth pattern makes it an excellent choice for residential lawns, parks, and golf courses. It also requires less mowing and fertilisation than other grass varieties, making it a cost-effective option for large-scale applications.

The introduction of Zoysia Australis to the Australian turf market has been a significant development for the industry. This versatile and

hardy grass variety is quickly becoming a new favourite among growers and landscapers, thanks to its excellent performance and low-maintenance requirements.

Zoysia Australis is currently being grown in several locations and is now available in Southeast Queensland and NSW exclusively through Lawn Solutions Australia Members.

If you would like more information on Zoysia Australis or would like to find suppliers in your area, please contact Lawn Solutions Australia.

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# Dunsborough Lakes Sporting Precinct

## CITY OF BUSSELTON, WA

As Dunsborough's sports clubs continue to thrive and achieve new heights, the demand for space has intensified due to the existing infrastructure being stretched to its maximum capacity. The growth in population has also contributed to the expansion of the Dunsborough Junior Soccer Club, which has experienced a significant increase in participation since its last season.

Efforts are currently underway to create a new Sports Precinct that caters to the needs of the growing Dunsborough community.

The site for the new Sporting Precinct is Lot 40 Dunsborough Lakes Drive, Dunsborough Lakes, which was previously owned by the Water Corporation. The design of the facility has been planned with potential future expansion in mind, and it will be conveniently accessible from the future school situated at the corner of Dunsborough Lakes Drive and Diamante Boulevard.

The exciting Dunsborough Lakes Sporting Precinct was driven by the increase in population, change in demographics, and

strong growth in sports such as AFL, soccer, cricket, netball, and basketball, which has put immense strain on the existing seven hectare Dunsborough Oval Precinct.

The council set out on an ambitious plan to deliver the project, which would include:

- Four hectares of playing fields (designed for soccer and cricket)
- Four multi-purpose hard courts
- Cricket facilities (turf wicket table, synthetic wicket, and three-bay cricket nets)



- Carpark and associated landscaping
- Lighting (oval, court, and carpark)
- Site fencing
- Pavilion

The City of Busselton secured funding from multiple sources, including the state and federal government, and from its reserve funding. Like all projects during Covid, there has been an increase in costs, especially in the building industry, which has stalled the pavilion until the project can be delivered to its original design and specification.

The oval component included:

- Clearing of necessary native vegetation only
- Removal of 4000m<sup>3</sup> of undesirable site soil
- Sub-surface drainage system
- Screening and import of a local sand source, which met USGA specifications (24000m<sup>3</sup>)
- Irrigation system
- Incorporation of a quality compost material
- Stolonising with TifTuf at 16:1
- Turf wicket construction

- Synthetic cricket wicket and three bay cricket nets
- Fully enclosed roof proof fencing

Dunsborough has a real problem with the lack of an adequate supply of groundwater in the Leederville Aquifer. At the same time, a federally funded project to deliver Stage 1 of the Dunsborough Non-Potable Network was underway. This project included the drilling of a 400m bore into the Sue Coal Aquifer, monitoring bores, a pump station, and a 3.5km pipeline to the new oval site.



This project was critical to the delivery of the oval project, especially with the chosen method of establishment.

Grass selection was critical to the successful delivery of the project and the long-term water challenges currently faced and what is expected in the years to come, especially in Dunsborough.

The City had been in discussions with John Clayton from Down South Turf, who has been growing TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda (Couch) on his farm locally. John had provided the grass to trial in several city locations, including the new un-irrigated Busselton entry statement, in which it performed extremely well.

*"I had seen TifTuf in action at Campbelltown Stadium in NSW and had no concerns with how it would perform in the Southwest of WA. To be honest, it doesn't get that cold here!"* said Parks and Environment Coordinator Brad Reynolds.

The project was not without its challenges, which had seen delays in a few components of the project, resulting in the grass being installed in late April and early May 2022 (originally planned for early January 2022). Although there weren't any concerns with the survival of the stolons, it did delay the grass establishment with the cooler weather setting in.

Strong winds played havoc with the surface levels, with alkaline sands blowing from the adjacent housing development, which was hard to contain.

September 2022 provided a chance to get the project back on track. Nutrition and weed control were key. Regular analytical testing guided the program, which included:

- Carbon-based microbial amendments to increase the CEC
- Lime
- Kieserite Magnesium
- Oxamax 18-10-9
- Regular applications of Black Urea
- Liquid fertiliser applications
- Hand weeding!

Due to the relative virgin sands, minimal weed content was seen because of imported soil. Wind-blown weeds such as Fleabane and Stinkwart were a problem due to unmaintained surrounding properties and a small amount of Arum Lilly contamination. Manual removal and some spot spraying was seen as the best course of action.

Once a coverage of around 50% was achieved, City Staff worked hard on regular mowing and removal of sand build up in the canopy. In December, stolons had run in some areas 30-40cm into bare areas.

Deep aeration, rolling, then topdressing with 400m<sup>3</sup> of a C-wise Sportsblend70, which made a huge impact on coverage and had seen them reach 90% coverage by December 2022.

December had also seen the construction of a three-wicket table, synthetic wicket, cricket nets and permanent oval fencing to meet funding deadlines.

The turf wicket table construction included a sub-base, formwork, 60m<sup>3</sup> of imported and laser levelled Culburra clay and washed couch. It is anticipated after extensive renovations and maintenance wicket production will start in early January 2024.

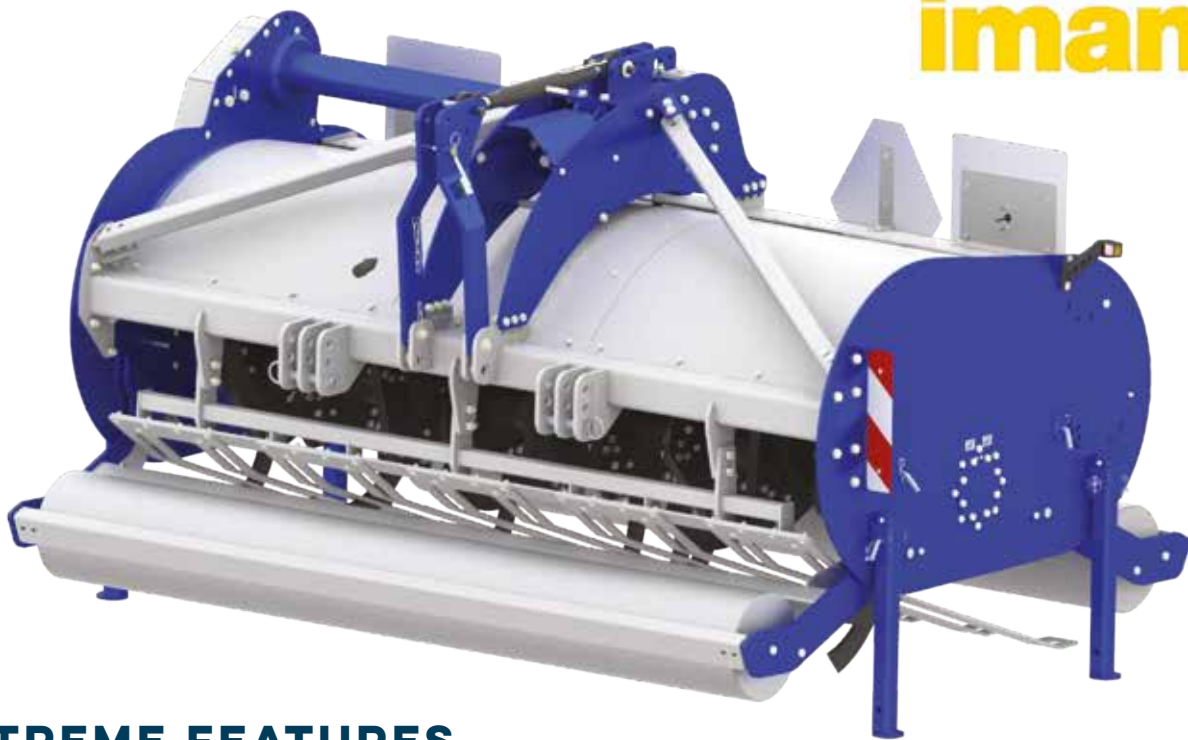
With temporary toilets and change rooms to be available soon, it is likely locals will get their first taste of the facility with Winter Sports training and general public use to take place in May 2023.

