

# Ted's News

## October 2017

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[Writing a Book on External Furniture](#)



External furniture is not always just about a couple of cheap barbecue tables but can involve a large amount of expensive, custom designed furniture. Recently I saw such a project that had gone very badly wrong. This has led me to start writing a book on weather exposed timber furniture as opposed to patio furniture. Every Landscape Architect in the country should purchase a copy but I expect to only sell 10 copies. Is it worth it? Financially, no. But as Prof. Marton Marosszeky, a Director of [BCRC, the construction materials and durability consultants](#) I now work with said "I find that you learn a lot in the writing, and it builds your knowledge, so if you have the time I would go for it." I am also being encouraged by Ralph Bayley of [Guymer Bailey Architects](#) who has done some very impressive work with external furniture.

I am on the lookout for images and insights from my readers. Images I need are:

Badly weathered pine BBQ table  
Badly weathered hardwood BBQ table  
Failed glue joints  
Decayed sapwood  
Decay under film finish.

I also want to know if you have had experience with jarrah. Any images and comments related to this new book will be gratefully received.

### Is Recycled Timber Seasoned?



The short answer to the question about whether recycled timber is seasoned is, "You would not want to trust your professional indemnity to it. Take, for example, the 300x150 jarrah I inspected that had been in a wharf for over 50 years. The moisture content was constantly about 25% and timber does not start to shrink until it reaches this point and, as would be expected, they are still almost full size. The timber is simply too large to dry. If you took these pieces as is, gave them a wire brushing and then used them in some architectural feature they will give no problem. But if you re-sawed them into 300x50 mm planks they would behave like green off saw timber and shrink the full 7.5% or almost 22 mm. This will cause problems when used for some structural purposes e.g. floor joists..

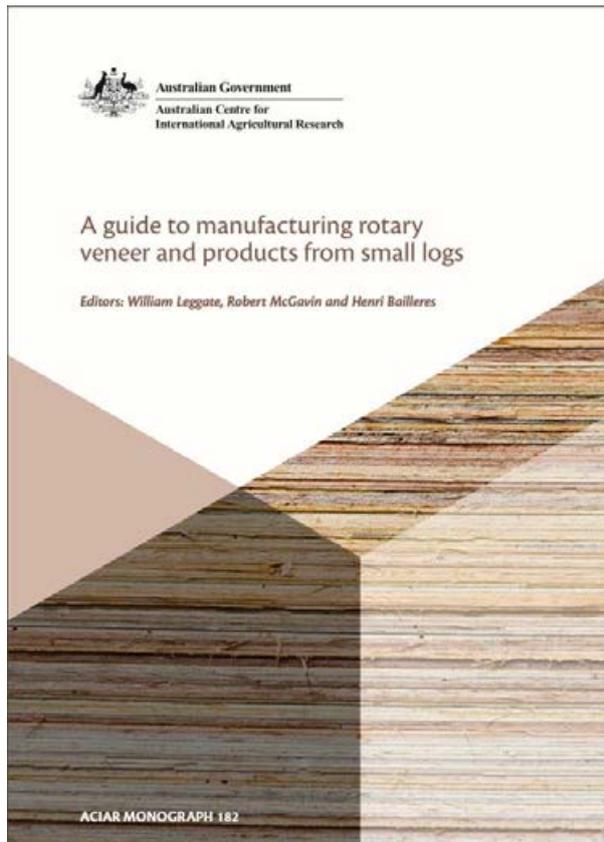
Conversely, if you take a 50 mm floor joist from a building, even just a couple of years old, and recycle it you will have no problems as far as shrinkage. (Serviceability is another matter though, it may have been in the building for 100 years but that does not mean it is a durable species that can be used externally.) But take timber from the larger sizes, re-saw it into say 25mm



boards and produce dressed products from it and prepare yourself a claim. The image to the right shows recycled spotted gum which has shrunk so badly it that the shiplap is no longer lapping and you can see the insulation underneath.

So, proceed with caution. Specify and check your moisture contents when shrinkage is going to be an issue as with flooring, decking and cladding particularly.

### [New Book for Those Interested in Plywood](#)



I know a few of my readers have a keen interest in plywood. A new book has been released entitled "A Guide to Manufacturing Rotary Veneer and Products from Small Logs". The book's editors are Bill Leggate, Robert McGarvin and Henri Bailleres of Forest Product Innovations, Salisbury Research Facility, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland, Australia. [Click here for the link.](#)



One of the drivers behind this book was trying to find higher value products that could be produced from forest resources that were originally intended for woodchip. The big

change has been the development of spindleless lathes that leave little more than a broom stick



A few days ago I called in to the Salisbury Research Facility to see Henri Bailleres and he showed me some of the latest things they were working on. One was this thick veneer produced from spotted gum billets ranging from 160-240 mm in diameter, material too small for sawmilling. Being French, Henri described this veneer as being the "crème de la crème" of veneers. He also

used a bit of "French" to describe the difficulty in gluing it quickly but they are working on it.

