

FEBRUARY 2022

# Turf

## Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021

# PERFORMANCE REPORT



## Turf SIP performance report

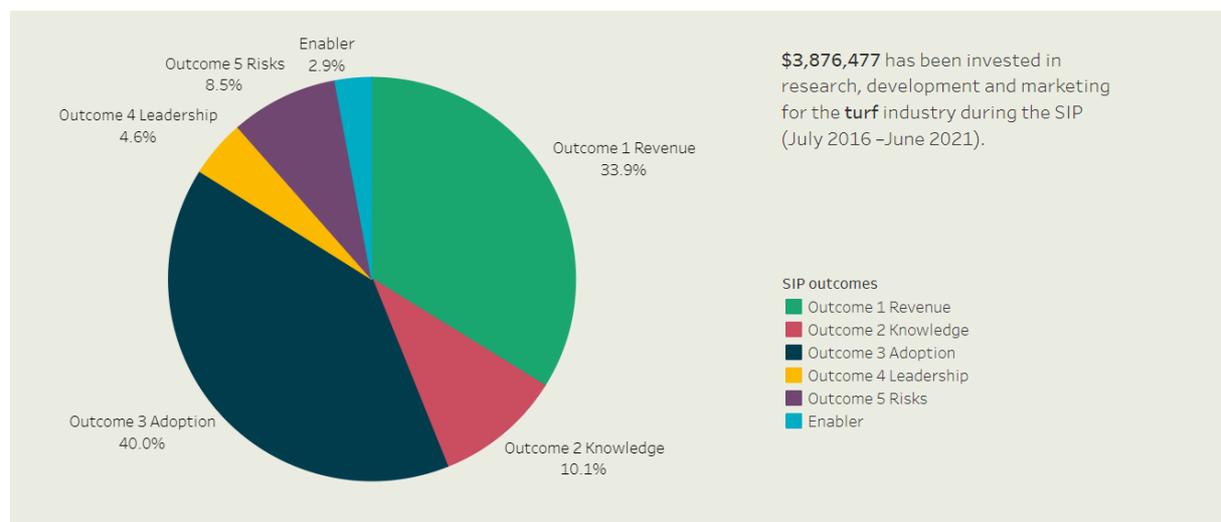
This performance report reviews the performance of levy investments delivered against the turf Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), which was active for the 5-year period from 2016/17 to 2020/21. The SIP was developed to strategically guide research and development (R&D) and marketing levy investment in accordance with core industry priorities. The SIP featured five outcome areas, 29 strategies and 22 key performance indicators (KPIs), summarised in Table 1. A total of \$3.9 million was invested into the Turf Fund over the 5-year period of the SIP. The total investment expenditure allocated against each outcome is provided in Figure 1.

**Table 1: Turf SIP outcomes**

Outcome	Description	Expenditure allocation*
1. Revenue	Turf revenue has increased by 5% plus consumer price index (CPI) from targeted marketing programs	33.9%
2. Knowledge	Improved strategic decision-making by turf growers from increased knowledge of industry data and consumer insights	10.1%
3. Adoption	Improved farm practices and profitability from increased awareness and adoption of turf R&D	40.0%
4. Leadership	Turf industry leadership program graduates are adopting innovation and using their leadership skills in business and industry decision-making	4.6%
5. Risks	Improved industry sustainability from identifying and managing risks	8.5%

\*Total investment \$3.9 million as of June 2021. Balance of expenditure comprises of enabler investments, which includes expenditure to support the delivery of the SIP including advisory meeting and publication costs.

**Figure 1: Turf SIP investment expenditure analysis**



## SIP performance analysis

This performance report reviews the investment achievements delivered within each outcome area that have generated impact for growers. The overall status of each strategic area, informed through an assessment of KPI performance, is also provided. The evaluation status and criteria were:

Strategic area status	Criteria
Achieved	KPIs for this strategic area were met
In progress	Investment delivery remains ongoing
Not achieved	Investment was not prioritised in this strategic area

The results have been informed from evidence compiled through reviewing investment documentation and engagement with project managers. Outcomes generated through the investments are documented and brief case studies of flagship performance and impact for each outcome area are also provided.

