



## **Final Report**

### **National Turf R&D Conference 2016 and 2017**

Richard Stephens  
Turf Australia Limited

Project Number: TU15700

TU15700

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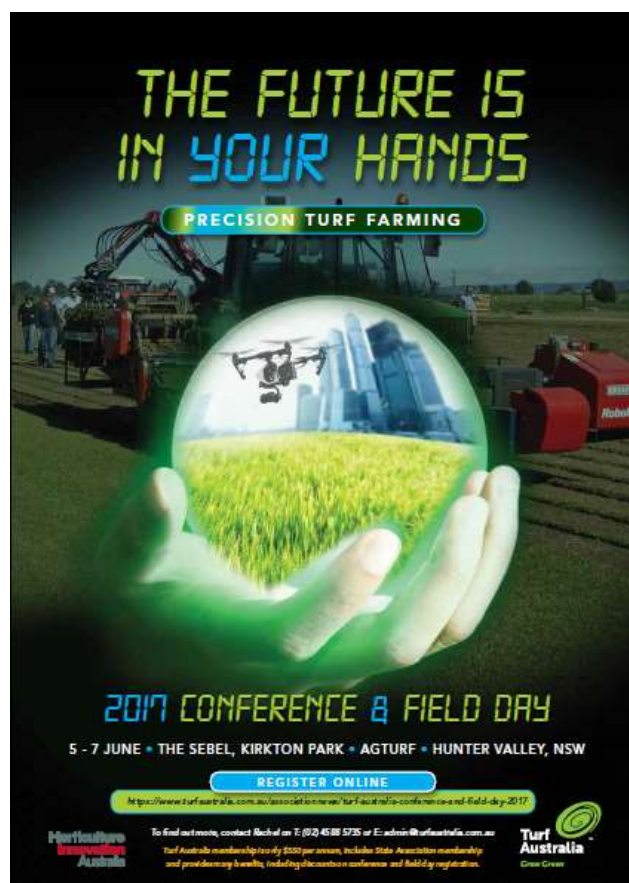
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## Summary

The turf industry national conferences, field days and state based forums provide turf growers with the latest industry research, development and marketing information enabling them to increase their professionalism and profitability. These events also create awareness of current industry issues, encourage personal development, enable professional networking, identify new business opportunities and provide access to better business management tools.

In 2016, Turf Australia's series state based forums held in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth attracted almost 150 participants in total. They provided a range of informative presentations and interactive workshops covering social media, accounting for profit, precision turf farming, levy investments and identifying different personality styles to help improve turf grower communication. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive and the forums received a considerable amount of media coverage which further extended the reach of the valuable information provided.

In 2017, the 13th national Turf Australia conference & field day was held in the NSW Hunter Valley and was a huge success. The 130 delegates were able to take home considerable information and insights into future opportunities for the turf industry. The conference theme "The future is in your hands" was timely given the recent advances into precision turf farming. The program provided a large variety of useful, tangible and relevant information for growers to take back and use in their own businesses. Again, the feedback received was very positive and demonstrated a considerable amount of valuable learning took place. Media coverage of this event was also extensive and helped to reinforce the key messages throughout the entire industry.



NEW SOUTH WALES TURF GROWERS  
STATE FORUM  
Tuesday  
16th Aug 2016

Improving your productivity & profitability

Afternoon Forum, Networking Drinks & Dinner  
Venue: Oakville House, 213 Old Stock Route Rd, Oakville

**Program**

Time	Topic	Speaker
12.20pm	Arrival and light lunch	
1.00pm	Welcome	Anthony Mucari (TAN International Past President)
1.05pm	How turf growers can generate more business through social media	Cynthia Mahoney (Director, Cynthia Mahoney and Associates)
1.50pm	Using your accountant and your taxation figures to improve your profitability	Greg Sharpe (Director 3D Accounting)
2.20pm	Tee & Coffee	
3.00pm	Final results from the NSW Turf Nutrition Program	Mark Bottom (AgScience Solutions)
3.20pm	How the turf levy is being used to make turf farming more profitable	John Lloyd (CEO, Horticulture Innovation Australia)
4.00pm	Interactive Workshop Your top five issues for industry research and development	Pat Abraham (Key Link Solutions)
4.20pm	Interactive Workshop Generating more business by better understanding how to identify and influence different personalities	Cynthia Mahoney (Director, Cynthia Mahoney and Associates)
5.20pm	Networking Drinks	
6.20pm	Dinner	
8.30pm	Close	

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STATE BASED FORUM **NSW**

## Keywords

National conference  
State based forums  
Forum  
Conference  
Field Day  
Farm Robotics

## Introduction

This project was developed to provide the turf industry with information on the latest R&D and marketing as well as allowing turf growers to engage with their peers. Turf Australia's highly anticipated field days, conferences and forums are valued by the turf industry because of the opportunities given to growers to learn new things from not only the presenters but fellow turf growers. These skills, technology and ideas can then be taken back and applied to their own businesses. In many cases events like these are the only chance the turf growers get to discuss, learn and share such a large variety of turf industry relevant issues.

The 2016 Forums and 2017 Conference and Field Day were both interactive, providing delegates with many opportunities to ask questions and raise matters of concern. This enables professional development of turf growers with the end result being increased farm business professionalism and profitability. The state based forums in 2016 enabled more one on one engagement with growers due to the smaller numbers at each forum when compared to the 2017 national conference and field day. In addition, the individual forums enabled a blend of local and national issues to be tailored for each state while the national conference & field day provided a good overview of a wider variety of topics spread over two and half days.

It is important to cover a diverse range of topics because of the unique nature of the turf production industry. Turf growers are not just farmers as they sell, deliver and often install directly with consumers. In other words, turf growers also provide and/or manage the supply chain within the industry and turf growers are constantly interacting directly with consumers and are continuously managing and developing new marketing strategies themselves.

Turf Australia recognizes the considerable time demands placed upon turf growers and understand the production, management and marketing expertise required to grow, harvest and sell turf throughout Australia, 365 days each year. Ensuring industry events such as state forums and /or national conferences & field days have direct relevance is vital to entice attendance by turf farmers. As a result, the feedback from previous events along with advice from the Turf Australia Board and State Associations is used to ensure relevant and enticing programs are created that encompass the priorities as determined by the industry Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) 2012-2017.



## Methodology

The aim of the National Turf R&D Conference 2016 & 2017 project was to provide turf growers with access to relevant and reliable information that will help them run a more profitable business, learn new production methods, realise the results of levy funded R&D and marketing programs, professionally network and assess new equipment, innovations and/or management practices that may aid more efficient turf production.

Media coverage before, during and after the events not only extends the key messages throughout the industry, it also reinforces the learnings that take place at these events.

Turf Australia carefully reviewed the current issues and latest technology available to the turf industry, along with taking into account the feedback received from previous events, to develop event programs that are relevant to and cover a wide range of topics so that every delegate will benefit.

The split between having state based forums in 2016 followed by a national conference and field day in 2017 enabled a variation to the events with the aim of attracting previously unengaged industry members. Each state forum program was tailored to ensure a blend of national and local issues. The programs for each event are provided below.

**QUEENSLAND TURF GROWERS  
STATE FORUM  
Wednesday  
27th July 2016**

**Improving your productivity & profitability**

**Afternoon Forum, Networking Drinks & Dinner**  
**Venue: The Sebel, Pelican Waters, Caloundra**  
**Time: 12.30pm - 8.30pm**  
**Cost: \$55pp incl. GST (non members \$75 incl. GST)**

In 2016, Turf Australia will be holding state forums to provide growers with up to date national and state based information. At Queensland's State Forum, Cynthia Mahoney will spell out social media quite simply and explain how turf growers can generate more business by using social media. Other key presenters such as John Kolehar from ALC will give growers an insight into implementing variable rate irrigation on a turf farm and how savings can be made. Horticulture Innovation will also be on hand to update growers on how the turf levy is being used to make turf growing more profitable, and you will have the opportunity to input ideas on research and development for the turf industry. In addition, accountant Greg Sharpe will outline how simple accounting techniques can improve your profitability. The afternoon will conclude with networking drinks and an enjoyable dinner.

