TURF TALK

BY LAWN SOLUTIONS AUSTRALIA | JUNE 2025

Built for the Community, Ready for the Big Stage

BAROSSA PARK, LYNDOCH SA MAKES IT'S AFL DEBUT

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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.

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Inside this issue

Built for the Community, Ready for the Big Stage

BAROSSA PARK, LYNDOCH SA MAKES IT'S AFL DEBUT

The quick ten-month turnaround presented a state-of-the-art precinct at Barossa Park in Lyndoch, South Australia. The multi-million-dollar project included the full establishment of the TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda Main Oval playing surface, with the AFL taking to the oval just five months after installation. A phenomenal effort!

The project began in April 2024, with an announcement from the State Government to partner with The Barossa Council to redevelop Lyndoch Recreation Park. This included an upgrade of the existing oval that was to meet AFL standards. The redevelopment also included a second new (Recreation Green) oval, a new multi-purpose building, and extended facilities to accommodate tens of thousands of spectators.

Turf Specification

When it came to the Main Oval playing surface, TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda was specified due to the quality expectations, the short timeframe to establish the surface, the challenges of a Barossa summer, and any potential water quality and supply issues. Key considerations included turf density and performance, sustainability and durability, ability to withstand heavy use, recover quickly from wear and tear, and low water usage.

The profile design and specification, construction supervision, and grow-in programming and supervision stages for Barossa Park's playing surfaces were awarded to Greenspace 4D, offering their expertise in green space redevelopment and creating high-end playing surfaces. The team at Greenspace 4D provided detailed information at each stage of the project, from early design through to material and soil testing and approvals.

The turf was supplied by local South Australian turf supplier Sunnyside Instant Lawn based in Bordertown. Sunnyside has significant experience developed through involvement with a range of high-profile turfing projects.

Greenspace 4D's Daryl Sellar inspected the TifTuf prior to harvest at Sunnyside Instant Lawn, testing for turf quality and purity. Daryl was committed to the project until well after the establishment stages and gave TifTuf his stamp of approval.

Project Construction

Tom Fiest Civil Construction were awarded the contract and engaged Lawn Nation to manage the works not long after. Lawn Nation worked on a challenging site during the winter months, preparing the subgrade, drainage, irrigation system, sand profile, and levelling. They completed the TifTuf installation by November 2024. It took attention to detail by the Lawn Nation team to install 15 truckloads of tight-knit turf slabs. Turf was harvested over a ten-day period, with Sunnyside supplying over 16,500m^2 of TifTuf to Barossa Park to complete the project.

Cameron Bourke, The Barossa Council, managed multiple departments with strict commitments across the project. This included working with Lawn Nation and Living Turf to implement the turf establishment program, including monitoring irrigation volumes, top dressing, aeration, mowing, and nutrient applications. This entire area was then to be over-sown with ryegrass in February to further enhance presentation for the mid-April games.

Build-Up to Gather Round

Greenspace 4D ensured that the grass received every chance to achieve the AFL-standard quality that was seen over The Gather Round weekend. Weekly visits from Daryl Sellar and Daimon Jones of Living Turf saw a strong focus on the initial surface-level uniformity and turf management programming right up until kick-off.

An inspection process was completed by the AFL, contracting Australian Sports Turf Managers Association (ASTMA) to complete three visits to Barossa Park to assess the condition of the TifTuf surface. ASTMA concluded that the surface hardness

was within the preferred range and that turf coverage, traction, stability, and presentation were "very good."

The turfgrass coverage of "TifTuf" couch base was excellent. The report also stated that "the surface has established well and should provide an excellent surface for both Gather Round matches. Credit must be given to all involved in the preparation of the venue."

The 2025 AFL Gather Round was a huge success, with two key games played at Barossa Park. Many eyes were on the performance of the oval during the game.

"We have been working hard to endorse and present TifTuf to our state for use on high-level sports fields. It was a great result to see the way the oval performed and presented on the weekend with no obvious markings," said Andrew Rowett, Owner of Sunnyside Instant Lawn.

Attention to detail in the program execution by The Barossa Council and Living Turf played a significant role in such a young surface being so consistent and performing so well.

Following a half-time turf inspection, Daimon Jones of Living Turf was impressed, finding "no divots and only minimal scarring." The televised coverage shared the event with millions of fans who sat down to watch the Gold Coast Suns take the win against North Melbourne Kangaroos and the Fremantle Dockers finishing in front of the Richmond Tigers. With a solid commitment from The Barossa Council, the community, and the stakeholders, Barossa Park is set to usher in a new era of AFL excellence.

The Barossa Park Redevelopment is a joint investment between The Barossa Council and the State Government.

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A Legacy of Sport, History, and Turf Innovation

HONG KONG CRICKET CLUB

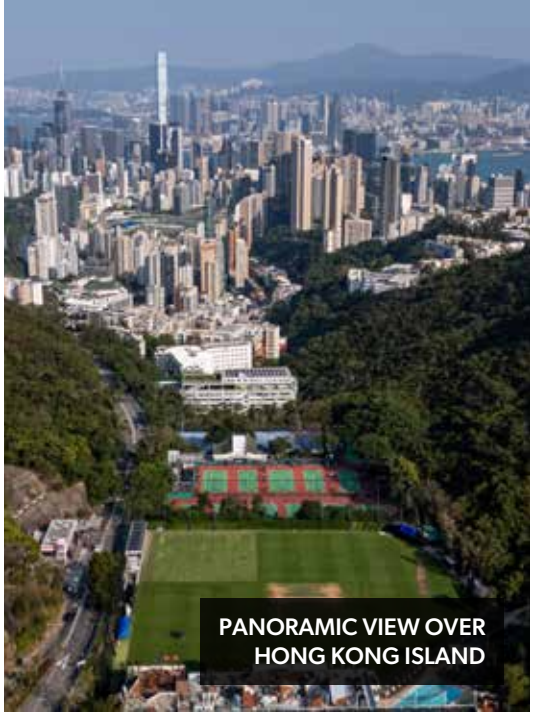
Peter Rasmussen is currently employed at The Hong Kong Cricket Club as Grounds Manager where he oversees all the sports turf and landscape which include cricket, lawn bowls, croquet and many community sporting events. Originating from Brisbane and completing his degree in turfgrass science at the Melbourne University, Peter has accomplished over 30 years in the industry.

Peter's previous position with the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) a global consultancy company presented opportunities around the world. Peter was heavily involved in the early development stages of the Kai Tak Sports Park, 'Lay and Play Hybrid Pitch System' in Zhuhai, China before being posted in Saudi Arabia to undertake golf course and thoroughbred racetrack turf projects.

Historical Foundations: From Colonial Roots to Modern Hub

Established in 1851, the Hong Kong Cricket Club (HKCC) stands as one of the oldest cricket institutions outside England. Originally situated at 'Charter Road' (now Charter Gardens) in Central, the club served as a social and sporting nucleus for over a century before relocating to 'Wong Nai Chung Gap' in 1975.

This move, driven by urban development, allowed HKCC to expand its facilities while embracing a greener, more spacious environment, a shift that also laid the groundwork for advanced turf management practices. The club's history reflects its evolution from a colonial-era establishment to a modern, inclusive sports hub, deeply integrated into Hong Kong's cultural fabric.



PANORAMIC VIEW OVER HONG KONG ISLAND

SUNDAY HONG KONG LEAGUE 50/50 IN ACTION

Sporting Excellence: Multi-Sporting Facility

HKCC has been a cornerstone of Hong Kong's cricket scene, fostering both local talent and international competitions. While domestic success is a hallmark, HKCC has also hosted tournaments such as the Singapore Cricket Club T20 Tournament, international Men's 50/50 ICC Challenge League and T20 Woman's International League.

Apart from the club's core sport, cricket, other sporting sections utilise the ground such as lawn bowls, croquet, lawn tennis, junior coaching clinics and community events.

Turf Management Challenges: Sporting Codes within One Sporting Facility

HKCC's cricket season commences in autumn at the start of September and concludes in spring, mid-May and coupled with an intense cricket schedule of 39 matches on astro and 96 matches on turf makes for a long season.

The club's ground is approximately 1 hectare in size and is unique providing 6 turf wickets and 1 astro. Tucked in one corner is the lawn bowls green with adjacent lawn tennis and lawn croquet courts all within the grounds 1 hectare boundary.

Managing turfgrass and sporting fixtures is quite the challenge.

Lawn bowls is very popular in Hong Kong, especially at HKCC. The bowling green features a bespoke ditch design with drop-in turf trays and pop-up ditches within the green's perimeter allowing the ground to transform from cricket during the day to lawn bowls in the evenings.

WOMEN'S WINTER LEAGUE LAWN BOWLS

MEN'S WINTER LEAGUE LAWN BOWLS

During the evening, croquet and tennis are usually played on the ground during this time taking advantage of the flood lighting.

Turf Management: A Two-Grass System for Subtropical Resilience

Green space in Hong Kong is a luxury and the challenge of maintaining turfgrass to an acceptable standard is quite challenging.

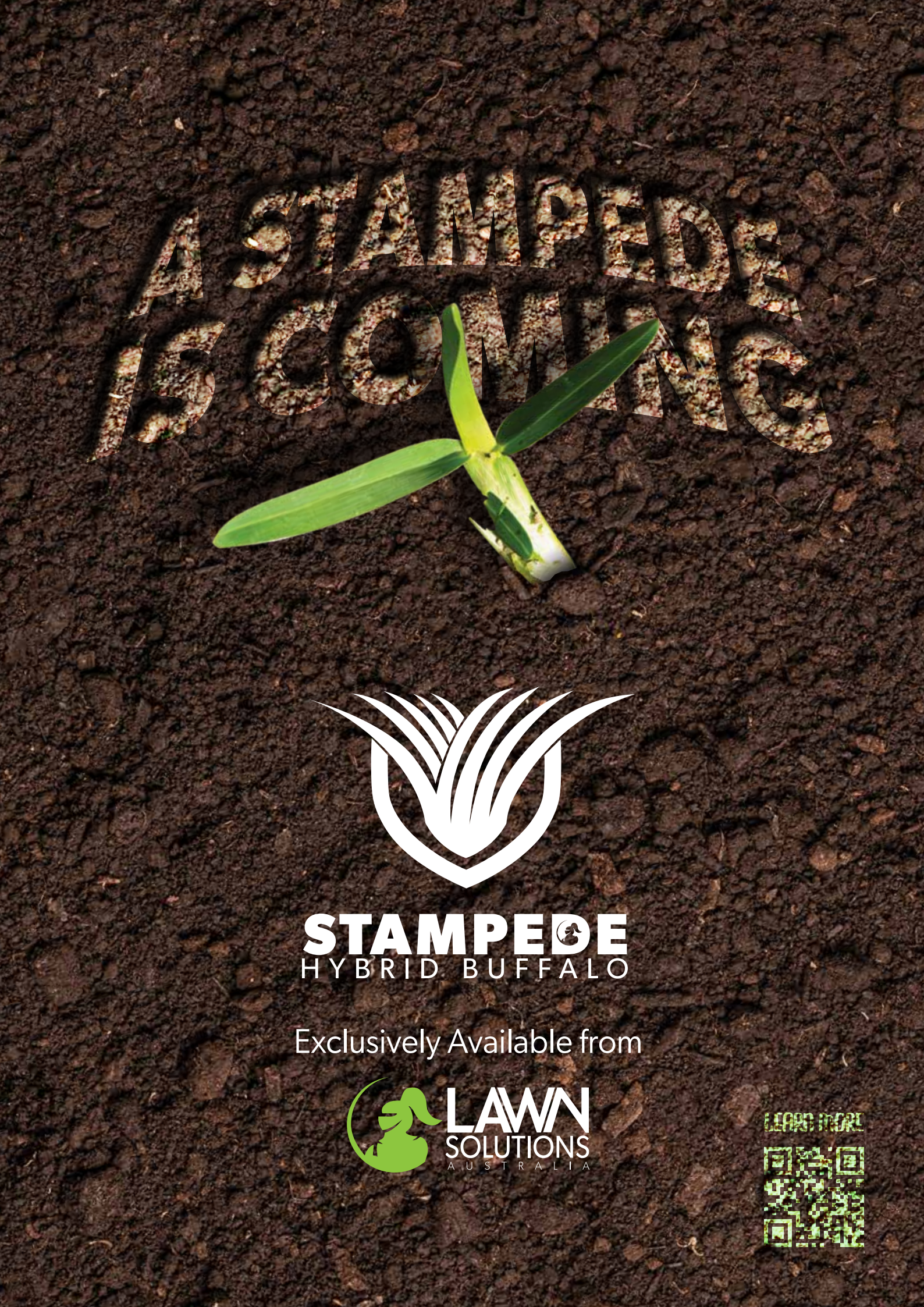
HKCC's reputation extends beyond cricket to its pioneering turf management. The club employs a dual-grass system combining Ryegrass (for cool seasons) and Bermuda grass 'Tifway 419' (for heat tolerance), ensuring year-round playability in Hong Kong's subtropical climate.

The choice of Bermuda grass, Tifway 419 was chosen as its readily available at most turf farms in southern China. Other varieties of Bermuda such as TifTuf are now newly on the market in China and will be considered at HKCC over the next few years if supply can be met.

Prioritising hardy grasses like Bermuda for drought resistance and Ryegrass for cooler months, ensures pitch durability. This scientific approach balances aesthetic appeal with functional resilience, making HKCC's grounds a benchmark for cricket infrastructure in Asia.

Legacy and Future: Bridging Tradition and Innovation

From its 19th-century origins to its 21st-century advancements, HKCC embodies a blend of heritage and progress. The club's relocation in 1975 not only preserved its legacy but also allowed for innovations like its turf system, symbolising adaptability. Today, HKCC remains a community pillar, offering membership programs and youth development initiatives that nurture future cricketers.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Stampede Hybrid Buffalo

NEW EXPANSION TAKING SHAPE

Stampede Hybrid Buffalo is an enhanced variety of soft-leaf buffalo grass developed by Lawn Solutions Australia. This innovative strain is set to hit the market soon and is the result of decades of research and development by Texas A&M University, led by renowned turf scientist Dr. Ambika Chandra.

