

Food fail score not fair: Old age home

Julie Cross
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The providers of an aged care home rated the lowest in the state by residents for its food have claimed it is “not an accurate reflection of the quality of food served in the home”.

Every aged care home in the country was given a food score after more than 37,000 aged care residents were asked: “Do you like the food here?” as part of an annual national survey undertaken by an independent team on behalf of the federal Government. The answers were collected last year, but only published in full last week.

Catholic Healthcare The Sister Anne Court Aged Care received the lowest rating by residents in NSW. There, one in five surveyed never liked the food, while more than half said they only liked it sometimes.

At Calvary St Martin de Porres Retirement Community in Newcastle, which was fourth-lowest rated in the state, a quarter of residents surveyed said they never liked the food.

In contrast nine out of 10 residents at the state’s highest rated home, William Beech Gardens at Condobolin, said they always liked the food.

The residents’ experience survey results are important because they carry a 33 per cent weighting towards the overall star ratings score for each home.

A Catholic Healthcare spokeswoman said 14 out of 64 residents at The Sister Anne Court Aged Care took part in the survey and that there was positive feedback about food quality in internal surveys.

“With only 14 residents participating, we feel this is not an accurate reflection of the quality of food served in the home,” the spokeswoman said.

A spokeswoman for Calvary said 10 per cent of residents took part in the national survey on September 21. She said an internal survey in December 2023, all residents surveyed responded “always” or “mostly” to liking the food.

“At Calvary St Martin de Porres, all meals are cooked fresh on site by a qualified chef and seasonal menus are endorsed by a robust resident food focus group,” the spokeswoman said.

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The fake grass that’s swallowing Sydney



PROBLEMS WITH SYNTHETIC TURF

- Polymers used are ‘easily flammable’ raising bushfire concerns
- Loose infill material could pose health risk
- Turf absorbs, radiates and reflects heat
- High ongoing maintenance costs
- Disposal costs after 8-10 years.

Moorebank Soccer players Taleah Jones, Layla Dewhirst, Zak Jones and Ayden Dewhirst on a hybrid turf field at Hammondville Oval. Picture: Jonathan Ng

EXCLUSIVE Linda Silmalis Mitch Fink

Artificial grass is spreading so fast across Sydney’s overused sports grounds that the Minns government has been forced to regulate its use.

A growing population, limited space and high demand as well as extreme weather events such as drought and flood have left fields battered.

While sports grounds have been closed in the past to allow for grass to grow back, the reliance on access by sporting clubs has given councils little options but to go synthetic.

However, the government

has warned councils that they need to take into account factors such as environmental impacts, maintenance costs and community needs before ripping up the lawns.

Across the United States, residents are battling authorities over the proliferation of synthetic turf fields amid fears of health risks from microplastics and concerns they will create “heat islands”.

There is also a debate under way over whether sporting injuries are worse from synthetic turf, with several studies conflicted in their findings.

A draft report on synthetic turf in open spaces to go on public exhibition this week

said demand for sporting fields in Sydney would only become higher with the increase in housing density and smaller backyards.

However, it said councils needed to “think carefully” before going synthetic.

Among the factors the government wants councils to consider include location, with polymers used in synthetic turf classified as “easily flammable” and able to be ignited in bushfire settings.

Councils wanting to go synthetic also needed to take into account the ongoing maintenance costs, and the disposal costs when it had reached its end of life after 10 years, it said.

Planning Minister Paul Scully said the government wanted to give people access to public spaces all year round in a range of climates.

“Given the conversations around potential impacts of synthetic turf, these guidelines provide councils, sports clubs and local decision-makers with research-backed information to make the best decisions for their communities,” he said. Liverpool City Council recently made the switch from grass for synthetic at Hammondville Oval.

“We want to give our community the best facilities possible, and that’s what synthetic is,” said Liverpool Mayor Ned

Mannoun. “It gives kids a chance to play all year round on great quality fields.”

Moorebank Soccer Club President Dan Flego sees the swap to synthetic as a valuable move. The club, which boasts 81 teams and more than 1000 players, uses the Hammondville Oval’s facilities as its home ground.

“Having something that we can train and play on all year round, where we won’t get any washouts, makes it worthwhile,” Mr Flego said.

A synthetic turf field is also set to be installed at the new recreation centre in Carnes Hill. That field is slated to open next year.

ACCESS DENIED

Why Aussie tourist site is closing down

One of Australia’s most treasured nature sites will only be open to tourists for another four years.

Once described by David Attenborough as one of the world’s greatest natural wonders, the Horizontal Falls in Western Australia will be closed to tourists from March 2028.

The state government’s goal in phasing out access was to “strike a balance between promoting tourism and protecting the environment”.

BUSINESS

Gold standard tourist innovators win gongs

Three NSW businesses have taken home Gold trophies at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards on Friday night.

Catering service Love Lord Howe earned Gold for Excellence in Food Tourism.

The Australian Reptile Park, in Somersby on the Central Coast, took home the Gold in the Major Tourist Attractions category. And the Tweed Tourism Company, a tourism development agency, won Gold in the Tourism & Marketing Campaigns category.

BEACH TERROR

Teenage girl, 13, attacked by shark

A teenage girl has been attacked by a shark at Bargara beach, in Bundaberg.

The girl, aged about 13, is believed to have suffered puncture wounds to her abdomen and back.

The Queensland Ambulance Service was called to the Bargara Surf Life Saving Club at 4pm on Friday, with a paramedic and doctor travelling to the scene.

Her injuries are not believed to be life threatening.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Public warning for measles symptoms

Sydneysiders have been told to be alert for signs and symptoms of measles.

Western Sydney Local Health District said an unvaccinated infant had returned from Southeast Asia where there have been measles outbreaks. People who should be alert for symptoms include those on flight VJ085 from Ho Chi Minh City on March 2, people at Rhodes Waterside on March 2 and 8, and anyone at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead ED on March 5 and 6, and 8-13.