Time	Topic	Speaker
12:30pm	Arrival and light lunch	
1:00pm	Welcome	Ross Boyle (TA President)
1:30pm	How turf growers can generate more business through social media	Cynthia Mahoney (Director, Cynthia Mahoney and Associates)
1:50pm	Using your accountant and your taxation figures to improve your profitability	Greg Sharpe (Director JD Accounting)
2:30pm	Tee & Coffee	
3:00pm	Implementing Precision Farming on a turf farm	John Kolehar (ALC QLD)
3:30pm	How the turf levy is being used to make turf farming more profitable	Senior Executive HIA
4:00pm	Interactive Workshop: Your top five issues for industry research and development	Richard Stephens (TA Business & Industry Development Manager)
4:30pm	Interactive Workshop: Generating more business by better understanding how to identify and influence different personalities	Cynthia Mahoney (Director, Cynthia Mahoney and Associates)
5:30pm	Networking Drinks	
6:30pm	Dinner	
8:30pm	Close	

To register:

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- T: Turf Australia (02) 4588 5735

**Don't miss this informative event. BOOK NOW!**



Ross Boyle



Cynthia Mahoney



Greg Sharpe



John Kolehar



Richard Stephens

**For more information contact Rachel Layt:**  
[admin@turfaustralia.com.au](mailto:admin@turfaustralia.com.au)  
 Mobile: 0438 887 754

**STATE BASED FORUM QLD**



**NEW SOUTH WALES TURF GROWERS STATE FORUM**  
Tuesday  
16th Aug 2016

**Turf Australia**  
Grow Green

**Improving your productivity & profitability**

**Afternoon Forum, Networking Drinks & Dinner**  
Venue: Oakville House, 213 Old Stock Route Rd, Oakville

**Program**

Time	Topic	Speaker
12.30pm	Arrival and light lunch	
1.00pm	Welcome	Anthony Mascot (AIMediate Past President)
1.05pm	How turf growers can generate more business through social media	Cynthia Mahoney (Director, Cynthia Mahoney and Associates)
1.50pm	Using your accountant and your taxation figures to improve your profitability	Greg Sharpe (Director 3D Accounting)
2.20pm	Tee & Coffee	
3.00pm	Final results from the NSW Turf Nutrition Program	Mark Satterthorn (AgEnviro Solutions)
3.20pm	How the turf levy is being used to make turf farming more profitable	John Lloyd (CEO, Horticulture Innovation Australia)
4.00pm	Interactive Workshop: Your top five issues for industry research and development	Pat Abraham (Key Link Solutions)
4.20pm	Interactive Workshop: Generating more business by better understanding how to identify and influence different personalities	Cynthia Mahoney (Director, Cynthia Mahoney and Associates)
5.30pm	Networking Drinks	
6.30pm	Dinner	
8.30pm	Close	

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STATE BASED FORUM **NSW**

**VICTORIAN TURF GROWERS STATE FORUM**  
Wednesday  
14th Sept 2016

**Turf Australia**  
Grow Green

**Improving your productivity & profitability**

**Afternoon Forum, Networking Drinks & Dinner**  
Venue: RACV Country Club Healesville  
122 Healesville-Kinglake Road, Healesville

**Program**

Time	Topic	Speaker
12.30pm	Arrival and light lunch	
1.00pm	Welcome	Mark Eagle (VFA President)
1.05pm	How turf growers can generate more business through social media	Cynthia Mahoney (Director, Cynthia Mahoney and Associates)
1.50pm	Using your accountant and your taxation figures to improve your profitability	Greg Sharpe (Director 3D Accounting)
2.20pm	Tee & Coffee	
3.00pm	Implementing Precision Farming on a turf farm	Scotty Stewart (Australian Lawn Careworks QLD)
3.20pm	How the turf levy is being used to make turf farming more profitable	John Vahedloo (Horticulture Innovation Australia)
4.00pm	Interactive Workshop: Your top five issues for industry research and development	Pat Abraham (Key Link Solutions)
4.20pm	Interactive Workshop: Generating more business by better understanding how to identify and influence different personalities	Cynthia Mahoney (Director, Cynthia Mahoney and Associates)
5.30pm	Networking Drinks	
6.30pm	Dinner	
8.30pm	Close	

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STATE BASED FORUM **VIC**

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA TURF GROWERS STATE FORUM**  
Wednesday  
31st Aug 2016

**Turf Australia**  
Grow Green

**Improving your productivity & profitability**

**Afternoon Forum, Networking Drinks & Dinner**  
Venue: Ambrose Estate,  
200 The Boulevard, Wembley Downs

**Program**

Time	Topic	Speaker
12.30pm	Arrival and light lunch	
1.00pm	Welcome	Anthony Mascot (AIMediate Past President)
1.05pm	Implementing Precision Farming on a turf farm	John Vahedloo (Australian Lawn Careworks QLD)
3.20pm	How the turf levy is being used to make turf farming more profitable	John Vahedloo (Horticulture Innovation Australia)
4.00pm	Interactive Workshop: Your top five issues for industry research and development	Pat Abraham (Key Link Solutions)
4.20pm	Interactive Workshop: Generating more business by better understanding how to identify and influence different personalities	Robert Roshmore (C/L Business & Industry Development Manager)
5.30pm	Networking Drinks	
6.30pm	Dinner	
8.30pm	Close	

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STATE BASED FORUM **WA**

# THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS : PROGRAM

PRECISION TURF FARMING

## 2017 CONFERENCE & FIELD DAY

5 - 7 JUNE • THE SEBEL, KIRKTON PARK • AGTURF • HUNTER VALLEY, NSW



Lock-in the dates June 5 to 7 for this year's national Turf Australia conference and field day to be held at The Sebel Kirkton Park and AGTURF in New South Wales' (NSW) Hunter Valley.

Presentations on precision farming and turf nutrition along with possibly the largest turf machinery field day ever held in Australia are planned.

The Master of Ceremonies (MC) will be 'Tony the Turfman' and presenters include John Keleher from Australian Lawn Concepts and Dr Mick Battam from AgEnviro Solutions.

The Field Day will be held at nearby AGTURF, Lorn, NSW on Wednesday June 7. AGTURF are owned and operated by the 6th generation of the Mead family.

### DAY 1 : MONDAY 5TH JUNE 2017

11.00am - 5.00pm	Scenic Helicopter Rides
1.00pm - 5.00pm	Dik Murphy Golf Tournament
7.00pm	Welcome Dinner

### DAY 2 : TUESDAY 6TH JUNE

9.00am	John Keleher: Precision Turf Farming is the future and it is here now
9.30am	Mick Battam: Knowing your turf nutrient requirements is a vital part of your business profitability
10.00am	Nick Dorney: The benefits of turf grass certification
10.30am	Morning Tea
10.50am	Panel discussion with Dr Leigh Golding: Arm yourself; how to combat the rising trend of synthetic turf
11.40am	Andrew Bate: Turf Farm Robotics
12.10pm	James Greenshields: Put your hand up
1.00pm	Lunch
2.00pm - 5.00pm	Vineyard and Winery Tours
6.00pm	Conference Dinner
6.50pm	Richard Stephens: Turf Hall of Fame
7.40pm	Dinner Speaker: TBA
8.30pm	Ross Boyle: Members Benefit Auction
9.30pm	After Dinner Drinks

### DAY 3 : WEDNESDAY 7TH JUNE

9.00am	Bus departs the Sebel Kirkton Park and travels to AGTURF
9.50am	Richard Stephens: Welcome
10.00am	Morning Tea
10.15am	Robotics demonstrations
10.45am	Mowing demonstrations
11.15am	Harvester demonstrations
12.00pm	Spraying demonstrations
12.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm	Quad bike, buggy and farm vehicle demonstrations
2.00pm	Irrigation demonstrations
2.30pm	Field Day ends
2.40pm	Turf Australia Annual General Meeting

Turf Australia's 2017 Conference will be held at The Sebel, Kirkton Park in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales.



### REGISTER ONLINE

<https://www.turfaustralia.com.au/associationnews/turf-australia-conference-and-field-day-2017>

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Turf Australia membership is only \$550 per annum, includes State Association membership and provides many benefits, including discounts on conference and field day registration.

Turf  
Australia  
Grow Green



# THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS : 2017 CONFERENCE & FIELD DAY

5 - 7 JUNE • THE SEBEL, KIRKTON PARK • AGTURF • HUNTER VALLEY, NSW

## BIO'S

### JOHN KELEHER

#### Australian Lawn Concepts

Managing director of Australian Lawn Concepts, John Keleher, bought his first turf farm in 2004 at Ipswich. Since then, John - an agronomist by trade before his step into the turf industry - has developed his farm into one of Australia's leading turf suppliers and user of precision agriculture and innovation. ALC now produces more than 150 hectares of warm season grasses and has embraced innovations in irrigation, fertigation, harvesting and on-farm management. In 2016, ALC installed the first variable rate irrigation system in the Australian turf industry. ALC continues to drive investment in its own and the wider turf industry to improve the best practice of turf growing and promotion, recently announcing it was the chosen supplier of Platinum Zoyle and Nullarbor Couch turf on a 105-hectare master planned community, The Heights, in Pimpama on the Gold Coast.