## Outcome 1: Revenue – Turf revenue has increased by 5% per annum plus CPI from targeted marketing

During the consultation process for the turf SIP 2017-2021, there was considerable discussion about promoting and educating customers, key decision makers and the Australian community about the social, environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits of turf. This was a strong message from all growers at the four state forums, with more market and scientific research needed in this area.

### Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support turf revenue are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Market research to focus levy-funded marketing activities on the benefits customers are seeking, with results disseminated for grower use	Achieved
Utilise strategic marketing techniques to leverage turf's marketing messages, including targeting of opinion leaders and influencers	Achieved
Identify and address information gaps regarding turf benefits and disseminate to key stakeholders	Achieved
Monitor, contribute and, where appropriate, invest into Hort Frontiers projects that potentially will increase demand for turf products	Achieved

### KPI callouts:

- The *Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook* (HA18002) reported turf revenues (farmgate value) reached a 9-year high of \$308 million in 2020/21. Over the 5-year period of the SIP, farmgate value grew at a 4% compound annual growth rate.
- The industry was informed on consumer preferences through the projects *Quantitative consumer research into buying, usage and attitudes toward turf* (TU17004) and *The value of turf – real estate agent research* (TU18001).
- Turf was promoted through the 'Lawnspiration' website providing inspiration, education and resources to simplify the process of selecting, laying and maintaining turf for consumers. Additional engagement through social media and PR further supported consumer engagement.
- Research was undertaken into the benefits of turf, including the projects *Developing a national standard for turf as an erosion control measure* (TU13034), *Conveying the benefits of living turf – a bushfire retardant* (TU17008), and *Conveying the benefits of living turf – mitigation of the urban heat island effect* (TU18000).

### ***Case study: Conveying the benefits of living turf – mitigation of the urban heat island effect (TU18000)***

With the development and growth of Australia's cities and towns there has been a gradual loss of urban greening that is being replaced with hard, constructed surfaces that absorb and retain heat. Urban heat impacts the health and wellbeing of people living in cities and towns and has negative economic consequences.

This research, which was conducted from 2018 to 2020, provided the turf industry with clear evidence on the benefits of living turf for mitigating the urban heat island (UHI) effect compared with synthetic turf.

The project team used modelling and simulation to determine how living and synthetic turf coverage can influence the temperature of urban environments. Drawing on climate change information and changing development patterns in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, the team determined the influence on present and future years.

Irrigated natural turf measured 4.9°C cooler than the baseline average surface temperature. The cooling benefits of non-irrigated living turf depends heavily on seasonal rainfall. On average, non-irrigated natural turf was found to provide a moderate cooling effect of 1.3°C.

In the team's analysis, long pile synthetic turf was one of the hottest surfaces in the landscape measuring nearly 11°C hotter than average surface temperatures including bitumen. There was evidence that synthetic turf with long pile has a greater average surface temperature than short pile. In some instances, the surface temperature of synthetic turf was recorded at over 70°C.

The results across all three capital cities confirmed that living turf provides a cooling influence on urban air temperatures compared with selected synthetic materials.

This information was developed to share with communities, developers and governments to help them better understand and select land surface types that encourage the development of cool (rather than hot) cities.

## Outcome 2: Knowledge – Improved strategic decision-making by turf growers from increased knowledge of industry data and consumer insights

The turf SIP 2017-2021 recognised that accurate and reliable turf industry data is a fundamental resource essential for effective strategic industry planning, resource allocation and tracking industry performance over time.

### Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support turf knowledge are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Monitor and understand who consumers are, their reasons for buying turf, their customer journey, and what they are willing to pay for turf	Achieved
Monitor average retail price of turf (AUD per square metre) by variety on all turf-producing states	Achieved
Obtain better metadata about the turf industry	Achieved
Define the different components of the turf industry	Achieved
Have a credible organisation benchmark for the industry in regards to social, environmental, economic and health benefits	Achieved
Communicate results to growers, government, and key stakeholders	Achieved
Define the different components of the turf industry	Achieved
Have a credible organisation benchmark for the industry in regards to social, environmental, economic and health benefits	Achieved

### KPI callouts:

- The project *Turf industry statistics 2017/18 to 2019/20* (TU17005) following on data gained from the *Turf industry research and statistics project* (TU16001) to communicate the benefits of industry benchmarking, industry pricing, and establishing data that can be used for baseline purposes. (See case study below.)
- The investment *The economic, environmental, social and health impacts and benefits of the turfgrass and lawncare industries in Australia* (TU17006) delivered a picture of the direct and indirect benefits that flow from the production of turf, including from economic, environmental, human health, and wellbeing perspectives. The consolidated dollar value of turf for each of Australia's major capital cities can now be calculated. For example, in Melbourne the five factors combine to add \$55.23/m<sup>2</sup> of turf, with the total benefit to the city, including home lawn, median strips, parks, roadside and sports fields, being worth \$6.02 billion per year.

### ***Case study: Turf industry statistics 2017/18 to 2019/20 (TU17005)***

Accurate and reliable turf industry data is a fundamental resource essential for effective strategic industry planning, resource allocation and tracking industry performance over time.

*Turf industry research and statistics project* (TU16001) successfully established the framework for collecting industry data on core industry metrics including the volume and value of turf production at the regional and national level, turf deliveries, sales channels, employment and industry confidence. The project was continued over an additional three years with *Turf industry statistics 2017/18 to 2019/20* (TU17005).

Industry participation was strong in early years with survey samples of 104 (55% of businesses) in 2016/17; 123 (70%) in 2017/18; 93 (51%) in 2018/19; and 65 (28%) in 2019/20. Growers who completed the survey received individual benchmark reports, with the overall results extended to industry in the *Turf Australia* magazine.

By increasing knowledge at a business and industry level, the research and statistics program allowed turf growers and the broader industry to make timely and effective decisions in planning and resource prioritisation, as well as track market trends and industry performance.

## Outcome 3: Adoption – Demonstrated awareness and change in industry economics, practices and inputs

The turf SIP 2017-2021 recognised that efficient production ensures businesses are sustainable through the use of less resources, lowering cost of production, increasing value of turf and capturing opportunities. The transfer and adoption of R&D knowledge was identified as being essential for the development of the industry.

### Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support turf industry adoption are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Identify and fill innovation gaps in smart farming of turf and its value-added chain	Not achieved
Develop and implement an integrated extension program	Achieved
Deliver industry training when required	Achieved
Collate information into a single point for future reference	Achieved
Develop an effective communication program	Achieved
Regular monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of communication activities and materials	Not achieved
Annual review of SIP and underlying strategy	Not achieved

### KPI callouts:

- The investment *Australian Turf Industry Communications Program* (TU16004) delivered industry communications through key channels including the magazine, newsletter, website, and social media. A survey found that 74% of growers believed that the material met their expectations and needs.
- The investment *National market development program for the Australian turf industry* (TU16002) assisted growers in developing their skills, knowledge and businesses through a range of extension activities, including delivering training and disseminating market research and R&D findings.
- The investment *National R&D Conference 2016 and 2017* (TU15700) supported grower engagement with latest R&D.

### ***Case study: National market development program for the Australian turf industry (TU16002)***

A key focus of outcome 3 of the turf SIP 2017-2021 was maintaining a focus on building an engaged and capable industry to underpin best practice and farm profitability through drawing on latest R&D information.

Beginning in early 2018, the ongoing project *National market development program for the Australian turf industry* delivered industry extension and capacity building activity and is currently supported by state-based development officers.

It is assisting growers in developing their skills, knowledge and businesses through a range of extension activities, including delivering training and disseminating market research and R&D findings through online resources, field days, round table discussions, and other events, which also engaged with growers to identify ongoing R&D opportunities. The project also supported collaboration through Turf Industry Awards evenings.