Lawn Solutions Australia is currently in a crucial phase of bringing Stampede to market. Several key turf producers across Australia are rapidly expanding stock to provide planting material to Lawn Solutions members nationwide. This phase is part of a broader process that every new certified turf variety must undergo before reaching the market.

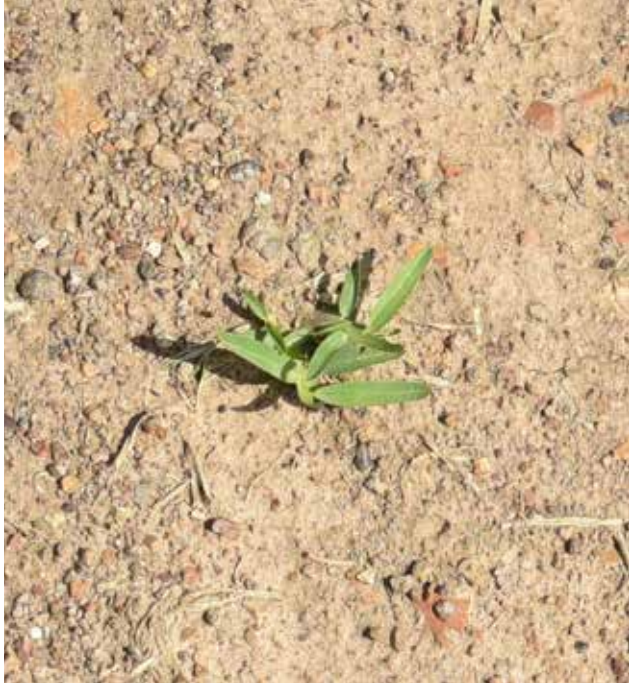
Following this strict process is essential to maintain the genetic purity of the stock as it is distributed. The process is outlined below.

Propagation Phase

Once a particular strain of grass is selected, initial propagation begins. This phase is highly manual and meticulous, involving the separation of individual runners, which are then cut and planted into cell trays. While tedious, the results are incredibly rewarding. Just one 8-inch pot of material can produce thousands of individual plants. Once cut and planted into the trays, these plants are placed into temperature-controlled hothouses to maximise growth speed, as time is always of the essence.

Foundation Establishment Phase

Once the cell trays have matured, they are removed from the hothouse and placed under green shade cloth to harden. This step is crucial because grass that has been grown in a hot, humid environment may struggle when transplanted into new soil. The plugs are generally kept under green cloth for 2–3 weeks before being sent to select foundation farms for planting and expansion. These foundation farms are Lawn Solutions Australia (LSA) members carefully chosen for their



meticulous approach to turf expansion. They are in strategically select geographic locations for optimal performance assessment across a range of climates. Foundation farms must adhere to strict AusGAP (Australian Genetic Assurance Program for Turfgrass) protocols during this phase.

Foundation Stock Release Phase

This is where Stampede is currently in its expansion process. The foundation farms have been established, and the grass is growing in, ready to be harvested and sold to LSA members nationwide as registered stock. Before the grass is harvested and distributed, every square metre of the foundation fields is inspected and certified by AusGAP. The farms receiving stock must also conduct pre-plant audits to ensure the fields adhere to AusGAP standards. The foundation stock release is expected to take place over the next few months.

Release to Market Phase

Once each LSA member's registered stock has matured, it will be available for sale to the market. This means that retail, trade, commercial, and sports turf customers will be able to purchase their very own Stampede Hybrid Buffalo grass from their local LSA supplier. We anticipate this will happen in August 2026, depending on weather conditions during the upcoming spring and summer.

As you can see, bringing a new turfgrass variety to market is a long and expensive process, but ensuring the purity of new strains is critical. To stay updated on the Stampede expansion and its release in your area, contact your local Lawn Solutions Accredited supplier.

SEED HEADS OF CULTIVAR 96_SK (016)

Turf Breeding for the Future

A TURFGRASS PROGRAM'S EXPANDING ROLE IN ZOYSIAGRASS INNOVATION

Brian Schwartz and Sameer Khanal
Warm-season Turfgrass Breeding Program
University of Georgia (UGA), Tifton Campus

The warm-season turfgrass breeding program at UGA's Tifton Campus continues to foster its long-standing and impactful public-private partnerships to address key challenges in the turfgrass industry through cultivar development. Our research focuses on germplasm enhancement and characterisation (pre-breeding), and while conventional breeding practices remain central to our approach, novel phenotyping tools, such as drones equipped with diverse sensors and molecular genotyping methods like DNA fingerprinting further enhance our efforts. Although the incorporation of genomics-enabled breeding has lagged in warm-season turfgrasses, we anticipate these approaches will soon become commonplace. Our program has historically focused on bermudagrass and centipedegrass breeding and has now expanded to include zoysiagrass.

Zoysiagrass Joins the Breeding Program's Core

Zoysiagrass breeding became a key priority of our program at the University of Georgia in response to the industry's need for more warm-season turfgrass options. The increasing prevalence of heat and drought has necessitated the adoption of low-input, drought-tolerant species across a broader geographic range. Among them, zoysiagrass stands out for its exceptional adaptability, offering resilience to cold, drought, shade, and salinity, along with reduced fertiliser, pesticide, and mowing requirements. Its versatility across applications, including home lawns, golf courses, public greenspaces, and roadside, combined with its superior turf quality, has positioned it as a critical focus for our breeding program. Zoysiagrass breeding is not new in Tifton; 'Emerald' was released here by the USDA in 1955. Although there

was a 54-year hiatus between this release and our first crosses in 2009, we've hit the ground running since then.

"I did my doctoral research at the University of Florida focused extensively on zoysiagrass genetics, abiotic and biotic stress responses, and turf performance traits. There we demonstrated that key characteristics—such as turf density, colour, quality, plot establishment, spring green-up, fall (autumn) dormancy, and seedhead density—exhibited sufficient heritability, indicating that meaningful improvements could be achieved through breeding and selection. My experiences in zoysiagrass research provided a foundation for expanding breeding efforts at UGA, where we initially focused on vegetative zoysiagrass cultivar development and have more recently expanded into seeded zoysiagrass breeding."

— Dr. Brian Schwartz, UGA

Key Sources of Zoysiagrass Germplasm for Breeding

A new plant breeding program relies on access to diverse germplasm resources, which provide the genetic variation needed to reshuffle breeding populations and create lines with superior genetic makeup. In addition to existing cultivars and publicly available germplasm, our research leverages zoysiagrass accessions acquired through collaborative agreements with Bladerunner Farms, Inc. a private company hosting one of the largest zoysiagrass collections in the United States, and Patten Seed Co. one of the largest warm-season turfgrass farming operations in the Southeastern U.S. Our efforts to generate genetic variability also include physical and chemical mutagenesis, chromosomal modifications, such as induced chromosome doubling and aneuploidy—and, more recently, targeted genome editing using the CRISPR-Cas9 system. Currently, we are screening more

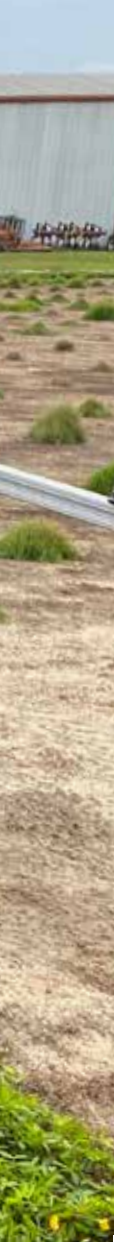
than 20,000 breeding lines for turfgrass performance in our vegetative zoysiagrass breeding program.

Phenotypic Recurrent Selection in Zoysiagrass: From Hybridisation to Field Trials

Our vegetative zoysiagrass breeding procedure follows a recurrent phenotypic selection scheme (select-recombine-repeat), in which segregating populations are developed by hybridising parental lines with desirable attributes. The resulting progenies, numbering in the thousands, are propagated in the greenhouse and later transplanted into spaced plant nurseries for multi-year evaluations of establishment, turf quality, and natural stress responses, among other traits. These subjective, visual ratings are supplemented with data collected using small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS). Selection indices are calculated, and a subset of lines (hundreds) are advanced to replicated field trials at one or more locations, including Bladerunner Farms in Poteet, Texas. The best-performing lines identified from the advanced trials often become parents for the next selection cycle. A similar approach will be used in our new seeded zoysiagrass breeding program, with added emphasis on traits important to the seed industry. Early selection cycles will prioritise characteristics such as seed yield, germination speed, and rapid establishment.

Multi-Institutional Efforts in Turfgrass Improvement and Cultivar Development

Between 2010 and 2024, six leading turfgrass research institutions in the U.S.—North Carolina State University (NCSU), Oklahoma State University (OSU), Texas A&M University (TAMU), University of California (UCR), University of Florida (UF), and University of Georgia (UGA)—secured a total of $16.2 million in funding through the USDA Specialty Crop Research Initiative. This funding supported coordinated agricultural projects aimed at improving warm-season turfgrasses through interdisciplinary research. As a result of these grants, we expanded our testing sites across the southern U.S., focusing on developing and promoting drought-tolerant cultivars of bermudagrass, St. Augustinegrass, seashore paspalum, and zoysiagrass. To date, these projects have led to the release of more than 15 turfgrass cultivars, including three zoysiagrasses: Brazos, CitraZoy, and Lobo. Additionally, Zoysia Australis (entry name 16-TZ-14114),



developed in our program, was launched in Australia and may soon be introduced in other regions around the world.

A New Era for Seeded Zoysiagrass

In our experience, the broader adoption of vegetatively propagated warm-season turfgrasses, including zoysiagrass, has been limited because they are primarily available as turf/sod. Seeded zoysiagrass cultivars with improved aesthetics are in high demand in both the U.S. and international markets, offering a cheaper and more accessible alternative to turf/sod establishment. However, despite long-standing anticipation dating back to the late 1990s, that multiple seeded zoysiagrass cultivars would soon reach commercial availability and rival the warm-season sod market, Zenith and Compadre remain the only two cultivars produced commercially in the U.S. These cultivars continue to face challenges such as slow germination, delayed establishment, and limited seedling vigour, which have hindered broader adoption.

From a breeding perspective, one major hurdle in developing seeded zoysiagrass cultivars in the U.S. has been identifying suitable environments for consistent seedhead production. Fortunately, parts of Georgia and South Carolina offer the right combination of day length and humidity for adequate seed yields. While we are still in the early stages of developing seeded cultivars, our breeding program benefits from access to germplasm adapted to this region. We are currently screening more than 10,000 seeded zoysiagrass breeding lines to identify parental clones with excellent yield and germinability.

Fortunately, our vegetative and seeded breeding efforts are complementary in that new hybrids with superior sod and seed characteristics emerge from both areas of our zoysiagrass research. This synergy gives us hope that we can get more "bang for the buck" as we ride a wave of genetic improvement well into the future. A billboard along the highway outside of town reads, "Think Tifton – The Turfgrass Capital of the World." Today, that message implies bermudagrass—but in the future, we hope UGA-bred zoysiagrasses will also stand the test of time!

TPI Conference 2025

TURFGRASS PRODUCERS INTERNATIONAL

Joe Rogers, Lawn Solutions Australia (LSA)

The Turfgrass Producers International (TPI) hosted its 2025 International Education Conference and Field Day from February 9 to February 13 at the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa in San Antonio, Texas. This premier event brought together turfgrass producers, seed manufacturers, equipment suppliers, and industry professionals from over 14 countries and 40 U.S. states, marking the highest attendance in nearly two decades.

The Australian turf industry was well represented, with more than 15 Aussie delegates traveling from across the country to attend the 2025 edition of TPI. The timing of the conference was perfect, as it coincided with the Super Bowl, the NFL's grand finale. This iconic event kicked off the conference with an American-style Super Bowl Tailgate party, giving delegates an excellent opportunity to reconnect, enjoy drinks, and engage in casual conversation, an ideal start to the week.

It was truly rewarding to witness the growth of Lawn Solutions Australia (LSA) and its members' relationships with the U.S. and international turf industry over the past decade. Many catch-ups and meetings were scheduled with our global colleagues, strengthening our international ties. Events like TPI provide an invaluable opportunity to expand on our existing relationships with turfgrass breeders such as the University of Georgia and Texas A&M, as well as other partners like ITGAP and The Turfgrass Group. It is through events like TPI that we can have all these meetings in one location.

The following day was filled with motivational and industry-based talks, offering valuable insights into the everyday operations of the U.S. turfgrass industry and the latest business and marketing strategies. It was reassuring to see that the Australian Turf Industry, particularly LSA, is already at the forefront of many of these discussions. In many ways, our industry is incredibly advanced.

The evening Trade Hall Expo on the second day was another highlight of the conference. Featuring exhibitors and showcasing new technologies from around

the world, it provided a fantastic opportunity to discuss these innovations and explore how they could fit into our industries and businesses. The event took place in a large hall, approximately the size of a Bunnings warehouse, which made for ample space to explore a wide range of equipment, and of course, collect plenty of free hats!

The true highlight of the trip was undoubtedly the field day on Wednesday at Bladerunner Farms. Located in Poteet, Texas, about an hour south of San Antonio, Bladerunner Farms is one of the most remarkable turf farms you could ever visit. Owned and operated by David Doguet, Bladerunner Farms is home to hundreds of Zoysia grasses and boasts one of the largest private turfgrass breeding programs in the world. This is the company behind the breeding of the renowned Sir Grange Zoysia.

In addition to its massive turf farm, Bladerunner Farms features a stunning 100-acre turf display, shaped into a golf course. The display includes a variety of turf grasses maintained at greens, fairway, and rough heights, all presented beautifully. This alone made the visit worthwhile, but to experience the field day in the same location made the last day of the conference truly special.

