



# SPORTS TURF REFLECTIONS

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*WE NURTURE TURF SPORTS ... OF ALL SORTS*

## *“It is not just another flu...”*

*STA-Australia are indebted to our national sponsor partners*



Covid-19 has confirmed our world has been shrinking.

What happens at a small market in a province of China confounds commerce across the globe and for our beloved industry, sport has been put ‘on-hold’. The grounds which we nurture are oblivious to these goings on and continue to grow, are invaded by unwelcome fungi, pests and numerous other damaging elements. To be in pristine condition at the end of this pandemic is paramount.

Sadly for some of our members, financial demands pointed to layoffs and terminations. A decision made hastily with a balance sheet in mind but may have missed the human angst. With some this has been a short coming in understanding the importance of sports fields maintenance to safeguard this nations greatest collection of social hubs where active participation embracing their sports of all sorts.



Early in this pandemic, a total closedown and lock out was a real fear. The importance of sustaining the maintenance of our turf sports fields was a critical activity. Through lobbying, cajouling and numerous discussions with Government ministers, nationally & state, we received acknowledgement of the importance of sports to everyone’s well being.

Thankfully, a full lock down did not eventuate. However, it strengthened the understanding of the importance of sport in our community. We are a vital service.

*We nurture turf sports of all sorts.*

### **SPORTS TURF MANAGERS ASSOCIATION-INTERNATIONAL INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION**

As we continue to map out the issues and direction to benefit the sports turf industry and our members we look to local and international environments to reflect of our tasks, direction and strategy.

Recently STA-Australia gained affiliation with Sports Turf Managers Association-International. Like STA-Australia it is a not for profit association embracing multiple chapters across America with a chapter devoted to global members.

As an association we have deemed this affiliation a key plank of embracing and sharing a wider technical knowledge, operational and research findings from across the globe. In addition, our National President Chris Chapman (Evergreen Turf-NSW) has been appointed to the committee of the STMA-International.

Over the next few months we will sharing and also be a recipient of some of the research and technology emerging from different sides of the Pacific.

Stay tuned, it will be of great interest to many.



*Chris Chapman*

NORTH SOUTH  
EAST WEST  
COAST TO COAST



**“LET THE GAMES BEGIN!”**

The impact of Covid-19 across the nation and the globe has been profound. We would all be hard pressed to find an industry that has not endured a change as a result of the government and commerce response to the virus. Sports have all been impacted and with it the sports turf industry.

The indications are we are soon to be released from our sports hibernation and thankfully, our dedication, commitment and experience has weathered this ‘storm’ well with our playing fields in top condition.

We are a sports loving nation with a huge participation rate. Our communities find their local ‘village green’ just around the corner at the local football ground, the bowls club, the soccer field, the golf course. We as professionals in the sports turf industry have delivered to our nation a treasure trove of outdoor sports fields. All with minimum fuss or fanfare. ***This sporting nation salutes you.***



**COLIN CAMPBELL (CHEMICALS) FULL TURF REGISTRATION OF POACURE**

Wintergrass is one of the most difficult weeds to control due to its adaptable nature in Australia. It has been an issue in turf management for as long as anyone can remember and documented back in the 1920's in the by the USGA.

PoaCure is a revolutionary herbicide to control wintergrass (Poa) in recreational turf. PoaCure has a mode of action and is unlike any other herbicide before it. PoaCure is slow acting and long lasting and is able to reduce and eliminate wintergrass from your turf without disrupting your surface. PoaCure not only works on Poa annua, but also on all biotypes of Poa commonly found in Australia that have been difficult to control.



PoaCure has been under development for 8 years and has been used under a research permit. Now PoaCure is fully registered by Colin Campbell (Chemicals) and we are excited able to offer this ground breaking tool for Australian turf managers.

