



## **Tony Rogers: Setting strategies to carry AFRDI forward**

**As a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Tony Rogers is fully aware of the commitment required and the mental preparation that must be undertaken as AFRDI's incoming Chairman.**

With 30 years' industry experience, Tony also recognises the challenges facing the furniture industry.

"The world is changing at a rapid pace, and the furniture industry is not exempt from these changes. As a board, we must be on top of an evolving and sometimes challenging market, ensuring we set strategies that meet our members' requirements," Tony says.

While acknowledging the tireless efforts of outgoing Chairman Peter McCutcheon, as well as those before him, Tony is looking to not only continue this good work and maintain the performance of AFRDI, but also to identify strategic pathways that will assist in assuring the organisations ongoing financial well-being and security.

"We must identify new revenue streams, look at ways to strengthen the AFRDI / Furtech brand and continue to provide strong leadership.

"With the diversity and experience of the board supporting CEO Bob Panitzki, I am confident we have the knowledge to navigate the process of change required to create the long term success of AFRDI.

***Tony Rogers continues page 5  
More on AFRDI Board page 2***

# Peter McCutcheon retires as AFRDI Chairman

Peter McCutcheon’s 14 years of service with AFRDI has covered a period of major change in the commercial marketplace, from a time when internet selling was only just emerging, to the present where the internet threatens many traditional forms of retailing.

Throughout, Peter has always maintained a steady eye on the future, and the need to adapt to changing circumstances. As this bulletin is published, Peter is enjoying a well-earned holiday with his family.



## Changes to the board after the AGM

As mentioned on Page 1, Tony Rogers takes over as chairman. Dane Walsh continues as deputy chairman. The remainder of the board consists of Vince Angelucci, Mark Copperwaite, Peter McCutcheon, Alf De La Harpe, Matthew Moore, Marcus Nelson, Ken Payne, Patrizia Torelli, and Ben Wortley.

## Consumer law talk draws strong interest

You can tell that a topic interests the audience when a talk runs almost an hour over time!

That was the case at AFRDI’s AGM in Sydney last month, when a Q and A session was planned on aspects of Australian Consumer Law (ACL). Senior project officer small business with the ACCC, Billy Brine, was kept on his toes after he touched on a number of key points, including:

- Consumer guarantees
- Remedies relating to guarantees
- Warranties against defects
- Product safety, including mandatory reporting, and
- Misleading or deceptive conduct

AFRDI CEO Bob Panitzki said the debate was extremely vibrant, with a planned short session considerably extended. Another talk on current issues is planned for the 2017 AGM, to be held in Melbourne.



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# The face of IP fraud



As the old saying goes, you can fool all of the people some of the time...and sometimes, a false description of goods will close a sale on the promise of a product being supposedly genuine.

However, the 'certificates' above are invalid, consisting of changes made to genuine certificates.

They are fraudulent, and AFRDI will be introducing new look certificates in 2017.

## Venue Operators Beware

Are you buying furniture direct from China?

Then you are considered the manufacturer under Australian Consumer Law. The Australian Furniture Association has been made aware of the serious financial and insurance risks to hospitality, conferencing and gaming venues across Australia.

Many venue operators are importing furniture, including gaming stools and fixed height bar stools, direct from overseas manufacturers. The AFA understands that once operators import their own furniture products they are considered the manufacturer under the provisions of Australian Consumer Law. *from AFA newsletter*

## New standard for plastic monoblocs

A new edition of AS/NZS 3813 Plastic monobloc chairs has recently been released.

AFRDI's technical manager, Ian Burton, advises that the institute's future certification requirements will be based on this new edition.

There are many differences between the old and new certification requirements. The new requirements include five areas of assessment. The first three (strength, durability, stability) are compulsory. The last two (ignitability, UV and weathering) are optional. The new standard is suitable for people up to 135 kg. There is further information on the AFRDI Webpage [www.furntech.org.au](http://www.furntech.org.au)

Ian Burton says AFRDI still plans to continue to use the old standard (1998) for those who wish to on request. The output of such a process would be a test report based on the chair's performance. Certification, however, will only be available to products that meet the new requirements.



