

Acoustic wool panels the latest innovation for New Zealand strong wool

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A New Zealand company with backing from the Government, has successfully developed a world-first fire-resistant, acoustic wall panel for commercial interiors made entirely from New Zealand strong wool, Agriculture Minister Damien Oâ??Connor announced.

â??T&R Interior Systems Limited (T&R) has spent the past two years refining its wool panels to ensure they meet New Zealandâ??s strict building and fire compliance standards,â?? Damien Oâ??Connor said.

â??Theyâ??ve nailed it and are now taking their product to market.â??

The new product, Floc Panels, was launched in Wellington.

“Floc wall panels use strong wool to eliminate common acoustic issues such as echoes and reverberation, which are vital in open-plan offices and classrooms,” Damien O’Connor said.

“What’s more, the panels provide a sustainable and more environmentally friendly alternative to existing products, which are predominantly made from synthetic materials. These selling points will resonate in our export markets.

“We’re excited for our sheep farmers to have a new high-value, innovative product on the market made from strong wool. Innovations like these will help them maximise their earning potential.”

T&R was awarded \$303,200 from the Ministry for Primary Industries Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures (SFF Futures) fund to accelerate the pre-commercial development of the wool panels.

“Most existing acoustic products are imported from overseas, so it’s great that a smart Kiwi company has invested to create this homegrown product,” Damien O’Connor said.

“The acoustic panel market is growing globally, and the domestic market alone is currently worth NZD\$35-50 million annually. Allied Market research has forecast the global market to increase by 6.3 per cent to \$13.8 billion by 2031.

“We expect the amount of wool used will increase substantially as we access new export markets with this product.

“This project with T&R is just one of 15 projects funded through SFF Futures to date that are aimed at re-energising our strong wool sector, with a total Government investment of \$14.69 million. It complements our establishment of Wool Impact, which is charged with driving innovation and demand for our strong wool.

“It also aligns with the Government’s and food and fibre sector roadmap *Fit for a Better World*, in particular its goal of lifting the performance of our wool sector as we aim to boost sustainability, productivity and jobs over 10 years,” he said.