The Field Day event was vast, with over 50 exhibitors and hundreds of machines, ranging from small ATVs to automatic turf harvesters and semi-trailers. It was truly a turf farmer's dream. We spent several hours exploring and discussing new innovations, particularly the automatic tractors. These retrofitted devices turn ordinary tractors into driverless machines, capable of pulling mowers, rotary hoes, and a variety of other turf implements without human intervention. It was exciting to get a firsthand look at what the future holds for our industry, and it's closer than we might think. To top off this incredible day, it ended with a performance by country music legend Tracy Byrd!

TPI is a one-of-a-kind event, and it's certainly worth adding to your bucket list if you haven't attended already. From the vast networking opportunities to the chance to get up close with the latest innovations in turf technology, it's an event that should be experienced at least once.

From Europe to Australia

HOW TURF GROWERS ARE WINNING THE RACE AGAINST TIME

When Besenthal Rollrasen, one of Germany's leading turf growers, set out to solve the challenge of post-harvest turf deterioration, they turned to a technology that was about to transform their operations: vacuum cooling.

Their goal was simple yet ambitious, to deliver turf that stayed fresher for longer, travelled better, and delighted customers days after harvest. The results were immediate.

By adopting vacuum cooling technology, Besenthal was able to dramatically extend the shelf life of their turf, reduce waste, and offer greater flexibility to their customers. Now, this same innovation brought to you by Heuch Cooling Solutions is reshaping the future for Australian turf growers.

The Turf Grower's Challenge

Across the world, turf growers face a shared challenge: preserving quality between harvest and installation. Turf remains biologically active after cutting, trapping heat and moisture within densely packed pallets. The soil backing of each roll acts like an insulator, allowing internal temperatures to soar, sometimes climbing past 60°C in just a few hours, triggering a process known as turf/sod heating. The consequences are immediate: yellowing, spoilage, wasted product, missed deliveries, and lost revenue. Growers are locked into a race against time — a race that until now, has been difficult to win.

Vacuum Cooling

Recognising the need for a smarter solution, Heuch Cooling Solutions introduced vacuum cooling technology to the Australian turf market. Vacuum cooling works by lowering atmospheric pressure around the harvested turf, causing moisture to evaporate and rapidly cool the product. Within minutes, turf temperatures can drop from around 30°C to just 1°C. By halting turf heating before it begins, vacuum cooling doesn't just preserve freshness, it rewrites what's possible for turf supply chains.

Besenthal's experience speaks volumes. Using vacuum cooling, they were able to keep turf fresh, vibrant, and installation-ready for far longer periods, even across longer, more complex distribution networks. The result? Less waste, fewer lost sales, and a stronger reputation for delivering premium-quality turf, even under tough conditions. Their success proved that with the right technology, freshness could be extended, logistics could be simplified, and turf operations could be revolutionised.

The Australian Breakthrough

In March 2025, Heuch Cooling Solutions completed a landmark trial with a major turf grower here in Australia. Freshly harvested pallets of Sir Walter DNA Certified and Eureka Kikuyu turf was cooled using vacuum technology. Initial turf temperatures ranging between 26°C and 28°C were reduced to a crisp 2°C in less than 35 minutes.

Data monitoring revealed:

- Turf maintained optimal low temperatures for over 40 hours, without the need for re-cooling.
- Humidity stayed consistently high, preserving turf vitality while preventing dehydration.
- Dew point and temperature tracking confirmed moisture was managed effectively, protecting against microbial risks.

Practical benefits:

- Resilient Deliveries: Turf could enter the logistics chain already stabilised, reducing risks during transit.
- Higher Quality: Visual appeal, root health, and moisture levels are preserved far longer.
- Operational Flexibility: Growers could harvest and cool in advance, reducing reliance on perfect delivery timing.

Australian growers now have local proof that vacuum cooling is not just a theory, it's a proven tool for protecting quality, profitability, and reputation.

Competitive Advantages

For turf growers, the implications of this technology extend far beyond freshness. Vacuum cooling unlocks a series of competitive advantages:

- Wastage Reduction: Modern turf varieties are especially vulnerable post-harvest, with up to 20% loss common under traditional methods. Vacuum cooling stops this loss in its tracks.
- Better Labour Management: Harvesting can now happen during daylight hours, making roles more attractive and improving staff retention.
- Weather Resilience: Rain forecasts no longer derail operations. Turf can be harvested early, cooled, and stored until needed.
- Next-Day Delivery Capability: Having cooled turf in storage opens opportunities to fulfill urgent orders at premium prices.
- Moisture Control: Vacuum cooling minimises surface moisture loss (just 1–3%), making pallets lighter, easier to handle, and less prone to spoilage.

In an increasingly competitive market, these advantages don't just add value, they can define success.

More Than Just Cooling

Heuch Cooling Solutions doesn't stop at vacuum cooling. Their comprehensive approach to cold chain solutions includes:

- Mobile and fixed cool rooms designed specifically for turf storage.
- Solar-powered refrigerated transport kits for your delivery trucks.
- Industrial ice makers and environmental chambers to protect turf at every stage of the supply chain.

As turf operations across Australia grow larger, faster, and more demanding, the need for smarter cooling solutions is only increasing.

Vacuum cooling doesn't just help turf survive the journey; it helps growers thrive. It transforms what was once a race against time into a predictable, manageable process.

With decades of engineering expertise and partnerships with leading technology innovators like Weber Group, Heuch Cooling Solutions ensures that Australian turf growers have access to world-class solutions — right here, right now.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

Suncorp Stadium Enters a New Era with HERO Hybrid Ready to Play Turf

HG SPORTS TURF

In the heart of Brisbane, Suncorp Stadium stands as more than just a sporting venue, it's a place where legends are made, and history is written under the stadium lights. For over two decades, the field endured countless epic rugby clashes, high-stakes soccer matches, and world-class concerts. But after 21 years and increasing pressure from a packed events calendar, 2024 marked the beginning of a new chapter: the transition to the HERO Hybrid Ready to Play Turf system.

Following a comprehensive tender process, HG Sports Turf was awarded the contract to lead this significant upgrade. Known for delivering cutting-edge turf solutions across Australia and New Zealand, HG Sports Turf stepped up to the challenge with its pioneering HERO Hybrid technology.

From Paddock to Pitch - Growing HERO at Beaudesert

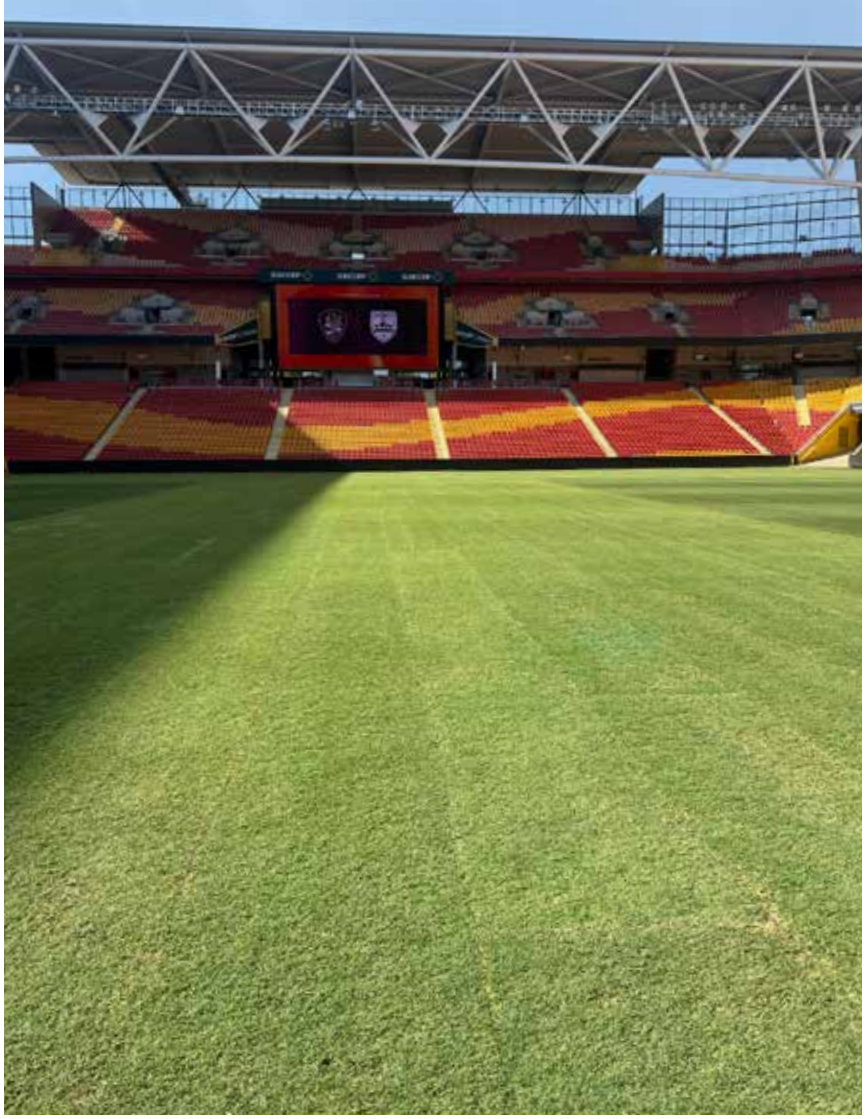
After securing the project in early 2024, HG Sports Turf focused on prepping the QLD based turf farm for production. The chosen site at Beaudesert underwent critical groundwork including land formation, drainage, and irrigation to meet exacting specifications. Although the contract called for 14,000m², a total of 2 hectares was prepared, ensuring surplus turf would also benefit other Stadiums Queensland facilities and local councils.

Matt Oliver, Suncorp Stadium's Grounds Manager, has long championed innovation in turf management. With Queensland's inconsistent seasons and the complexities of managing species transitions between ryegrass and couch grass, Oliver introduced an annual pitch replacement strategy to ensure a consistently high-quality surface. This proactive approach has led to the adoption of Couch grass, selected after rigorous testing at Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre (QSAC).

With preparations complete, HG Sports Turf began installing the HERO hybrid system, this time with an environmental focus. The company has phased out the use of plastic and geofabric beneath the hybrid layer, opting instead for a sand bedding that promotes sustainable turf growth and reduces waste.

The HERO system is built panel by panel, stitched together using a unique butt-stitch method. Each layer of sand topdressing (applied in 5mm to 10mm increments) is carefully brushed and groomed to keep the synthetic fibres upright. Once the profile reaches a depth of 30mm, sprigging begins, followed by a final topdressing layer to support the new couch grass.

Mick Gilman, former Suncorp Stadium turf expert and now Turf Farm Manager at HG Sports Turf, oversees the day-to-day production and care of the new hybrid surface.



What Makes HERO a Game Changer

The HERO Hybrid Ready to Play Turf system blends natural and synthetic elements to deliver an elite playing surface. Synthetic fibres are knitted into an open grid, allowing natural grass to grow through and intertwine. The result? A surface that's stable, durable, and quick to recover after events.

Already proven in Australia and New Zealand's top stadiums including the MCG, Optus Stadium, Adelaide Oval, AAMI Park, and Eden Park, HERO Hybrid is also endorsed by international bodies like FIFA and World Rugby, making it a go-to choice for global sporting events.

Precision Installation Ahead of a Massive Match

With a major International Friendly between the CommBank Matildas and Olympic Silver Medallists Brazil on the horizon, the HG team had a tight window to complete the installation.

The project kicked off with the removal of the old turf and 60mm of organic material using a KORO Field Topmaker. New sand was imported, laser-graded, and amended to match precise specifications. While this was underway at Suncorp, HG's farm crew harvested 6500m^2 of HERO turf, adding to the 3500m^2 previously laid after the Travis Scott concert in October 2024.

Turf rolls, each 12m long, 1m wide, and weighing approximately 750kg were transported from Beaudesert to Brisbane. With a team of 14 at the stadium and 6 at the turf farm, the entire installation wrapped up in just five days.

"It takes a huge team effort from all of our staff, the stadium crew, our partners, and suppliers, but it's incredibly rewarding," said Erik Kinlon from HG Sports Turf. "The biggest challenges were the persistent rain and the tight site logistics, especially around turf deliveries and material movement."

Despite the weather, the operation went off with military precision and the HERO turf was rolled and consolidated, ready for play.

A Surface Fit for the Spotlight

As the final checks were completed and the turf settled into place, a new era officially began at Suncorp Stadium. For the first time in its storied history, the venue now boasts a true hybrid "ready to play" surface.

The months ahead will be a proving ground for the new turf, with an intense event schedule that includes A-League soccer, NRL and Super Rugby clashes, concerts, Magic Round, State of Origin, and even the British and Irish Lions Tour.

No stadium has a calendar quite like Suncorp's, but now, it has the surface to match.

Turf Certification's Role in the Success of Newly Developed Turf Cultivars

CAINE JAMES, TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL

With over 30 years of experience in the turf industry, Caine James has built an extensive career spanning turf management, project management, sales, and product development. Caine's formal qualifications in turf management and project management have enabled him to work on a variety of turf surfaces, including golf courses, cricket wickets, and sports grounds. Caine also spent 15 years in sales and product development with leading companies such as Nuturf and Amgrow, further expanding his expertise in turf solutions.

This experience has equipped Caine with a unique skillset to understand the challenges of turf professionals and how this relates to turfgrass production.

Caine's most recent role was Operations Manager of Parks, Open Space, and Sportsgrounds at Maitland City Council in the Hunter Valley, where he spent six years overseeing the maintenance and construction of numerous sports grounds and turf cricket wickets.

One of his key projects was the Maitland Regional Sports Complex, where he played a pivotal role in the installation of TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda. This premium turf variety was chosen for its industry-leading reduced irrigation requirements (Smart Drop Certified), high wear resistance, exceptional recovery ability, and superior colour retention.

This resulted in surfaces that exceeded expectations and earned praise from local and national sports teams, as well as visiting athletes who played and trained on them.

The Australian turf industry thrives on quality, innovation, and sustainability. At the intersection of these crucial elements is turf certification, a leading force in achieving ongoing purity and ultimately the success of a brand. In Caine's current role as an AusGAP (Australian Genetic Assurance Program for

Turfgrass) Turf Inspector in partnership with Lawn Solutions Australia, Caine is uniquely positioned to elevate turf standards across Australia, ensuring excellence in both certification and market expansion.

