

ARA SUBMISSION

Suitability of ASTM F2057-23: Standard Safety Specification for Clothing Storage Units

June 2024

The Australian Retailers Association (ARA) welcomes the opportunity to provide additional feedback to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), following consultation earlier this year, in relation to the newly adopted ASTM F2057-23: *Standard Safety Specification for Clothing Storage Units* and its suitability as an Australian mandatory safety standard for Toppling Furniture.

The ARA is the oldest, largest and most diverse national retail body, representing a \$420 billion sector that employs 1.4 million Australians – making retail the largest private sector employer in the country. We represent the full spectrum of Australian retail, from our largest national and international retailers to our small and medium sized members, who make up 95% of our membership. Our members operate in all states and across all categories - from food to fashion, hairdressing to hardware, and everything in between.

In principle, the ARA welcomes the inclusion of the *ASTM F2057-23 Standard Safety Specification for Clothing Storage Units* in the specific mandatory standard, in addition to other relevant standards such as *AS/NZS 4935: Domestic furniture - Freestanding chests of drawers, wardrobes and bookshelves/bookcases - determination of stability* and believe it should be included in the specific mandatory standard. However, we do hold some concerns regarding the rollout of any changes though and would advocate for a longer lead time, particularly for small business, to ensure there is not an undue burden of additional regulation and red tape without adequate time for compliance.

Since 2000, 28 people have died in Australia from toppling furniture, and each year more than 900 Australians suffer injuries requiring medical assistance from toppling furniture. Children aged up to 4 years are most at risk, with older Australians also vulnerable. To this end, our members support new laws to increase awareness of the dangers of toppling furniture in Australia.

The ARA also believes it is important that a comparison should be undertaken independently comparing the provisions of the *ASTM F2057-23* and *AS/NZS 4935:2009* and the differences should be assessed in terms of product risk in home environment. The comparison of standards must consider how these standards intend to reduce injuries and deaths of children from hazards associated with tip over of clothing storage units.

We look forward to working further with the ACCC to assist with a more detailed approach to this issue.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on this matter. Any queries in relation to this submission can be directed to our policy team at policy@retail.org.au.