For more information on PoaCure please visit [www.poaCure.com.au](http://www.poaCure.com.au) or call Nadeem on 0403 110 608 or (02) 9725-2544

**TORO’S NATIONAL SPORTS FIELDS & GROUNDS FORUM AT BANKWEST STADIUM**



The highly regarded annual Toro Sports Fields & Grounds Forum that was planned to be held at Bankwest Stadium in Sydney will be postponed to 2021. Toro Australia had partnered with the newly developed stadium and was looking forward to hosting a group of sports turf managers in August.

Toro’s Senior Marketing Manager Equipment & Turf/Ag Irrigation, Elise Willemsen, said the decision was made based on the current uncertain situation in Australia and Asia. “The health and safety of our employees, families, business partners and customers continues to be our top priority. We are still open for business and we are continuing to assist all the industries we serve, but we feel that it is currently not right to continue with the planning for the forum.” A mix of turf managers from stadiums, racecourses, maintenance contractors, government and schools around Australia, as well as some from India and New Zealand, usually attend the invitation only event, which has been designed to assist customers in the preparation and presentation of their sports grounds. The national winner of the STA Graduate of the Year award is also announced during the forum.

“We are really disappointed we can’t go ahead at this current time. The Sports Fields & Grounds Forum is a major event on Toro’s calendar and is very important to us, as well as to our customers! However, we will be back next year, with an even bigger and better Forum”, said Willemsen.

“Toro Australia would like to sincerely thank Syngenta and the Sports Turf Association for being partners in this event. We, Toro, look forward to continuing with the Sports Turf Graduate Award for this year.”



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### A LIVING LEGEND

**Joe Clark** began his illustrious career working for his father's contracting business at the Tweed at the Bilambil Sporting Club. He was responsible for the maintenance and preparation of 11 Ha of sporting grounds.



In 2008 a position opened at Allan Border Field and he joined the team to prepare wickets and fields for Queensland Cricket. Joe made a great impression with his dedication and passion for his work. This dedication was rewarded in 2011 when Joe was accepted as a curator at the MCG.

Joe was responsible for the preparation of the MCG's turf nets and maintenance of the hallowed turf on the field under the direction of Tony Gordon. Joe worked at the MCG for 2 years when an offer from Kevin Mitchel Jnr to join the team at the GABBA was too good to refuse to venture back to the warm climate and to be closer to his family on the Tweed. Joe was responsible for the myriad of patterns mowed into the field during AFL and Cricket seasons.



Joe worked with the team for 5 years before he received an offer from the grounds manager back at Queensland Cricket to head a team of Sports Turf Managers charged with the responsibility of improving the quality of Cricket Facilities in Brisbane Premier Cricket. Joe has now been responsible for a marked improvement of turf facilities throughout the state.

And all in one lifetime...*what a legend!*

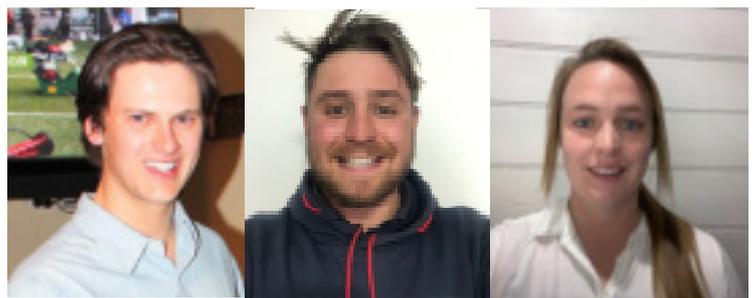
### OUR INDUSTRY'S FUTURE IS IN THESE HANDS.

#### STA GRADUATES OF THE YEAR

We are rapidly advancing to the judging for our National Graduate of the Year. By the end of June the final candidates will have made their presentation to the judges and the ultimate winner decided.

Each year Toro have been a major benefactor to the sports turf industry by sponsoring this astonishing award. Not only does it give recognition to our recent graduates, the national winner has the trip of a lifetime attending the Toro World Conference, a guided study tour of stadiums, turf farms, chemical/fertilizer plants research facilities and all fully paid for by Toro. It is a fitting prize for the nations Graduate of the Year.

