

Ted's News

July 2019

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[I Learn Something New Every Time](#)

I recently asked a long-time reader if he found my newsletters helpful. He replied "You are undoubtedly a wealth of timber knowledge, Ted. I've been doing this for 35 years and yet I always learn something when I read your newsletters." I hope this is your experience too. Please forward this newsletter to any contacts that might find it useful.

Don't forget to purchase a book/s as you will learn a lot from them too. Book sales help keep me solvent.

[Know a Decent Door Supplier?](#)

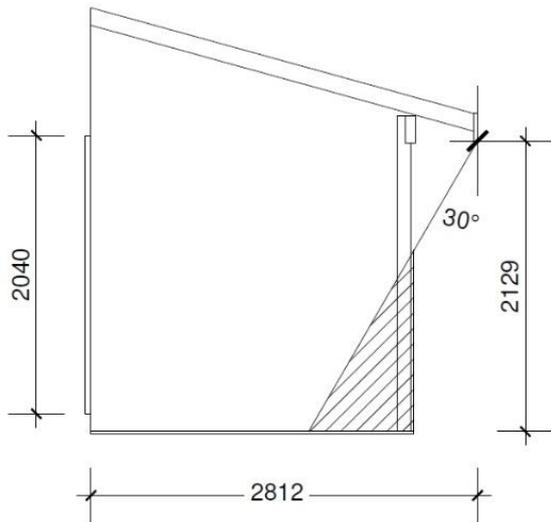


The picture to the side is of my office doors from where your newsletter is written. I have waxed lyrical before about the two volume *Construction Timbers in Queensland* (CTIQ) previously and my personal and very expensive lesson reinforces the wisdom embodied in those publications. These books, by the way, are law in Queensland, not a suggestion and very sound advice elsewhere. Now let me tell you a sad story. I have eight sets of French light doors on my home that I built in

1992. I sealed the doors with a leading brand of door stain and I even read and followed the instructions. Very quickly my doors started falling apart and, for many years they, like my once trim figure, have been beyond redemption. They are under a 2.4m wide verandah so aren't they protected?

CTIQ, Volume 1 (page 7) defines "protected" as follows "In relation to the weather and other dampness, not exposed to the elements and not liable to become damp due to rain or any other source of moisture under normal conditions of use—exposed timbers

may be considered fully protected for the applications listed in this publication where a roof or structural overhang provides protection against wetting by rain driven at angles of less than 30 degrees from the vertical." So, looking at my verandah this is the situation.



The exposed area doesn't match my experience. The degrade matches very closely the line which is a 30 degree from horizontal line. Now I suppose that that is not too surprising as, when it does rain, which is rare these days, the rain seems to come almost horizontal.

I suppose that is what happens when you purchase doors with only a 5-year warranty.

Wishful Thinking Verses Planning to Succeed



Proposed material to make children's play equipment

And old friend and long-time reader of this newsletter sent me some tender documentation for a job in WA where timber from the stockpile illustrated above was available for the construction of an expensive children's playground. The concept drawings provided showed this timber set in the ground. I have written previously about the wisdom (or rather lack thereof) of using the imported [Robinia](#) or even [Larch](#) in Australian landscaping but what of this Australian timber which is either Jarrah or Karri.

I can say it is Jarrah and Karri because of the colour of the heartwood and where it was grown. The In-Ground Durability of jarrah is 2 (15-25 years) while karri is In-Ground Durability 3 (5 to 15 years) but this only applies to the heartwood and if it is not set in concrete. The sapwood is In-Ground Durability 4 (0-5 years) and this is without the deleterious effect of the concrete. Fail prematurely it must, hurting someone in the process is a distinct possibility. Then what? The person who went to tender with such little preparation and thought would say that timber is a dreadful product and not take responsibility for a poorly prepared (in my opinion) tender document. The contract may well be let to someone with the same limited understanding.

How do you plan to succeed with these species? The minimum is:

- Either treat the sapwood or remove it.
- Have no timber in contact with the ground
- Only use stainless bolts, brackets and supports.

My friend very wisely declined to offer a price for this project.

