

# the AFRDI bulletin

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## Review of AFRDI Standard 150

**AFRDI is commencing a review of its Sustainability Standard AFRDI 150.**

There are a number of reasons for this review, including:

- time since previous review
- changes in global sustainability thinking
- growth in demand for sustainable furniture products, and
- Green Building Council's Green Star Future Focus program and how Green Star will assess certification programs



AFRDI welcomes comment from members and clients in relation to the above review. These should be addressed to our Institute's Business Development Manager, [Bob Panitzki](#), and be submitted by 1 November 2020.

**Our aim is to have a revised draft by Q2 2021.**

## Product Stewardship

Recent world events are forcing/encouraging us to look more deeply at our environmental footprint and to reconsider how we recycle/reuse/repurpose the items we use.

Below is an excerpt covering Product Stewardship as detailed in our current AFRDI Sustainability Standard AFRDI 150:

*To reduce environmental and human health impacts associated with the management of end-of-life commercial furniture with a focus on landfill diversion and associated resource recovery. Product stewardship sets as an aim the sharing of responsibility between manufacturers, retailers, users and disposers for reducing the environmental impact of products. The emphasis of this element is on recognising practical recovery, disassembly and recycling services and initiatives offered by the furniture manufacturer/supplier to manage the end-of-life or post-consumer phase of commercial furniture.*

Dr Lee Bowkett, Sustainability Team Leader at AFRDI, said 'In the decade since we launched AFRDI Green Tick I have observed that companies have become more thorough in their approach to product stewardship. This is good not only in terms of the environmental benefits but is also one way a manufacturer can keep engaged with their suppliers and customers'.

## SOME OTHER NEWS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The Federal government recently announced the formation of a new fund (Recycling Modernisation Fund) to generate investment in innovative recycling. <https://www.environment.gov.au/protection/waste-resource-recovery/recycling-modernisation-fund>

Steelcase announces carbon neutrality and goal to be carbon negative by 2030. <https://www.steelcase.com/press-releases/steelcase-announces-carbon-neutrality-goal-carbon-negative-2030/>

The Australasian Furnishing Association announces The Australian Furnishing Industry Product Stewardship Taskforce. <https://australianfurniture.org.au/australian-furnishing-products-stewardship-scheme/>

## IS WORKING FROM HOME THE NEW WAY?

A survey by Boston Consulting Group found 60% of respondents want to split their working time between home and office.

Read the full article here <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-23/most-workers-want-hybrid-of-home-and-office-post-coronavirus/12381318>

## WILL OFFICE LAYOUT/DESIGN CHANGE?

There are numerous articles to be found on probable changes to office design as a result of COVID-19. Below are a couple which may interest some readers:

“How offices will change after coronavirus”  
<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200514-how-the-post-pandemic-office-will-change>

“The New Leader - How Lessons From Biology Breed Agility”  
<https://www.steelcase.com/eu-en/research/articles/topics/leadership/the-new-leader/>

## NEW SOUTH WALES STATE CONTRACT

NSW has released the following:

REQUEST FOR TENDER

RFQ NUMBER: DoE2040350214

RFT NAME: Office and Education Furniture State Contract.

## CONTINUING R&D REGISTRATION

AFRDI has recently had its registration renewed as a Research Service Provider (RSP) under the Australian Government's R&D Tax Incentive Program.

The tax incentive reduces company R&D costs by offering tax offsets for eligible R&D expenditure. Eligible companies with a turnover of less than \$20 million receive a refundable tax offset.

See this "Research and development tax incentive" link for more details on the program <https://www.industry.gov.au/funding-and-incentives/research-and-development-tax-incentive>

If you consider that AFRDI may assist by undertaking Research and/or Development of your products please contact [Bob Panitzki](#).

## AFRDI POSITION ON PRODUCT LOADS

We are receiving questions regarding the loading capacity of various products. Two such items are desks/workstations and school and educational chairs. We have published recommended loadings for seating in the past and is viewable [here](#) for quick reference.

These recent queries result in the following guidelines:

### **For AS/NZS 4442:2018 Office desks, office workstations and tables intended to be used as office desks – Mechanical, dimensional and general requirements and test methods**

AS/NZS 4442:2018 is not a rated load standard, which means it is difficult to say for sure what load a particular desk is rated. However, the loads applied in the various tests of the standard give an idea of how heavy a load a desk can withstand. One thing to remember is that test loads are usually intentionally set higher than what the desk is expected to endure through normal use. This to try and account for a degree of abuse (i.e. not normal use) that a product may encounter across its life. Three relevant areas of the standard are referenced below for guidance:

#### **5.7.4 Vertical static load test—Concentrated load**

Purpose

To determine whether the unit can withstand static loads to which it may be subjected when in use, such as a person standing on the primary worktop.

A vertical point load of 130 kg is applied to the worktop and left for 60 min.

#### **5.7.5 Vertical static load test—Distributed load**

Purpose

To determine whether a unit can withstand static loads to which it may be subjected when in use, such as loading along its front edge.

The distributed test load is 0.110 kg per linear millimetre of front edge length, this means the longer the worktop's front edge the greater the distributed test load. So a desk with a 1800 mm front edge length will have a distributed test load of (1800 mm x 0.110 kg per linear millimetre = 198 kg). The distributed test load is distributed along a line 200 mm in from the front edge of the worktop and left for 60 min.

## 5.7.6 Worktop cyclic vertical load test—Designated working position

### Purpose

To determine whether a unit’s primary worktop can withstand cyclic loadings, such as a person repeatedly leaning on the worktop, to which it may be regularly subjected when in use.

A vertical fatigue load of 65 kg is applied for a total of 11500 cycles (the test load is applied and then removed).

## For the new standard **AS/NZS 4610.2:2020 Furniture – School and educational Part 2: Chairs – Strength, durability and stability**

This standard was designed with the understanding that students had generally grown larger over the last several decades.

The load rating on school and educational chairs is not explicitly stated in AS/NZS 4610.2:2020 but our estimates, based on the test loads, are as follows;

Size Mark	Use	Recommended user weight limits
A to D	Frequent use by all students within the appropriate stature range for the size mark and Infrequent careful use by teachers	Up to 110kg Static load tested to between 150kg and 180kg
E to H (normal)*	Frequent reasonable or normal use by students or teachers	Up to 110kg Static load tested to 200kg
E to H (severe)**	Frequent more severe use by students or teachers	Up to 120kg Static load tested to 240kg

From the standard

\*Normal - for everyday use in supervised environments.

\*\*Severe – where an increased level of strength and durability may be required or in unsupervised environments where a higher level of misuse may be expected to occur.

For more information please see our online “Size Mark Guide to School & Education Chairs & Tables (AS/NZS 4610:2020)” [here](#).

## PETER WILSON RETIREMENT

After 15 years at AFRDI, first as a Team Leader and more recently Drafting Standards (notably AS 4688.1 & AS/NZS 4610.1, .2, .3) Peter has decided to retire.

At a luncheon in Peter’s honour, Bob Panitzki who has worked with Peter for about 40 years, thanked him for his service to AFRDI making special mention of his attributes of attention to detail, record keeping and engineering input.



*Furntech-AFRDI General Manager, Ian Burton (left), with recent retiree Peter Wilson.*

From all the Furntech-AFRDI team... happy retirement Peter!

## NO FEE INCREASE THIS YEAR

At its September meeting the AFRDI Board resolved not to increase fees this year.

## THANK YOU

A big thankyou to our members and industry colleagues for your ongoing support in these difficult and changing times.

## COMING SOON...

Watch for the release of our AFRDI Guide.