*"I am looking forward to the next spring and summer when we will be able to put TifTuf to the test, especially with its drought tolerance. We can then start to maximise the benefits of water savings and reliance on the scarce groundwater source."* City of Busselton Parks and Environment Coordinator, Brad Reynolds said.



# SHOCKWAVE EXTREME

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- We have two different widths 275 (9') and 366 (12')
- Maximum working depth 330 mm (13") But after they wear approximately 50 mm (2") you can mount the blades further away from the shaft so you can reach the maximum depth again which means more life out of the blades. (animation)
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- LED lights road lights are standard.

	275	366
Working width (mm)	2750	3660
Input PTO RPM	1000	1000
Working depth minimum (mm)	150	150
Working depth maximum (mm)	330	330



# Setting a Benchmark for Sports Turf Consultancy

BY MATT ROCHE, DIRECTOR AND PRINCIPAL TURF CONSULTANT,  
AUSTRALIAN SPORTS TURF CONSULTANTS (ASTC)

At Australian Sports Turf Consultants (ASTC), our team of experts is made up of experienced turf professionals who have a deep understanding of the complexities of constructing, redeveloping managing, and maintaining natural turf playing surfaces. Our services are designed to provide our clients with the information, advice, and tools they need to achieve optimal playing surfaces for their sports, recreation, community, or multi-use stadium facilities.

Our clients are spread across many key turf-related industries and facilities. Our business clients include some of the biggest names in sports, such as sports stadiums and elite sporting codes. We also serve many councils and government bodies, community sports

clubs, horse racing tracks, golf and bowling clubs, and schools and universities. In addition, we work with turf suppliers and maintenance, commercial construction companies, architects, engineers, developers, builders, and landscapers, as well as with turf producers and peak industry bodies. We take pride in delivering high-quality expert advice and customised and sustainable solutions that meet the unique needs of each of our clients.

ASTC has worked with Lawn Solutions Australia (LSA) over the years accessing turf production facilities to ensure adequate steps are in place to comply with the AusGAP (Australian Genetic Assurance Program for Turfgrass) Certification Process.

It is important that farm audits are managed to ensure compliance. ASTC is also commissioned to check turf grass health and purity for specific products that LSA Members supply.

LSA also work closely with ASTC on turf grass evaluation and sampling for Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR) submissions – with work currently underway with four varieties.

Some of the key services ASTC offers include:

## **Project management**

Project management plays a crucial role in the success of any turf management, redevelopment, and construction project. Our team work to produce high-quality



delivery which involves developing and implementing comprehensive redevelopment or reconstruction plan that outlines the scope of work, project timeline, budget, resource allocation, and risk management strategies. Active communication and collaboration between stakeholders, including The Principal (client), the Contractor and subcontractors, often including sports turf construction and irrigation companies etc., is vital in successfully delivering a project. By ensuring that all aspects of the project are well-coordinated and documented, project management helps ensure that the final product meets the specifications and client's expectations.

When a sports field is being redeveloped, ASTC will conduct a detailed site investigation. This will typically include (i) an agronomic assessment of the turf surface and rootzone, (ii) soil nutrition and physical testing e.g. particle size analysis, bulk density, hydraulic conductivity etc., (iii) an assessment of existing features, environmental hazards and access and exit points, (iv) an irrigation audit and (v) surveying to identify the existing gradients and visible features. The site investigation report helps ASTC prepares detailed current technical specifications that are site and project specific and include a series of Hold Points, Witness Points, and request for documentation to be provided as

evidence of completed work that meets the specification and aligns with the detailed BOQ which is also provided by ASTC.

As for new or construction projects, the same effort and detail is required, it usually just means that more information is to be conveyed to the stakeholders during the early concept and design stage to ensure the intent is still achieved, without compromising on the quality of the sports turf surface.

#### **Quality assurance**

Quality assurance is a key component in any turf management, redevelopment, or construction project. This follows on from the design and production of clear, black-



and-white detailed technical specifications where ASTC regularly conducts quality assurance checks to make sure companies are following the technical specifications. ASTC acts as an independent auditor to ensure the standard is being followed and high standards are being met on site. Quality assurance checks are vital in ensuring that proposed materials meet the specifications before they are delivered to the site; ensure that construction techniques and equipment used meet specifications or best practices; and ensure turf maintenance is conducted by qualified turf professionals to a high standard. This is to ensure the client's expectations are met and to ensure player safety is not compromised. With regular quality assurance checks, any issues can be addressed early and avoid costly repairs and rework in the future.

Auditing and benchmarking (routine testing) of sports turf surfaces and open space

recreational areas are critical initiatives in turf management and decision-making. Auditing plays a significant role in identifying areas that require attention, such as those that are vulnerable to wear and tear, erosion, pest infestation, and other issues that could compromise the turf's quality or strength. Benchmarking, on the other hand, involves comparing the performance data over time at a single facility or comparing one sports facility against another (maintained by the same client) and/or best practice. Benchmarking data provides insights into the facility's strengths and weaknesses, enabling stakeholders to identify areas to focus on to improve overall performance. By carrying out auditing and benchmarking, facility managers can identify areas that require attention and adjust their management plans accordingly to optimise performance. They can also use their data to assist with fine-tuning annual turf maintenance plans and budgeting.

ASTC has audited sports fields across numerous councils across Australia which has allowed them to increase their annual turf maintenance budget enabling them to maintain safe and playable sports fields for their community. The data and subsequent recommendations provided by ASTC highlighted areas that were under-budgeted and where greater resources or planning was needed for the sports fields or facilities to meet best practices.

At ASTC, we are committed to providing our clients with the highest quality independent turf consultancy services beyond those listed in this article. Please visit our website [www.ASTCs.com.au](http://www.ASTCs.com.au) or contact us today to find out how we can help you achieve the optimal turf surface for your facility.

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# 5 Million Metres of TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda

## AUSTRALIA'S FAVOURITE COUCH GRASS

This is a truly incredible milestone for a turf variety that has only been available for just over three years in Australia.

To put this into perspective, if you laid this much TifTuf turf in a line it would be able to go from Brisbane, to Sydney, then to Canberra before heading across to Adelaide and then all the way across to Perth. That is one hell of a road trip!

### The Birth of TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda

TifTuf was created at the University of Georgia in their world-famous turf breeding

program based in Tifton, Georgia. TifTuf was hand-selected out of almost 30,000 other hybrid grasses and was assessed over a 25-year period before being released. The aim at the University was to find the most drought-tolerant grass possible, with TifTuf being code-named DT-1 for Drought Tolerant number 1 at the end of extensive trials.

TifTuf was also assessed in the National Turf Evaluation Program (NTEP) in the US, where TifTuf outperformed all other bermuda (couch) grasses. TifTuf finished the trial as the best performer overall, with TifTuf coming first

for quality, autumn (fall) colour and summer density. TifTuf was also trialled for water use and drought tolerance, where unsurprisingly it also finished first convincingly.

Further testing was then undertaken in Australia where TifTuf also outperformed all other available couch grasses in trials conducted over several years. With this success, TifTuf was released to the Australian market exclusively through the Lawn Solutions Australia national network of turf suppliers.

Since this release, TifTuf has continued to grow and grow in popularity. It's incredibly drought-



tolerant, and hard-wearing and makes for a highly attractive lawn for a range of climates. These superior traits have led to the grass being referred to as the 'Alpha Grass.'

It's so drought tolerant that it's the only grass to be awarded the Smart Approved Watermark for water efficiency. So, it's a 'Smart Grass' too!

**The importance of turf certification through AusGAP when it comes to new and improved varieties like TifTuf**

When new grasses like TifTuf are released, it is so important that the genetic makeup

of the grass is maintained. This ensures that the grass stays true to type and maintains the superior characteristics that make it so amazing. This is why the Australian Genetic Assurance Program for Turfgrass, known as AusGAP, is so important. TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda is AusGAP Certified, which means all suppliers must adhere to the strictest of production standards and are regularly audited to ensure their grass maintains its genetic purity. TifTuf is the only hybrid couch grass in Australia to be AusGAP Certified. Just another significant reason why TifTuf stands above all other grasses in its category.

TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda is still a new variety in the Australian turf world and to achieve so much success in such a short amount of time is unparalleled. We can't wait to see what TifTuf will do in the coming years.

For more information on TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda, please get in touch with Lawn Solutions Australia.



