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Now is perfect time for outdoor makeover

WINTER is the perfect time to give your home an outdoor makeover.

The cooler weather is no excuse to neglect your backyard and these chilly months are the perfect time for laying new turf.

Jason Hodges, landscaper and presenter of Channel 7's *Better Homes and Gardens*, said the benefits of turfed outdoor areas are abundant, including an improvement in lifestyle and health.

"Turfed areas are great for families because the kids are able to run around, play with their favourite games and family pet or even kick the footy around a bit," he said.

"It is also fantastic for holding outdoor social events. Whether you prefer barbecues or picnics, green areas have even been found to improve happiness and wellbeing, making people feel more relaxed

and closer to nature."

Turf also has a huge range of environmental benefits such as improving air quality, reducing noise and heat in and around the home, and can also assist with protecting properties from bushfires.

According to Turf Australia, other benefits Australians will enjoy by laying turf include:

- Five square metres of turf lawn provides all the oxygen needed by a person each day, meaning the average backyard produces enough oxygen for a family of four.

- Turf is the safest surface for outdoor leisure activities.

- Turf provides a natural sink for carbon dioxide – it takes carbon from the atmosphere and stores it in the soil.

- Turf has the cooling effect of nine tonnes of

airconditioning, an impressive figure when you consider that the average home airconditioner has a three-to-four tonne capacity and increases carbon dioxide emissions.

Turf also prevents soil erosion while filtering water runoff and it traps pollutants before they get to our rivers and streams, destroying natural vegetation and fragile ecosystems.

There are five main types of turf grass grown in Australia – buffalo, carpet grass, couch, kikuyu and tall fescue.

Each has a different colour, blade thickness and location suitability.

Turf Australia website (www.turfaustralia.com.au) provides advice on the best type of turf for your area and needs.

The website can also direct you to your local turf supplier.