

# Ted's News

October 2023

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## [Case History: Footbridge Handrail](#)



Original handrail

After four months of trying to get permission to say something nice about a local government project and very competent contractors and engineers, I have given up trying. We are getting far too precious. Sufficient to say is that the job is in a southern state. If you want credits, [email me](#). The timber bridge/boardwalk (30.0 m x 4.0 m) had seen better days and needed to be refurbished. Something visually similar needed to be installed in its place in this Victorian-era park. Unfortunately, when the bridge was initially built, insufficient thought was given to code compliance of the handrail, though the risk was slight as the fall is classed as “benign” in *AS2156.2-2001 Walking Track: Infrastructure design*. A very able team of contractors was engaged to restore this bridge and, in the process, ensure that the handrails met present codes and expectations.





The Project Engineer initially contracted Stewart Madill of Wilson Timbers/Outdoor Structures Australia after seeing the work we did on the riverwalk [by the new casino in Brisbane](#). The inquiry was referred on to me and I was able to assist the contractor with a consultancy through [BCRC](#), the durability specialists. While BCRC are not design engineers, I was able to provide the contractors with certifiable drawings on how to rebuild the handrails so they were durable and met expectations. This included a meaningful timber specification for the handrails, posts, and diagonals, along with construction details.





The fixing of the top rail was not straightforward. I always advise fixing the handrail either horizontally or from underneath. The diagonal made that difficult which required that I design a special bracket to accommodate the diagonal in the corner as well as the handrail. My advice included end sealing, painting, and the fasteners including custom items. The diagonals are covered with a mesh that discourages climbing. Fortunately, none of the information I supplied to the contractor was secret men's business as it can be found in my guide Timber Handrails. This is a free guide and may be [ordered from BCRC here](#). Timber sizes are given in my book [Commercial Timber Barrier Guide](#) (Cost \$22).

The contractor advised that the client was very happy. This timber handrail refurbishment was done to a standard seldom seen in southern states and will give long, low-maintenance service. If you want to know more about this project, For your timber consultancy, contact me or [BCRC](#).



### Coming Soon, A New CPD Course on Domestic Decks



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I can't say that I enjoy the [Tradie Mayhem Facebook page](#) of Trades.com.au. If it weren't someone's hard-earned cash spent unwisely or their safety put at risk, you could laugh but it is too serious for that. As I constantly say, "Trust no one except your mother." Some of my readers know I have a CPD Course [and a book](#) (\$55) on designing commercial decks but I feel the time has



come to prepare a course on domestic decks. I have been called in to advise on a number now that have been constructed close to the ground and they have all been little short of a disaster. There is no other word for it. So the call is out there for images that might be useful..



This will be one of the images showing mold growing in the treated sapwood on the underside of near new decking. There was no airflow and the timber was very close to the ground. The timber is also too wide for the thickness.

### [Plastic or Timber Bollards, Which is Better?](#)





Back in 1985, I supplied a large quantity of bollards and traffic barriers to our local council for a park opposite where I now live. It was what got me started in specialising. In 2014, during an upgrade of the park, a large quantity of plastic bollards was installed. I went to photograph them so I could get a before and after shot.. I have had experience when someone ran over 50 bollards with their 4WD. The image illustrates how easy they are to break. In that instance, I received the order for timber replacements!



I saw a friend there and asked how he was, and he replied. "Not very good!" His wife hit the accelerator, not the brake, and drove into one of my barriers. It drove the radiator into the engine and bent the cross member. A new car was needed but the people behind the barrier were safe.



Over nine years numerous plastic bollards have been replaced. This short run shows the faded original mixed with the new. So in my opinion, Timber is better than plastic. The Council has had the excellent judgment to do all future bollards in hardwood of suitable quality. But there is a proviso, The species must be right, the grade must be right, the detailing must be right for the size and the installation must be right. Fortunately, it is not a secret. You can get the information in [Wood Solution's Technical Guide 38, Timber Bollards](#). In that guide, I explain the differences in detailing pine, hardwood, and cypress and how detailing changes with section size. It is a free guide. Alternatively, you could have me come into your office to deliver a CPD course on the subject. Free again if you are in Brisbane or the locality. Be careful, IPWEA drawing GS-042 (issue F) is contrary to best practice and the presentation explains why. Contact Stuart Madill 0403 385707.





