

Ted's News

April 2021

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Are you aware that there is an index for the newsletters from 2015 onward? [Here is the link.](#)

[Waje Fire Tower Refurbishment](#)

(Not a paid advertisement)



My friends at [Timber Restoration Services](#) have done a remarkable job in restoring to working condition the heritage listed Waje fire tower, situated north of Miles in the [Barakula State Forest](#) (about 350 Kilometres WNW from Brisbane). It is one of the few remaining towers of the total of 65 built in Queensland and was the first to exceed 30 metres in height. (One later tower, Jimna, reached 47 metres). The cabin on top is built on four single length 30m long grey ironbark poles! The work undertaken was to:

- repair the tower legs,
- remove the lowest stairwell,
- replace the timber bracing, replace broken cabin louvres and,
- construct anchor blocks and connect new guywire supports while keeping all other elements in place.



Deteriorated sections of tower legs were repaired utilising high strength fibre wraps which provided high strength capacity to the deteriorated sections. Where cavities were identified in the tower legs, Structurfill®, a specialty high strength epoxy filler formulated for timber, was injected to restore these sections. To mitigate future deterioration, the tower legs were diffused in a spiral configuration with Decaystop®. [Read the full story here](#)

Because people are generally not familiar with timber any longer, they give up on it too quickly and think that demolition is the only answer and don't consider refurbishment. I once saw a timber bridge replaced like for like for over \$4M when another organisation had a quote for its full refurbishment for a tad over \$1M.

[A Rose by any Other Name Might be Lemon](#)



Garogaro sold as Pacific Tallowwood after four years in North Queensland

(This is an extract from my new book, *Timber in Playgrounds*)

Care needs to be used when specifying a timber as it can be called by four possible names. These are:

- Botanical name
- Standard Trade Name
- Local name, and
- Marketing name

Botanical names. Few at the trade level and probably not too many at the supply level will be familiar working with botanical names. If these are being used, we recommend that they be used in conjunction with the Standard Trade Names. Remember also that some species are actually made up of a number of similar species. In the case of spotted gum it is *Corymbia citriodora*, *Corymbia henryi* and *Corymbia maculata*. It is important to mention all three. They will be impossible to differentiate so there is no point introducing something that will be ignored, such as saying you will only accept *maculata*.

Standard trade names. These are the names that are used in conjunction with the botanical

names in AS 5604, AS/NZS 1148 and Construction Timbers in Queensland. These are the official names e.g., spotted gum.

Local names. The same trees can be called different things in different localities. E.g., forest red gum, and durability Class 1 in-ground timber is frequently called blue gum in Ted's home valley. One day a NSW logging contractor offered him a load of blue gum so he jumped at it. What turned up was Sydney blue gum, known in the locality it was drawn from as blue gum. The properties were vastly different. This has caused major problems on occasions and proves the merit of using both the botanical name in conjunction with the standard trade name. [Follow this link to see the vital importance of this section.](#)

Marketing names. A number of imported species are sold under names like "Pacific Tallowwood" "Pacific Spotted" and "Pacific Jarrah." Some of these timbers can be very good indeed (see the reference to cumaru/tonka in the species comparison in Table 7) (sorry you will have to purchase the book to see that.) Conversely, Ted has also seen two different species sold under one marketing name by two different suppliers. One was durable and the other was not. Designers should on no circumstance use this terminology unless combined with a botanical name. There may not be a standard trade name as the timber can have many different names depending on the country.

[Tell me How to Detail it Correctly](#)



Over Christmas I spent a few days at Burleigh Heads and saw what I thought was a good use of timber very close to breaking waves so I took an image. On closer inspection, I noticed that everywhere that there was a stainless fastener there was corrosion. I have a lot to say about detailing timber but would appreciate my readers advice on how the steel should be detailed so corrosion is not a problem. Of course, it is the steel rusting, not the timber decaying.

[Pre-release Copies of My New Guide - Timber in Playgrounds Available](#)

The guide to timber in playgrounds written by myself and senior respected Architect Ralph Bailey ([The Architect behind Frew Park](#)) is all but ready, with just a few small points to clear up, so we can now sell advanced copies. There should not be a playground designer, manufacturer, installer, inspector and owner in the country that does not have a copy of this book. If you are an asset owner, this guide will allow you to purchase well and avoid thousands of dollars in maintenance and premature replacement costs simply by having the tenderers submit the completed design check list. This same checklist can also work as part of your tender documentation.



Frankly, some of things we encountered were just frightening. We were appalled at the ignorance of timber and the effect of the Australian climate that some manufacturers had. After one visit, Ralph reminded me that the purpose of this book is to save lives. [Here is a case history of a playground that is done very well.](#)

[Order your copy of the pre-release version here.](#) The document can be updated at no extra cost when finalised.

[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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