15 months after high school, Nick went onto complete a bachelor's degree in Agriculture at the University of New England in 2004. Nick worked underground for 12 years between tunnelling in Sydney and coal mining in Queensland and New South Wales. He was a compliance officer for the last 7 years underground overseeing production and safety in the part of the mine. Nick joined AusGAP in early 2016 and has since been running the program and processing the first applicants to bring them up to compliance standards.

### ANDREW BATE

#### Founding Director, MD & CEO

The vision to develop robotic farming technology came from innovative grain and cattle farmer Andrew Bate. Andrew has spent a life time in agriculture; he has trained as an agronomist, and farms near Emerald, Central Queensland Australia. Andrew is passionate about ensuring the future generations of farmers have a vibrant, economic, and sustainable future in the cropping industry. Andrew graduated from the University of Queensland with an Assoc. Dip App Science - Agronomy. He is a mentor on the Westpac Business of Tomorrow Program.



Practitioner, Institute of Success Dynamics and Certificate IV Workplace Training And Assessment, Dept of Defence.

### PANEL DISCUSSION:

### WILL PEARCE

Will Pearce has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science from the University of Queensland (UQ) majoring in soil science and horticulture specialising in turf grass. He has worked with leading Australian turf researchers on a number of projects including the EcoTurf project and chemical phyto-toxicity projects. During his time with the Queensland Government and Bioscience Australia he took a lead role with the design, construction and running of the project Using turf for erosion and sediment control (Turf Levy Funded Project TU12022). Since undertaking his role as a research agronomist and trials manager at the Sports Turf Research Institute's (STRI) Australian base at Redlands Research Station in Brisbane in 2014, he has designed, constructed, maintained and reported on a number of turfgrass research projects.



### DR MICK BATTAM

#### AgEnviro Solutions

Mick is principal author of the Footprint Calculator app for sports field managers and the Sydney Water Best Practice Guidelines for Holistic Open Space Turf Management in Sydney, 2011. He is a certified irrigation designer and a certified irrigation agronomist. In 2014 he was presented with an award by AORA for 'Outstanding contribution to organic market development by an individual'. Mick has 20 year's experience in the fields of soils, irrigation and landscape assessment, and a Doctorate in Agricultural Science (Soil Science) in soil water movement and TAFE certificates in Urban Irrigation and Building Contracting Management. Mick has presented many soil workshops to assist farmers to better understand their soil, including the positives and negatives of using poultry manure, compost, and knowing the real value of fertilisers.



### JAMES GREENSHIELDS

#### Director and Co-Founder of the Resilient Leaders Foundation

James Greenshields is a husband and father of two girls, who has been to the depths of human existence, chosen to change his life, and now assists others do the same. James gained James Greenshields is a husband and father of two girls, who has been to the depths of human existence, chosen to change his life, and now assists others do the same. James gained extensive leadership, organisational and training experience in his 17 years as an Army Officer. Amongst other positions, he led a Combat Team of over 100 personnel in Iraq during 2006 - 07. Later he completed Australian Command and Staff College in 2008 where he graduated at the top of his trade stream. James has had personal experience with both trauma and depression. Upon leaving the military James gained qualifications as an Emotional Intelligence facilitator, trainer and coach with the ANZI accredited organisation, Beyond Success, Neural Linguist Programming



### DR LEIGH GOLDING

Dr Leigh Golding is a medical doctor who works full time with patients with musculoskeletal injuries. He is a Registrar in Sports and Exercise medicine and consults at The Sports Clinic, Sydney University. Dr Golding has provided medical coverage to various sporting teams recently including Sydney University Rugby, Australian Women's Indigenous Cricket, Australian U16 Cricket and he is currently the team doctor for Northern Suburbs Rugby Club. He is a keen sportsperson and has a special interest in exercise medicine and pre-emptive injury prevention.



### NICK DORNEY

#### AusGAP

Born and raised in the Upper Hunter Valley on his parents' beef and broad acre farming property, he worked as a jockey in the NT and travelled through Europe for



### ROSS BOYLE

#### Rosemount Turf

Ross Boyle is the chairman of Turf Australia and director of Rosemount Turf, Sunshine Coast, Queensland. Ross is passionate about turf, and has recently returned from exploring the turf industry in England and America.



## Outputs

### 2016 State Based Forums

The 2016 state based forums, which attracted approximately 150 delegates, were developed with the guidance of the Turf Australia Board and the State based Industry Development officers. Interactive workshops were held in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth and the key agenda items included:

- The future direction of the turf levy was debated at each forum through an interactive workshop run by Pat Abraham from Key Link Solutions. These sessions allowed growers to participate in the process of deciding where the levy funds should be invested as part of the industry's strategic investment plan for the next five years.
- Social Media being a more effective and efficient way to connect and engage with existing and potential customers. Cynthia Mahoney from Cynthia Mahoney and Associates provided some startling facts and figures and explained how turf growers can generate more business by using social media.
- Knowing what aspects of a turf farm business are profitable and what aspects need be 'worked on' was the focus of the sessions presented by Greg Sharpe from 3D Accounting. Greg showed how some simple accounting techniques, such as;
  - Creating a '*Financial Scorecard System*'
  - Calculating your '*Return for Effort*', and
  - Establishing '*Effective pricing*'.
- John Keleher from Australian Lawn Concepts (ALC) presented on 'Precision turf farming' and how ALC was adapting and implementing precision agriculture technology.
- At the NSW Forum, Mick Battam from AgEnviro Solutions informed the NSW growers of the final results from the Turf Nutrition Program, which involved on-farm analysis from 19 different NSW turf farms.
- John Vatikiotis and John Lloyd, both from Hort Innovation, delivered sessions on how Hort Innovations is now overseeing the turf levy investments.
- And to finish off each forum, Cynthia Mahoney (Richard Stephens at the WA Forum) ran an interactive workshop on identifying and dealing with different personality types in the workplace. According to the feedback received from the 150 participants, this 'Communication Styles' workshop was a key highlight of every forum, along with the networking drinks and dinner.



For more detail on the 2016 State Based Forums, please refer to Appendix 1 for a summary of the feedback received and milestone report 103.

## **2017 National Conference & Field Day**

The 2017 Turf Australia Conference & Field Day attracted over 130 delegates and received extensive media coverage. The program was developed by the Turf Australia Board and used feedback received from previous events to ensure a relevant and attractive program and venue.

Hosted at The Sebel Kirkton Park in the Hunter Valley, the theme “The future is in your hands” ensure the focus was on the future of turf farming. Throughout the program, presenters focused on delivering tangible information that growers could use in their own businesses and highlighted opportunities to improve their profitability and professionalism, including:

- John Keleher, Australian Lawn Concepts (ALC), and David Weier, Precision Ag Solutions, gave a practical overview of what ALC has achieved by installing Variable Rate Irrigation and other precision farming technologies into their everyday working environment. David presented on how the technology could assist growers and by transferring its applications in other industries, including broadacre cropping, to turf. John spoke on the actual efficiencies his turf farm had achieved having only installed the technology 12-18 months ago and showed pictures of the technologies in operation.
- Mick Battam, AgEnviro Solutions, highlighted how important it is to understand the nutritional status of both the soil and the turf plant when growing healthy turf, and how adding the correct amendments in the appropriate time can significantly increase the health of a turf crop. His research on NSW turf farms opened the eyes of many growers to the vastly under-researched area of turf plant nutrition and turf plant growth patterns, while also challenging growers to assess their long-held traditional application of fertilisers.
- Nick Dorney, AusGap, provided an overview of the benefits of turfgrass certification and accreditation as well as the AusGap program which aims to set minimum standards for turf growers and enable them to offer customers a guarantee of quality. The program, open to all Australian growers, covers everything from growing to installing standards and ensures the industry raises the bar in terms of its assurances to customers and the wider public. Nick’s talk aimed at helping growers understand the accreditation process and how it could be used to the growers’ advantage.
- Andrew Bate, SwarmFarm, gave an informative talk about how as a farmer he has helped develop one of Australia’s leading farm robotics companies in Emerald, Queensland, and how the business is now venturing into turf through an automated mowing platform. The robots are aimed at being robust and user-friendly and have a number of applications in the turf industry considering the relatively low level of obstacles turf farms have for a robot to avoid, compared to the broadacre cropping sector.
- The panel discussion on how synthetic and natural turf compare involved the Sports Turf Research Institute’s Will Pearce, leading sports physician Dr Leigh Golding, and Turf Australia Chairman, Ross Boyle, Rosemount Turf. Facilitated by Richard Stephens from Turf Australia, the discussion covered how many research projects comparing the two surfaces were only short term, and no longitudinal studies had been undertaken. While research projects cited by Dr Golding showed increased levels of knee injuries on synthetic surfaces, he said injuries such as skinned limbs were likely under-reported due to them being considered more superficial and cosmetic. The key take home message was for growers to combat the synthetic surface, they needed to “sell the feeling” natural turf gave an environment and a situation – the non-tangible emotions attached to playing a park, having a barbeque on a lawn, or laying on grass in summer. They should also focus on the fact synthetic turf is far from maintenance free, and the environmental cost with producing, laying and disposing of synthetic turf compared to natural turf.
- James Greenshields, Centre for Resilient Leadership, gave a confronting, emotional and educational presentation on the importance of being honest, open and present. A former Australian Army member, he stressed how important it was to find happiness without external validation; find the time to emotionally connect with the people in your family and your business rather than wait to find time in the



future and how this helps to build resilience within yourself to deal with external influences. He also stressed the importance of speaking to him, or someone, if his talk raised any issues for them.



