MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

File No. DOIA 1617-0787, 0788

09 FEB 2017

Ms Belinda Robinson
fyi-request-5154-ab7ff9a7@requests.fyi.org.nz
fyi-request-5155-3131adf6@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Robinson

Thank you for your emails of 30 December 2016, requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *The MBIE Fire Programme Update: March 2016 states that for Project 3: Material Group Numbers - Timber Linings, the first meeting was held at BRANZ where a full scale fire test was conducted on plywood linings.*
   Please provide the independent study that MBIE relied upon which shows that a single test using plywood linings can be used to establish time to flashover for all types of timber available.
2. *The MBIE Fire Programme Update: March 2016 states that for Project 3: Material Group Numbers - Timber Linings, the first meeting was held at BRANZ where a full scale fire test was conducted on plywood linings.*
   Please provide the independent study that MBIE relied upon, or the fire test which MBIE or BRANZ conducted, which establishes time to flashover for untreated internal timber lined buildings that are sprinkler protected.

You may already be aware that, since 2012, New Zealand uses a Group Number System where materials used for wall and ceiling linings are required to have a group number of 1, 2, 3 or 4. Generally speaking:

- Group 1 materials are non-combustible or near non-combustible
- Group 2 materials are predominately fire retardant timber
- Group 3 materials refer to timber products
- Group 4 materials are highly flammable.

The BRANZ study report, *Fire Properties of Wall and Ceiling Linings: Investigation of Fire Test Methods for Use in NZBC Compliance Document,* provides more information on the Group Number System. A copy of the report can be found on the BRANZ website at www.branz.co.nz/cms_show_download.php?id=7652db415e65acf4391dcaffb8edb87fac3784ff.

In response to your first request, a single test using plywood linings was not used to establish time to flashover for all types of available timber. However, you may like to know that timber based products must all be tested for their average flashover time in order to establish which group number they fall under. The report *Assessment of the Material Group of Various Timber Products using the Cone Calorimeter* shows that various timber species of certain density and thickness achieve group 3. This report can be found on the Australian Timber Database website at www.timber.net.au/images/downloads/fire/assessment-of-the-material-group-of-various-timbers.pdf.

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In response to your second request, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (the Ministry) did not establish, or rely upon, the time to flashover for untreated internal timber lined buildings that are sprinkler protected. Fire sprinkler systems are designed to prevent flashover from occurring. Therefore, untreated timber linings, which obtain group 3 classification, can be used in place of group 2 materials when there is the presence of fire sprinkler systems.

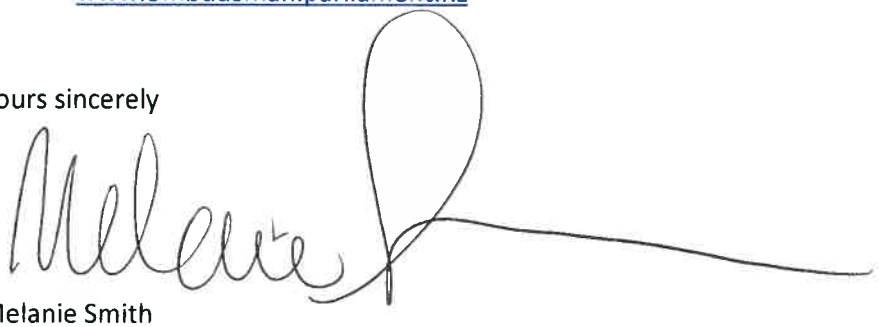
As the Ministry does not hold the information requested, your requests are refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information you seek does not exist.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision. The relevant contact details are:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10 162
WELLINGTON 6143

0800 802 602
www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

Yours sincerely



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