Stagger Your Screw Line



The image directly under the heading shows how screws should be installed. The joists were fully predrilled for the screws which were dipped in CN Emulsion. That image was taken after 2 years when some maintenance had to be done after a flood washed out some piles. I was from the time before we started using dampcourses. Where did the asset owner have to go to get this standard of workmanship? It was a group of young unemployed (and probably never employed) people on

a work for the dole scheme. But what they did do was follow my boardwalk construction guide to the letter. It was a great job.

What about the second picture? Eleven years ago, I gave the Landscape Architect involved assistance with the design and I know that it was detailed to have a dampcourse and screws in a staggered alignment and fully predrilled. I supplied the decking and joists. They are the same size and species as in the first image. Every pack of decking had a weatherproof A4 sheet with fixing instructions - stagger the screw lines, fully predrill and use a dampcourse. It was built by "professionals" who completely ignored the Landscape Architect's requirements and the manufacturer's instructions.

The lesson, trust no one and verify the work is done correctly.

[Verdict is in on my New Coastal Deck Course](#)

I have now delivered my first Coastal Decks Course. I have had good feedback including

Thanks for the day course on coastal desks and boardwalks. All of us who attended gained useful knowledge about working with timber, and I think the cost of the course will easily be recouped through that translating to better outcomes on the ground. All the additional information on fixings and metals with the focus on local conditions was invaluable. It was especially helpful to have plenty of time for questions and answers with a mix of designers, project delivery and maintenance officers able to ask questions and discuss ideas and solutions.



Clare Staines | Senior Landscape Planning Officer
Parks Asset & Capital Planning
Sunshine Coast Regional Council

The main part of the day takes you through the design checklist in my Deck and Boardwalk Design Essentials, line by line and explains and illustrates why that line is there and why that aspect of the design must be attended to. There are three supplementary sections:

- A look at the alternatives to traditional hardwoods and discuss their weakness and strengths (if they have any)
- A look at two very different boardwalks in Cairns and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each design
- A look at boardwalks I built at Point Cartwright in 2000 and Jacobs Well in 2003

Unlike the free CPD sessions, there is a charge for this course but it is "very small bickies" compared to what you could spend if you get the basics wrong and end up with a very unsatisfactory result. From the course you will see just how logical everything is. Contact me on 0414 770 261 or [email me](#)

Free CPD Sessions



Here I am delivering my CPD course on Architectural Timber Battens at the offices of GHDWoodhead.

Why avail yourself of a free CPD course sponsored by Wilson Timbers/Outdoor Structures Australia (OSA) are meeting the cost of delivering CPD sessions in your office? Simply because they are very good, and the free offer will end soon. Here are two references:

From a recipient at Cornell Engineers: We started with Ted's Timber 101 class. It really was a great talk. Can totally recommend it to all engineers, designers and architects.

From a recipient at BSPN Architecture: Thanks for speaking with us again – your talks are always very informative.

There are only two conditions, and these are that I can travel there and back in a day and that OSA be allowed to give a sales pitch. These are exactly the same

presentations I would give if you paid. It sounds like a good deal to me. Here is the [link to the courses I have available](#). I suggest External Timber 101 would be a good start. The learning outcomes are:

- Know the resources needed for a successful design
- Understand the difference between pine, cypress and hardwood
- Understand the importance of selecting the right species
- Understand the importance of selecting the right part of the tree.
- Understand the importance of preservation
- Understand why natural feature must be limited

These are informative seminars with serious learning outcomes and, if required for CPD points, I can provide a test and a certificate. Call Stuart Madill on 0403 385 707 to arrange a free session and for paid add free talks call me on 0414770261 to arrange a convenient time for your "Ted talk".

Interstate readers - travel is no problem.

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

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

- 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.
- Grading - Quite literally, I have written the book on the subject
- Design - I can provide detailed technical drawings and advice.
- Reports - I have authored many books on timber and can prepare a report providing recommendations and practical instructions on to how to rectify issues.

Please note as I am now employed a Senior Timber Consultant with the firm BCRC all large and complex consultancies and requirements for an expert witness will be handled in conjunction with them. Existing consulting arrangements remain unchanged and I am also available to assist on small projects. For more information see www.bcrc.com.au



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