An afternoon spent visiting local wineries provided an excellent networking opportunity and gave insight into how the Hunter Valley wine industry is marketing itself in an ever-changing commercial marketplace. The region has not only had to face the challenges of climate change impacting their varietal choice and label development, but also the changing way consumers buy their product. No longer can the region rely on a steady stream of tourists road tripping between wineries to buy product – a model which has formed the back bone of the region's development – wineries have had to become savvier in the way they market themselves, their wines and move into the online sales sphere.

The conference dinner also provided an enjoyable networking opportunity and three new inductees were awarded the Turf Australia 'Hall of Fame' award for outstanding services to the turf industry. The celebrated inductees were Brent Redman from Buchanan Turf, Lynn Davidson from Jimboomba Turf and Peter McMaugh from Turfgrass Scientific Services.

### **Field day success despite inclement weather**





The field day at Ag Turf Lawn Solutions was significantly impacted with more than 50mm of rain soaking the farm overnight and during the field day. Undeterred by the weather, the field day went ahead with a modified program and those exhibitors who took part were able to engage with growers inside the field day marquee and pass on information about various new machinery now available for turf farm operations.

Of particular interest was the SwarmFarm automated mowing robot, known as 'Swarmbot', which had its first public display on the sodden turf at AgTurf. After a short demonstration into the paddock, SwarmFarm's Neville Crooke drove the robot to growers on higher ground for a close up look and chat about its capacity to bring some 21<sup>st</sup> century technology into the turf industry.

The Swarmbot was of significant interest to growers who could see huge benefits in being able to automatically mow their paddocks. While the bot cannot currently be owned by growers, instead being hired by growers and allowing a team member from SwarmFarm to operate it, the innovation and potential for the turf industry was recognised by all the growers at the field day.

In lieu of a farm walk, the Meade family gave an insight into their farming operation, the varieties, markets and business structure. The AgTurf farm, which is part of the Lawn Solutions Australia group, is a family-owned farm with two generations working in the business.

TA chairman Ross Boyle also gave a short talk on his recent international travel which included visiting turf farms in Europe and gave growers and comparison to way in they operate their businesses (with government subsidies) and the varieties they grow, including living turf carpets with wildflowers.

Patrick Muscat of GreenLife Turf Supplies exhibited his Green-Blasta turf colouring machine and showed its versatility by demonstrating in the inclement weather. Patrick designed the specialised machine to apply colourant to any turf surface including turf farms, ovals, sports fields and golf courses. His patented design for Green-Blasta saved time and money by using 50 per cent less product and gave turf a more realistic natural look in one pass by atomising the pigment/colour mix into a fine, high pressure mist.

While FireFly Equipment might not have been able to get their machine off the back of a truck, response to their newest piece of equipment, the self-propelled ProSlab 155 turf cutting machine which reduces labour costs, improves productivity, and reduces maintenance, drew plenty of grower interest. The ProSlab produced a superb pallet with low field impact using a patented floating cutterhead and electric chop, with a depth control system, which could also cut turf to a range of specifications. FireFly also now offers GPS guidance as an option on the machine.

All 2017 Turf Australia national conference & field day delegates were provided with a detailed conference handbook containing information on all of the presenters, exhibitors and a summary of speaker presentations as well as providing space for recording tailored notes and key learnings. Following the conference & field day, the presentations and feedback received were used as a base for articles in industry E-newsletters, magazines, Facebook and website postings.



## Media Coverage

- **Turf Australia Industry Magazines**
  - Spring 2017, pages 6-15
  - Autumn 2017, pages 6-9
  - Summer 2016/17, page 3
  - Spring 2016, pages 4-8
- **TurfCraft magazines:**
  - July/August 2017, pages 50, 51 and 59.
  - March/April 2017, pages 60-62
  - January/February, page 56
  - July/August 2016, page 72
- **Turf Australia Enewsletters**, various editions from May 2016 to October 2017

## Outcomes

### 2016 state based forums

The level of engagement from the participants during each of the 2016 state based forums along with the formal and informal feedback received following the forums was excellent. Some of the most common general feedback comments include:

- A very helpful and informative forum, thank you
- Good interaction among participants
- The program for the day was good, great for everyone who attended
- The enthusiasm of the participants, the speakers were engaging and the forum went smoothly
- It was a friendly open forum with well-chosen topics
- Impressed with everything and pleased that TA has come so far.

More importantly, there is a long list of things participants said they learnt and could put into practice following the presentations, including:

- Social media
- Using marketing & statistics
- Fertilizing program based on plant stage/growth
- Marketing ideas
- Personality identification
- Don't discount prices
- Mick's talk on soil profiles and nutrition
- Greg's presentation – do not cut your price!
- Tips on social media – like selling the emotion/lifestyle NOT the turf production/harvester!!
- Look into using new technology (IE Precision Farming) on farm
- Allocate time for social media (understanding and using)
- Actually look at my accounts and use that to help make more money. This may include to group expenses categories and review accounts so it is easier to understand farm (and enterprise) profitability.

Some of the presenters have also informed Turf Australia that they have been contacted by turf growers for further information and/or assistance with their business, which is a great additional outcome.

Appendix 1 contains the feedback summaries from the 2016 state based forums

### **2017 Turf Australia National Conference & Field Day**

A greater understanding of turf's nutrient requirements, the automation now available to the turf industry and key points on how to combat the rise of synthetic turf were key outcomes from the 2017 Turf Australia National Conference & Field Day.

New innovations, industry development ideas and plenty of professional networking resulted in an engaged turf industry with participants willing to learn and be involved in national research, development and marketing initiatives.

Feedback from participants included:

- Excellent event and networking opportunities. 'Put Your Hand Up' was outstanding, LOVED IT! I also thought Mick Battham was great, his enthusiasm and knowledge was fantastic.
- Being informed about the future possibilities for turf farming, IE precision farming and robotics, viewing turf specific machinery at the field day and being able to speak with the suppliers in person was great.
- Education material that help improve how jobs are carried out was useful.
- James was really interesting, the organization was good and all speakers were excellent and relevant with great content.
- The presentations were of high calibre, networking opportunities were great and the robotics were fascinating.
- The social interaction with all the valuable information sharing and not being inside for long periods was great.
- So many things were good. I now have a better appreciation of soil, I took something from every speaker than I think I can apply to my small business.

Appendix 2 contains the feedback summary from the 2017 national conference & field day.

## Evaluation and discussion

The feedback received from the 2016 state based forums indicated a high level of appreciation for the tailored mix of national and local issues and the relaxed, informative and interactive way in which the forums were run. The 2017 feedback received indicated the national conference & field day theme 'The future is in your hands – precision turf farming' was ideal, the topics chosen to be presented were appropriate and relevant and all speakers were of high caliber and delivered useful, practical information.

Based on the formal and informal feedback, the format of alternating state based forums in year one followed by a national conference and field day in year two was considered successful. The Turf Australia board would like to repeat the format in 2018 and 2019 and then further build on this concept of industry learning by planning an international study tour to the Turf Producers International Conference and Field Day in February 2020.

The turf industry responds well to industry events if they are professionally organised by representatives who are genuinely engaged with the industry and have detailed industry knowledge, expertise and experience. As the turf industry is the only industry covered by Hort Innovation where the actual grower pays the levy direct to the Department of Agriculture & Water Resources, growers expect the cost of registering for such events over recent times have been heavily subsidised by the levy.'