Turf Inspection Meets Brand Strategy

The role of an AusGAP Turf Inspector is to ensure turf producers comply with the highest standards of production through ongoing inspections and auditing. This work is particularly vital in guiding the expansion of premium turf solutions for the sports turf and local government sectors.

Ensuring Excellence as an AusGAP Turf Inspector

An AusGAP Turf Inspector is responsible for overseeing the following:

- Conducting rigorous inspections of turf farms to ensure compliance with certification standards.
- Assessing turf quality, consistency, and adherence to best practices.
- Providing detailed reports and recommendations for improvements in turf production.
- Upholding international standards through the synergy between the Australian Genetic Assurance Program (AusGAP) and the International Turfgrass Genetic Assurance Program (ITGAP).

The collaboration between AusGAP and ITGAP strengthens the Australian turf industry's global credibility, ensuring that Australian-grown turf meets international quality benchmarks. Through this partnership, Caine helps maintain the integrity of Australian turf farms while ensuring long-term sustainability and market competitiveness.

ADAM NIAL (LEFT), TEAM LEADER OF MAITLAND REGIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX AND CAINE JAMES (RIGHT)

Shaping the Future of Turf

Caine's role for AusGAP focuses on educating the market about the benefits of certified turf solutions for local government projects and professional sports fields. With Caine's experience, AusGAP is reinforcing its commitment to delivering high-performance, durable, and aesthetically superior turf surfaces.

Local Government Focus

Local governments play a vital role in providing resilient, visually appealing green spaces for public use. Caine champions premium turf brands such as TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda Grass and Sir Grange Zoysia as the premier choice for municipal projects, ensuring that public parks, streetscapes, and recreational areas feature turf that is:

- Highly durable and resistant to heavy foot traffic.
- Aesthetically consistent, maintaining lush greenery in all conditions.
- Cost-effective, requiring low maintenance and reduced water consumption.

Sports Turf Solutions

For sporting venues, Caine ensures that turf solutions meet the rigorous demands of competitive sports fields and training grounds. By promoting newly developed cultivars like TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda Grass, he provides sports organisations with turf that:

- High-Performance Turf for Sports Fields: TifTuf is specifically bred to withstand high foot traffic, intensive use, and the demands of competitive sports. Its strong root system and excellent wear tolerance make it an ideal choice for both training grounds and professional stadiums.
- Surface Consistency: One of the key features of TifTuf is its ability to provide a consistent, uniform playing surface, ensuring that athletes have optimal conditions year-round. This is crucial in reducing injuries and ensuring consistent performance on the field.
- Resilience and Recovery: TifTuf is known for its ability to quickly recover from damage, making it perfect for high-traffic sports fields that need to be in top condition at all times.

A Vision for the Future

The Australian turf industry is poised for growth in the coming years and a commitment to quality will be pertinent in achieving successful outcomes for turf management professionals.

Whether through meticulous certification processes or market expansion strategies, Caine's influence is helping to shape the future of turf production and management in Australia.

"OPTIADJUST™ IS A GAME-CHANGER:"

POWERING TURF EFFICIENCY AT JIMBOOMBA

Nestled along the Logan River in southeast Queensland, Jimboomba Turf spans 118 hectares and grows a variety of species including Sir Grange Zoysia, Zoysia Australis, Sir Walter DNA Certified Buffalo and TifTuf.

Operating in a region known for unpredictable rainfall presents daily challenges, but Trimax's OptiAdjust™ system has made a real impact.

"We jumped on OptiAdjust as soon as it became available. It's an absolute game-changer."

WHY OPTIADJUST™ WORKS IN THE FIELD.

Unlike traditional mower setups that require workshop downtime for height adjustments, Trimax's OptiAdjust allows operators to make quick, tool-free changes via a mobile app—right in the paddock.

"We used to spend up to an hour adjusting a mower, sometimes multiple times a day. Now, it's instant—without leaving the seat."

This flexibility is critical as mowing height often varies between regrowth and finish-ready stages. Incremental adjustments save time, reduce clipping waste, and eliminate unnecessary cleanup.

"If we've had rain and missed mows, we can take a high pass first, then lower it—no mess, no vacuuming or follow-ups."

"We've tried other auto-height systems, but the tolerances were too great. They'll be obsolete now that OptiAdjust is here."

APP-CONTROLLED PRECISION, TRACTOR FLEXIBILITY.

"Other brands needed a fixed control box inside the tractor. If you swapped tractors, you had to pull it apart. With Trimax, it's an app—we can switch across into any tractor and go."

EFFICIENCY THAT PAYS FOR ITSELF.

While investing in new tech is a big decision, the value was obvious from day one.

"We didn't even bother running the numbers. The flexibility and time savings are evident. It's not just about cost—it's about running smarter."

"Getting things done on time so that you're not having turf growing out of control, or missing fertilizer applications or pre-emergence or any herbicide applications is critical. OptiAdjust allows us to get across all the production task, on a daily basis."

The team has already seen improvements in turf consistency and quality, thanks to on-the-fly height control based on species, growth, or paddock condition.

"Honestly, I want five of these mowers already."

LOOKING AHEAD: TRIMAX INNOVATION AND AUTONOMY.

With Trimax now exploring autonomous mowing, Jimboomba is watching closely.

"I think Trimax is all over it, light years ahead of the rest. I've seen the prototypes, and I'm waiting for when we can combine OptiAdjust tech with full autonomy, it's going to be a huge leap forward especially in a labor-short market like this."

Until then, OptiAdjust continues to deliver daily wins in **precision, speed, and simplicity—right where it matters most.**

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From Broadacre Agronomy to Turf Excellence

MICHAEL AND SARAH BRADY, OWNERS OF MALLEE TURF

The journey of Mallee Turf developed through a passion for nurturing the land. What began in the expansive paddocks of broadacre agronomy has evolved into a premier turf business, helping families, businesses, and communities across the Mildura region create beautiful, thriving outdoor spaces with turf.

Long before Mallee Turf was born, our roots were firmly planted in agronomy research and development. Years were spent working alongside farmers, funding bodies, and industry leaders to improve crop performance, enhance soil health, and develop sustainable farming practices. Through rigorous trials and hands-on experience, we gained invaluable knowledge of plant growth cycles, nutrient management, and environmental sustainability, knowledge that would later become the foundation of the turf farming journey.

But beyond the science, what truly drove us was a desire to create something meaningful, something that would not only benefit large-scale agriculture but also bring beauty and functionality to everyday outdoor spaces.

A New Opportunity: Sunraysia's Mowing and Maintenance

That passion led us to explore a new path. In 2020, amidst the uncertainty of COVID-19, we launched Sunraysia's Mowing and Maintenance with a simple goal: to help property owners maintain lush, healthy landscapes. We started with just 45 properties under management, but through dedication and a commitment to quality service, we now care for over 300 properties each month.

From residential backyards to commercial spaces, our team provides essential lawn care, weed management, and grounds maintenance services because we believe a well-kept lawn isn't just about aesthetics; it's about creating a space where families gather, businesses make a great first impression, and communities thrive.

The Birth of Mallee Turf

As our maintenance business grew, so did our vision. We knew we could take our expertise even further, not just by maintaining great lawns, but by growing them from the ground up.

That's how Mallee Turf was born.

What started as a simple property purchase to store our equipment soon became the foundation for something much greater. With seven acres of land at our disposal, we saw an opportunity to cultivate premium turf varieties tailored to our local climate. A visit to the Melbourne Flower Show sealed the deal, we knew the turf industry was where we needed to be.

In mid-January 2025, we planted our first turf crops, focusing on high-performance varieties like Sir Walter DNA Certified Buffalo and TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda, grasses known for their resilience and ability to thrive in Sunraysia's conditions.

Starting a turf farm from scratch hasn't been without its challenges, but we've been incredibly fortunate to have the support of industry experts like Gavin Rogers and Brent Redman at Lawn Solutions Australia and Paul Daniel at The Turf Farm

in Pinnaroo, whose guidance has been instrumental in bringing our vision to life.

A Commitment to Community

At Mallee Turf, we believe a great lawn is more than just grass, it's the foundation for moments that matter. It's where kids take their first steps, where friends gather for weekend barbecues, and where businesses create welcoming outdoor spaces. Our mission is to provide high-quality turf that not only looks stunning but also stands the test of time in our unique climate.

Looking ahead, we're excited to expand our production capacity, introduce innovative solutions like auto-mowers, and continue providing premium turf to homeowners, landscapers, and businesses across the region.

Being part of the Lawn Solutions Australia network gives us access to the latest industry advancements, ensuring that every roll of turf we supply meets the highest standards. But more than that, it connects us with a community of people who share our passion for quality, sustainability, and customer care.

This journey, from agronomy research to property maintenance and now turf farming, has been an incredible evolution. While we're proud of how far we've come, we know the best is yet to come.

Whether you're looking to transform your backyard, enhance your business frontage, or create a greener, more vibrant space, Mallee Turf is here to help. Because at the end of the day, it's not just about growing turf, it's about growing beautiful, lasting landscapes for the people who call this region home.

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Turf insecticide

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Pennmag®
Turf Herbicide

PENNMAG® controls various broadleaf weeds and grasses with minimal effect on new root development which means you can apply to soil immediately post-harvest for up to 8 weeks weed control at the critical time of re-establishment.

For more information visit **syngentaturf.com.au**
or speak with your local Syngenta Territory Sales Manager

Reviving the Riverbank: Turf's Role in Erosion Control

GREEN LIFE TURF FLOOD REMEDIATION PROJECT

Nestled on the banks of the Hawkesbury River, just outside Windsor, New South Wales, is a newly completed turf project that demonstrates the power of natural erosion control using turf. A collaborative effort led by Green Life Turf has transformed a flood devastated riverbank into a resilient green embankment.

Josh Muscat from Green Life Turf and his team have been at the forefront of this initiative, working tirelessly to rebuild the area following the devastating floods of 2021. "We had four consecutive floods over that period, real big floods," Josh explains. "In 2021, we lost all the soil here on the riverbank directly alongside our production farm. The bank dropped 8-9 metres down to river level, and everything was washed away. It was just one big hole of erosion."

Rebuilding From the Ground Up

The first step in the project was stabilising the ground. Given the significant soil loss, the only viable solution was to import clean fill with clay content, compacted in 200-300mm layers. "We brought in over 7,200 truckloads of material," Josh says. "It had to be done in stages, ensuring each layer was properly packed to prevent future slumping and erosion."

What was once an inaccessible, unstable site is now a solid, functional riverbank. "In the beginning, even a small excavator couldn't get down here," Josh recalls. "Now, we can bring in trucks and machinery with no problem."

The Role of Turf in Erosion Control

While the structural rebuild was essential, turf played a critical role in stabilising the riverbank and preventing future erosion. Over 5,000 square metres of turf was laid, featuring four different turf varieties, each chosen for its unique benefits.

- TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda: Selected for its drought tolerance and rapid establishment, making it ideal for areas with limited irrigation.

- Sir Grange Zoysia: Known for its dense growth and aesthetic appeal, Sir Grange provides a lush, low-maintenance solution for erosion control.
- Zoysia Australis: A hardy, low-maintenance turf that performs well in various conditions while maintaining a neat appearance.
- Sir Walter DNA Certified Soft Leaf Buffalo: Used in upper areas to create a park-like feel while also offering strong erosion control.

"The TifTuf was the quickest to establish, grabbing hold almost immediately," Josh notes. "But the real surprise was Sir Grange, it's not just visually stunning, but it established faster than expected and holds the ground exceptionally well."

A Scalable Solution for Any Landscape

While this is a large-scale commercial project, the lessons learned apply to domestic landscapes as well. Sloping yards, embankments, and even garden beds can benefit from the erosion-controlling properties of turf. Whether it's TifTuf for fast establishment, Sir Grange for visual appeal, or Zoysia Australis for low-maintenance durability, there's a turf solution for every environment.

Looking Ahead

This project is more than just a restoration after the devastating floods, it's a case study for erosion control, demonstrating how turf can be used to protect and revive even the most severely damaged landscapes. "We'll be collecting data over the next few years to see how these varieties continue to perform," Josh says.

With nature's best erosion control, turf now in place, the once-devastated riverbank is now fully repaired and stabilised for the future.

For those looking to learn more about this project or implement similar solutions, please reach out to Green Life Turf or Lawn Solutions Australia.

REAL SITE INSPECTION

Journey Towards an Improved Turf Variety

LILYDALE INSTANT LAWN AND THE REAL PROGRAM

Ashburton Park Oval in Ashburton, Victoria recently underwent much needed upgrades to the turf surface and facilities. TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda was specified for use on the outfield and turf wicket block, with the project scheduled for completion in early 2024. City of Boroondara were keen to explore the performance of this new variety for use on their sports fields and turf wickets, for this, and other projects on the horizon.

In 2023, City of Boroondara had four fields go out to tender for construction, with one of these fields specified for TifTuf. Two of these tenders were awarded to SJM Turf and Civil: one to be initially built with Santa Ana and the other with TifTuf.

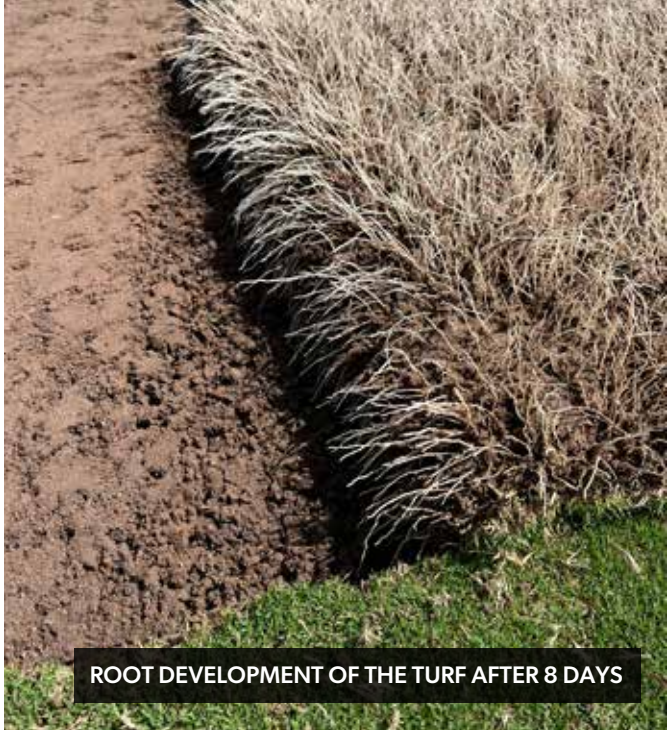
Lilydale Instant Lawn is an accredited turf supplier in the Victorian market and has been implementing a highly successful program to ensure turf quality and performance in the commercial sector.