### Be Careful Choosing Your Species



The picture to the left is of 13 year old blackbutt used in a barbecue table in full sun. It is not aging gracefully. When you go away from the timbers that were traditionally used in an application and just go by a durability rating you can get this disappointing result. When writing to one timber merchant in Perth recently about jarrah, he commented *"It's funny you mention Colour, over here lighter wood preforms miserably in our climate,*

*species like Selang batu twist and bow like you wouldn't believe, even the eastern states Blackbutt shrinks and checks like [not printable]."* So you can avoid issues like the one illustrated, the new book has a detailed specification for hardwood and pine [but a maintenance nightmare].

### Two New CPD Subjects Being Developed

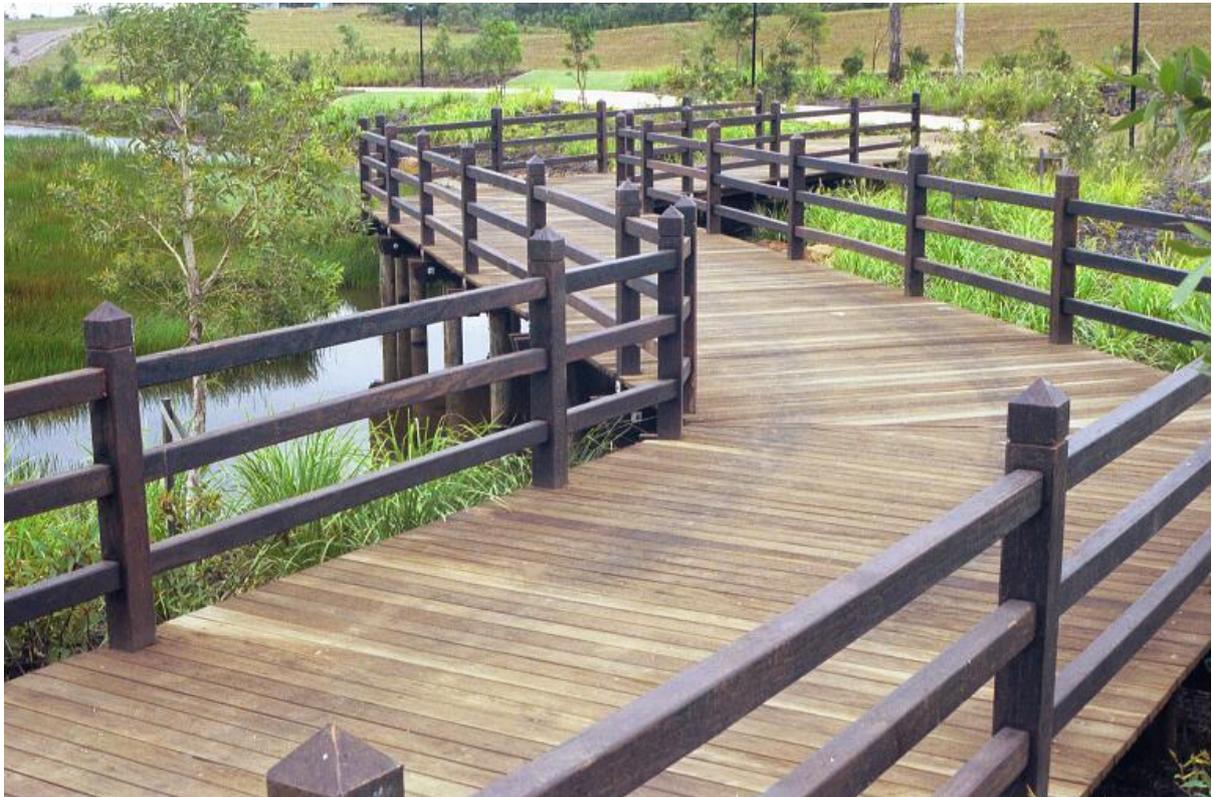


Image Dennis Clark Photography

I have prepared two new CPD subjects, **Timber 101** and **Boardwalk Design**. I presented these to a class of landscape architecture students at Queensland University of Technology recently. Contact me if you would like to have a presentation at your office.

[Need a Timber Consultant or Expert Witness?](#)

I have over 40 years experience in the industry and can assist you with any of your timber needs.

**Design** - I can provide detailed technical drawings and advice.

**Inspection** – I can assess timber products on their performance, fitness for purpose or cause of failure. I also examine whether best practice was used in design and construction.

**Reports** - I have authored many books on timber and can prepare a report to meet your needs.



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