Turf Australia will now review the feedback received in more detail and engage with industry members to determine the possible themes, topics and presenters for events in 2018 and beyond.

## Recommendations

A mixture of national and state based extension and engagement events for the turf industry should continue into the future and these events should receive a high level of financial support from the turf levy to help ensure quality speakers and venues while keeping the delegate registration costs to a minimum.

## Acknowledgements

A big thank you to the 20+ sponsors, exhibitors and auction items donors as without their support, the 2017 conference & field day and the 2016 state based forums could not have gone ahead. Thanks also goes to all of the speakers and field day exhibitors for sharing their extensive knowledge and technology with turf growers.

The major sponsors were:

- Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA)
- Lawn Solutions Australia (Platinum Sponsor)
- NuTurf / Amgrow (Gold Sponsor)
- Turfcraft (custom Sponsorship package)
- BioActive Soil Solutions (Silver Sponsor)
- K-Line Industries (Silver Sponsor)
- AusGap (Silver Sponsor)
- Finlease (Silver Sponsor)

Thank you also to the turf Australia Board members, each of whom played a significant role in designing and running the conference. The Turf Australia Board Members are:

- Ross Boyle (Chairman), Rosemount Turf, Qld
- Anthony Heilig (Treasurer), GoTurf, Qld (now resigned from TA Board)



- Bec Sellic, (Vice Chair) The Lawn Doctor, WA
- Sarah Mason, Coastal Turf, NSW
- Neale Tweedie, Grech's Turf Supplies, NSW
- Tony Cornwell, Mardi Park Turf, NSW
- Emma Burstall, Turf Biz, QLD

Also, thank you to Liz Mecham (TA Journalist), Katie Fisher (TA Editor), Grant Nelson (TA subcontracting Graphic designer), and Rachel Layt (TA Marketing and Events Coordinator) for their tireless efforts in making these events a big success.

# Appendix 1 – Feedback summaries from the 2016 state based forums

## NSW State Forum Participant Summary

### 1. Speaker Presentations

	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
<b>Cynthia Mahoney – Social media for turf growers</b>	10	11	1	-	10	10	2	-
Comments:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Made me think differently about social media</li> <li>It would have been good to have examples of successes and how to implement a simple social media program</li> <li>I am not a face book or social media fan, but I have been enlightened</li> </ul>								
	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
<b>Greg Sharpe – Accounting for turf farm profitability</b>	6	13	3	-	6	13	3	-
Comments:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship between selling price and wage</li> <li>A 5% in sale price can cover a 9% decline in sale volume – Wow!</li> <li>A good presentation to highlight the importance of working with your accountant</li> <li>Beyond my pay grade</li> </ul>								
	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
<b>Mick Battam – Turf Nutrition Program</b>	11	11	3	-	12	11	-	-
Comments:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would like to find out more</li> <li>A good presentation with good, practical tips. Need to advise where to get more information</li> <li>Very helpful and informative</li> </ul>								
	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
<b>John Lloyd – Horticulture Innovation Australia</b>	4	12	8	-	6	13	4	-
Comments:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A reasonable presentation but disjointed and needed to engage and resonate better with turf industry</li> <li>Not so relevant to industry</li> </ul>								
	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
<b>Pat Abraham – Turf levy Investments</b>	6	13	2	-	10	9	2	-
Comments:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good discussion</li> <li>Not really a presentation but a facilitated discussion which went reasonably well</li> </ul>								
	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
<b>Cynthia Mahoney – Different personalities</b>	15	5	2	-	17	3	1	-
Comments:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good fun at the end</li> <li>Great presentation on others</li> <li>Interesting, now I will put our people into their groups</li> <li>A good way to finish the day</li> </ul>								

**2. Networking drinks & dinner**

Enjoyment

Organisation

**v good 8** good 2 fair - poor -

**v good 8** good 2 fair - poor -

Comments:

- Always enjoyable

**3. Overall, the things I really liked were:**

- The overall thinking about industry improvement
- Interactions with different personality styles
- Social media statistics & personality questionnaire
- Statistics on the use of social media
- Understanding the latest turf nutrition results
- Personality session
- Turf nutrition
- Social media
- The personality workshop with the colour team
- Turf nutrition talk
- Networking + discussions + openness
- Good interaction among participants
- The program for the day was good, great for everyone who attended
- The information presented
- Networking
- Pat's session giving insight to levy investment

**4. Overall, the things that could have been improved were:**

- All was good
- More on nutrient trials
- Would like to see more turf growers attend and be a part of the full day
- Having all turf growers attend
- Maybe more interaction and involvement from people that were not here
- I was happy with everything
- To get more involvement from industry so we can all work together
- A bit more farm stuff
- Fire lighting

**5. Things I learnt and could put into practice are:**

- Look into funding for Green Cities through EPA
- Interacting more
- Nutrient requirements
- Social media
- Social media marketing & statistics
- Social media ideas
- Fertilizing program based on plant stage/growth
- Marketing ideas
- Personality session
- Soil session
- Implementing social media
- Marketing
- Our social media needs more work
- Personality identification
- Nutrition requirements through crop phases
- Assessment of personality types for better communication
- Don't discount prices

- Soil nutrition
- Certainly in the future will use facebook & social media
- Fertilizer program

#### Verbal feedback - things learnt by participants and considering to incorporate 'On Farm'

- 52% of consumers are more likely to trust your brand if you are positive
- Start using social media
- Implement personality types at our next staff meeting
- Social media is good
- Try personality types with my wife
- Learnt how to talk to different personality types
- A lot of innovative thinking going on
- Improved marketing and possibly a new nutrition program
- Liked personality styles
- Liked turf nutrition
- Enjoyed social media statistics and personality styles
- Nutrition levels
- Personality styles, refresh how to deal with different people
- Enjoyed nutrition, learnt about different rates
- Would like to get more people to these events
- Will do more with social media
- Liked Mick's talk on soil profiles and nutrition
- Will try to be on-time next time
- Liked the way Cynthia talked about being social on social media
- Learnt about needing a balance of personalities within a business
- Liked Mick's talk on soil
- Get to know customers more, find out about them and what their needs are
- Learnt more about what I can implement with social media
- I will finally have to try social media
- Lack of nutritional data and information not being available
- Liked Pat's session and listening to growers
- Personalities – remember to think about other people's personalities
- Greg's presentation – do not cut your price!
- Tell the people who are not here to not cut their price!

#### 6. Turf Australia, in conjunction with Turf NSW, should hold State Forums

Annually 13      Bi-annually 4      Other.....

#### 7. Turf Australia should hold a national conference & field day

Annually 9      Bi-annually 9      Other.....

#### 8. What time of year suits you best to attend Turf Australia Events?

May 2      June 5      July 9      August 8      September 7      Other.....

### QLD State Forum 27 July 2016 – Written Participant Feedback

	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
1) Cynthia Mahoney – Social media for turf growers	3	4	1	-	5	1	2	-

Comments:

- I enjoyed this session but feel it could have been better if it was more concise and not so wordy. It had a lot of food for thought but lost some of its punch with the repetition of messages



- Presenter needs to check if video clip is working prior to the start
- Presentation not very well timed
- A double up of information presented at the Qld forum a few months earlier
- Informative and very, very useful.
- Interesting
- Good. I do not like social media myself, however, I found the marketing ideas helpful – such as focusing my marketing towards the client's experience.

	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
2) Greg Sharpe – Accounting for turf farm profitability	1	4	2	-	1	4	2	-

Comments:

- Greg had a good message. He was a bit lost at first but got better as he went on
- Valuable - A reminder to identify and eliminate unprofitable practices
- Good
- Interesting, I got some good tips.

	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
3) John Keleher – Precision turf farming	4	3	-	-	5	2	-	-

Comments:

- New innovations for any industry are worthy of airtime and is comes with more power from someone in the industry who is using these products on the farm
- Amazing! He is so far ahead of the rest of us in farming practices. Sharing his innovations is very much appreciated
- The best, I really liked this presentation.

	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
4) John Vatikiotis – Horticulture Innovation Australia	3	2	2	-	3	2	2	-

Comments:

- Disappointing – I was surprised to learn that my levy payments had helped fund possibly the most expensive Facebook site in Australia haha
- OK, although I do think the term “moving forward” was overused
- I have been following their Facebook page and like the work they have been doing, however, I agree with the comment that we seem to get more bang for our buck by being in Turf Australia.
- OK, I look forward to seeing how things develop.

