

Ted's News November 2019

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Don't Do Silly Things with Timber

Unfortunately, I can't show you the offending image again. [I had a warning last month about using organic oils externally.](#) I had to write another report this month on exactly the same problem. Danish oil was used on internal laminated beams which was fine but then it was used externally as well. Not good. You can just imagine. Don't use organic oils externally, as it just feeds the mould.

An Opportunity Missed

While my real name is Edgar, everybody knows me as Ted. It is a long story. Recently an Engineer read one of my reports. I was recommended to him as a timber design expert. He commented I was missing an opportunity. It should be **Timber Expert - Design or T.E.D.** But then you will never know until you employ me as a consultant.

Full Day Courses

 <p>The Footbridge Postworking and Inspection Course run by Edgar (Ted) O'Sullivan is designed for those responsible for the specification, purchasing and ongoing maintenance of footbridges. The course will enable participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an appropriate specification • Assess suitable products to purchase • Recognise where concerns are not • Ensure value for purchasing • Know quickly where to inspect • Recognise suitable timber for bridges <p>With over 40 years experience of supplying timber and treated and steel products, I have sourced some outstanding low maintenance footbridges. Conversely, I have also witnessed many structures that simply could never have been purchased.</p> <p>This course is offered on a checklist that can be used as a specification and also a confirmation that someone working with wood is getting it right. You can now take advantage of my extensive gained building low maintenance steel and timber bridges.</p> <p>I have extensive expertise in treated timber applications. This knowledge has developed naturally through a number of formal research projects followed by years of observation. I possess a deep understanding of the issues relating to designing, supplying and constructing fully weather resistant timber and timber and steel structures including bridges.</p> <p>Contact Details Mobile: 0411 775 221 Email: edgar@tedo.com.au</p>	 <p>The Coastal Deck Design Course run by Edgar (Ted) O'Sullivan is intended for those responsible for the specification, purchasing and ongoing maintenance of boardwalks and decks with emphasis given to the more difficult coastal environments. The course will enable participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an appropriate specification • Assess suitable products to purchase • Recognise where concerns are not • Ensure value for purchasing • Know quickly where to inspect • Recognise suitable timber for decks <p>With over 40 years experience of supplying timber and treated and steel products, I have sourced some outstanding low maintenance coastal decks and boardwalks. Conversely, I have also witnessed many structures that simply could never have been purchased.</p> <p>This course is offered on a checklist that can be used as a specification and also a confirmation that someone working with wood is getting it right. You can now take advantage of my extensive gained building low maintenance steel and timber bridges.</p> <p>I have extensive expertise in treated timber applications. This knowledge was developed naturally through a number of formal research projects followed by years of observation. I possess a deep understanding of the issues relating to designing, supplying and constructing fully weather resistant timber and timber and steel structures including bridges.</p> <p>Contact Details Mobile: 0411 775 221 Email: edgar@tedo.com.au</p>
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I have been collecting images of good and bad practice for over 20 years and learning from those images. I now have an unmatched library of do's and don'ts of external timber use. This vast collection of images has allowed me to put together two full day courses, one deals with footbridges and the other with coastal decks. These are incredible resources going into the close attention to detail that is required for a weather exposed timber bridge or deck to succeed.

These are serious courses that are unmatched in the value you will extract from them by delivering expensive infrastructure that ages gracefully and with little maintenance. They both start by going through a design checklist and explaining, line by line, why you must attend to that point. They then look at a number of case studies, showing good and bad practice.

[Click here for footbridge course brochure](#)

[Click here for coastal decks brochure](#)

Call me to discuss your training needs. These courses, which are eligible for CPD points, will give you an incredible understanding of good timber use from them. Call 0414 770 261 or [email me](#).

[Why You Should engage a Timber Specialist \(Even if it isn't me\)](#)



I was speaking to another timber consultant this week who had been called in to look at a problem child. He said to the asset owner, "You got in a steel expert and a concrete expert why didn't you call in a timber expert." Oblivious to the reason why my friend was called in in the first place, he said, "Why would I do that?"

Fast forward a couple of days and I was sent an engineer's report on another deck in a large commercial premises that had failed in just a few years. I was asked to go to the site prior to the job starting. I was able to give them

indicative costs and left them with my design guides. What I saw at the time on relatively new existing work shocked me so much that I wrote to them advising they call in Timber Queensland and try and get the matter rectified under warranty. From memory it had 45 mm weather exposed Victorian ash joists that were split from the 14# screws. Not only did they not do that, they ignored the guides and the built the large new deck using principals that had already failed elsewhere on the project.