# What makes a great workplace culture?

## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS AND MANAGING STRESS AT WORK

The recent passage of the Work Health and Safety (Psychosocial Hazards and Risks) Amendment Regulation 2022 (in nearly all states and territories across Australia) means that employers now have a more explicit duty to eliminate or minimise workplace psychosocial risks. Whilst Victoria is not yet under the WHS Act, there are still explicit requirements from WorkSafe Victoria to manage psychosocial hazards and risks.

### Summary

- From 1 October 2022, the Regulation detailing employer responsibility to respond to, manage and prevent psychosocial risks has come into effect
- The implementation of the Regulation on psychosocial risks is a warning for employers nationally, to undergo a risk assessment and review their control measures in relation to psychosocial hazards

### Background

While the concept of psychological health isn't new, it hasn't been clearly and concisely addressed in workplace legislation until now. This is despite the fact that, over the past decade, there has been an increase in psychological health issues, and a decrease in the rate of physical injuries, in the workplace.

### Psychological injury - the Regulation

Psychological health is currently addressed in the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (the WHS Act) by way of inclusion in the definition of 'health' in Section 4. This means that employers are already under an obligation to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the psychological health of their workers while they are at work.

However, the model WHS regulations and the model Codes of Practice provided

no further assistance to employers, and other duty holders, on how to meet their obligations regarding psychological health, and so this wasn't further dealt with by the WHS Regulations.

### Psychosocial hazards

Psychosocial hazards are factors in the design or management of work that increase the risk of work-related stress and can lead to psychological or physical harm. Examples of psychosocial hazards might include poor supervisor support or high job demands.

Employees are likely to be exposed to a combination of psychosocial hazards. Some hazards might always be present at work, while others only occasionally. There is a greater risk of work-related stress when psychosocial hazards combine and act together, so employers should not consider hazards in isolation.





Psychosocial hazards do not necessarily reveal the causes of work-related stress. Causes are likely to be specific to the employee, work or workplace. Senior management should identify which psychosocial hazards negatively affect employees' health and well-being and take appropriate action to control the impact of those hazards.

A psychosocial hazard is anything that could cause psychological harm (e.g. harm someone's mental health). Common psychosocial hazards at work include:

- Job demands
- Low job control
- Poor support
- Lack of role clarity

- poor organisational change management
- inadequate reward and recognition
- poor organisational justice
- traumatic events or material
- remote or isolated work
- poor physical environment
- violence and aggression
- bullying
- harassment, including sexual harassment, and
- conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions

**Kingston Heath Golf Club - Focus on ownership, safety & culture**

Hayden Mead, Golf Course Superintendent at Kingston Heath Golf Club places a safety culture and team wellbeing at the heart of team operations - "A great, safe work environment is very important for numerous

reasons; foremost the safety of staff, boosting staff morale and productivity, creating a cohesive team that everyone feels a part of and everyone takes ownership of the safety and policies and procedures of the club. The teams wellbeing and support of each other is at the heart of our culture"

**How Psychosocial Hazards Cause Harm**

Psychosocial hazards can create stress. This can cause psychological or physical harm. Stress itself is not an injury. But if workers are stressed often, over a long time, or the level of stress is high, it can cause harm.


Psychological harm may include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, or sleep disorders. Physical harm may include musculoskeletal injuries, chronic disease or fatigue related injuries.

## Managing psychosocial hazards at work

Apply the risk management process to manage psychosocial hazards

Exposure to psychosocial hazards can cause psychological and physical injury.

Under model work health and safety laws, psychosocial hazards and risks are treated the same as physical hazards and risks.





On average, **7,984** Australians are compensated for work related mental health conditions each year. Psychological injuries usually have **longer recovery times, higher costs and mean more time away from work** than physical injuries.

**Psychosocial hazards that may arise at work**

- Job demands
- Low job control
- Poor support
- Lack of role clarity
- Poor organisational change management
- Inadequate reward and recognition
- Poor organisational justice
- Traumatic events or material
- Remote or isolated work
- Poor physical environment
- Violence and aggression
- Bullying
- Harassment including sexual harassment
- Conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions

**9%** of all serious workers' compensation claims are for work-related mental health conditions.

**People at Work** is a free online tool to help businesses identify, assess and manage psychosocial risks at work. The online tool also provides guidance on practical ways to manage these risks at work.

## Managing psychosocial hazards at work

Apply the risk management process to manage psychosocial hazards

### Four steps to prevention

Safe Work Australia recommends following the same four step risk management process you use to manage physical hazards to manage psychosocial hazards. All these steps must be supported by consultation with your workers.


**Step 1: Identify**

Psychosocial hazards and risks can be identified by:

- talking and listening to your workers
- inspecting your workplace
- taking note of how your workers interact
- reviewing reports and records, and
- using a survey tool to gather information from staff.

**Step 2: Assess**

Consider what could happen if workers are exposed to the identified hazards and risks. Many hazards and their associated risks are well-known but some may need to be identified through a formal assessment process.



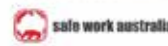

**Step 3: Control**

Where possible, eliminate the risk. This is always the safest option, but if it isn't possible, minimise the risk as much as possible through planning and prevention.

**Step 4: Review**

Maintain, monitor and review control measures when necessary. It is important to regularly review control measures to ensure they remain effective.

For information on psychosocial hazards and how they can be managed see the model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work.

### Psychosocial hazards may interact and combine

Psychosocial hazards may interact or combine to create new, changed or higher risks. It is important to consider all the psychosocial hazards workers may be exposed to when managing psychosocial risks.

Some hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. For example, when workloads are high the risk may increase if workers cannot take breaks or there is no one around to help. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe.

### Managing psychosocial risks

A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) must eliminate psychosocial risks, or if that is not reasonably practicable, minimise them so far as is reasonably practicable.

For information about managing and reducing psychosocial risk see the Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work.

### What does this mean for employers and officers?

The implementation of the Regulation regarding psychosocial risks is a warning bell for employers nationally, to undergo a risk assessment and review their control measures in relation to psychosocial hazards.

It recommends managing psychosocial hazards by following the same four-step risk management process that is used to manage physical hazards. This involves undertaking the following steps in consultation with workers:

- Identify any psychosocial risks;
- Assess the impact of all identified risks;
- Control risks by eliminating and minimising them as much as possible; and
- Review any control measures implemented, to ensure they are effective

### Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work: Mona Vale Golf Club Course Maintenance Team

Nick Tapley and his crew at Mona Vale Golf Club Course Maintenance have made a commitment to each other to remove or minimise psychosocial risks at work wherever possible.

With communication a pillar of their strategy as a team, individuals are free to ask questions and talk to others about their experience without concern of judgment.

*"It's so important to give the crew input into the work they are doing and some diversity in their jobs. We have a great setup where the team get the opportunity to try a range of different tasks to keep things interesting"* - Nick Tapley, Course Superintendent, Mona Vale Golf Club



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# The Future of your Lawn Care Business is Coming

## TORO REVOLUTION BATTERY-POWERED COMMERCIAL LAWN CARE EQUIPMENT

Toro is introducing several new pieces of durable and innovative outdoor power equipment to meet the rugged demands of landscape contractors. The new Toro Revolution Series of battery-powered commercial lawncare equipment will be introduced into Australia during 2023.

### Revolution Series Z Master® and GrandStand®

“The new Z Master® Revolution and GrandStand® Revolution take two of Toro’s beloved mower platforms and revolutionises them with lithium-ion battery power technology,” said Brian Goodridge, Toro’s Equipment Product Marketing Manager.

Every Revolution machine is equipped with patent-pending software in the controls that enables smooth operation. It also gives operators a chance to customise the machine with adjustable deck rake, drive-speed control options and blade-tip speed settings.

The Revolution Series mowers are powered by Toro’s HyperCell Power System® which



delivers all-day power and reliability. The Battery Management System (BMS) allows for longer run times and quick charging to maximise productivity. HyperCell® is built to run cooler than other power systems for long-lasting efficiency. Ultimately, you gain efficiencies, cut down on emissions, and can complete more jobs with less hassle.

To help you calculate your operational return on investment and see why going electric may just be your best decision yet, Toro will be making the total cost of ownership calculator available online in the near future.

The Toro Z Master® Revolution is built on the same proven Z Master® chassis and

TURBO FORCE® deck you've trusted for years, but with a quieter, eco-friendlier design to deliver lower overall cost over the machine's lifetime.

