Turf Community and Sport

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION

"How do we motivate decision makers to choose natural turf?"

COMMUNITY & SPORTING DEMAND

97% of Australians regularly use community spaces

84% Participate in sport or physical activity annually

So what? Community sport and open spaces are core national infrastructure assets

USER PREFERENCES

83% of Australian Rules players prefer natural turf

81% of parents whose children play soccer prefer them to play on natural turf

76% of Australians prefer natural turf in community spaces

2x Parents value the time their children play on natural turf twice as much as synthetic

So what? Australians show a strong preference for natural turf for community and sporting usage

DECISION FACTORS

ENVIRONMENT

Key benefits of natural turf:

- ✓ Cooling and heat mitigation
- ✓ No microplastics shedding
- ✓ Supports soil health, drainage and urban greening

COST

Synthetic fields require

~$3M more lifecycle investment per field over 30 years → **~2x** more than natural fields

CAPACITY

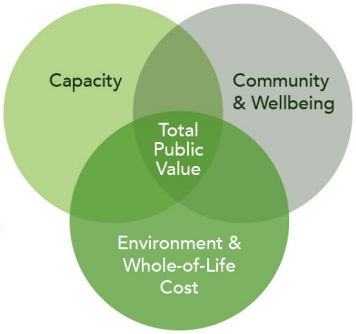
Well-managed natural turf sustains

~40-50 HOURS (context-dependent)

So what? Natural turf delivers not only Capacity but Environmental benefits and lower lifetime cost

KEY FINDING

Natural turf remains the preferred surface by far, but decisions often favour capacity; future investment should optimise Total Public Value across participation, environment, community and wellbeing.



IMPLICATION

Use this model to help decision makers look beyond capacity, understand the real evidence on natural turf, and challenge flawed perceptions of natural turf performance so future choices optimise Total Public Value.

Hort Innovation Hort IQ

Source: TU24004 Turf Survey 2026 conducted by Greenfields Consulting. Funded by Hort Innovation using Turf Industry R&D levies & Australian Government contributions. Visit hortiq.com.au

Research method: On-line survey n=1,628 adult Australians who use community spaces, regularly play sport, or have kids who regularly play organised sport. Qualitative interviews n=23 Councils, sports clubs, schools, landscapers, architects and developers