REAL is an acronym developed by Lilydale, standing for Reserved, Extra 20%, Agreed Management Plan, and Longitude/ Latitude. After discussions around the benefits of TifTuf and the REAL program, with the council's support, the decision was made to convert both fields contracted to SJM Turf and Civil, including Lynden Park in Camberwell, to TifTuf.

Following the receipt of SJM's purchase order, Lilydale Instant Lawn reserved the required turf and added an extra 20% to the order to ensure there was no risk of running short on supply if requirements were to evolve during the project.

Lilydale then sat down with the contractor and Steve Vernon, Project Planning and Delivery Officer from City of Boroondara

CORNER POST MARKING THE FIELD



ROOT DEVELOPMENT OF THE TURF AFTER 8 DAYS

FIRST MOW UNDERTAKEN ON THE 14TH OF MARCH

and agreed to a management plan. This plan included a mowing height of 15mm by cylinder mower, a fertilising plan and preventative programs including mite management, Tetrino application for African black beetle and Primo Maxx Plant Growth Regulator applications to manage growth prior to installation. Included at this stage was the desired turf format, in this case sand based maxi rolls for the outfields and washed maxi rolls for the wicket block, along with defining some of the key preliminary logistics.

The final element of the REAL process that provides all parties with a lot of confidence is 'L' for longitude and Latitude. The location of the project's allocated turf is provided with GPS Longitude/Latitude coordinates so that at any stage the contractor or client can come to the farm and inspect the exact turf that is being prepared for their project.

With any large scale project in built up areas there are always different challenges to manage, and both fields were in older areas with varying access. A month before the projects were scheduled to commence Steve Cole from Lilydale did preliminary site visits to assess delivery options and access. Lynden Park had very little access and was going to require some obstruction of neighbouring properties by trucks for access. All affected properties were notified of these implications and agreements were reached to ensure a smooth process once the project commenced. Ashburton Park had a good sized parking lot, however, stop and go traffic management was required to allow trucks to safely reverse into the car park for access to the site.

FIRST TWO WICKETS OF THE 2024/2025 SEASON

Lynden Park commenced on the 5th of March with root development of the turf occurring in just 8 days. The first mow was then undertaken shortly after on the 14th of March.

Both projects were completed later than originally planned due to a wet spring in Melbourne delaying works in the early stages. Steve Vernon from Boroondara said that having the turf grown to a pre-determined height and having a management program in place on farm, meant that the turf was laid in field ready condition. This plus the incredible root development of TifTuf allowed for a seamless establishment where there was no need to reset height of cut. This helped to ensure the fields were ready for play by May after a March turf installation. In comparison the third and fourth field that was specified and laid with the other variety at the same time, has taken 12 months to get to the same level due to it not being pre prepared off site.

The cricket wickets installed during the construction at Ashburton came up very quickly and this summer they have been very well received by the curator and club with reports they are playing fantastically. The curator has been very impressed with the recovery of the wickets, with play early in the season and with recovery to a high quality by mid-December. The first two wickets of the 2024/25 season were used for 3 to 4 weeks and recovered back approximately 95% cover by the December season break.

After 12 months of managing TifTuf Steve Vernon is impressed with how solid the surfaces are performing, in both AFL, soccer and cricket. Very minimal damage from footmarks in the run up areas during cricket season and the usual

WATSON RESERVE, LAID ON THE 9TH OF JANUARY

VICTORIA PARK INSTALLATION COMPLETED ON THE 31ST OF JANUARY

centre corridor wear during the football season was a significant improvement from other warm season grass species.

Steve Cole from Lilydale has challenged Steve Vernon to push the limits next season and fully test the drought hardiness that TifTuf possesses. It's hoped that council will use the opportunity to compare water inputs and playability next summer, to see just how much water they can reduce through the improved variety.

The results from the first two grounds have provided council the confidence to keep going with TifTuf, with Victoria Park and Watson Reserve also out to tender for full reconstruction.

Evergreen Turf Group won both these tenders and committed to the REAL program for supply of both grounds. Lilydale Instant Lawn met with council staff in August and set up a program for the fields to be ready for installation in December/ January subject to construction.

Watson Reserve was laid on the 9th of January, with council mowing it at 12mm just two weeks after installation. These are the results that can be achieved under the REAL program, where all parties have a clear expectation of outcomes and are committed to achieving a quality result every time.

Victoria Park installation was completed on the 31st of January and was ready for use after only 6 weeks.

TifTuf is getting fantastic results for City of Boroondara, this coupled with the ultimate control achieved by growing the turf under the REAL program means that both the construction company and the council are guaranteed a known outcome every time.

Landscape Water Conservation - No Longer a Unicorn

BRYAN TOLAR, TOLAR CAPITOL PARTNERS USA

The term "drought resistant landscape" may conjure up images of rock gardens and artificial turf…which is a far cry from desirable. In the US, Georgia's landscape industry has been in some strongarm battles with water providers for decades as we strived for irrigation access to maintain the favoured plants and turfgrass that are emblematic of southern landscapes.

Our climate provides all the resources needed for beautiful landscapes, but getting rain at just the right time will forever be fleeting. Pressures for increased need of limited water resources grow steadily to address new communities, population density, and economic investments. The 2007-2009 drought shook state water policies and hampered the entire landscape industry and many plant providers that serve this thriving sector of the agricultural economy. Much like the Millenium Drought that occurred in many areas of Australia.

Tough drought conversations reimagined a vision for long-lasting, drought tolerant landscapes. The issue was thrust to the top of the list for innovation and implementation by stakeholders, but as drought concerns grew, time was not on our side. Water providers needed answers and opportunities to avoid prohibiting outdoor irrigation. Some western states and population centres had a history of vilifying turfgrass irrigation, turning neighbours against neighbours and shaming those with manicured landscapes. Change was needed to stem that tide - and research by top turfgrass breeders answered the call.

While bermudagrasses have long been recognised as using less water than other warm season turf types, opportunities were on the horizon to see improved drought tolerance. The promise of reduced water

use would benefit every sun-drenched southern landscape through lower water use and top performance. When it comes to water conservation and beautiful lawns, a new option was needed and the University of Georgia Turf Team delivered.

After being tested and re-tested for decades ahead of being launched into the marketplace in 2015, the drought tolerance of the new bermudagrass cultivar, TifTuf, gave the market exactly what it needed. Now, record-setting adoption of TifTuf has it justifiably recognised as the "alpha grass" in the world of water saving turf. In 2024, it surpassed the two billion mark of square feet sold and installed. This makes it by far the fastest warm season turfgrass to achieve such a milestone - and it was accomplished in less than 10 years.

By reducing water use by 38% over the previously most commonly used bermudagrass in the US, TifTuf earned the Smart Drop Certified designation, which recognises water conservation in tested and qualified consumer goods. Game-changing genetics allowed for its outstanding performance and the water savings are realised year after year. Consumers welcome options in the marketplace, so other grasses are in development and testing that will one day provide choices for more water savings, less fertiliser use, increased shade tolerance, and more.

As for water savings, Atlanta and other regions have taken notice as water shortages have no boundaries. This was recognised during the 2024 Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP) Conference in Savannah, Georgia. At this event, the University of Georgia Turfgrass Team - Griffin campus was honored with GAWP's Water Wise Council, Fox McCarthy Award for their outstanding research, data

collection and education on saving water using drought tolerant turfgrass. UGA Turfgrass Specialist, Dr. Clint Waltz was on hand to accept the award. Data showing a 38% reduction in irrigation is an attention grabber by any community planner or water provider. Having turfgrass research and drought tolerant cultivars recognised and receiving awards from the water industry is the shift in conversation the landscape industry has been seeking.

Exceptional drought tolerant turfgrass was once thought to be a unicorn among landscape planning, but UGA and TifTuf have dispelled that myth. TifTuf is not a one-trick pony, but its drought tolerance and water conserving characteristics are the talk of towns not just in Georgia, but across the world including Australia.

In fact, the popular Atlanta based Water-Wise Landscape Planning Guide was updated to include TifTuf as the referenced drought tolerant bermudagrass to use when designing a landscape. Reducing water use while maintaining an attractive landscape is a win for everyone.

Congratulations to UGA's Turf Team in Griffin, as well as their other team members in Tifton and Athens for doing the work to chart new paths for landscape development and reduced impact on our water resources. TifTuf changed the water conservation conversation, but work continues – unicorn herding never stops.

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SPORTENG TURF AGRONOMIST LUCAS TAKING MEASUREMENTS DURING A SITE INVESTIGATION

Future-Proofing Your Natural Turf Fields

WHAT IS TURF AGRONOMY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Turf agronomy is the science of growing and maintaining high-quality turfgrass. It involves selecting the right turfgrass varieties, managing soil health, and ensuring that all factors - irrigation, drainage, and environmental conditions, work together to create a sustainable, long-lasting sports field.

A key component of turf agronomy is resilience, ensuring sports fields remain safe and high performing despite regular wear and environmental challenges.

With increasing user demands, evolving climatic conditions, and rising construction and maintenance costs, maintaining sustainable, durable and high-performing sports fields is more crucial than ever.

How SPORTENG's Expertise Ensures Long-Term Resilience and Performance

SPORTENG specialise in both sports engineering and turf agronomy, providing tailored solutions to ensure sports fields remain safe, resilient, and high performing. With expertise in turf management and sports engineering, SPORTENG can help optimise playability, safety, and long-term value while future-proofing fields of play.

SPORTENG has an in-house agronomy team that can provide expert guidance on optimising turf health, enhancing playability, and proactive maintenance strategies. Proper turf management isn't just about upkeep—it's about longevity, reducing long-term costs, and ensuring peak performance year-round. SPORTENG are passionate about planning and designing fields of play that not only perform at the highest level but also stand the test of time.

Enhancing the Longevity and Performance of Your Sports Field

SPORTENG believes that planning which starts with end in mind, makes all the difference in protecting the investment into sports fields whilst increasing user satisfaction. Ensuring your fields remain in top condition involves the following:

1. Agronomic Assessments: Condition assessments evaluate the health of your sports

SPORTENG TURF AGRONOMIST AMY USING A CLEGG HAMMER TO DETERMINE THE SURFACE HARDNESS

fields, helping you identify any weaknesses and improve resilience. These data-driven recommendations are used for upgrades or ongoing maintenance to keep your field in top shape—no matter the weather.

2. Sustainable Turf Solutions: With the growing demand for sustainable sports fields, the focus is on designing and maintaining fields that are not only durable but also environmentally friendly. SPORTENG offer agronomy services that include researching and implementing the latest sustainable practices in turf management, such as using recycled materials or experimenting with drought-resistant turfgrass varieties.

3. Damage Recovery and Maintenance: In the event of significant field damage, a range of services are offered to assess the impact, restore the playing surface, and ensure long-term playability. From soil analysis and irrigation optimisation to turf variety selection, our agronomy team works with you to recover and future-proof your fields.

Comprehensive and Tailored Services

End-to-end field of play services as offered by SPORTENG, cover planning, design, construction, and maintenance. A multidisciplinary team of civil engineers, turfgrass agronomists, and irrigation designers ensure every project benefits from expert insights.

By using an independent consultancy, you can gain direct access to a wealth of experience spanning the last four decades with the team having held roles within the industry including Senior Local Government Management, Golf Course superintendent, Construction Manager and various roles within turf management. With team members in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Perth, the team at SPORTENG are well-positioned to serve clients across the country.

- Field of Play Condition Reports: SPORTENG conduct comprehensive condition assessments of both the agronomic and civil components of sports fields, providing in-depth reports on their

RECYCLED GLASS RESEARCH AND TRIAL RUN AT A SUITABLE SITE IN CITY OF BOROONDARA

current state and potential improvements. Whether addressing storm damage or enhancing playability, expert evaluations offer tailored recommendations to ensure optimal field performance and longevity.

- Feasibility Studies: Feasibility studies analyse the site's conditions, potential challenges, and budget, helping the client make informed decisions about long-term sustainability and field performance.
- Detailed Design and Documentation: From earthworks to drainage and irrigation solutions to growing medium specification and infrastructure integration, the team ensures every detail is accounted for in your sports field's design. This level of detail reduces the risk of costly back and forth during tender submissions and then again during the construction phase.
- Construction Phase Services: SPORTENG can oversee the construction of sports fields to ensure quality control at every stage. The team coordinates with contractors and stakeholders to make sure the turf is properly installed, and the field performs as intended.
- Golf Course Agronomy: For golf courses, they offer specialised agronomy services to optimise turf quality, from soil management to irrigation and performance monitoring, ensuring your course delivers exceptional playing conditions year-round.
- Superintendent Services: Superintendents ensure smooth project execution by coordinating construction efforts and ensuring compliance with design specifications.
- Research and Innovation: SPORTENG are committed to advancing the future of sports field design through research and innovative solutions. SPORTENG undertakes its own research and development trials to gather the data to support future innovations for the industry. However, as an independent consultancy, they are also ideally positioned to undertake research and trial work on behalf of the industry.

