

Matilda Fireply

Public Comment – 1 November 2019

As advised in our public comment on 1 October 2019, we proceeded as planned and completed further testing of Matilda Fireply – our fire-retardant (FR) plywood.

The product range was originally tested in accordance with Australian Standard 5637.1 in April 2016 using AS/NZS 3837 (cone test) as the test method as per the requirement and professional advice received at the time. As a result of this testing the product was classified Group 1.

In January 2019, in awareness of the pending changes to the National Construction Code (and effective from 1 May 2019), Matilda Veneer sought confirmation that Matilda Fireply would not be affected. While this was confirmed by Warringtonfire, the test laboratory and certifier of the product range, other products in our industry such as veneers and laminates pressed on board, as well as other composite products, were affected and would therefore require re-testing to confirm their Group rating post 1 May 2019.

The results of the re-testing of other products, believed to have increased resistance to fire, were poorer than expected. While unrelated to Matilda Veneer, the results cast some doubt over the previously accepted correlation between the smaller-scale cone test – to which Matilda Fireply was tested and certified, and the larger, more comprehensive and expensive ISO 9705 (full room burn test). As a result of this doubt, Warringtonfire requested Matilda Veneer re-test the Matilda Fireply range via the full room burn test.

While the requirement to re-test was untimely, Matilda Veneer remained both committed to the future of Matilda Fireply and to the ensuring ongoing fire safety, and therefore agreed to proceed as requested. On 30 October 2019, the ISO 9705 test was completed, and we are glad to confirm that Matilda Fireply, 12mm and thicker, will be considered as Group 2.

While there is some cause to believe, this is negative result for the product range, Matilda Veneer does not hold this belief. For the product to perform in this type of test to this standard is something we are very proud of. It gives us renewed confidence to proceed with further product development which will undoubtedly lead to increased options, applications and usage. To our knowledge, Matilda Fireply is the only Group 2 plywood product available on the Australian market.

The reality is Group 1 products are seldom required and when they are, they will almost always be non-combustible products, ie not wood based. The nature of the full room burn test makes it nearly impossible for combustible products to achieve Group 1. It is our belief that a wood-based Group 1 product, tested in accordance with AS5637.1 using the ISO 9705 test, does not exist.

Matilda Veneer is focused on natural, unique and beautiful solutions for buildings. There is unlikely to be significant demand for products of this type to be used in fire isolated exits or fire control rooms, or other areas of buildings where only Group 1 products are permitted.

It is also worth clarifying, that the final decision on the suitability of any product will be determined by the fire/building certifier and allowances may be made if risks are mitigated by building design or other factors.

Matilda Veneer will be working hard to assist and educate architects, designers, specifiers and the wider industry to understand the requirements of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and finding natural, unique and beautiful solutions to their design challenges. This includes efforts reduce the prevalence of over-specification of products which only serves to increase costs and reduce design possibilities.

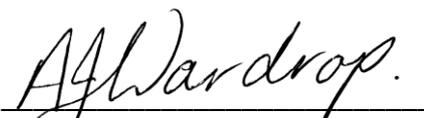
Matilda Veneer is aware that there are some wood-based products still being sold as Group 1, that have not yet completed the full room burn test. Our understanding is it is only a matter of time until such products are identified and required to complete further testing.

Finally, Matilda Veneer would like to thank our valued distributors and customers who have supported us and the Matilda Fireply range over this short period of uncertainty. We're incredibly proud of the results and look forward to sharing more options for the range with you the coming months.

Sincerely,



Craig Graham
General Manager



Anthony Wardrop
General Manager