



AUSTRALIAN PLANTATION PRODUCTS
AND PAPER INDUSTRY COUNCIL

CIRCULAR TO INDUSTRY

CHANGES TO TIMBER STANDARDS

IMPORTANT

This information is provided to help manufacturers of MGP graded structural products understand their obligations flowing from the release of revised Australian standards as described below. The changes to these standards were not initiated by the industry. Whilst the actual changes are, in A3P's view, relatively minor, the issues created by these changes do require adequate attention from manufacturers.

Standards Australia will soon be publishing a revision of AS1720.1 (Timber Structures) which will contain, among other things, changes to the structural design properties of MGP grades of structural timber. A revision of AS1684 (Timber Framing) will be published at the same time and this will reflect the changes to these properties via revised span tables for MGP grades.

The Australian Building Codes Board has advised that it will give consideration to the referencing of these revised (“**new**”) standards through the deemed to satisfy provisions in the 2011 Amendment of the Building Code of Australia (**BCA**). This means, however, that the status quo will remain, under BCA 2010 whereby the original (“**old**”) standards remain referenced through the deemed to satisfy provisions, until at least May 2011. That is, the new standards will not be referenced under the current deemed to satisfy mechanism. Once published, designers and specifiers might nevertheless seek to use the new standards in their building solutions (eg, subject to them obtaining relevant accreditation or approvals under the alternative solution pathway in BCA 2010 or in relation to a particular building permit application).

The existence of both old and new standards means that manufacturers of MGP graded products will have no way of controlling or even knowing what standards have been used as the basis of the design or specification for which they are supplying their timber products. Manufacturers are still obliged to ensure that their timber products are “fit for purpose” for the intended use, and that they are accurate in relation to or when describing or making other representations about their timber. Where building solutions are designed to comply with the old standards, the supplied timber must also comply with the old standards. Where solutions are designed to comply with the new standards, the supplied timber must also comply with the new standards.

Unfortunately the structural properties of the MGP grades defined in the old and new standards are not uniformly higher or lower and so direct substitution of one for the other is not feasible.

Manufacturers will need to make their own assessment of these matters and respond accordingly with respect to both manufacturing and marketing considerations.

A3P's suggestion to manufacturers is that it would, in these circumstances, be prudent to consider ensuring that MGP graded structural timber products being supplied by the manufacturer meet the structural property requirements of both the old and new standards for an appropriate transition period. In this way products that are marked MGP10, MGP12 or MGP15 will be appropriate for use with either the old or new standards. We also suggest that it would be prudent to inform your

customers of your policy in this regard, in a prominent way, so they can be confident the material they purchase will be suitable for designs and specifications based on both old and new standards.

For companies who would prefer to manufacture to either the old or the new standards separately, we suggest that it would be prudent to ensure the timber is clearly marked in a way that will identify its suitability for any given application (eg. include “AS1720.1:1997 (superseded)” or “AS1720.1:2010” in the marking). We also suggest that customers are appropriately informed about the meaning of such marks so that they will be clear about the standard to which the timber is manufactured to meet and thereby be able to avoid incorrect use (or supply for incorrect use) of the timber in particular designs and specifications and the potential liability of such action by them. When otherwise describing MGP timber products, manufacturers should be clear about which standard the product is manufactured to comply with, so that no confusion arises.

Structural properties

The structural properties for MGP grades of structural timber are shown in Table 1 as per AS1720.1:1997 (old standard) and AS1720.1:2010 (new standard) respectively.

Table 1: MGP Structural properties

Property (MPa)	AS1720.1	MGP10	MGP12	MGP15
MoE	1997	10,000	12,700	15,200
	2010	10,000	12,700	15,200
Bending strength	1997	16 (19)*	28	41
	2010	17	28	39
Tension strength	1997	8	15	23
	2010	7.7	12	18
Compression strength	1997	24	29	35
	2010	18	24	30
Shear strength	1997	5.0	6.5	9.1
	2010	2.6	3.5	4.3

*For 45 thick material only

Other products

This information is provided specifically in relation to MGP grades of structural timber but it may be relevant to other grades of structural timber as well. The structural property design values for F-grades have also been changed and suppliers are advised to ensure their products meet the appropriate requirements. There are, however, no changes to the span tables of AS1684 for F-grades as the AS1684 design outcomes remain the same under the new version of AS1720.1.