



MEDIA RELEASE

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More thought needed in choosing commercial seating for public places, says AFRDI

Furniture industry testing and certification body *AFRDI, the Australasian Furnishing Industry Research and Development Institute, is calling on people who supply and use fixed height seating in public spaces to exercise care in their choice of seating.

In a blunt message, Institute Chairman Peter McCutcheon says the process of exercising care really comes down to choosing a chair certified by AFRDI. AFRDI is the principal chair testing authority in Australia, and endorses products which test successfully with its AFRDI Blue Tick.

AFRDI tests to national and international standards, and where these do not provide coverage, such as coping with the effects of increasing obesity, the institute researches its own standards.

“For the safety of their customers and themselves, commercial premises should only buy chairs which feature the AFRDI Blue Tick,” Mr. McCutcheon said.

***pron. Ah-FARD-ee**



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Standards, Testing and Product Certification for Commercial, Domestic and Nursery Furniture in Australia and New Zealand

“There have been recent reports of commercial seating causing injuries and failing, some resulting in financial penalty”.

“It is paramount that people assess the likely use a chair will face, and purchase accordingly,” Institute CEO Bob Panitzki added.

Mr Panitzki said AFRDI tested fixed height chairs to two standards – one assuming a maximum user weight of about 100kg, and the other, more severe test, starting with extensive testing at the 135kg mark and offering options at 160kg, 185kg and 300kg.

“We developed the more severe testing regime – AFRDI Standard 151 – because we believe it is not safe to assume that lightweight seating is necessarily suitable for all public seating, where there is generally no control over who sits where.

“You can’t put up a notice in a café or a library suggesting so-called normal people sit here, and that the big chairs at the far end are for heavy people. It just doesn’t work that way, and for safety’s sake, we should assume that almost all public seating should be able to safely accommodate society’s larger individuals.”

Mr Panitzki said that while recent incidents involving chair safety - and including extreme injuries – were creating a sensational focus on safety, the broader issues of safety in public seating should also be addressed in a meaningful way: the simplest way being the purchase of tested and certified products.

For further comment:

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