	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
5) Pat Abraham – Turf levy Investments	3	4	-	-	4	3	-	-

Comments:

- Pat's enthusiasm motivated the participants to think about the positives of the turf industry
- Encouraging - without doubt, he is very capable and will work to make the turf levy investments more relevant to the levy payer – Thank you
- Good, I was happy to learn more about the levy
- Informative, I do think it should be more clear where levy is going and there should be more involvement from the growers as to where the funding goes to.

	Content				Presentation			
	v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
6) Cynthia Mahoney – Different personalities	3	4	1	-	3	4	1	-

Comments:

- This subject of personal difference is worthy of consideration when working in a workplace. I found the whole notion very enlightening on a personal and professional level.
- Quite interesting but could have been structured better
- Timely and valuable - she revealed our flaws and showed the need for respect in interpersonal relationships. It was interactive but also relaxed

- Enlightening. I predominately work out of a home office. Working, living and raising kids with my husband can be tricky, frustrating or overwhelming at times. It can be hard to separate work, home, farm, family while trying to keep on top of it all and school, kid's sport, etc. Looking into our personality traits was refreshing way to look at why we butt heads on some things
- Good.

Enjoyment				Organisation			
v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
5	2	-	-	6	1	-	-

#### 7) Networking drinks & dinner

Comments:

- It was an enjoyable and tasty experience
- It was good to reconnect with people in the industry
- Well done Rachel, Richard & Ross
- Great. Excellent meal and good company. Perhaps a couple of speeches would suit the mood – someone from the association could speak about the state of the industry. Maybe talk about opportunities and threats
- Fantastic, they are a great group. Often as the “admin” partner of a family business, it can feel quite isolating. It was great to meet so many strong women who can also feel like they have similar problems to me. They were so keen to share their ideas, thoughts and what works for them, I thought it was amazing (which is why we deserve our own section on the turf conference tour!). Obviously on the verge of Lev 3 Water Restrictions, we debated whether the forum and high travel costs were a good use of \$ for us in these difficult times. Definitely was the right move for us. It has helped us to re-charge and re-connect with our business. It was a positive experience
- Excellent

#### 8) Overall, the things participants really liked were:

- The enthusiasm of the participants, the speakers were engaging and the forum went smoothly
- Accounting
- Precision turf framing – very relevant to me (mentioned twice)
- Chance to meet with a variety of interesting characters
- Networking & drinks
- The whole presentation
- It was a friendly open forum with well-chosen topics
- Social Media
- The opportunity to meet other growers. By being Queensland only, it gave us a chance to strengthen connections within our region and talk about things relative to our state, growing conditions, etc
- Figures, understand the numbers better and the opportunity to talk to growers. It really does seem that the size of the farm doesn't matter, we all have similar problems. I find it extremely beneficial to hear how they go about different things.

#### 9) Overall, the things that could have been improved were:

- I can't think on any blaring constructive criticism
- Nothing
- Time management
- Nothing comes to mind – it was an informative forum
- I do realise that it was the first one of the series, only that maybe starting slightly earlier start to allow a bit more leeway.
- N/a

#### 10) Things I learnt and could put into practice are:

- Learning to deal in a more constructive way with various personalities at work
- Look at our figures more regularly
- Embrace Social Media more (mentioned 4 times)
- Understanding personalities better (mentioned 4 times)
- Precision turf farming
- Better accounting

- Marketing with social media (not sure how though) and cost focus
- Lots!
- Tips on social media – like selling the emotion/lifestyle NOT the turf production/harvester!!
- still thinking about that, but keen to keep trying to improve

Verbal feedback - Things learnt by participants and considering to incorporate 'On Farm'

- Social media – it is not about me, it is about the ender, or potential & existing customers
- Look into using new technology (IE Precision Farming) on farm
- Allocate time for social media (understanding and using)
- Explore other parts/aspects of social media
- Learn how to better manager staff
- Communication is the key
- Exciting to see how precision farming in the turf industry will go and how it can save/make more money
- Be more decisive (for my wife)
- Make time for facebook and advertising
- Precision farming
- Educating customers
- Investigate precision farming
- Actually look at my accounts and use that to help make more money. This may include to group expenses categories and review accounts so it is easier to understand farm (and enterprise) profitability.
- Learn a lot more about precision farming
- Social media
- I liked the whole lot
- As a supplier, seeing the direction industry is heading
- Leant that I am a 'D' – Decision Orientated – personality type
- A great platform for moving forward and knowing numbers/profitability
- Future investment areas for HIA, especially the health benefits from turf
- Strengthen communication by better understanding and responding to different personalities.
- Using precision agriculture to make more money
- Precision ag, where will the industry be in five years if we have come this far in 3?
- Accounting to help better understand profitability.
- Precision agriculture
- Networking with growers
- Look at our marketing
- Review our accounts and figures and take more not of people's personality types
- Social media and how it can be used to educate turf end users
- Focus on selling the benefits of turf, not the price
- Increase the price of turf by 5% and work 5% less for the same profit
- Precision ag
- Thinking about possible levy investments
- I learnt more about the levy
- A good reminder about the different personality types and to look at this within my own business and staff
- Come up with a rate for my hourly value
- Social media
- Impressed with everything and pleased that TA has come so far
- Precision ag can help my bottom line.

11) Turf Australia, in conjunction with Turf Queensland, should hold State Forums

Annually - 9                      Bi-annually - 3                      Other.....

12) Turf Australia should hold a national conference & field day

Annually - 5                      Bi-annually - 7                      Other.....

**13) What time of year suits you best to attend Turf Australia Events?**

May - 4      June - 4      July - 10      August - 4      September - 2      Other.....

**14) Overall comments**

- Hi Richard, Thanks to yourself and Turf Australia for putting a very informative and enjoyable afternoon. It is sessions like this that prove the value of being a member of the association. All the presenters had topics that were relevant to turf famers and I came away with handy ideas and concepts that I will implement into our business. Thanks to all the presenters and NuTurf for sponsoring. Well done and thanks again.
- Having every second year within your own state also makes it more viable to travel each year to stay connected, learn, develop and network (given the turf conference could be anywhere in Australia)
- I like the state forum (although I understand it is more work for Rachel) because it gives you a great opportunity to talk on a "local level", also a smaller group makes it a bit more personal
- I enjoyed the Forum – definitely glad we came. It was great to interact with a such a positive and proactive group.
- I think the forum went well and the ½ day format with dinner was very good.
- I thought it was a good afternoon. Obviously the star topic was precision farming but that reflects the audience, i.e. hands-on practical people. I thought all speakers gave participant's something to think about and that is the value of these types of events. I liked how the focus was on productivity and profitability because that aligns with what I believe any Investment plan should be about. It is important throughout this process that growers have input and the forum was a cost effective way to do this. Thank you!

## VIC State Forum 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016 – Written Participant Feedback

**1) Cynthia Mahoney – Social media for turf growers**

Comments:

- Great content & very engaging
- Great to get an understanding of what is out there
- Very engaging, good precise speaking styles

Content				Presentation			
v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
5	8	-	-	5	7	-	-

**2) Greg Sharpe – Accounting for turf farm profitability**

Comments:

- We always need to aware of cost and product
- Quite practical

Content				Presentation			
v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
3	6	3	-	4	6	2	-

**3) John Keleher – Precision turf farming**

Comments:

- Shame that John was not here to present in person
- Some excellent information shared
- New practices
- Efficiency = profitability

Content				Presentation			
v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
4	9	-	-	3	9	-	-

**4) John Vatikiotis – Horticulture Innovation Australia**

Comments:

Content				Presentation			
v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
2	9	2	-	3	7	2	-

**5) Pat Abraham – Turf levy Investments**

Comments:

- Very interactive

Content				Presentation			
v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
9	2	1	-	8	3	-	-

Content      Presentation



**6) Cynthia Mahoney – Different personalities**

Comments:

- Fantastic session, highly recommend

v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
8	1	-	-	7	1	-	-

**7) Networking drinks & dinner**

Comments:

- Unable to attend

Enjoyment				Organisation			
v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor
5	2	-	-	6	1	-	-

**15) Overall, the things participants really liked were:**

- Meeting new people
- I enjoyed meeting new people & and also presentations by Cynthia
- Location of forum
- Substance of presentations
- Timely run
- Cynthia's presentations very good
- The variety of relevant topics
- Knowledgeable speakers
- Cynthia's communication style was great
- Very well put together

**16) Overall, the things that could have been improved were:**

- Early start
- More growers attending
- Closer to Melbourne
- I thought that the apologies list was more negative than positive
- Maybe have farm inputs
- Make the forum earlier in the year, ie June-July
- Make it a full day forum

**17) Things I learnt and could put into practice are:**

- I had limited knowledge of Turf Australia, so from that aspect it was great.
- Lots on social media and DISC
- Personality modifications
- Social media
- Communication styles
- Grouping expenses to understand profitability

**18) Turf Australia, in conjunction with Turf Queensland, should hold State Forums**

Annually - 6      Bi-annually - 5      Other.....