FINAL SITE INVESTIGATION AT BACCHUS MARCH REGIONAL SPORTS PRECINCT

PROJECT OVERSIGHT FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE ATHLETICS TRACK AT THE PENINSULA GRAMMAR SCHOOL – COLOURS LAYOUT AND LINE MARKINGS

Examples of SPORTENG's Successful Projects

SPORTENG is involved in a diverse range of projects, showcasing their sports engineering and agronomy expertise:

- Chevalier College, NSW: A thorough site investigation was conducted and feasibility study to support the upgrade and expansion of a multi-sport, multi-surface precinct. By combining a detailed condition assessment with an analysis of future user requirements, SPORTENG developed a strategic site master plan and a staged implementation approach to help the college achieve its long-term goals.
- Rockhampton Sports Precinct, QLD: As the lead consultant, detailed design services were delivered for this large-scale sporting facility, integrating natural fields, synthetic turf, and hard-court solutions to create versatile, durable fields that can meet the community sporting demands into future.
- Bacchus Marsh Regional Sports Precinct, VIC: The team designed, documented and oversaw the construction of two multipurpose ovals, acrylic tennis and netball courts along with a multi-purpose net complex.
- Peninsula Grammar Athletics Track, VIC: SPORTENG were involved in the development of a state-of-the-art athletics facility, providing both construction phase and superintendent services to ensure seamless project execution. From the synthetic soccer pitch to the 8-lane athletics track, the team managed quality control, contractor coordination, and compliance with design specifications to deliver a facility built to the highest standards.
- Recycled Glass Research and Trial: In collaboration with the City of Boroondara Council, SPORTENG conducted a groundbreaking trial to explore the use of recycled glass sand as a growing medium for natural turf Fields of Play. This innovative project is part of a commitment to sustainability, aiming to reduce landfill waste and minimise the use of virgin materials in field construction.

With a blend of technical expertise and a passion for sports, SPORTENG is your ideal partner in designing and maintaining your sports fields at their best.

Your Next-Generation Tractor is Already in Your Machine Shed

CRAIG RUPP, SABANTO FOUNDER AND CEO (USA)

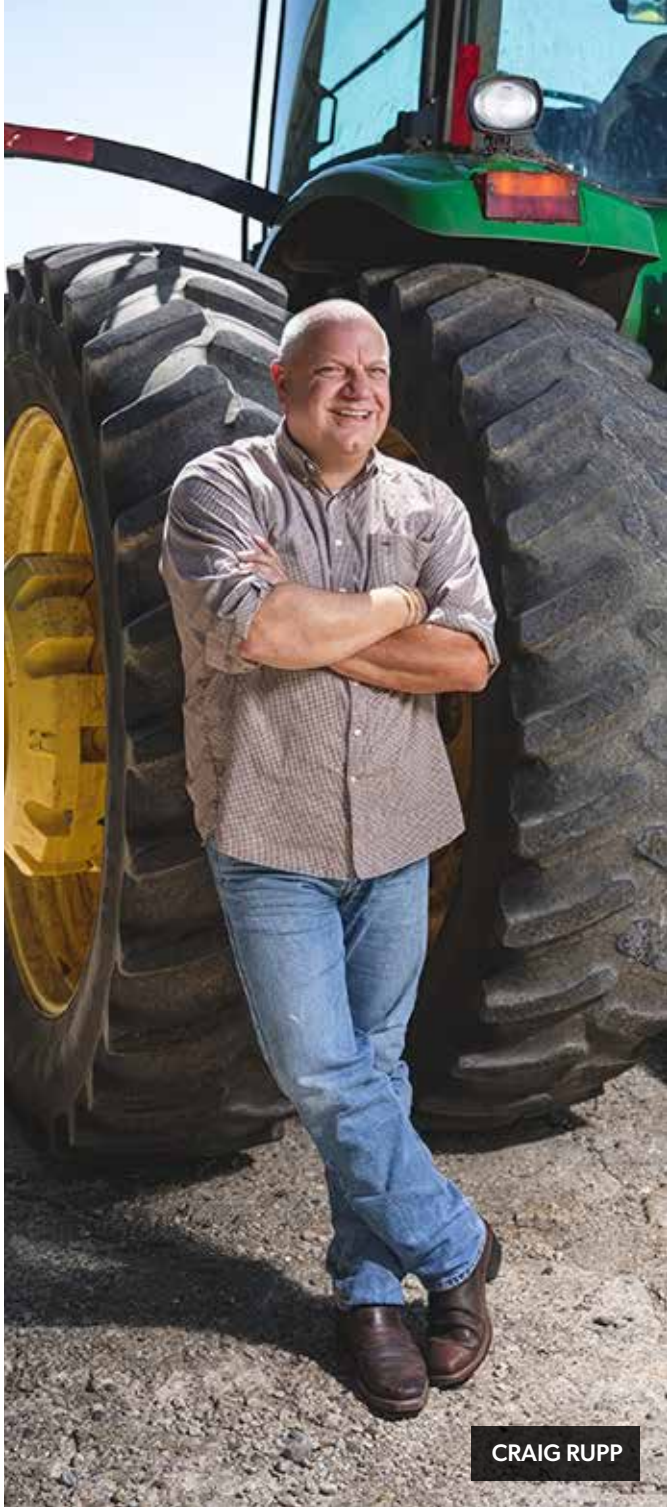
I'm a bit of an enigma. I grew up on a farm and became an electrical engineer, spending many years working in cellular technology. When I sat amongst farmers, they had no idea I could weigh in on the merits of adjacent channel rejection. Likewise, when I sat among RF engineers, they had no idea I could weigh in on the importance of 'planting into the moisture.'

It took me a while to realise that an electrical engineer with a deep understanding of agriculture is an interesting combination. As a result, I focused my career on 'agtech'. In 2018, every farmer I knew told me labour keeps them up at night - not the cost of labour, but the lack of it. I spent countless hours automating manufacturing plants all over the world and knew automation was the answer. I wanted to do something about it.

About Sabanto

If someone had told me that one day we would be deploying autonomous tractors on the other side of the world in Australia, I would have congratulated them on their vision and then reminded them to be a bit more realistic. Not because I lacked belief in our technology, but because farming is notoriously grounded in what works right here, right now. Yet, after meeting some great Australian turf farmers at the TPI Conference this year, here we are.

If you've never heard of Sabanto, I'd like to think we're taking the sod (turf as you know it) market by storm. We build a retrofit kit that installs on standard, off-the-



CRAIG RUPP

shelf tractors, magically turning them into autonomous machines. Our mantra is, "Your next-generation tractor is already in your machine shed." Even better, it's still supported by your local equipment dealer.

I get asked a lot, "Why on earth the sod market?" I have to be careful of the audience, but I've often responded, "Because sod farmers make row crop guys look like gardeners." Most U.S. row crop farmers will admit they're 4x4 farmers, four weeks in the spring and four weeks in the fall/autumn. Sod farmers perform field operations – mowing, rolling, aerating, fertilising, applicating, and harvesting – for over 30 weeks a year. They're row croppers on steroids. I've said this countless times: autonomy will target the highest frequency, most mundane field operations first. I can't think of another crop to lead that charge than sod.

Why Australia?

If there is one thing I'll never forget, it's this: about 10 years ago, I was having a beer with my friend from John Deere. With AC/DC playing in the background, he said, "I'll tell you what, nothing worries us more than the Australians." I didn't see that coming, but his reasoning stuck with me like Angus Young's schoolboy outfit – odd at first, but impossible to ignore. He said Australia today is where the rest of the world will be tomorrow. Australia has the first-mover advantage.

For starters, Australia is a huge landmass with a sparse population. You know the saying – necessity is the mother of invention.

Australia leads in the early adoption of remote sensing, IoT, satellite imagery, and cloud-based farm management tools. The U.S. is heading in that direction and will look more like Australia in the coming years.

Australia also faces extreme weather variability – from droughts and floods to heatwaves and bushfires, you have it all. And your farmers? They're resilient. They adopt and invent technologies faster than any other farmers in the world. My fellow startup founders like to talk and compare notes. Time and again, I hear the same thing: Australian farmers are more prone to adopting technology than American farmers.

Lastly, innovation is at the core of your country, thanks in part to CSIRO, a government-run R&D organisation that genuinely lives up to its name – actually developing. Every time you join a Wi-Fi network, you can thank CSIRO. It's the backbone of Australian ag innovation, designing crops, satellites, and robots of tomorrow. Their research has shaped Australia's farms and modern agriculture worldwide.

Closing Thoughts

From where I stand, Australia isn't just a market, it's a proving ground. The country's conditions, challenges, and forward-thinking farmers make it the perfect place to show the world what's possible when autonomy meets agriculture. We're excited to grow our presence here, not just because it makes a good story, but because we'll learn something, too. Or, as one of the greatest bands the world has ever heard put it, "To me, it makes good, good sense."

SABANTO

WE SAW THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE WE BUILT IT.

SABANTO AUTONOMY SYSTEM

sabantoag.com

TURFCO INSTALLATION TEAM AT MENANGLE PARK

Versatile, Adaptable and Low Maintenance

HOW AUSTRALIAN TURF PRODUCER TURFCO IS UTILISING ZOYSIA AS A SOLUTION FOR UNORTHODOX SPACES

Versatile, adaptable, low-maintenance, and highly durable, Zoysia grasses offer a lush, striking aesthetic. With these exceptional qualities, they have become a popular choice for both residential lawns and commercial landscapes.

Due to these excellent qualities, Zoysia grasses are being utilised in innovative applications and locations previously overlooked for turf.

Over the past 10 months, Turfco, a leading turf supplier on the NSW South Coast, has had the privilege of supplying two premium Zoysia varieties, Sir Grange Zoysia and Zoysia Australis, for a range of distinctive commercial projects.

Sir Grange Zoysia and Local Council Involvements

With resounding domestic success in home lawns and commercially with golf courses since its release in 2017, Sir Grange Zoysia has extended its appeal by becoming a favourable option for unsuspecting areas, particularly with local councils.

Grasses such as Kikuyu have traditionally been the preferred choice for government bodies and councils, primarily due to budget constraints, with Kikuyu offering upfront cost-effectiveness. However, the ongoing maintenance required for Kikuyu, accompanied by uncertainty about whether it is the most suitable grass for a given environment, can lead to long-term challenges in both maintenance and performance, resulting in significant ongoing expenses and resource demands.

There are many situations where Kikuyu can be the right grass choice. However, while it may be appealing from a budget perspective, its selection often reflects a lack of awareness about the benefits that alternative turf varieties can offer. When matched to the right environment, these alternatives can deliver advantages that outweigh the initial cost, resulting in greater long-term savings.

For turf growers and suppliers, there is always a focus on ensuring the right grass is selected and placed in the right location, ultimately benefiting all parties and contributing to long-term success.

Reframing local councils' perspectives on turf has been a key goal for Turfco over the past five years. Turfco have successfully achieved this by hosting various educational events, including farm visits for council and local government agency members, as well as local landscapers.

In 2021, Turfco supplied Shellharbour City Council with Sir Grange Zoysia for a local roundabout. Previously, the roundabout

featured high-maintenance plants that required frequent upkeep, leading to significant expenses for traffic control and posing safety risks for both workers and commuters.

To address these challenges, the council selected Sir Grange Zoysia to drastically reduce maintenance needs and enhance safety by minimising the need for workers to access the roundabout. This also helped limit traffic disruptions. The success of this project has led the council to incorporate Sir Grange Zoysia in multiple subsequent projects where plant maintenance costs were excessive.

In early 2023, Turfco supplied Shoalhaven City Council with Sir Grange Zoysia for the Bike Pump Track at Boongaree National Park. The original specification called for Kikuyu grass; however, upon completion of the track, the council realised that the steep embankments made mowing unsafe for maintenance crews.

As a result, Turfco was engaged to install Sir Grange Zoysia, allowing the area to remain unmown. Despite the challenges of a poor growing medium and heavily compacted soil necessary for maintaining the track's structure, Sir Grange Zoysia has thrived. In the two years since its installation, the track has required virtually no maintenance, significantly reducing labour and resource demands—an outcome that has been highly beneficial for the grounds team managing the large complex.

Building on the council's success with Sir Grange in roundabouts, in March 2025, the turf has now been installed in median strips along busy roads that were previously overgrown and difficult to maintain with Kikuyu.

By transitioning to Sir Grange Zoysia, these areas will now remain completely unmown, significantly enhancing kerb appeal while drastically reducing maintenance requirements along these busy stretches of road.

Sir Grange Zoysia at Menangle Park

In mid-2023, Turfco hosted a farm visit attended by Leigh Trevitt, a Landscape Advisor for Transport NSW. Leigh had taken the initiative to attend several information days and had seen the successes of unmown Sir Grange first-hand.

Bridge Abutments and other steep areas like this always pose issues to Landscape Designers and maintenance crews as they are very close to the highway and are quite steep and unpredictable to work on, posing several logistics and safety challenges when it comes to the installation and maintenance of a covering surface. With these challenges, there is also a high maintenance cost associated with these sites.

Following on from previous discussions and the site visits, Leigh had presented the Menangle Park Bridge Abutment as a

TURFCO INSTALLATION TEAM AT KURNELL

potential site to use Sir Grange Zoysia. The site was ideal; it had a steep batter that was going to be expensive and difficult to maintain, and it was very prominent with a lot of eyes on it, so, it was a necessity to be aesthetically pleasing.

Joe Rogers from Lawn Solutions Australia closely worked with Leigh and his colleague Jason on an installation method using bio-degradable turf pegs and went over an establishment plan to ensure Sir Grange had the ability to establish a root system to maximise the chance of success.

In the winter of 2024, Turfco supplied and installed approximately 1,790m2 of Sir Grange Zoysia at the embankment beside the Hume Highway at Menangle Park. This project was completed intermittently over a 3-week period, with the delivery and installation taking approximately 4 full days. The project was unlike anything the Turfco Team has ever worked on in their nearly 40 years of business, with harnesses required to lay the turf across the steep surface.

Almost one year on and the site has been a success, thanks to the diligence from Transport NSW in ensuring the Sir Grange had enough irrigation to establish and the foresight from Leigh to use Sir Grange in this instance. Sir Grange is perfect for this site as it has greatly reduced the need for maintenance, has provided an environmentally friendly solution and it looks fantastic.

Zoysia Australis

Zoysia Australis is the latest, premium turf variety introduced to the Australian market by the Lawn Solutions Australia Network in early 2023. Despite being new to the industry, Zoysia Australis is already experiencing strong adoption in both residential and commercial applications. Turfco, an LSA member, commenced offering this variety to their customers in October 2023.

