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Media Release

TTNA to deliver training for synthetic turf

Monday 24th Sept 2012: The artificial turf value chain is driven by sport, climatic challenges, urbanisation and personal fitness, and out of this mix merges great opportunities for a broad range of businesses, including yarn manufacturers, tufters, roll good merchants and installers – to name a few.

The biggest growth areas in the artificial turf value chain come from sport and residential landscaping applications, much of which is driven by risk mitigation of potential injuries. New technology, better engineered yarns and machinery has allowed for greater shock absorption. Growth can also be attributed to replacement of red clay tennis surfaces that require considerable water, although the breaking of the 10 year drought has slowed growth in residential landscaping; however work life balance considerations are seeing households choose lower maintenance inputs.

The Australian climate is extremely demanding on artificial surfaces as a result of both intense sun and high temperatures. While these elements demand higher performance from synthetic turf, it is a natural hedge against importers that frequently underestimate the UV challenges and struggle to meet the performance standards.

Increasingly building owners, architects, designers and specifiers are asking about the embodied energy of specified material inputs into landscaping and civil infrastructure projects. It is important therefore to correctly specify the total synthetic turf assembly to maximise its use life and ensure good environmental performance for the assembly as a whole, and not just the synthetic turf.

Manufacturers of synthetic turf related products need to respond to these demands or risk losing business to the largest overseas suppliers who can. They are looking to the TTNA to take the lead by providing technical training aimed at helping manufacturers to better understand the effect that their products have on the performance of the total synthetic turf assembly in terms of both the durability of the installation and its impact on the outdoor environment.

The training will be practical, relevant to market needs and strategically linked to those who install and specify Australian synthetic turf, including civil engineers as well as Government authorities.

In the past two years, there have been a number of environmental scare campaigns focused on concerns about industrial chemicals used in synthetic turf, none of which has been proven. These campaigns are driven by misinformation and the thought that manufacturing is a black art that uses toxic inputs.

Developing this strategic learning resource will both educate those within the synthetic turf industry and those who specify Australian made products. This initiative aims to fortify the jobs of those that work within the industry; employees will also gain transferable skills to be applied in other jobs. This knowledge should raise the level of fibre and textile knowledge of those that work within the industry in order that sustainable products are produced,

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