

# Ted's News

## November 2017

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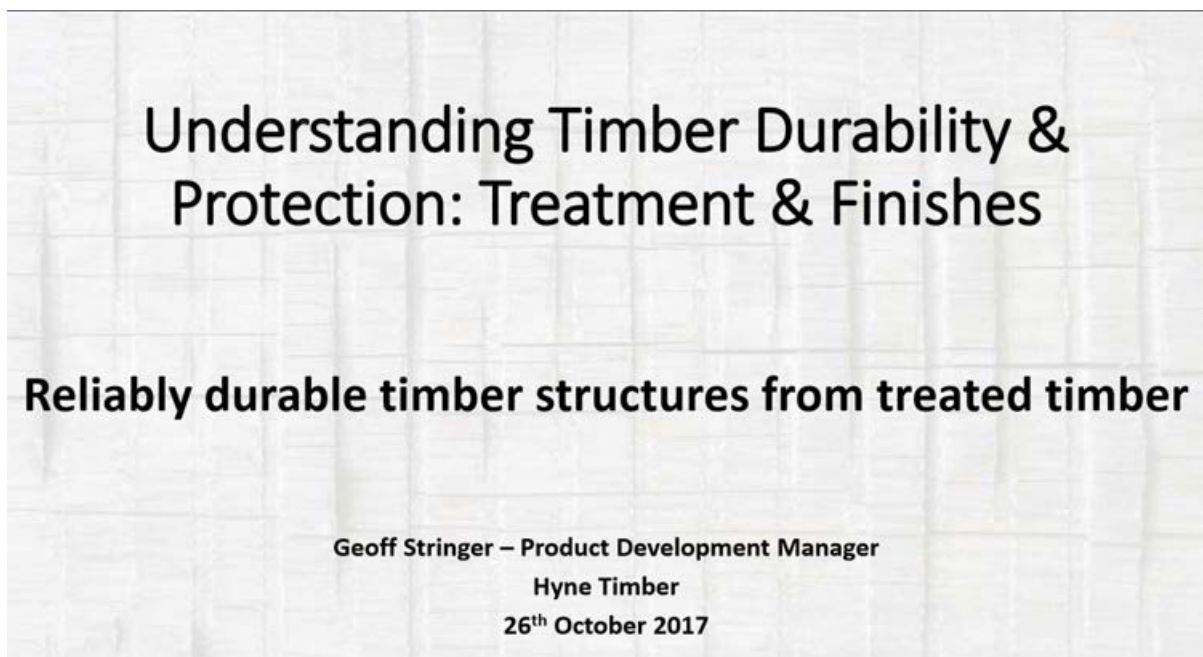
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Last month, Geoff Stringer, The Product Development Manager at Hyne gave a presentation for Timber Queensland entitled *Reliably Durable Timber Structures from Treated Timber*. In it, he looks at the causes of deck failures and poses the question of whether decks should be load limited. I have known Geoff since 1984 when I was with Gatton Sawmilling Co. and he was with TRADAC. Anything Geoff says is worth listening to and if you have any involvement with decks you would be wise to follow the link and see what he has to say.

[Click here for the presentation.](#)

## It's a Good Idea to Pre-oil Your Decks

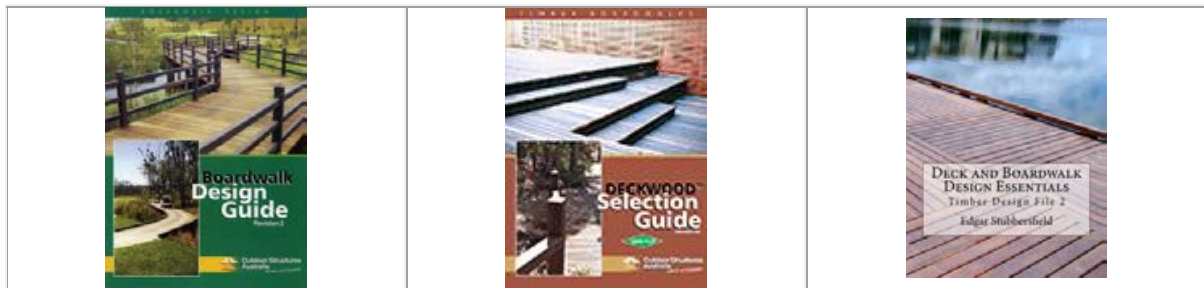
This month I had a call from an architect who had, very correctly, specified LifePlus oiled all round prior to installation. The builder did not read the specification (or ignored it) and so only wanted to oil the top after laying. He explained that it was going to take an extra day to oil all round. The architect stood his ground and rightly so. The builder then said, "how about I oil the



underneath when it is laid." "NO! I want the oil on the surface between the deck and the joist, exactly where you cannot oil." While ever we run the risk of engaging contractors that cannot read or want to cut corners, It solves a lot of problems if you specify your LifePlus with one coat of factory applied Tanacoat and then, just before handover give the top of the deck another coat. For more information contact Stuart Madill, Wilson Timbers 0403 385 707. [Click here for more on Tanacoat](#)

Note: Deckwood and LifePlus profiles are covered by an Australian Registered Design.

