



MEDIA RELEASE

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International Recognition for Work of Local Furniture Safety Committee

The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has given high commendation to the work of a safety standards committee which works across Australia and New Zealand, and which includes representation from a Launceston company, AFRDI, the Australasian Furnishing Research and Development Institute.

The CPSC award is the Chairman's Circle of Commendation, awarded by the CPSC's chairman Inez Tenenbaum, and given to five awardees for their significant lifesaving contributions to consumer product safety, both in the United States and around the world.

The Australian award recipient is Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand's committee CS-003, a joint committee covering safety requirements for children's furniture sold in Australia and Zealand. AFRDI's technical manager, Ian Burton, is a member of the committee, and has made significant input to its findings.

The committee drafts, maintains and interprets national and bi-national standards relating to infant and child products. In May this year, a test for mattress firmness developed by the committee was published as a new Australian and New Zealand Standard. *(A Standard is sometimes defined as a set of rules and specifications which are a means of ensuring manufacturing quality, and by inference, setting criteria for performance and safety).*

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Australasian Furnishing Research & Development Institute Limited
ABN 44 009 579 908, trading as Furntech
School Road (University Campus) Newnham Drive PO Box 2042 Launceston Tasmania 7250 Australia
Tel (03) 6326 6155 Fax (03) 6326 3090
Website: www.furntech.org.au Email: info@furntech.org.au

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

“The mattress test developed by CS-003 is the first of its kind in the world,” says CPSC’s Inez Tenenbaum.

“It outlines a method of testing all horizontal infant sleep surfaces and can be applied in laboratory, retail, and home settings.”

Ms Tenenbaum says the CPSC understands that on average, products which fail the test are three times more likely to present a risk of fatality than products which pass. She says the new test method for firmness will also allow investigators inspecting the sleep environment of infant fatalities to assess the firmness properties of the surface where a child lies down. *(A mattress which deflects too easily may contribute to an infant smothering, and an ill-fitting mattress may allow a child to become trapped between the base and the lower parts of a cot side, for example, leading to suffocation).*

The award from the United States CPSC is the second award given to the CS-003 committee this year. Earlier, Standards Australia gave the committee its Outstanding Committee Award for its work on safety requirements for children’s furniture.

CONTACTS:

AFRDI Technical Manager **Ian Burton** (03) 6326 6155

Marketing Manager **Julian Ridgers** 0418 328 373