As a premium alternative to standard grasses like Kikuyu, Zoysia Australis stands out for its versatility, shade tolerance, low maintenance requirements, durability, and medium-textured appearance.

Zoysia Australis at Kurnell – McConnell Dowell Corporation

Between mid-September 2024 to February 2025, Turfco supplied and installed 7,750m2 of Zoysia Australis to the

McConnell Dowell Kamay Ferry Wharves site compound at the Kurnell National Park.

Initially, the project specified an older variety of Zoysia japonica; however, upon Turfco's recommendation, the original contractor agreed to trial Zoysia Australis as a superior alternative. Turfco is confident that Zoysia Australis will perform better in terms of wear and climate making it more suitable for the project. Turfco has seen increasing interest in transitioning from older Zoysia's to Zoysia Australis, with all feedback so far being highly positive.

McConnell Dowell required an incremental demobilisation to facilitate a smooth handover to the public, with Turfco carrying out the turf installation in stages. The site, having been a construction zone for nearly 24 months, featured varying ground conditions; some areas had ideal sandy soil, and others had compacted, uneven soil from constant vehicle traffic. Throughout the discharge process, Turfco made multiple turf deliveries and site visits to ensure the installation was completed as construction areas were finished and ready for final touches.

When asked about the selected turf variety, Zoysia Australis, Luke from McConnell Dowell expressed complete satisfaction, along with gratitude towards Turfco and their services.

"My experience using Turfco has been excellent, they are receptive to short notice changes to schedules and quantities and have been able to suit our needs with a changing project deadline and a busy demobilisation from the site.

The delivered Zoysia Australis turf looks and feels fantastic. It is by far the softest grass that I have come across. It quickly took hold on sandy soil and looked very healthy with some minor attention given to it in its first weeks.

There was not a single roll of turf provided that was not fit for purpose or looked out of place. The installation team required little instruction and was devoted to getting their job done quickly and safely.

I would absolutely recommend Turfco for the supply and installation of their Zoysia grasses." – Luke, McConnell Dowell

JOHN DEERE 8700A PRECISIONCUT™ MOWER

Green Fleet and PRO Golf Helping Transform Settlers Run

ADOPTING NEW TECHNOLOGY

Brenton Clarke is the first to admit that anticipating the future maintenance needs of the acclaimed Settlers Run Golf and Country Club, a Greg Norman-designed 18-hole golf course, with 550 residential homes on site, keeps his team 'pretty busy'.

Brenton is Course Superintendent at the 260-hectare Settlers Run, which was built in 2006 in a remarkable natural setting near Cranbourne, about 50 minutes' drive southeast of Melbourne, where the city skyline is visible from several high points around the golf course.

"Settlers Run is a little bit different in that when you buy a house here, you buy a membership to the Club and pay a yearly fee, and we have external members as well. So we've got 1800 members all up," Brenton explained.

"Being a golf and country club, we have a bar/bistro and facilities such as the pool, gym, and tennis courts to maintain, as well as a fence line for residents and an entry road. Then we have the 18-hole course. It's quite a large area of turf to maintain."

While Settlers Run began life as a challenging championship golf course featuring all the best elements of Melbourne's renowned Sandbelt links, the broadening of membership to include golfers of all abilities has prompted a re-think of the layout.

Along with slight modifications to bunkering, Brenton Clarke said the master plan devised in 2024 included an upgrade of maintenance machinery, as well as adopting new technology to work smarter into the future.

Enter John Deere.

Local Support Key to Transition

"As soon as I joined the club in March 2023, replacing some of our old equipment was the big first priority for me," Brenton said.

"The John Deere team gave us options for where we could improve our fleet, and the local support was what initially attracted us. They have a dealership half an hour away in Hastings, where Chris Angwin is our main contact," he said.

"Chris has been a big part of the changes at Settlers Run. Swapping over to new equipment can make people a bit anxious but when we first got our walk-behind mowers, Chris turned up at 6am to make sure that they were running as smoothly as possible.

"It's that sort of support that other companies couldn't provide, and John Deere has the agricultural background as well, which gives them a big edge over other companies in terms of technology."

Settler's Run's injection of John Deere equipment has so far included four 220SL Walk Greens mowers, an 8700A PrecisionCut™ Mower, four Gator™ TX 4X2s and a ProGator™ spray unit, two Riding Greens Mowers, along with multiple tractors and loaders.

In the near future Brenton plans to add another two Gators, a 5 Series Utility Tractor, a second 8700A PrecisionCut Mower and potentially a 7400A TerrainCut™ Trim and Surrounds mower as well, to provide brand uniformity across the fleet.

"The new machines have been really, really well received by the team," he said.

"Everyone likes the walk behind mowers, the Gators are more robust around the course, and the guys have really enjoyed mowing fairways with the 8700 - it's definitely giving a better cut than what we previously had."

PRO Golf Software Shapes Future Management

Behind the scenes shaping of the course of the future is John Deere's Operations Center PRO Golf course management software, that offers a real-time view of daily operations and is capable of streaming data from any internet connected device, on or off the course.

PRO Golf allows superintendents to monitor their fleet's schedule, customise fleet and crew reports, assign jobs and communicate with staff, manage labour costs, schedule maintenance, and streamline equipment servicing.

"We've basically replaced the whiteboard in the morning meetings with PRO Golf," Brenton said.

"The software has been a real positive in providing data and analysis of what we're doing, how long jobs are taking, and matching individual job tasks to hours, as well improving communications between staff.

"I break down all the individual jobs that we do then match them to the hours, so if we want to share data with the committee to push for construction of bunkers, it's a really good way to prove where we spend our time and where efficiency can be improved.

"For example, one day we had a look at how much time our machinery spent travelling around the course — so not cutting or idling but actually moving from job to job. In the space of a seven-hour day we could see a whole hour of that was travel time. That kind of data is great to have so we can look at better ways of moving around the course to improve efficiency."

"There's so much built into PRO Golf so we're keen to keep expanding our use of the software into other areas."

GPS Sprayer on Wishlist for the Future

Another John Deere technology firmly on Brenton's wishlist is the ProGator GPS Precision Sprayer, which can link up with PRO Golf to provide real-time data on spray application, chemical and treatment sheets, and guidance for staff on where to spray.

"We're trying to anticipate our needs for the future, so wherever we can map our equipment or staff movement across the golf course, or refine how we get around the 260 hectares, it all helps us improve," Brenton said.

"The benefits of the GPS Sprayer would be in ease of operation and reducing overlap. We've got a team of 12 staff here but only three people can operate the spray rig, and when you have such a large area to spray it can get stressful.

"So just having a GPS sprayer that can 100% guarantee that you're going to spray exactly what you want to spray in the area you want

to spray would be great. Saving money on chemicals by fine-tuning it to mapping and spot spraying would be very useful as well."

Women in Turf Program Inspires Settlers Run Apprentice

Brenton recently sent Settlers Run third-year apprentice, Emma Lewis, to the Women in Turf program at the Cobram Barooga Golf Club, which is a collaboration between John Deere, Australian Sports Turf Managers Association (ASTMA) and Envu to encourage more people to consider a career in turf management.

"It's great seeing John Deere investing back into the industry," Brenton said.

"I asked Emma to do a talk in our toolbox meeting about her experience at Cobram Barooga, and she presented really well. She actually used the GPS Sprayer when she was down there, so maybe that's a new skill she can pursue here.

"I think it's crucial at the moment, to break down a few career pathways so that people actually know that they can get into turf. It doesn't necessarily have to be golf. When I went into my apprenticeship, I was cricket mad, and I'd never even thought of going to a golf course.

"The TAFE guys said, 'There's an apprenticeship going at a golf course near you', so I got sort of thrown into it. But you realise how good it is as a career, and how many people are missing out because they don't know it's there."

SUNCORP STADIUM WITH MATT OLIVER (LEFT) AND HAMISH SUTHERLAND (RIGHT)

Vasverde Visits Australia's Premier Turfgrass Facilities

BY ANA MAIA, VASVERDE CEO

My journey in turf began with a postgraduate degree in Turfgrass Management from the University of California, following my Agronomical Engineering degree at the University of Lisbon's Institute of Agronomy. Today, I manage Vasverde, a leading Portuguese company specialising in turf production for the sports and landscape markets.

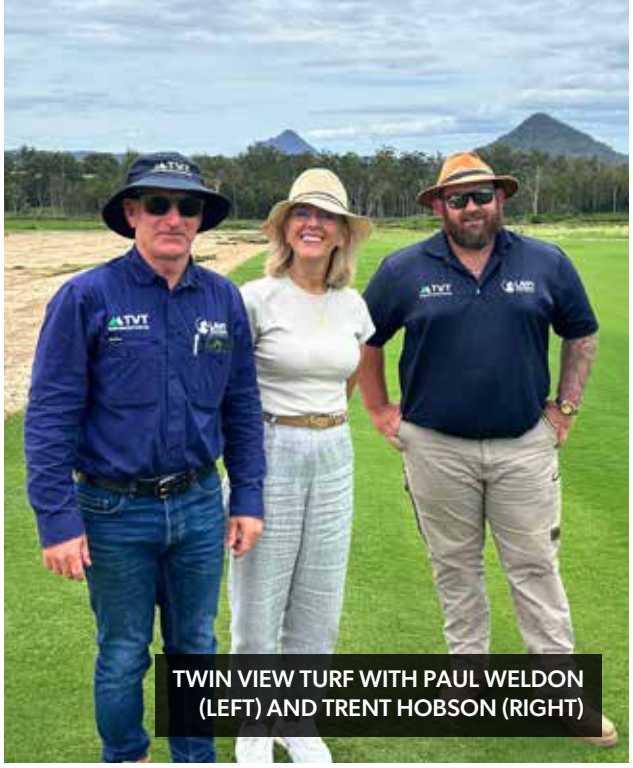
With this background, I was eager to experience firsthand the innovations and expertise within Australia's thriving turfgrass industry during recent travels to Queensland. As someone who's entire 30-year professional career has been dedicated to turfgrass, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to tour some of the finest turf facilities while meeting fellow international turf producers.

This memorable visit was made possible through an introduction from UK sod producer Simon Hutton, owner of Tillers Turf, and Simon Adermann who, alongside Lawn Solutions Australia, coordinated an unforgettable two-day tour.

Suncorp Stadium

My first stop was the iconic Suncorp Stadium, where I met Matt Oliver, the superintendent responsible for maintaining the world-class playing surface. During our visit, the field was undergoing a full turf replacement by HG Turf, where Matt was able to introduce me to HG Turf Managing Director Hamish Sutherland. We shared valuable insights and experiences in stadium turf management, discussing the challenges and innovations in maintaining high-performance sports fields.

From Suncorp, we headed to Twin View Turf, where Trent Hobson and Paul Weldon warmly welcomed us. This was my first in-depth encounter with Australian warm season turfgrass production, which left a lasting impression. Among the Bermudagrass, Buffalo, and Zoysia



TWIN VIEW TURF WITH PAUL WELDON (LEFT) AND TRENT HOBSON (RIGHT)

DALEYS TURF WITH JAIME HIGNETT

varieties, I was particularly captivated by Zoysia japonica 'Australis' a high-quality, medium leaf variety. Its rapid establishment and regrowth capabilities, comparable to Bermudagrass yet distinct from traditional Zoysia, made a significant impact. I also admired the fine leaf Zoysia matrella 'Sir Grange', a premium variety with excellent aesthetic and performance traits. Witnessing the entire production process and Twin View's innovative in-house washing facilities for sports turf was a privilege.

Next, we visited Daleys Turf, where Terry Daley and Jaime Hignett provided an insightful tour of their operations. Here, we engaged in discussions not only from a producer's perspective but also from a user's viewpoint, particularly in the boutique turf market. Once again, Zoysia Australis stood out as an exceptional variety, reinforcing its reputation as a premium choice for Australian conditions.

Sports Turf at Brisbane Lions' Training Facility

Day two commenced with a visit to the Brisbane Lions' new training facility, Brighton Homes Arena. The quality of the TifTuf Hybrid Bermudagrass at this stage of the playing season was remarkable. The venue itself was impressive, reflecting the high standards of Australian sports turf management.

Jimboomba Turf – Overcoming Challenging Conditions

Our final stop was Jimboomba Turf, where Renee and Alana Davidson welcomed us warmly. They guided me through their production processes, and we exchanged valuable insights on growing turf in challenging soil conditions, far more demanding than those we face at Vasverde in Portugal. Once again, Zoysia Australis stood out as a robust and versatile variety, reinforcing my appreciation for its adaptability and quality.

"YUTORI" SHOW GARDEN BY CHRISTIAN AND BAILYN JENKINS

MIFGS Celebrates Highly Successful 2025 Event

MELBOURNE BLOOMS ON THE WORLD STAGE

This year saw over 115,000 people make their way through the gates of the Carlton Gardens and Royal Exhibition Building. The best attendance at the show in over 20 years!

Lawn Solutions Australia (LSA) enjoyed a highly successful presence at this year's Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show. With a large stand near the main entrance, creating a lot of interest from attendees as they flowed through the gates. The LSA stand featured a range of turf varieties, including Sir Walter DNA Certified, TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda, Sir Grange Zoysia, and Zoysia Australis. These grasses drew significant attention from garden enthusiasts, landscapers, and industry professionals. With a strong focus on education and providing turf inspiration, the LSA team and Members engaged with thousands of visitors throughout the event, highlighting the benefits of choosing premium turf for both residential and commercial applications.

LSA brand ambassadors Charlie Albone and Jason Hodges played a key role also throughout the week. Both industry experts delivered engaging on-stage presentations, sharing their extensive knowledge of lawn care and landscape design while also answering questions from eager attendees. Their presence

reinforced LSA's position as the trusted authority in turf, offering valuable insights into selecting, installing, and maintaining the perfect lawn for any setting.