**19) Turf Australia should hold a national conference & field day**

Annually - 9      Bi-annually - 2      Other.....

**20) What time of year suits you best to attend Turf Australia Events?**

May - 2      June - 5      July - 10      August - 4      September - 2      Other.....

## WA State Forum Participant Feedback Summary

**Speaker Presentations**

Content				Presentation			
v good	good	fair	poor	v good	good	fair	poor

**John Keleher – Precision turf farming**

4 2 - -

2 1 - -

Comments:

- New age thinking
- Very interesting, found it very informative

Content  
v good good fair poor

Presentation  
v good good fair poor

**John Vatikiotis – Horticulture Innovation Australia**

3 2 1 -

- 2 - -

Comments:

- I feel a little unsure of the outcome

Content  
v good good fair poor

Presentation  
v good good fair poor

**Pat Abraham – Turf levy Investments**

3 - 1 -

1 1 1 -

Comments:

- Very Good presentation
- Got information out of members, and imparted a lot of info as well

Content  
v good good fair poor

Presentation  
v good good fair poor

**Richard Stephens – Different personalities**

4 2 - -

1 2 - -

Comments:

- Great
- Interesting

**9. Networking drinks & dinner**

Enjoyment  
v good 4 good 1 fair - poor -

Organisation  
v good 3 good - fair - poor -

Comments:

- Good networking opportunity

**10. Overall, the things I really liked were:**

- The location was beautiful
- Better insight into HIA
- The Forum
- The level of passion in the discussions
- Meeting people and learning

**11. Overall, the things that could have been improved were:**

- Warmth of the room
- Maybe more growers could have come
- Starting earlier
- The weather

**12. Things I learnt and could put into practice are:**

- New fertilizer application process
- Networking
- All that I have learnt I will put into practice

**13. Turf Australia, in conjunction with Turf Growers WA, should hold State Forums**

Annually 3 Bi-annually 1 Other.....

**14. Turf Australia should hold a national conference & field day**

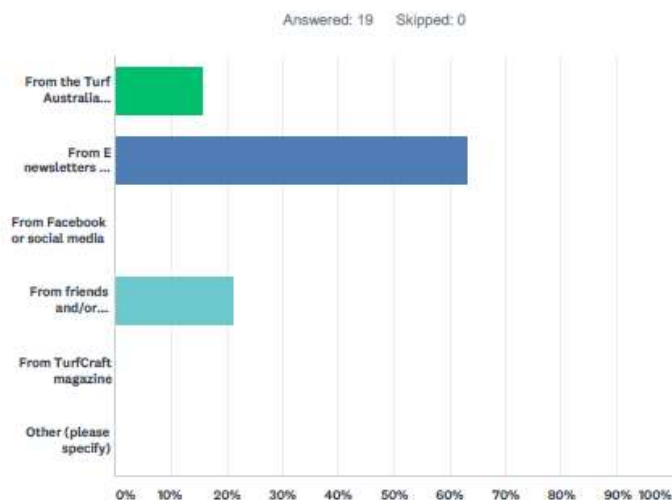
Annually 3 Bi-annually 2 Other.....

**15. What time of year suits you best to attend Turf Australia Events?**

May 2 June 1 July 3 August 2 September 1 Other: Jan/Feb 1

## Appendix 2 – Feedback summary from the 2017 Turf Australia national conference & field day

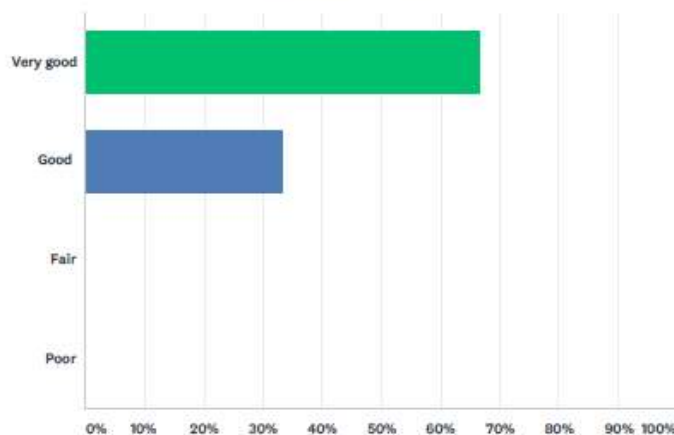
Q1 How did you find out about the Turf Australia 2017 Conference & Field Day?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
From the Turf Australia Industry Magazine	15.79%	3
From E newsletters or emails from Turf Australia	63.16%	12
From Facebook or social media	0.00%	0
From friends and/or colleagues	21.05%	4
From TurfCraft magazine	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		19

### Q3 John Keleher - Precision Turf Farming

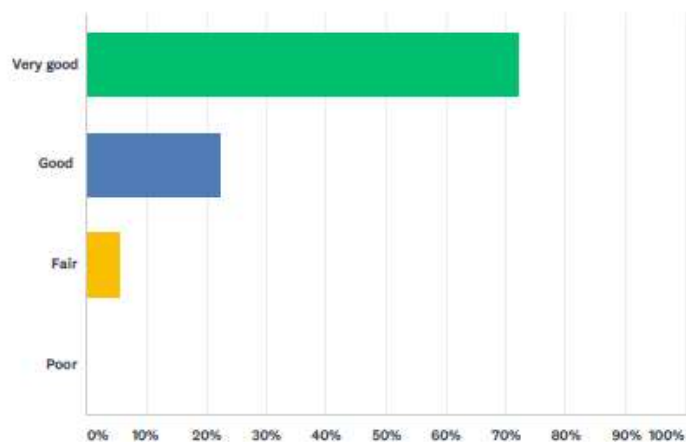
Answered: 18 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very good	66.67% 12
Good	33.33% 6
Fair	0.00% 0
Poor	0.00% 0
TOTAL	18

### Q4 Mick Battam – Knowing your turf nutrient requirement

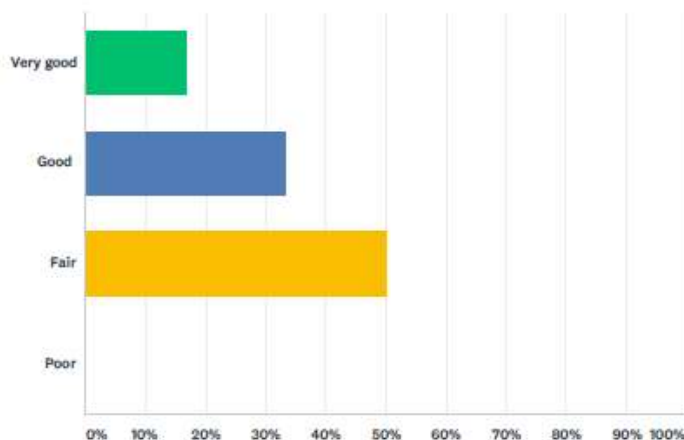
Answered: 18 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very good	72.22% 13
Good	22.22% 4
Fair	5.56% 1
Poor	0.00% 0
TOTAL	18

### Q5 Nick Dorney – Turf Grass Certification

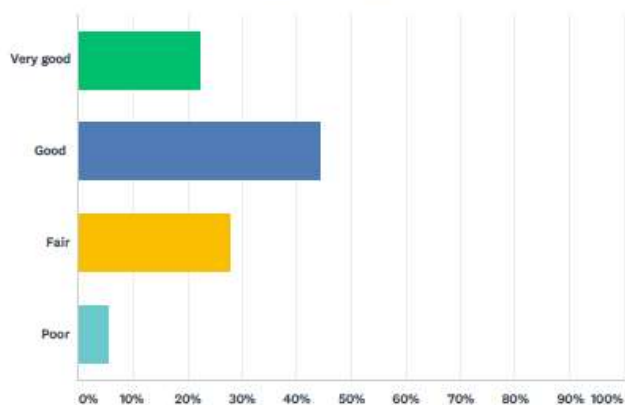
Answered: 18 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very good	16.67%	3
Good	33.33%	6
Fair	50.00%	9
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		18