To help support turf demand, the project engaged the wider industry and key influencers, such as landscape architects and planners, while facilitating collaboration and engagement with and between key industry bodies. Events such as lawn expos (1,000 attendees), and round table events with state and end-user industries helped to understand consumer experiences and convey the many benefits of turf.

## Outcome 4: Leadership – Turf industry leadership program graduates are adopting innovation and using their leadership skills in business and industry decision-making

The turf SIP 2017-2021 recognised that leadership was important to industry development because leaders were perceived as the innovators who inspire their peers. For the industry to remain profitable and sustainable, it was seen as important that future leaders have the opportunity to develop new skills, expand their networks and be at the forefront of the adoption of R&D and marketing outcomes.

### Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support turf industry leadership are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Identify and engage future leaders and/or innovators in leadership programs	Achieved
Monitor effectiveness of programs to enhance networks, leadership skills, access and adoption of innovation	Achieved
Have future leaders involved in extending and promoting the adoption of R&D and marketing outcomes	Achieved

### KPI callouts:

- The project *NxGen 2016-18* (TU15002) encouraged leadership development, communicated R&D and marketing information, and enabled professional networking for turf industry participants aged under 40, with 138 attendees at three annual NxGen events.
- Leadership and skills for the turf industry were further developed beyond NxGen through the multi-industry investment *Green industry growing leaders program* (MT16002), which developed the leadership capacity of 11 from turf levy-paying businesses between 2017-2019. (See case study below.)

### ***Case study: Green industry growing leaders program (MT16002)***

From 2017 to 2019, this project delivered leadership education to participants from across the Australian nursery and turf supply chain who were motivated to further develop their leadership skills. The Growing Leaders Program was designed to develop leadership capability and capacity to transform the nursery and turf industries through vision, engagement, action, and leadership. It provided participants with positive exposure and networking opportunities with stakeholders from across the supply chain.

The program comprised:

- Two separate 2-day leadership forums, which included the fundamentals of good leadership
- A workplace project that was approved by the participant's manager
- One-on-one coaching with program leaders
- Weekly emails with helpful resources such as short reads or video content
- Webinar participation
- Networking and 'buddy' support
- Post-program participation in an industry event or program profiling.

Across the three years of the program there were 100 applications for the course, with 58 enrolled and 50 that graduated. Of the 58 participants, 11 (19%) were from turf levy paying businesses, with an additional two (3%) from turf supply chain partner businesses.

Key outcomes reported from this program included increasing industry knowledge, industry awareness and supporting industry governance capacity, which will contribute to underpinning participants' career development. Participants rated the program 4.6/5 (98%) for its value to them personally, and also to the wider industry in developing leadership skills and knowledge.

Since completing the program, two turf participants have joined the Board of Turf Australia – one national and one at Turf Queensland – taking on higher leadership within industry governance to further their careers within turf and support the industry.

## Outcome 5: Risks – Improved industry sustainability from identifying and managing risks

Managing risk was identified in the turf SIP 2017-2021 as an important part of turf businesses to ensure longevity whilst minimising the impacts of potential threats.

### Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support improved turf industry risk management are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Monitor major risks impacting on the long-term profitability and sustainability of the industry	Achieved
Use of minor use permits, where appropriate, to maintain access to chemicals	Not achieved
Provide education, strategies, and documents on key risk areas when required	Achieved

### KPI callouts:

- The project *An environmental assessment of the Australian turf industry* (TU16000) benchmarked the turf industry's environmental performance and established a lifecycle assessment and environmental product declaration (EPD) for the turf industry. Through these tools, the industry is better equipped to plan and adapt operations to reduce them and provide improved sustainability outcomes, and also communicate the industries sustainability credentials.
- The investment *Crisis management awareness program* (TU16003) developed a proactive and preventative risk management approach to ensure that the turf industry is able to identify and manage potential industry risks relating to biosecurity, biological and environmental risks, workplace safety including potential risks arising through handling and contact with turf and associated soil.