In mid June the 5 candidates will be vying for this coveted award. All have been awarded their states Graduate of the Year. Now the quest is on to take out the National Award.



**Matt Wolfe WA,**

**Luc Hill ACT,**

**Jayde Robson Vic**



**Jack McArteer Qld**

**Andrew Hodgson NSW.**

The diversity and experience from those relatively new to sports turf is always great to witness from the candidates each year. The judging panel must establish who reflects the best qualities as a future leader for the industry. It can be a harrowing experience where the quality is at such a high level.

Stay tuned

# SPORTS TURF WORLD



## A GIANT STEP FOR SOCCER IN CHINA Dalian Football Youth Training Centre

*STRI are affiliated with our agronomy patron Sports Turf Consultants and supplied this editorial.*

Dalian Pro Football Club, the Chinese Super League team based in Dalian in the North East of China is a club looking to the future, with an eye on the past.

Dalian is a football city that has a strong pedigree stretching back to 1955 when shipyard workers began building the club. The first major silverware for the club was the 1992 Chinese FA Cup. The acquisition of Rafa Benítez (and his team) as Senior Men's Football Manager was a clear signal of intent. Dalian-Wanda's plan to future proof Dalian's football history was the announcement of the Dalian Football Youth Training Centre.



The scale and ambition of this project is breathtaking. A 22-hectare site in an industrial sector of the city approximately an hour drive from the centre was to be turned into the first world class football academy in China. The complex will contain the following,

- ◇ Two full sized heated FIFA Pro indoor pitches
- ◇ A 5,000 seater stadium pitch complete with a Hybrid reinforced surface and an under pitch heating system
- ◇ 10 full sized FIFA mixed cool season surfaces (Perennial Ryegrass and Kentucky Bluegrass) with and without reinforcement
- ◇ A full-sized outdoor FIFA pro outdoor pitch and a variety small sided pitches and training areas.
- ◇ The complex contains the capacity to hold 18 teams or 600 players at one time.
- ◇ The complex contains accommodation for the Men's Senior team but also the Women, and all levels of youth teams.
- ◇ Capacity for local schools and the public to access some of the pitches.

The real clincher of this project scale was the time scale of this project. It began in April 2019, with the base scheduled to open in December 2019. Never to be daunted by a challenge STRI Group design team working closely with Buro Happold developed a site specific plan that merged the needs of the client using STRI international experience to produce a world class football academy



based on the elite football academies in the UK and Europe. The seamless integration of technologies such as subsurface heating, hybrid surface reinforcement technologies and STRI's new surface performance tracker TURFSYNC would bring these pitches to excellence demanded by Wanda group but also by Rafa Benítez (Senior football manager) who frequently visited the site.

The role of STRI group was in construction monitoring and frequent agronomic assessments of the project. Peter Rasmussen, an Australian living in Hong Kong who leads our Hong Kong office shouldered much of the daily construction monitoring due to his ability to speak Chinese and his background working in the turf industry. The focus and determination of all parties involved to hit the ambitious opening date in December was potent.

With the majority of the natural pitches germinated and establishing by late September the key target was to ensure that all pitches had adequate maturity and resilience to withstand the formidable harsh cold dry winter in this area of North Eastern China.

The project had three separate sport field construction and maintenance companies involved in the sportsturf elements of the project due to the number of pitches in a short duration of time. The sense of cooperation and teamwork shown by all parties involved to adapt, facilitate and communicate was awe inspiring. This project could be considered a marvel due the lofty ideals and the ambition of achievement. It is with STRI experience gained and our future involvement in Wanda-Dalian that STRI group moves forward with football in China.

*Editorial supplied by our agronomy patron, Sports Turf Consultants,*



*an affiliate company of STRI*



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