



KooyongKoot Alliance Position Statement

Artificial Grass

Position:

The KooyongKoot Alliance oppose the use of artificial grass in the catchment, unless no practical alternative option exists.

Background

The use of artificial grass boomed in the 1990s with the millennial drought and combined with the increase participation rate in sport and rising population leading to increased pressure on sportsgrounds and playgrounds. Requiring little water and little maintenance as well as being drought proof many have been installed across Melbourne and in the KooyongKoot catchment.

Well managed turf can withstand 30 hrs use / week.

Despite these positive attributes there lie several significant drawbacks:

- The presence of plastic laid on a firm surface is a perfect medium to heat up with impacts to the local and surrounding areas, amplifying the heat island effect.
- In certain areas temperatures up to 90 degrees c on a 30-degree day have been recorded, which could potentially scald.
- Off gassing the use of petroleum based plastic leads to significant off gassing especially on hot days releasing toxic gasses.
- Biodiversity: These surfaces do not harbour any lifeform, they kill the microbes in the soil; they smother releasing carbon from it, but also, they impact surrounding areas creating a barren desert where there are no pollen insects and no forms of food for species to feed on. The increased radiated heat impacts not just fauna, but flora as well.
- Microplastics: Both the grass the base and the subbase are made of plastic. Rubber crumb from recycled car and truck tyres containing heavy metals make their way into our waterways. Poly cyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and 6PPD. A typical soccer field has 100 tonnes of crumb rubber. As this breaks down it makes its way through the unfiltered drainage system straight to the urban streams and waterways and potentially entering the food chain.
- Flooding rainwater is not absorbed into the ground but flows directly off the surface and into the waterway potentially contributing to flash flooding.
- The product is almost impossible to recycle.

Provision should be made in new developments for more water storage allowing grassed areas to be better managed. Its impacts are unacceptable in our warming and micro plastic impacted world.

.KKA 28/5/24