The proven MyRIDE® Suspension System feature on the Z Master® Revolution models provides a superior ride. The fully suspended operator platform allows up to



7.6cm of travel and reduces impacts, bumps and vibrations. The operator can easily and quickly adjust rear-shock ride settings to personal ride preferences without tools!

The Toro GrandStand® Revolution stand-on mower combines the speed and comfort of a zero-turn rider with the on-and-off ease of a wide area walk-behind — creating a fast, manoeuvrable, and more productive alternative to meet your quiet, battery-powered, efficient mowing needs.

### **60V MAX\* Revolution Series Handheld Tools**

Designed with input from professional landscape contractors, the new 60V MAX\* Revolution Series Handheld tools were built to perform in demanding work conditions and environments all day long. Powered by Toro's Flex-Force Power System®, the new line includes a dual-battery backpack that can hold two 10 Ah batteries — which is designed for comfort and power source for the integrated leaf blower or, when paired with the Powerlink tether, the string and hedge trimmers to keep jobs moving all day.

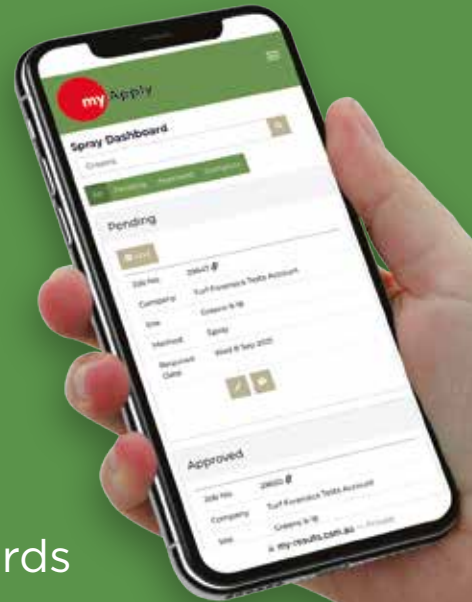
Operators can easily swap batteries out, so when one battery is done, the workday doesn't have to be. Outpacing the charging speed of larger, lower voltage batteries, the 60V power comes to you fast — taking just 50 minutes to fully charge our largest battery in the all-new six-pod rapid charger.

No matter what the challenge, the Toro integrated 60V battery platform ensures professionals always have a Revolution tool ready.

\* Battery manufacturer rating = 60V maximum and 54V typical usage. Actual voltage varies with load.



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# Turfing the Way for Fun

## BOONGAREE NATURE PLAY PARK'S NEW SIR GRANGE ZOYSIA TURF

Boongaree Nature Play Park in Berry has been given a major upgrade with the installation of Sir Grange Zoysia natural turf by local turf provider Turfco around the recently built pump track. The project was initiated after Turfco organised a council farm visit, where Shoalhaven Council Co-Ordinator of Parks and Ovals, Richard McGuinness, learned about Sir Grange Zoysia. The turf is a low-maintenance, environmentally sustainable natural turf surface that is perfect for difficult or expensive areas to maintain.

Kikuyu was initially installed around the pump track in December 2022, but it quickly became apparent that it would be hazardous to mow and some of the banks were too steep even for a whipper snipper. Kikuyu also grows quickly, requiring frequent and expensive maintenance. Richard discussed Sir Grange with his colleagues, and Turfco was subsequently consulted in regard to making arrangements for the installation of the new turf.

The cost of the turf was about 1/30th the cost of soft fall, which would have been an alternative option. A black pump track would have become very hot in the summer, but the natural grass surround provided by Sir Grange will help to keep users cooler. Sir Grange also provides a safe and soft landing zone if users were to ride off the side of the pump track.

Sir Grange Zoysia looks fantastic unmown and will save the council money and time in maintenance and upkeep. It requires zero





fertiliser and will only need to be whippet snipped around the edges from time to time if required. Turf is also a great stabiliser and natural coolant, making it the perfect choice for a pump track where safety is paramount.

Once the go-ahead was given, Turfco removed 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of the existing failed kikuyu with an excavator with a tilt bucket, ensuring that existing gradients were left intact. Refuse was removed from the site, and 38 tonnes of free-draining turf underlay were brought in to assist new turf growth. A

total of 1,275m<sup>2</sup> of Sir Grange Zoysia was supplied and installed, with the turf being pegged down on the embankment for stabilisation on steep sections.

Installation took place over several days. The Sir Grange started to establish within just three weeks of being installed, and the main aim for the council is to reduce the high maintenance required by kikuyu by switching to Sir Grange, which will be left almost totally unmown.

The Boongaree Nature Play Park pump track is now safer and more attractive thanks to the installation of Sir Grange Zoysia natural turf. The turf provides a low-maintenance, environmentally sustainable solution that is perfect for this application. With Sir Grange in place, council workers will be able to spend less time on maintenance and more time ensuring that the pump track is safe and enjoyable for the community.



# The Invitation Only Golfing Sanctuary

## OHOOPÉE MATCH CLUB

Situated on the Ohoopée River at Cobbtown in rural Georgia, 120 kilometres west of Savannah in the USA is the Ohoopée Match Club. The Club was opened in 2018 by tech investor and entrepreneur Michael Walrath and as low-key private clubs go, this one's nearly off the grid!

Walrath sought to create a golf facility that respected the traditions of the game while innovating and taking private golf in a new and exciting direction. A place where mates could enjoy match-play golf.

The 3,500-acre property was purchased in 2016 and renowned golf course designers Hanse and Wagner were enlisted to design the course. They were given the directive to create a unique match-play course that was fun and sporty, with a focus on

risk versus reward situations. Hanse and Wagner crafted the 22-hole layout atop the undulating, forested, property by the lake that previously functioned as an onion farm. Eighteen holes form the traditional layout; plus, extra holes, including a few that cross over each other.

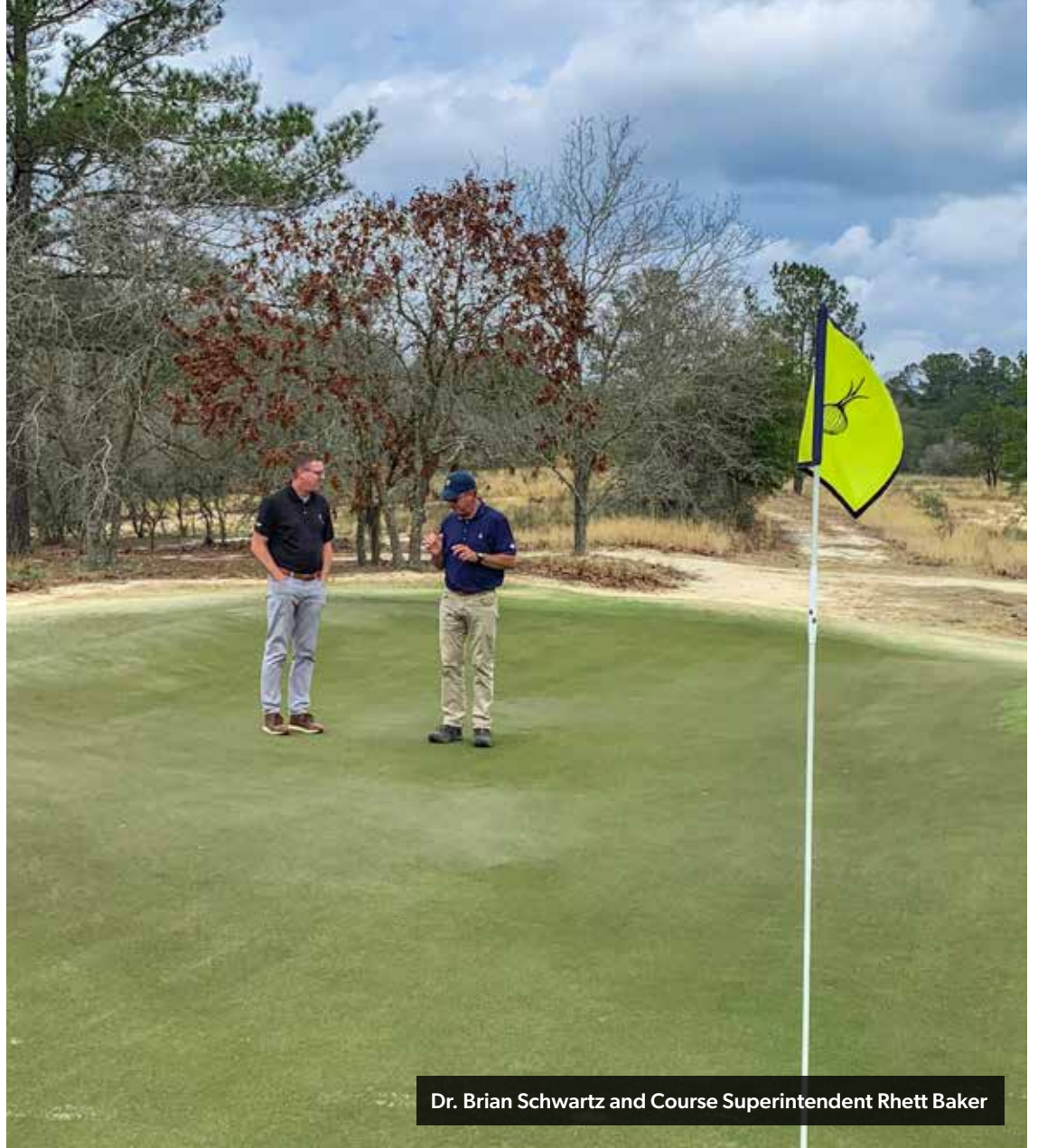
The club operates from mid-September to mid-June, with a clubhouse and bar, dining area, men's and women's locker rooms, a fitness room and 12 guest rooms. There are also four lodges, each with eight guest rooms and large gathering rooms.