So why have I got a picture of a rusted steel bridge? Well they got in a non-specialist to advise them how to rectify the problem and all his answers were strength related and did not seriously address durability. It was a recipe for another early failure. It was recommended that, among other materials, the builder could replace the decking with 70x45 H3 treated timber with no mention of natural durability. In spotted gum, that is a low grade with defects so extreme it has only half its strength left or in ironbark it is only 42% of its strength left. It is the timber version of using steel like that shown in the image. And yet a different outcome is expected! To quote an old friend, "It ain't wood's fault" when this happens. Oh, and 2 only 75x 3.75 mm stainless nails are not going to hold it.

Lesson 1. If you are not prepared to do the job properly, don't use timber

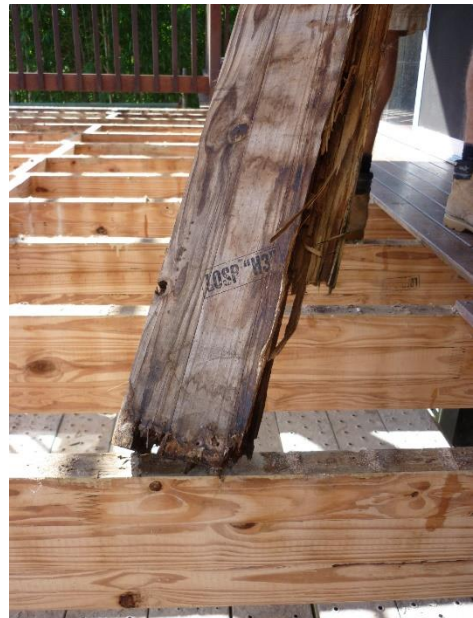
Lesson 2. Ensure specialist consultants are involved.

Guide for Exercising Due Diligence with Treated Timber



Over the last month, I have had two failures of LVL beams drawn to my attention. Some great pictures but unfortunately, as it is all before the solicitors at the moment, I can't share. For the life of me, I cannot understand why people would use them when a spotted gum or ironbark solid timber joist would be there trouble free for your great grandchildren. Granted you have to eat your Weet-bix beforehand, but the angst of a job gone wrong is something to be avoided at all costs.

I have been saying for years that not all suppliers are equal when it comes to the quality of their treated pine. The image to the right is of a H3 LOSP treated LVL verandah joist that failed after about 18 months and was replaced with solid pine.



The Frame and Truss Manufacturers Association of Australia have advised their members of the need to do due diligence to ensure Timber Treatment Compliance. Too often that had been no more than looking at the price.

Their advice is very sound advice to any builder, especially jobs where there may be material from perhaps three different manufacturers mixed in. [Here is a link to their excellent guidelines](#). Thank you FTMA for permission to use the guidelines. Treatment of Durability 1 Above Ground hardwood to H3 probably does not need to be documented as it is almost impossible to get wrong.

A Fair Question About Purchasing

At the seminar on laminated beams run by Timber Queensland on the 19th of November, a presenter asked the audience who had purchased a new car in the last year. A number out their hands up. He then said, keep your hands up if you paid less than \$13,000 for it. No hands were left up. (TATA introduced the Nano a few years back with a list price of \$2,500 USD. Even the upwardly mobile in India did not purchase it.)



His point was that we have developed a degree of sophistication in purchasing cars on price because we know what to expect if we do. He asked how is that different when purchasing timber. It's a fair point.

Architectural Batten Course coming to eClassroom



Following the success of my CPD course [Outdoor Timber: Design and Specification Basics](#) with eClassroom I have agreed to increase the number of CPD courses available from them. My Architectural Timber Batten course will cover all the information you will need to design them well. [Don't forget, there is a book on the subject as well.](#) Hopefully by next newsletter it will be up. I saw this job in Toowoomba. The architects were Sims White who have their own offices in the building.

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. I have recently completed inspections on boardwalks, bollards, support beams and external timber furniture.

Grading - Quite literally, I have written the book on the subject. Recent experience has shown that up to 30% of timber supplied may not be to grade.

Design - I can provide detailed technical drawings and advice. I can also review already prepared drawings.

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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