### Q6 Panel Discussion – Arm Yourself, how to combat the rising trend of synthetic turf

Answered: 18 Skipped: 1

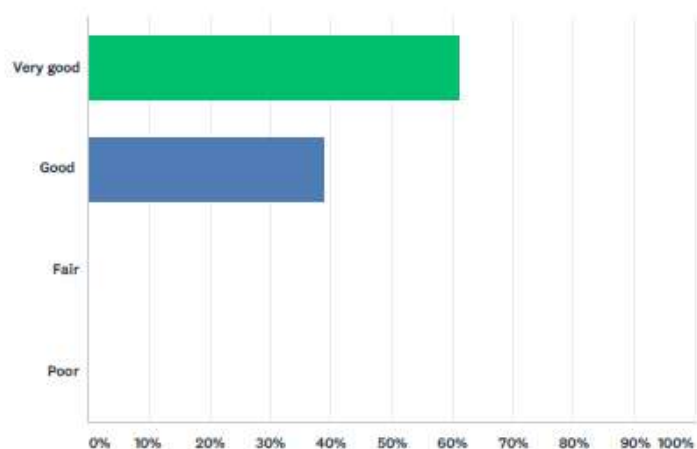


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very good	22.22%	4
Good	44.44%	8
Fair	27.78%	5
Poor	5.56%	1
TOTAL		18



## Q7 Andrew Bate – Turf Farm Robotics

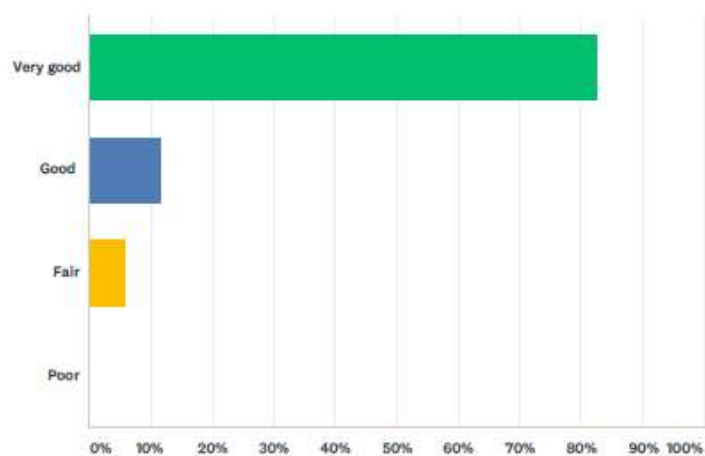
Answered: 18 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very good	61.11%	11
Good	38.89%	7
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		18

## Q8 James Greenshields - Put Your Hand Up

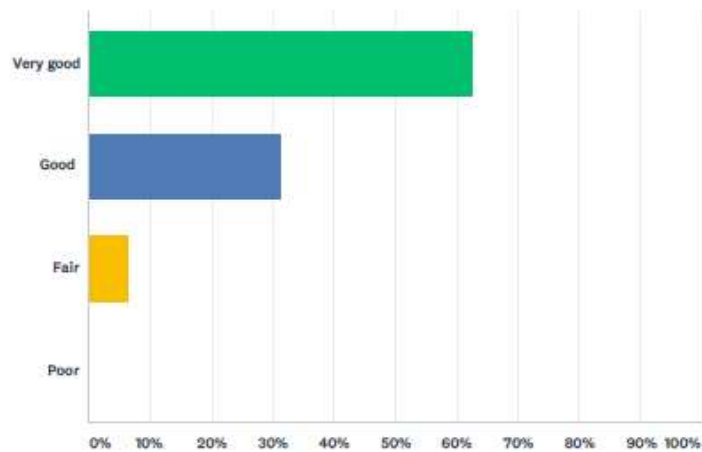
Answered: 17 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very good	82.35%	14
Good	11.76%	2
Fair	5.88%	1
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		17

## Q9 Wine Tour - Tulloch and Mount Pleasant Wines

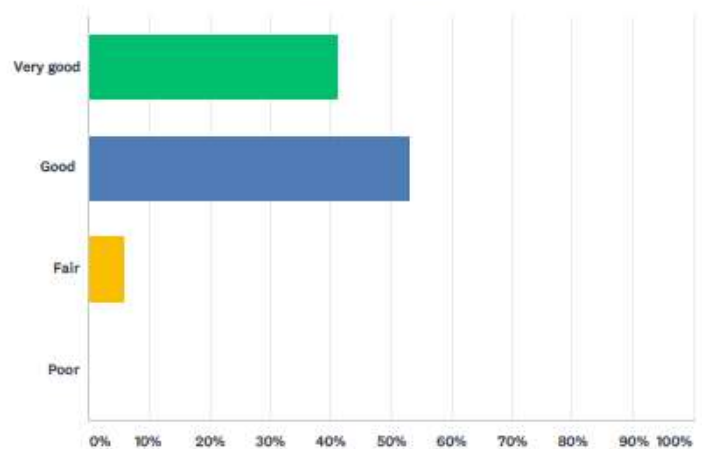
Answered: 16 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very good	62.50%	10
Good	31.25%	5
Fair	6.25%	1
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		16

## Q11 Field Day Exhibitions

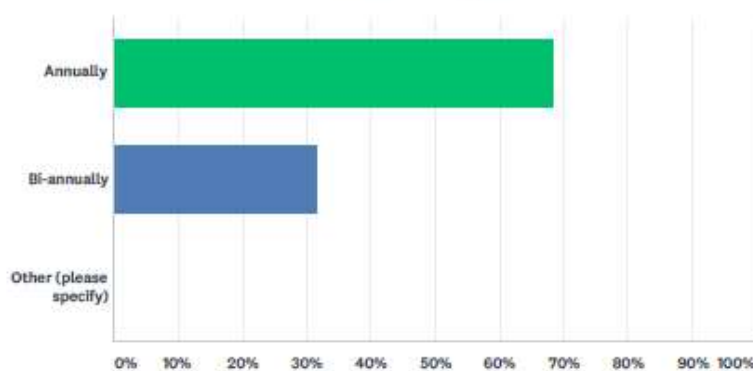
Answered: 17 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very good	41.18%	7
Good	52.94%	9
Fair	5.88%	1
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		17

### Q15 Turf Australia should hold similar combined conferences, field days & workshops

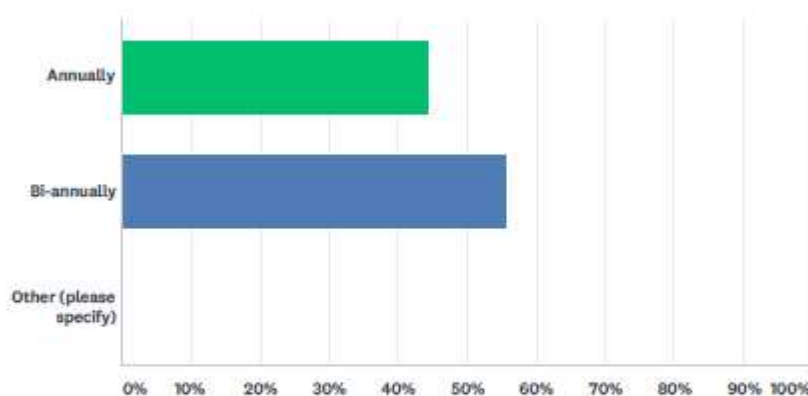
Answered: 19 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Annually	68.42% 13
Bi-annually	31.58% 6
Other (please specify)	0.00% 0
TOTAL	19

### Q16 If held separately, Turf Australia should hold conferences (IE speaker presentations)

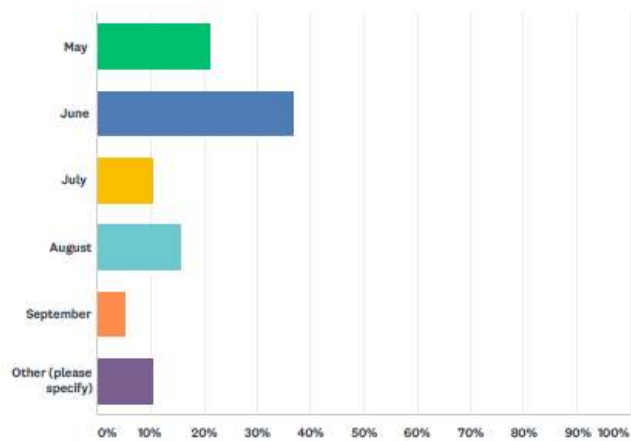
Answered: 18 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Annually	44.44% 8
Bi-annually	55.56% 10
Other (please specify)	0.00% 0
TOTAL	18

### Q19 What time of year suits you best to attend Turf Australia Events?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
May	21.05%	4
June	36.84%	7
July	10.53%	2
August	15.79%	3
September	5.26%	1
Other (please specify)	10.53%	2
TOTAL		19