The 22-hole championship golf course is, without doubt, the main draw card, but there is a range of other activities on the property as well, including two lakes stocked for fishing, upland wing shooting, and sporting clays.

### The Ohoopée Match Club Course

The Ohoopée Match Club Course is a 6,692 metre, Par 72 featuring TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda throughout the entire course. The course is full of half-par holes and risk-versus-reward situations that provide a fun yet challenging golf experience. Course Superintendent Rhett Baker has over 26 years of experience in golf management and has been at Ohoopée since construction commenced seven years ago.

The course is bracketed by native sandy soil, scrubby vegetation, and gorgeous live oaks, but it has plenty of widths to allow for multiple options off the tee. Sculpted bunkers of all sizes, and inspired contouring on and around the greens, make Ohoopée ideal for match play.



Dr. Brian Schwartz and Course Superintendent Rhett Baker

### Turf selection

Due to the sandy soil and the need for a turf variety that would survive in such a low-fertility environment, TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda was selected as the grass for the tees, fairways, and bunker surrounds across the entire course. TifTuf is an incredibly hardy variety that would provide an exceptional playing surface without the need for expensive inputs that they simply didn't have the budget for. TifTuf is mainly known for its industry-leading drought tolerance, meaning that watering requirements would be minimised while maintaining a quality surface in the trying conditions experienced in this climate. *"It's hard to go past bermudagrass in southeast Georgia,"* Baker says. Plus TifTuf has resilience to nematodes, which with all the sand on-site was likely going to be an issue at some stage.

TiffEagle, another exceptional grass, also out of the University of Georgia's turf grass program in Tifton, was used for the greens.

Starting at an elevated clubhouse beside the main lake, the course takes golfers on an absorbing journey through a sparse woodland with open meadow sections at the 10th and four additional holes at the Whiskey Routing. The longer holes, such as the 2nd and 3rd, provide challenges that reward those who take on the daunting bunkers. The mid-iron par threes at the 5th and 16th also provide challenges with their wasteland areas and almost-island greens.

The most memorable moments of match play are found in the holes that straddle the long three-short four divide, including the 8th and 13th. The 14th and 9th are listed as

par 3.5s and can be particularly difficult for those who attack the green off the tee. The 14th has similarities to Hanse's infamous 5th hole at Boston Golf Club, with a push-up green and trouble lurking on the right and tricky chipping areas on the left.

Despite having a small membership and focusing more on matches for its members and guests, Ohoopee has established a devoted following among golf enthusiasts who regard it as the most significant course in the Hanse/Wagner portfolio. The facility fosters genuine bonds of golfing mateship and camaraderie and provides a world-class experience for those who prefer stroke play or match play.



# Growing Greener at Tinamba Turf



## SUSTAINABLE TURF PRODUCTION

Tinamba Turf is a leading grower of premium quality turf in Queensland. Many of the turf varieties that Tinamba Turf produces are ideally suited to the climatic conditions of Southeast Queensland and beyond.

A big focus for Tinamba Turf is sustainable turf production methods. With about 1,000 acres of irrigated turf cultivar over three properties, one of their main objectives is to ensure these farms have access to secure water and can utilise typical SEQ weather events to their advantage. They collect overland water flow

from about 60-65% of their property, with the ability to catch up to 500 million litres of water during heavy rain events.

Tinamba has three main storage dams, two of which handle the bulk of the overland flow, while the third is mainly for storage and can be pumped into during flood harvest or dry times. An advantage of their overland catchment system is the ability to capture any migrating fertiliser or chemical, thus rediverting it from entering waterways.

The farm employs efficient irrigation systems, with 13 centre pivots and only four lateral irrigation lines covering one hectare. The irrigation system is monitored over the internet and equipped with emergency stop systems if required. In the peak of the drought, Tinamba can use up to five million litres of water a day for irrigation.

Tinamba has a license to pump 500 million litres of water on a part A license (Logan River Scheme) and 868 million litres of flood harvest per year. The farm also operates several bores to supplement the overall irrigation system.



Water collection dams



Broiler farms utilised for fertiliser

In addition to their sustainable turf production, Tinamba also hosts a broiler farm with over 200,000 chickens on site. The fertiliser from the chicken sheds is used on the property for the long-term sustainable growth of the turf.

Recently, Tinamba has undergone an extensive in-house trial of organic amendments to gauge the short- and long-term effects. The organics come from a local supplier reusing green waste products from the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Logan, and Ipswich city councils.

The trial has resulted in an estimated 30% water savings, increased cation exchange, boosted carbon content in the soil to aid nitrogen uptake and other benefits.

Tinamba has invested in two huge solar energy systems for the farm. One system provides power to the poultry sheds, while the other system runs all the offices and main engineering sheds for the mechanics and boiler makers. The next investment will be in on-site batteries to manage startup loads when technology permits.

In the last 12 months, Tinamba has made a significant investment in six brand new Euro 6 standard carbon emissions trucks. All the trucks have been delivered and are on the road. Tinamba Turf is committed to sustainable turf production and reducing its environmental impact through various initiatives and investments. A truly innovative and sustainable turf operation leading the way for the industry.



# The Lawn Tips Par 3 Project

BY BEN SIMS

I started in the turf industry when I was 20 years old, and I worked on a golf course for eight years in a country town in NSW called Orange. I was fortunate enough to have a lot of experience with different grass cultivars and had the opportunity to not only work on a golf course with bentgrass greens but also on a hybrid couch bowling green.

As soon as I finished my apprenticeship my passion for turf increased dramatically and I was addicted to researching and learning as much as I could. I would read every article I could find online, and I

bought multiple books to help increase my knowledge and understanding.

This love for turf then sparked a passion to teach others how to look after their own lawns which is what ultimately pushed me to start my YouTube channel, Lawn Tips.

I uploaded my first video on the 25th of May 2017. My goal was to upload a video once a week consistently and give people not only "Lawn Tips" but provide entertainment as well. Two years later I quit my job on the golf course and went into a full-time job on YouTube talking about grass.

In the second year of my apprenticeship, I had started to dream of owning and building my own golf course but had always thought that was a little farfetched and impossible. Fast forward to the present day and my dream has become a reality!

## The Par 3 project

My wife and I purchased a 12-acre property in 2021 and the Par 3 project was born!

Taking on this Par 3 build has presented many challenges and I have learnt so much more than I had ever expected to.



The first hurdle was making sure we had sufficient water to water the green, fairways, and tees. We only have rainwater storage on the property and no access to town water. I was told that people who sunk bores in our area had very little flow and a minimal chance of water, but I decided to take the risk and sink a bore on the property. If you've ever sunk a bore before you know how risky it really is. You could be \$30k out of pocket with a 200m hole in the ground with no water to show for it. Thankfully we found water at about 60m underground and had a flow of 500 gallons/hour which was enough to fill up some water storage tanks to then pump some water onto the course.