## The Customer Isn't Always Right

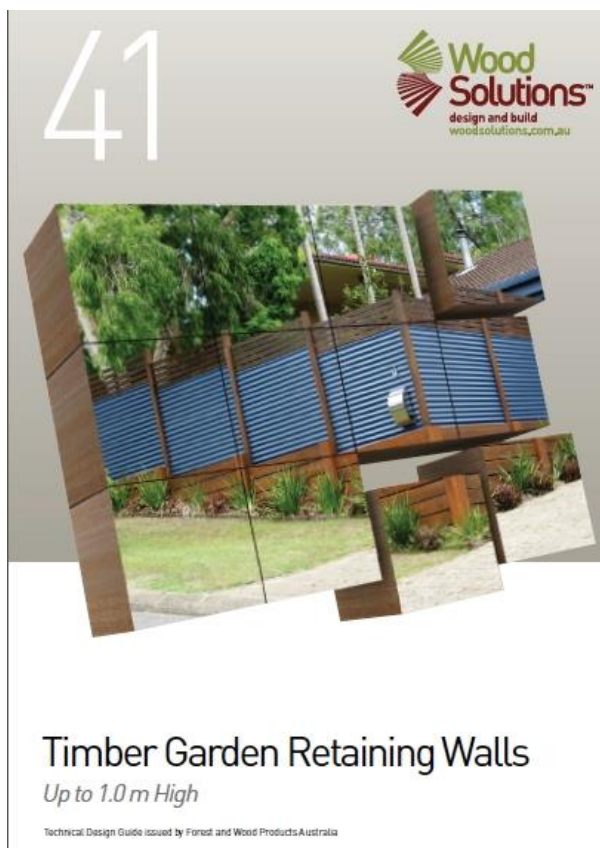


Last week I had one of my most frustrating phone calls ever. Outdoor Structures Australia passed on to me an enquiry from a firm of engineers that were pricing a design and construct tender for a boardwalk and wanted a price on materials. Those materials were 300x75 KD joists but only spanning 4 m and 75x25 mm decking spanning 600 mm. I was quite blunt I fear. The joists are

way oversize in an impossible specification (you cannot dry beyond 50 mm thick) and 75x25 mm would not pass a domestic deck load let alone a commercial one. "Why are you trying to reinvent the wheel" I asked, because everything is already sorted for you in my three guides two of these are available free off the net and the last is only \$55. "Oh we wouldn't countenance purchasing a guide, just give me a price for the materials!" "You have not understood; the joists cannot be supplied as you have specified and the decking mustn't be supplied." I even offered to send through some CAD drawings of systems that work. No! I just want a price and now some poor unsuspecting council may well receive something very unsuitable.

When it comes to external timber design I firmly believe that design and construct is a very poor way to progress. The design needs to be done either by specialist or by firms willing to learn, ask questions and avail themselves of the very best guides to the subject. [See The City of Gold Coast Builds an Outstanding Deck](#) Actually, it is not that hard, I was thrown out of school after grade 10.

## Timber Garden Retaining Walls



WoodSolutions have released a new Design Guides, Timber Garden Retaining Walls (Number 41 ). A garden wall is one under 1 m high and often does not need council approval. It is a great resource, written for both design and landscaping professionals and ambitious DIY'ers.

The body of the publication is devoted to a discussion of design, materials and construction details. Useful information includes tables showing recommended spans, post depths and fixing details. These are complemented by drawings of typical construction systems, including connections, drainage, backfill and other functional elements.

[Here is the link to the free resource](#)

## Writing a Book on External Furniture



I have started to write a book on external furniture and I live in hope that the royalties from this book will allow me to purchase a genuine Eames lounge and Ottoman, a chair with "the warm, receptive look of a well-used first baseman's mitt." (In reality it probably won't finance an Aldi copy.) This iconic chair has been in constant manufacture without significant modification since 1956 because its moulded plywood, heavy

leather padding, adjustable height and reclining action allows it to conform to almost any body.

This very successful chair highlights the problem with external furniture. Moulded plywood will disintegrate, the leather will not take the ravages of the sun and rain and overall it is far from being robust enough for commercial use. The designer of external furniture must produce, not just code compliant but also comfortable furniture without any recourse to padding, height adjustment or reclining action. And on top of that it has to last for years. This is very challenging and a seeming impossibility, hence the book.

Is it worth writing the book? 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:

Decay under film finish.

Decayed sapwood

Failed glue joints

Badly weathered hardwood BBQ table.

Badly weathered pine BBQ table

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

## 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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