Lexus has debuted its Kinetic Seat Technology featuring a movable back cushion and head rest, which keeps the field of vision steady and is said to improve driver comfort. The Kinetic Seat also uses a spider web-pattern net to adhere to the driver's natural shape.

# Global furniture market strengthening

Technavio, a company that evaluates global market opportunities, forecasts that the global office furniture market will grow at a compound annual growth rate of 5.54% over the next three years.

To calculate the market size, Technavio considers revenue generated from sale of office furniture.

Its analysts highlight three factors which are contributing to the growth of the global office furniture market:

- The rise in the number of offices worldwide
- The launch of innovative design concepts to enhance the work environment, and
- An increased demand for eco-friendly office furniture.

## Sitting brings you closer to death

That's the disturbing headline in a recent program on the ABC's Health Report, quoting a new series in The Lancet medical journal finding that there is an increased risk of death associated with sitting for eight hours a day, the typical working day for many people.

However, researcher Professor Wendy Brown , who's the director of the Centre for Research on Exercise, Physical Activity and Health at the University of Queensland, says that an hour of physical activity a day can eliminate the negative health effects of prolonged sitting.

Professor Brown says national health guidelines have been amended, and now suggest that even if people can't spare an hour or more a day in exercise, all adults should be aiming for between 30 to 60 minutes exercise. For the record, it's thought that about one quarter of adults actually achieve this level of exercise.

## Live 3-D printing at Neocon furniture show in Chicago



**AFRDI member Wilkhahn demonstrated its technical expertise at this year's Neocon furniture exhibition by 3-D printing specially designed stools on demand.**

The company says it's the first time 3-D printing has been used at an international furniture show to demonstrate the capabilities of the fast-growing technology.

Wilkhahn's CEO in New York, Simone Vingerhoets-Ziesmann, says the company sees 3-D printing as cost efficient, and a less time-consuming way of making furniture.

"It gives us the capability of producing products the consumer actually wants, and avoids waste through over-production."





# AFRDI takes on a work experience student



Launceston student **Mark Kimpton** has spent six days working with AFRDI on work experience.

Mark worked alongside team leader Richard Levett, who demonstrated a broad range of testing principles, and how machines carry out the work.

Left: At the heart of many of AFRDI's operations is air operated machinery – here a control panel for a machine that tests bunks.

Continuing its engagement with students, AFRDI also occasionally tests prototype furniture developed by students at the nearby University of Tasmania.

## Tony Rogers....continues from front page

**Thirty years ago, Tony Rogers started his life in furniture as a cabinet maker and joiner.**

Twelve years ago, he had an opportunity to join Woods Furniture as operations manager. He bought equity in the business, became a shareholder and director, and now he's general manager. **In late November, he also assumed chairmanship of the AFRDI Board**, after serving since 2010. He also spent two years as Vice Chairman of the **Australian Furniture Association**.

There's nothing particularly unusual about such a rise in fortune, except for one thing: Tony Rogers is passionate about local manufacture, sourcing local materials and supplies, and making – in Australia - nearly everything that Woods Furniture puts its name to in Australia. (The one exception is plastic seat tubs bought in from Germany).

Tony is also highly focused on product design and development. Woods is known for its educational furniture, but as Tony frankly puts it: "Kids can destroy almost anything, and that's the challenge for us: to design educational furniture that looks good, and performs exceptionally".

An almost equal challenge is to do that at a price which is competitive with imports from low-cost labour markets. Tony's answer has been to use CNC machining of wooden parts, robotic welders, and 3D lasers. The company is currently outsourcing 3D printing of prototype parts, but rapid changes in 3D printing technology may change that practice.

The make-up of the Woods workforce is changing also. The business continues to grow, and there's always a need for more operators, but the focus is changing from qualified tradesmen to younger workers who have high-level computer skills.