The build officially started on the 4th of September after nearly 12 months of rain delays.

#### **The subgrade**

The first step in building a golf green is building the foundation which is known as the subgrade. This is where the levels of the final grade of the green are determined. This was by far the most difficult part of the whole process due to constant revisions on the final shape and undulations on my green. The final size of the green I shaped is 500m<sup>2</sup> (the subgrade doesn't have to mirror the finished grade but it's important to get as close as possible to prevent movement in material and levels over time).

#### **Subsurface drainage**

The next step is the subsurface drainage which is designed to help move excess water from the profile, so the green is playable even after heavy storms. 100mm ag pipe was used in a herringbone pattern to collect as much water as possible. 200m of pipe was used over the whole of the green surface.

#### **The gravel layer**

The gravel layer is also used to remove excess water from the green surface and help to prevent the sand from clogging up the drainage. The gravel also creates a perched or suspended water table in the



sand, increasing its ability to retain nutrients and moisture. The gravel layer should be within one inch of the final grade of the green surface (100 tonnes of gravel was used at 100mm in thickness).

#### **The sand layer**

The sand layer is what the bentgrass is established on. Golf greens are built with sand to help move water, allow more traffic, and promote a stronger, more dense root system.

The sand is 300mm thick which equates to about 260 tonnes of sand. I spent three weeks shaping, watering, and compacting the sand so it was ready for grass. This can be done in 2-3 days, but I sowed my surrounds during this time to prevent soil eroding onto the green itself.

#### **Sowing the green**

On the 23rd of February, I sowed the bent grass into the sand. I watered the seed four times a day to help with germination

and by day six the seed had germinated. The green was then mowed on day 14 and would be mowed every 2-3 days for the next four weeks.

At the six-week mark, I start to mow daily, and liquid fertilisers are applied weekly to help promote growth and build up nutrients in the sand profile. At the time of writing this article (1st of May), the green is 11 weeks old and is nearly filled in.





### **Next steps...**

Now that the green is built it's time to start working on fairways and tee boxes.

This will include irrigation installation, shaping fairways and building elevated tee boxes.

### **Grass selection**

To help save water on the course I have decided to select warm season grasses for the fairways. For the larger fairway, I have

selected TiffTuf Hybrid Bermuda. It's a great grass for the climate here with its superior drought tolerance and ability to hold good colour leading into the cooler months.

For the Fairway toward the back of the paddock, I have decided to go with some Sir Grange Zoysia. I'm excited to try some zoysia out on the property as I don't have a lot of experience with it. Sir Grange Zoysia was specifically bred for the golf industry,

it's very versatile and is used on some of the best courses in the world, so it's pretty cool to have here in Orange.

I'm still undecided on the grass types for my tee boxes, but they will be warm season grass again to help with water. I'm leaning towards a hybrid couch due to quicker repair rates with divots and traffic. I look forward to providing an update as the build progresses further towards the end of the year.



# From Disaster to Resilience

## ADAPTING OPEN GREEN SPACES TO FUTURE FLOODING

When record flood waters inundated large parts of Victoria and southern NSW in late 2022, the focus in the immediate aftermath was on the thousands of homes, properties and businesses which were destroyed, and the mammoth task of rebuilding.

These floods were like nothing before seen in history – whole townships were underwater, homes were unliveable, families were displaced, businesses were closed indefinitely, and the recovery seemed insurmountable.

As the months have passed, and communities continue to rebuild, our attention is slowly turning to other less obvious casualties of the natural disaster, such as our iconic public open space areas, sporting fields, and caravan parks.

How were they impacted, how have they recovered, and what lessons can we learn?

Coolabah Turf, located at Echuca, near some of the hardest hit communities, recently set out to seek some answers, investigating the impacts of floodwater on turf varieties in holiday parks, sporting ovals and open green spaces.

And what they found may go some way towards shaping how we attempt to flood-proof these spaces in the future.

Coolabah Turf Farm Manager David Geltch described the 2022 floods as an extreme event, and one which they expected would annihilate all turf varieties, given the extended periods of time in which they were submerged in deep flood water.

However, Mr Geltch said the surprising outcome was that some Lawn Solutions Australia turf varieties withstood up to six weeks underwater, and miraculously, recovered.

### Echuca Case Studies

Campaspe Shire Council Turf Specialist, Ben Lloyd said he was impressed with and blown away by the resilience of TifTuf and its rate of recovery in two separate public space areas in Echuca which were submerged by flood waters for more than six weeks.

*“We were absolutely amazed at how the TifTuf bounced back in the Echuca Kiosk/Riverboat Dock and Victoria Park Boat Ramp areas after the flood waters eventually subsided,”* he said.



Photo: Steve Huntley



Photo: Chris Hawking



Photo: Steve Huntley

“Our parks team expected the turf to be totally obliterated given the length of time it was oxygen deprived and without sunlight, and we fully expected to have had to replace the surface.

“But within weeks of flood waters subsiding, we could see a tinge of green popping its head up through the film of silt that post-flood had covered the entire area.”

Mr Lloyd said his team’s resources were extremely stretched post-flood and they did not perform any sort of maintenance on the affected areas at the Echuca Kiosk/Riverboat Dock and Victoria Park Boat Ramp to assist in the turf’s recovery.

“The areas which have fully recovered are in a full sun environment, and the few areas which are still recovering are slower because of shade cast from the bridge structure, but we are confident it is happening,” he said.

An additional factor, not previously experienced in Mr Lloyd’s 13-plus years in the role at the council, was the destructive emergence of mites causing visible damage to the recovering turf area.

He said he had applied fortnightly applications of Thumper to treat the mites over a 12-week period.

“The softer stolon was definitely an invitation for the mites to burrow in and attack new growth,” he said.

“The flood waters and poor drainage in the area provided a prime swampy and moist environment for them to thrive.”

**Moama Case Studies**

In Echuca’s twin town, Moama, on the NSW side of the Murray River, the community’s two most iconic public open space assets were heavily impacted by floodwater that took weeks to peak and then lingered for many months.

At Moama Beach, on the banks of the Murray, the turf (Eureka Premium VG Kikuyu) was underwater from the end of August until the beginning of December, with water levels reaching approximately 9m in depth. The damage to trees, infrastructure and amenities



### Key to Successful Turf Recovery

- Ensure the site is safe - electricity and water mains are turned off
- Ensure areas are free from toxic debris
- Put in place a disease and weed management plan
- Wear appropriate protective clothing and have in place clean water and facilities for washing down
- Collect samples of soil for salinity, nutrient and organic matter
- Coring and/or verticutting to assist in turf recovery
- Apply small applications of liquid fertiliser to encourage new growth
- Address recommendation from soil test results
- Replace areas of turf that aren't showing signs of recovery



was significant, and the area sustained full turf loss, requiring complete replacement.

At Kerrabee Soundshell, Moama's main public reserve for festivals, events and markets, almost half of the green space was underwater from October until early December, reaching a depth of approximately 1.5m. Assets and amenities were flooded with contaminated water and the turf (kikuyu) and landscape loss were significant.

Of the inundated area (approx. 1000m<sup>2</sup>), 90% of turf was lost, and there was only partial recovery of the remaining 10%, three to four weeks after the water receded.

Murray River Council, Manager Parks & Biosecurity Luke Keogh said with certainty both sites would flood again.

*"What we've learnt is that the assets and infrastructure chosen for these sites need to be sustainable,"* Mr Keogh said.

*"Furniture needs to be removed pre-flood, and the landscaping should be minimal."*

*"The turf will need replacing depending on the flood event time, however good soil for the turf areas will reduce the post-event cost to restore."*

Mr Keogh said one thing was for sure, how unequivocally valued these two open space areas were by ratepayers in the community.

*"The community is celebrating the reinstatement and usability of their local beach and park,"* he said.

*"Which as a council, reinforces for us that we are investing in the right areas of public infrastructure."*

#### Caravan Park Case Study - Moama

Moama Waters Holiday Park is home to acres upon acres of Eureka Premium VG Kikuyu turf supplied by Coolabah Turf and was chosen for its hardiness, dense growth, and fast recovery rate.

When the park was swamped with floodwater in October, it was impossible to know how the turf would hold up. Water inundated the entire park, onsite restaurant and surrounding roads over a 12-day period and remained on some areas of the turf for a further two weeks following the peak. The floodwater at the grass area near the restaurant (at the river's edge) was worst affected, along with many caravan and cabin sites.

