

## **TURF AUSTRALIA WARNS COUNCILS AGAINST 'FAKING IT' FOR SPORTING GROUNDS**

**18 September 2014:** With a sudden influx of local councils considering synthetic grass for sporting grounds, Turf Australia warns of its negative impacts for the players and community.

President of Turf Australia, Anthony Muscat, who is both a natural turf grower and seller of synthetic grass, says local councils may not be properly weighing up the pros and cons of fake grass for sporting purposes.

"Synthetic grass has its place, but it isn't on the sporting field. There have been several studies that show synthetic turf increases injury risk for players, as it doesn't have the cushioning effect like natural turf. In fact, in a recent survey of nearly 100 professional soccer players, 94 per cent said synthetic grass increased the risk of sustaining an injury.

"Additionally, fake grass gets up to three times hotter than natural grass. It has shown to reach temperatures 93.3 degrees Celsius.

"There is a common misconception that synthetic grass doesn't require maintenance. This is simply not correct. It still requires watering for cooling and cleaning, needs to be sprayed for weeds. And, particularly for contact sports, blood and sweat need to be cleaned up with disinfectant, unlike real grass that has beneficial bacteria that does the job for you.

"It also costs more money in the long term, requiring a full replacement in about eight to 10 years," said Mr Muscat.

Anthony suggests that with some careful planning and care, councils can keep their sporting fields green and luscious.

"By spending a little bit of extra maintenance time in autumn to fertilise and in spring to fertilise, aerate and spread gypsum, you can keep turf in good shape. It is also key that the grass is never mown too low and that it is given time to recover after a match. That said, the turf industry is continually researching new turf varieties that have increased wear tolerance.

"We'd also encourage councils to speak to us to discuss measurements that can be put in place to assist with their needs, before opting for fake grass," concluded Mr Muscat.

Turf Australia warns that the community also misses out on the benefits of natural grass sporting grounds if they are replaced by synthetic. Natural grass helps to cool suburbs by breaking up radiant energy and absorbing heat. Additionally, natural grass absorbs carbon dioxide and releases oxygen, traps dust and improves water quality.

(ENDS)

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**About Turf Australia:**

Turf Australia is the representative body of the turf industry comprising of more than 200 levy paying turf producers and individual members Australia wide. Turf Australia is a non-profit organisation. For more information, please visit [www.turfaustralia.com.au](http://www.turfaustralia.com.au)