LSA turf varieties were prominently featured throughout the show gardens, a clear testament to the vital role that quality lawns play in landscape design. From lush, inviting green spaces to meticulously curated garden settings, these grasses demonstrated their versatility, resilience, and aesthetic appeal in a range of implementations. The widespread use of Sir Walter, TifTuf and Sir Grange (long and short!) across these displays highlighted the growing demand for high-performance turf solutions that cater to diverse environments and design preferences.

The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show – Show Garden Entries

Doable – Jason Hodges

Jason's incredible show garden entry the "Doable" garden is the result of thoughtful planning, proving that you don't need a large budget and the most expensive of materials to create a beautiful, functional and desirable space. The team at Semken Landscaping did an incredible job bringing this design to life.

"DOABLE" SHOW GARDEN BY JASON HODGES

"ƏSKĀP" SHOW GARDEN BY ROB COOPER

"NOSTALGIA" SHOW GARDEN BY PAUL PRITCHARD

While the garden design features a range of beautiful plants, we were most excited by the very impressive Sir Walter DNA Certified feature lawn.

Jason's show garden won a Silver Medal and was also awarded the Peoples Choice Award.

əskāp – Distinctive Gardens

Designed by Rob Cooper of Distinctive Gardens, "əskāp" is a lush and inviting garden that seamlessly combines contemporary structures with the wild beauty of native Australian plants. It features mass plantings of vibrant Banksia 'Little Candles' complemented by rugged mallee root sculptures, creating a harmonious blend of art and nature.

The beautiful garden design was awarded the coveted Golf Medal, alongside the City of Melbourne Award of Excellence for Best in Show and the Horticultural Media Association Award for Best Use of Plant Life. This garden included the use of both Sir Grange Zoysia and Sir Walter DNA Certified.

Nostalgia – Paul Pritchard Landscape Design

The "Nostalgia" garden evokes sentimental memories through its classic design elements, integrating traditional plant varieties with timeless landscaping features to create a space that feels both familiar and comforting.

Nostalgia took home the Mark Bence Construction Award, along with a well-deserved Gold Medal. This garden featured both Sir Grange Zoysia and TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda.

"IN RATIO WITH AFRICA" SHOW GARDEN BY MATT YORK

THE LSA STAND

"ODE" SHOW GARDEN BY BRENT REID

ODE – Candeo Design, Brent Reid

"ODE" is a tribute to contemporary design, showcasing clean lines, minimalist aesthetics, and a curated selection of plant species that together create a serene and modern outdoor space. ODE was awarded a Silver Medal, featuring another highly impressive Sir Walter DNA Certified entry lawn area.

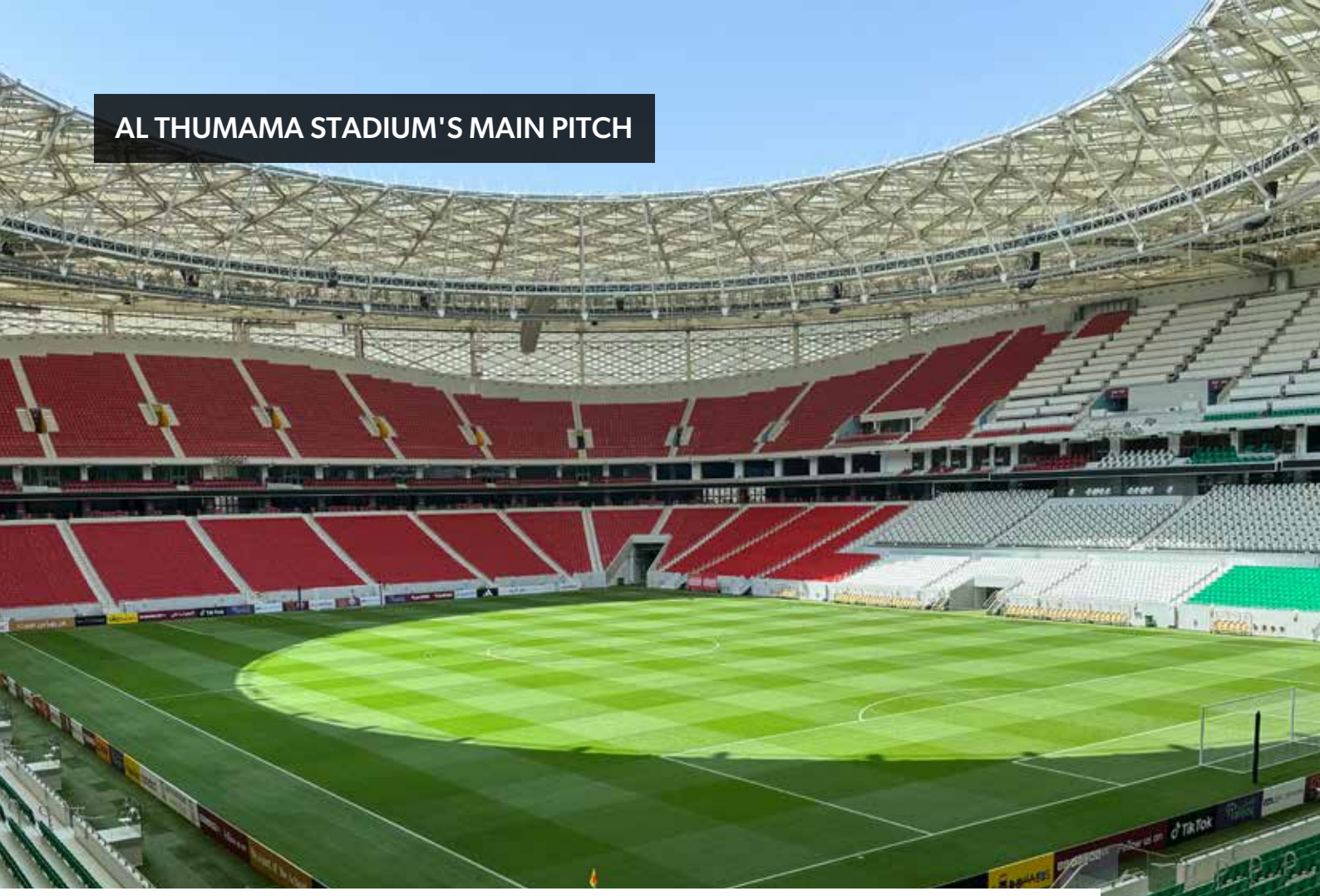
Yutori – Christian Jenkins and Bailyn Jenkins

"Yutori" embodies the Japanese concept of spaciousness and relaxation, incorporating Zen principles with tranquil water features, minimalist plantings, and contemplative spaces designed for reflection. Yutori was also awarded a Silver Medal, featuring lush unmown Sir Grange Zoysia throughout the design.

In Ratio with Africa – Matt York

Inspired by African landscapes, "In Ratio with Africa" incorporates bold textures and earthy tones, featuring drought-tolerant plants and innovative design techniques that reflect the balance and harmony found in nature. In Ratio with Africa took out the Silver Gilt Medal and also featured some very impressive unmown Sir Grange Zoysia.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in bringing the Show to life through these incredible gardens and displays.



AL THUMAMA STADIUM'S MAIN PITCH

From Brazil to Qatar: A Turfgrass Expert's World Cup Journey

HOW ALVES FILHO HELPED SHAPE THE PLAYING SURFACES FOR THE WORLD'S BIGGEST SPORTING EVENT

In 2017, Brazilian agronomist engineer and soil and plant nutrition specialist, Antônio Alves do Nascimento Filho, received an unexpected email inviting him to interview for a position in Qatar. At the time, his knowledge of the country was limited to its selection as the host nation for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. With prior experience in turfgrass management, including involvement in the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, Alves embraced the opportunity and joined local Qatari company Nakheel Landscapes in January 2018.

Initially, Alves relocated alone, leaving his wife and daughter in Brazil due to concerns about cultural differences, language barriers, and lifestyle changes. However, upon arrival, he quickly adapted to his new environment and began to see Qatar as his second home.

Qatar is a country located in the middle east and has grown to be one of the most influential and prosperous nations in the world, largely due to its vast natural gas and oil reserves. However, there is a long-term vision that includes investments in infrastructure, sports, education, and tourism.

Recognising Qatar's rapid development, Alves was eager to contribute his expertise to the nation's ambitious projects.

Qatar's desert climate presents unique challenges for turfgrass management.

THE FILHO FAMILY

Summers often see temperatures soaring above 40°C, while winters are milder, ranging from 10°C to 25°C. Alves's initial role focused on the construction of football pitches, encompassing the installation of irrigation and drainage systems, as well as landscaping. He undertook the formidable task of assembling and training a diverse team of 153 professionals, including agronomists, supervisors, machinery operators, mechanics, and gardeners. Together, they developed and maintained 350 hectares of grass, 32 hectares of groundcovers, 4,500 shrubs, and 1,089 trees.

Central to their efforts was the use of Platinum TE® Paspalum, a warm-season grass known for its exceptional salt tolerance and adaptability to various mowing heights. This made it an ideal choice for Qatar's arid conditions and the high standards required for World Cup venues. To meet FIFA's requirements, the team overseeded the Paspalum with perennial ryegrass during the cooler months, ensuring a dense and vibrant playing surface. Extensive testing had demonstrated that Platinum TE® Paspalum was the ideal playing surface with durability, shade tolerance, and rapid recovery from injury.

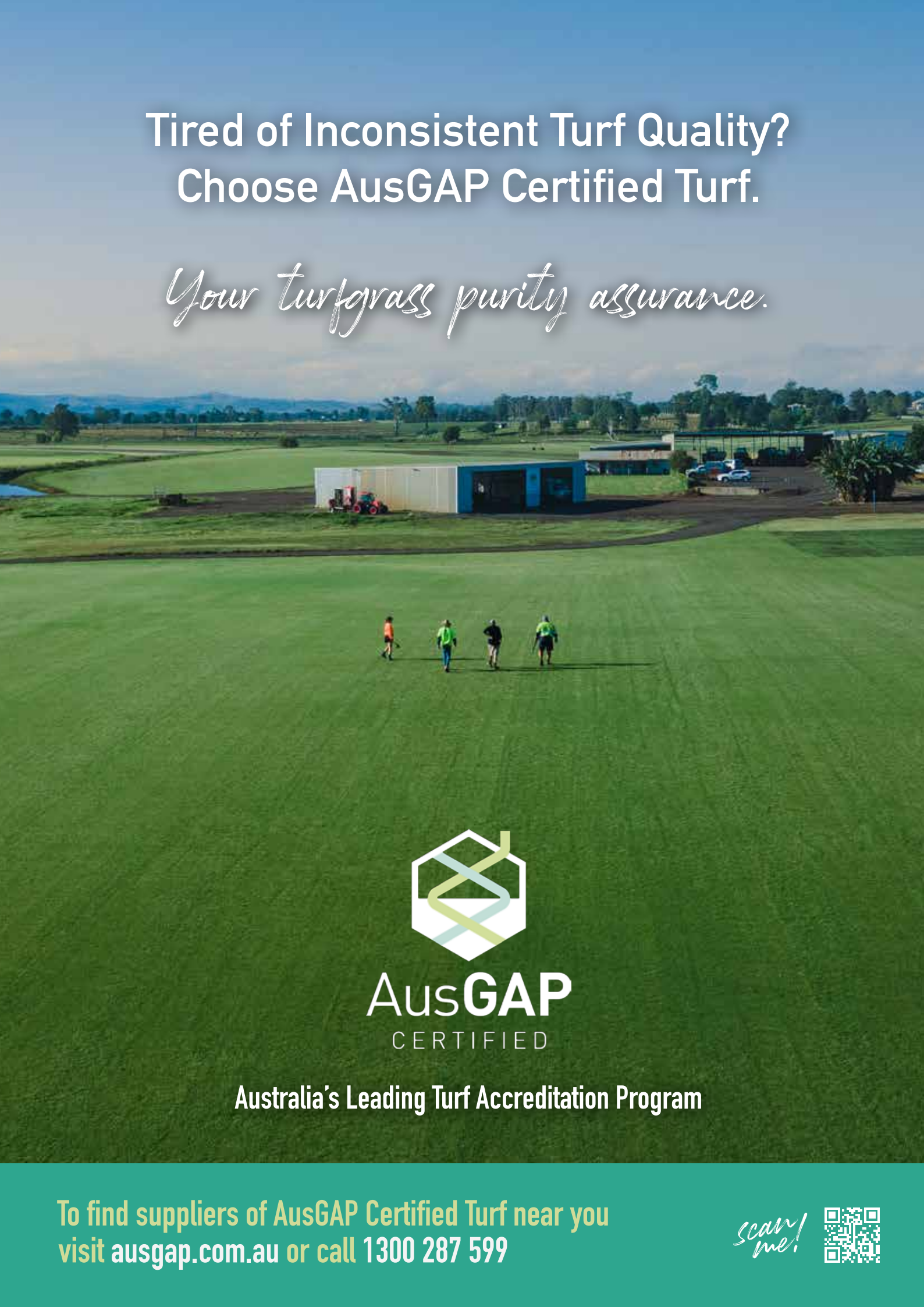
Throughout the World Cup, Alves served as a project manager overseeing the maintenance of 30 training sites, which included football pitches, landscaping,

THE TSP TEAM

and parks. These facilities hosted numerous teams, including the tournament champions. Ensuring a safe and high-quality surface for athletes required a dedicated and skilled team, advanced technology, and meticulous planning. The rigorous schedule of daily training sessions demanded that the turf remain in optimal condition, balancing aesthetics with player safety.

With over 15 years of experience in sports turf management, Alves's role combines technical knowledge, practical expertise, and strategic planning. His passion for his work is evident, as he acknowledges the challenges but finds fulfillment in doing what he loves. Currently, as a sports turf consultant, he is responsible for overseeing plant health, performance, sustainability, and the enhancement of sports fields and turfgrass areas. His duties include scheduling maintenance activities for government contractors, monitoring turf conditions, and providing proactive solutions to uphold the legacy of the World Cup by maintaining high-quality playing surfaces.

Reflecting on his journey, Alves expresses gratitude for the opportunities and achievements he has encountered. He looks forward to embracing future challenges and continuing his professional growth in the field of turfgrass management.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