Park owner Rod Perry said the turf had recovered surprisingly well given the extreme circumstances of the event which closed the park for 7 weeks.

*"When the water subsided, we raked the impacted areas with a grass rake which helped air it out and also removed the build-up of silt,"* Mr Perry said.

*"This helped the grass recover and we did have some sunny weather that also helped. The less inundated areas recovered a lot quicker. We were mowing that grass within a week and the more heavily impacted areas were within a couple of weeks."*

*"The grass seemed to cope well given what we had just experienced. Being able to mow and give the grounds the attention they needed as soon as were able to help to have the sites ready when we were able to re-open on December 5. We received comments from guests that you wouldn't have even known we had had a flood!"*

#### Rochester Case Studies

About 45km south of Echuca, the township of Rochester suffered the worst of the state's catastrophic flooding event, with up to 1000 properties inundated.



Photo: Nicole Connolley



Photo: Megan Causer



Photo: Mitch Lyons



Photo: Megan Causer

Brett Wileman, proprietor at Temptation Living and Landscapes was one of many Rochester residents affected when his nursery and sand and soil yard were punished by the flood waters which ripped through his retail shop front at a height of 1.2m.

Brett and his wife Sally, who also run a landscape and turf maintenance business, said he had been amazed at the incredible rates of recovery of turf groundcover in the flood-affected area.

*"Most of the turf we mow and maintain in and around industrial factory sites, schools and nature strips is kikuyu and it is all looking amazing,"* Mr Wileman said.

*"It was incredible how turf surfaces recovered and repaired post-flood. To be honest, despite how destructive the flood waters were in our towns with regard to damage done to homes, fences and other buildings and infrastructure, we haven't actually seen too much carnage with regard to lawns."*

*"Mind you, it is worth noting, flood waters which impacted the Rochester township literally came, wiped us out, and disappeared within about 3-4 days. So while we were more severely*

*affected by the flood event than other areas, the water didn't hang around for as long."*

Mr Wilman said an unexpected bi-product of the flood event was stones that the waters transported onto Rochester's main sports field, which required manual removal by hand.

He said the local committee of management who maintain the sporting facility recently direct-drilled the kikuyu turf oval with ryegrass seed and have it looking an absolute treat.

### The Findings

Historically, the degree of flood damage to turf is determined by three major factors, said Coolabah Turf's David Geltch.

*"Length of time inundated, depth of flood waters, and as we saw a major trend in the 2022 flood event was the toxicity of the water quality,"* he said.

*"This water was black like we've not seen before, and toxic to the extreme that you could see where it had stripped galvanising off steel posts in its wake."*

Mr Geltch said a clear observation from the case studies was that the ability of the turf to handle floodwaters varied significantly.

*"The thing that we've predominantly seen through this extreme experience is that where the turf has been in shallower water, for up to six weeks, it's tended to have survived."*

*"But where it's been in that deeper floodwater, and for greater lengths of time, that's where it's failed and hasn't recovered."*

Mr Geltch said the less expected observation was that TiffTuf had stood out as a star performer.

*"I'd love to say it was no surprise to us that the TiffTuf survived, but actually we didn't expect anything to endure those conditions,"* he said.

*"What was surprising, was learning that the areas in Echuca had recovered to the extent that they had without intervention. In fact, the turf in those spaces has continued to thrive against further odds battling the applications of Thumper to treat the mites."*

Mr Geltch said to help expedite the growth recovery of damaged turf, Coolabah Turf would usually perform some level of maintenance including aerating, scarifying, and possibly top dressing of the area.

Jai Loader, winner of "Best Lawn" with presenter Jason Hodges



# Celebrating Adelaide's Best Lawn

BY NEWTONS BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE SUPPLIES



In February of this year, Newtons Building and Landscape Supplies hosted the inaugural Adelaide's Best Lawn Competition in partnership with Sunnyside Instant Lawn and Lawn Solutions Australia (LSA). This exciting event saw two winners crowned as the best lawn devotees in Adelaide. The competition brought together a panel of knowledgeable lawn experts, including Jason Hodges and Simon Adermann from LSA, Theo Kyriazis, Frank Ferella, and Will Richey from Newtons Building and Landscape Supplies, and Andrew Rowett

from Sunnyside Instant Lawn. The panel had the difficult task of selecting the first-ever winners of the competition.

The competition was a fantastic opportunity for key suppliers such as Jeffries, Toro, Golden North, Lawn Solutions Australia, and Nelson, to come together and celebrate their shared passion for beautiful lawns and curbside appeal! Newtons Building and Landscape Supplies led the charge in organising this event, demonstrating their commitment to promoting the benefits of buying and using a Lawn Solutions Lawn.

The competition winners, Jai Loader from Meadows (Best Lawn) and Sam Putland from Mount Barker (Best Lawn Renovation) were overjoyed to be recognised as the first-ever winners of Adelaide's Best Lawn Competition. Their commitment to creating and maintaining top-shelf lawns was clear to see.

Speaking with Theo from Newtons Building and Landscape Supplies, the competition was born out of a desire to create recognition for the hard work that goes into building and maintaining beautiful lawns. He noted that while builders often receive



Sam Putland, winner of "Best Reno"

awards for their work on houses, there is a distinct lack of recognition for the role that lawns play in creating a fantastic first impression of a property.

Enter, Adelaide's Best Lawn Competition – a competition that would leave a legacy in Adelaide and encourage budding gardeners and lawn enthusiasts to put their best mower forward. Through creating the competition Newtons wanted to also promote the benefits of using lawns such as TifTuf as promoting sustainable gardening solutions is something Newtons and its

suppliers are very passionate about. The competition had entries come in from all over Adelaide, including the Northern suburbs, South, East, and West. Leaving no blade unturned.

The judges were incredibly impressed with the pedigree of lawns displayed by the entrants, making their decision a tricky one. Newtons Building and Landscape Supplies leveraged the power of digital marketing, working with local marketing agency 4RT, to create a digital campaign that allowed entrants to submit their lawn entries via Instagram.

In closing, the inaugural Adelaide's Best Lawn Competition was a fantastic success, it was a real treat to witness lawn aficionados from all corners of Adelaide come together and celebrate the wonder that is a Lawn Solutions Lawn. Kudos to the Newtons Building and Landscape Supplies crew for their relentless dedication to stunning lawns. We can't wait to see what they've got up their sleeves for the next round!



# Brisbane's Best Lawn is Getting Bigger Every Year

BY CENTENARY LANDSCAPING SUPPLIES

Brisbane's Best Lawn competition has been a huge success since its inception three years ago. The competition has grown in popularity, and this year saw over 50 entries from enthusiastic amateur greenskeepers. The competition is a testament to the passion and dedication of these individuals who have worked tirelessly to create beautiful, lush lawns.

The top 10 entries were assessed by expert judges from Lawn Solutions Australia, UltraGrow, Centenary Landscaping Supplies,

and celebrity lawn enthusiast and landscaper Jason Hodges. The judges were impressed with the quality of the lawns and found it challenging to narrow down the entries to the top three, which turned out to be a top four this time around with such hot competition.

The winner of this year was Matt Kehl from Narangba, whose TifTuf lawn and meticulously kept gardens left the judges in awe. The judges were particularly impressed with the perfectly placed street tree that fit seamlessly into the landscape. Matt

uses a Masport and Scott Bonner cylinder mower and mows his lawn three times a week. He kickstarts the lawn's growth in Spring by cutting it back to dirt, fertilising it, top dressing with Fairway Pro-MAXX, and allowing the grass to grow back through thick and lush.

The criteria for judging the lawns included visual appearance, maintenance regime, and care regime. The lawns were evaluated on their colour, thickness, coverage, presence of weeds and pests, mowing





frequency, fertilising schedule, and weed and pest management. The competition has set a high standard.

Centenary Group CEO James McCullough said they started the competition in spring of 2020 to take advantage of the boom in home improvements that came about during Covid-19 lockdown. He added that the lawn quality is so high that it's almost a detriment to the competition, as people are scared to enter because they don't think their lawn is up to scratch.

The competition's success is a testament to the dedication and hard work of amateur greenskeepers in the region. It is an excellent platform for showcasing the talent and passion of these individuals and promotes the importance of lawn care and maintenance. The competition has also sparked an interest in lawn care, with many homeowners now investing more time and effort in their lawns. Congratulations to Matt Kehl for winning this year's competition and hats off to the other finalists who put in a lot of effort to get their lawns looking incredible.