As for business, Tony Rogers says 2016 has been the busiest year since around 2010, and the spending that came with the BER scheme to stimulate industry. "I don't know why some in the industry are pessimistic. There are always highs and lows in any industry, but in the end, it's a game of patience. The one thing we have going for us is that by world standards, the Australian economy is reasonably stable – and that's something that gives encouragement for the future."

# STANDARDS UPDATE

## **AS/NZS 4442/3 Desks and Workstations**

A comprehensive committee draft has been prepared with AFRDI being the Lead Drafter.

Following formatting and sketch inclusion by Standards Australia, the draft has completed a committee comment phase. From the feedback a new draft is now well advanced and the committee will now meet to assess the revised draft.

## **AS/NZS 4688.1 Fixed Height chairs**

The standard was originally published in 2000. In 2007 a revised part 1 of AS/NZS 4688 standard was published but there were errors and it was subsequently withdrawn in 2008.

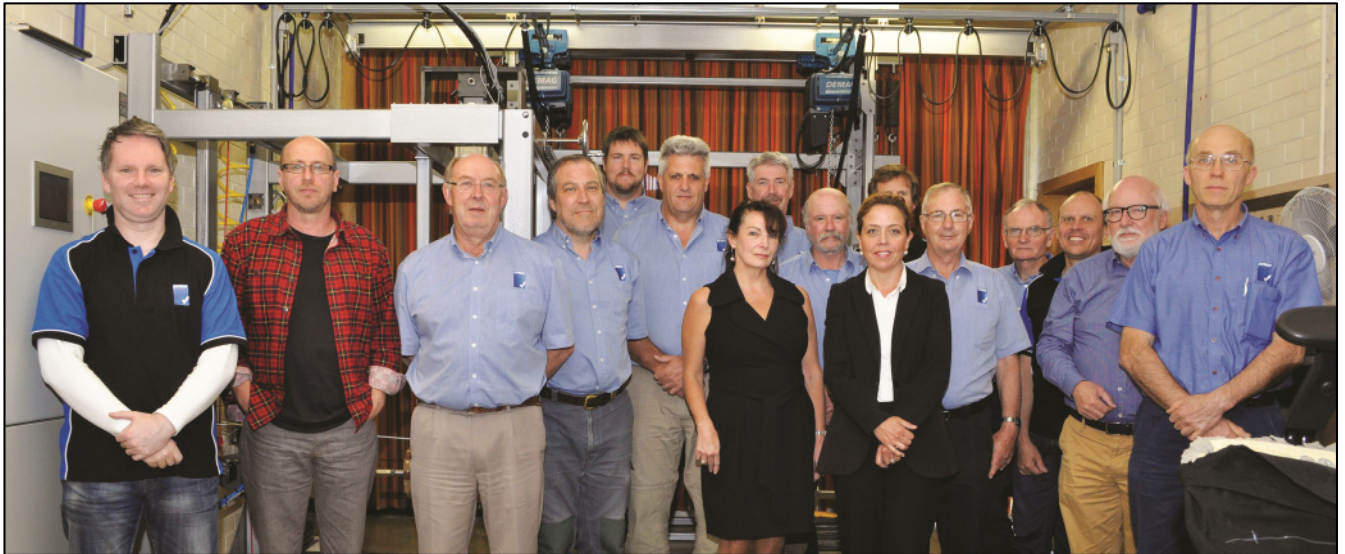
AFRDI is also the Lead Drafter and has prepared a draft which will go shortly to the committee for discussion.

## **AS/NZS 4610 School and education furniture**

The kick-off meeting for review of these standards has been held.

AFRDI is also the Lead Drafter and is first preparing a draft of the new 4610.2 Tables and Tables with Storage for committee discussion.

**AFRDI STAFF 2016.** From left: Dr Paul Semmens, Ian Burton, Bob Panitzki, John Court, Dr Lee Bowkett, Col Witt, Alex Munn, Guy Manley, Jeremy Jackson, Tonia Morewood, Jai Larkman (partly obscured), Peter Wilson, John Brock, Richard Levett, Julian Ridgers and Eric Paul.



**All the best for 2017 from the Staff at AFRDI**