Looking forward, the competition will be expanding in 2023 to become Queensland's Best Lawn, which will open up the competition to even more talented lawn enthusiasts from across the state. It promises to be an exciting event, and we can't wait to see the high-quality lawns that will be entered into the competition. Stay tuned for more information on Queensland's Best Lawn in the coming months!



# Turf Australia Appoints New CEO

## INTRODUCING MATTHEW LUNN

When the call came for Matthew Lunn to join Turf Australia late last year, there was no hesitation in saying yes even though, at the time, he was well embedded into his successful roles as CEO of the Nursery Garden Industry WA and Landscape Industries Association WA in Perth.

Matthew, who originally arrived in Australia in 1994 from the UK, had devoted his entire career to horticulture, having been encouraged by his late father to pursue such a path when he was taken to his first Chelsea Flower Show as a young teenager.

By 18, Matthew began a horticultural apprenticeship at the Royal Horticultural Society's Garden at Wisley and quickly fell in love with horticulture. It was during this period that, through the RHS, he worked on the Chelsea Flower Show and began to have a keen eye for landscape design and construction.

*"Those early days were the real building blocks of my career, and although we always grumble about being put through*

*an apprenticeship, the result allowed me to grow my career outwards, particularly within horticulture; those paths are endless."*

In 1994 Matthew arrived in Perth and was appointed as the Grounds Manager at Curtin University; he held this position for ten years before joining the University of Western Australia in a similar role for three years.

It was here that his first interest in turf began when he managed a variety of passive and recreational turf surfaces and embarked on formal turf management training at TAFE and then at Sydney University under the guidance of Prof Peter Martin.

*"Turf has always been a big part of my horticultural DNA, which I suppose has come from my keen interest in sport and regularly attending sporting venues across the UK. My path should have taken me into sports turf management and the presentation of turf in stadiums.*

*The effort that goes into turf grass surfaces in stadia today is boggling, and it is those turf practitioners that play such a massive role in*

*the development of high-profile sports and sportsmen as well as bringing undoubtedly the enjoyment and theatre of visiting such iconic sporting facilities we have today."*

In 2016 Matthew joined the Nursery and Garden Industry WA as their CEO, having run a successful landscape business in Perth.

For nearly seven years, he lifted the image of the nursery industry and mainly worked closely with growers on improving advocacy with the state government.

*"This career period was critical in helping me in this new role with Turf Australia. Working closely with the NGIWA board and their members and seeing first-hand the importance of assisting growers in being part of a sustainable industry was great learning. The continued development of the national accreditation program, the Australian Plant Production Standard, also provided me with a clear insight into the future direction of businesses so that they became more profitable and gained better market access by being an accredited grower."*



Recording the Turf Talk podcast

By January this year, he joined Turf Australia officially as their national CEO. Since then, he has been busily understanding the association's relationship with the 240 levy-paying turf farms across Australia.

Within his work, he will be closely working with the Turf Australia National Board and President Bec Sellick as they work to forge Turf Australia as the peak industry body for the turf industry.

As well as this, there will be a prominent role in overseeing the turf levy projects in collaboration with Hort Innovation and ensuring the extension work with turf growers through the state associations is mainly delivered and continuing to build broad relationships with the end users within the landscape space.

*"Turf Australia has a wealth of history as an association, but in many ways, it is time for it to take another step forward so that it doesn't either get left behind or, as we have seen with other associations, forced into an amalgamation with another similar industry.*

*As a peak body, we must not only be seen but have a strong voice in all areas of advocacy that impact this industry. We have vital issues around rising production costs, labour shortages, natural disasters and in some cases, businesses that are not forging ahead with innovative practices to make their farms more financially viable."*

Lunn, therefore, believes Turf Australia has a fundamental role to play in the lives of Australians, with living plants becoming even more critical when considering climate change, with turf always being seen as part of the solution when mitigating heat.

To this end, Turf Australia will continue to work closely with its state associations and help to develop strong branding on the benefits of turf and why alternatives like synthetic grass have considerable environmental negatives.

*"When we start looking at synthetic turf, particularly for residential properties, I almost shudder with disbelief. I'm a great believer that in many circumstances, the homeowner has*

*been misinformed about the real benefits of turf, and poorly kept grassed areas are often the perfect advert for not buying natural turf. Our job is to make turf this great living carpet for all levels of gardeners. On top of this, by proactively working with state water authorities, any concerns over water usage should also be negated based on turf's great benefits, including mitigating the heat island effect in urban areas and human mental health."*

Turf Australia's future, therefore, looks to be in good hands, and with a national board and President fully committed to building Turf Australia, it appears the turf production industry is in for some exciting times ahead with a clear strategic direction of helping to develop a more sustainable and resilient sector.



# New Premium Turf Supplier in South Australia

## INTRODUCING EZI LAWNS

Ezi Lawns is a turf supplier based in Bordertown, South Australia, that specialises in supplying premium quality turf to homeowners, landscapers, and commercial developers. The company offers a wide variety of turf options to suit different applications, including Sir Walter DNA Certified Buffalo and TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda.

The business is relatively new and came about from an opportunity for growth as a Lawn Solutions Australia (LSA) member in South Australia. The team behind Ezi

Lawns includes Owners Ashley Cook and Jenny Tilbrook, alongside Matthew and Kriena Rowett.

Ashley Cook is an oat miller who also worked in the family oat milling business, Blue Lake Milling, and did so for many years. Ashley moved from Mount Gambier to Bordertown when he left school. During Ashley's time at Blue Lake Milling, Ashley learnt everything about making the best product for porridge possible and gained a strong knowledge of the production

process. He was responsible for ensuring the production, packaging lines and infrastructure in the mill and facilities kept pace with the business as it grew both domestic and export markets. At the time the business was sold in 2015, it employed approximately 140 staff across three sites located in three states.

Ashley is passionate about producing quality products for a large market and doing this in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible. While not



considered the conventional fit as a turf farmer, Ashley's experience has proven to be instrumental in adapting and finding success within the new business. The team at Ezi Lawns jokes that Ashley's favourite things in life are concrete and steel with all the construction projects he's undertaken over the years, but a love for turf is quickly becoming a new favourite.

Jenny is a farmer's daughter from a small town called Lake King in Western Australia. She completed a Bachelor of Accounting

and Finance and worked in financial planning before joining Ashley at Blue Lake Milling. Jenny worked in the sales team where the markets included industrial, domestic, and export retail customers.

The time at Blue Lake Milling provided Ashley and Jenny with experience in building and maintaining long-term supply arrangements for a broad range of customers including the major supermarkets and multi-national food companies. As the company grew so did

the systems which ensured compliance with food standards across multiple countries and markets. This included production quality controls to ensure products that would meet individual customer expectations while ensuring the operations were as cost-effective and efficient as possible.

Matthew Rowett is an accountant and financial planner and is the numbers man at Ezi Lawns. As a director of Ezi Lawns, Matt's input on management systems and financial



**Ashley Cook, Ezi Lawns co-owner**

decisions is paramount with his many years of experience as an advisor for another turf business, Sunnyside Instant Lawns.

Kriena Rowett is the one who keeps everyone grounded and reminds the team of the importance of family. As a small family business, Kriena is crucial and is often the one who has all the kids when work commitments ramp up. Kriena always has a plan and healthy food on hand to help us work towards what we are trying to achieve. *"We all need a mum in our lives to keep us on track and Kriena is that for all of us!"* Jenny informed us.

Being in a business that grows something is exciting and tangible. There is the element of uncertainty of working with an agricultural product, but there is also the sense of achievement when you can consistently produce a product to the highest standard. The team at Ezi Lawns don't shy away from hard work and all enjoy the opportunity to have a balance between the physical outdoors work on the product, but also working in and on the business.

There is still a demand for kikuyu in the region, but Ezi Lawns would like to encourage the market to move away from

the kikuyu and adopt more environmentally sustainable varieties like TiffTuf. Environmental sustainability is a passion for the business with improved production efficiencies and the development of new high-quality turf products for the market.

A new business is exciting and a little daunting at the same time. The benefit for Ezi Lawns is the opportunity to learn from other well-established businesses, taking things that work well and using their own experiences to implement new ways of doing things, the Ezi Lawns way.



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