There is a bit more to this story as in about 2000 I experimented with pine bollards and gave the Council some to put in a different area of the park (illustrated).. To meet the requirements of the Timber Utilisation and Marketing Act in Queensland I could and still can only do that with incised pine. So I purchased a truckload and turned them into traffic barriers and bollards. The trial barriers were recently replaced as part of a refurbishment. They looked more tired than hardwood would at a similar time but weren't unserviceable. Unfortunately, they were only incised to a depth of 3mm so I could not sell them legally as H4, A very expensive lesson learned.

### [Signup for One of my Eleven CPD Courses](#)



Learn from my four decades of experience with these CPD training sessions, some of which are available in eClassroom.

Topic 1	Timber Preservation	
Topic 2	Hardwood Grading	
Topic 3	Timber Decks - Designing for Durability	
Topic 4	Utilising Small Diameter Hardwood	
Topic 5	The Seven Deadly Sins of Timber Design	<a href="#">eClassroom link</a>
Topic 6	Timber Joints	<a href="#">eClassroom link</a>
Topic 7	Architectural Timber Battens	<a href="#">eClassroom link</a>
Topic 8	Timber 101	<a href="#">eClassroom link</a>
Topic 9	Boardwalk Design (recommend delivered with Timber 101)	
Topic 10	Timber Handrail Design	

Topic 11	Timber Bollards	
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[Click here to learn more about these courses](#)

Are you aware that [Wilson Timbers/Outdoor Structures](#), who I am affiliated with and are suppliers of quality timber, will have me come to your office (in person or remotely) and deliver one or two of my CPD sessions for free? The only condition for in-person presentations is that, with travel, we can do it in a day from Brisbane in Queensland. [Contact Stuart Madill by email to arrange a time](#) or call his mobile 0403 385 707.

## Full-Day Courses

 <p><b>Footbridge Course</b></p> <p>The Footbridge Purchasing and Inspection Course run by Edgar (Ted) Stubbersfield is intended 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"> <li>• Prepare an appropriate specification</li> <li>• Assess suitable product to purchase</li> <li>• Recognise where corners are cut</li> <li>• Ensure value in purchasing</li> <li>• Know quickly where to inspect</li> <li>• Recognise suitable timber for bridges</li> </ul> <p>I can offer valuable assistance to your organisation by empowering your people to recognise an appropriate low maintenance footbridge from one that requires expensive rectification over a shorter life span.</p> <p>On retiring from Outdoor Structures Australia, a company I founded in 1997, I have been concentrating on publishing guides on external timber and steel use and educating professionals in that field. You can now take advantage of my experience gained building low maintenance steel and timber bridges.</p> <p>I have extensive expertise in exposed timber applications. This knowledge was developed initially through a number of formal research projects followed by years of observation. I acquired a deep understanding of the issues relating to designing, supplying and constructing fully weather exposed timber and steel structures including bridges.</p> <p><b>Contact Details</b>  Mobile: 0414 770 261  Email: edgerstubbersfield@gmail.com</p>	 <p><b>Coastal Deck Course</b></p> <p>The Coastal Deck Design Course run by Edgar (Ted) Stubbersfield is intended for those responsible for the specification, purchasing and ongoing maintenance of boardwalks and decks with emphasis given to the more difficult coastal environment. The course will enable participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare an appropriate specification</li> <li>• Assess suitable product to purchase</li> <li>• Recognise where corners are cut</li> <li>• Ensure value in purchasing</li> <li>• Know quickly where to inspect</li> <li>• Recognise suitable timber for decks</li> </ul> <p>I can offer valuable assistance to your organisation by empowering your people to recognise an appropriate low maintenance deck or boardwalk from one that requires expensive rectification over a shorter life span.</p> <p>On retiring from Outdoor Structures Australia, a company I founded in 1997, I have been concentrating on publishing guides on external timber and steel use and educating professionals in that field. You can now take advantage of my experience gained building low maintenance steel and timber bridges.</p> <p>I have extensive expertise in exposed timber applications. This knowledge was developed initially through a number of formal research projects followed by years of observation. I acquired a deep understanding of the issues relating to designing, supplying and constructing fully weather exposed timber and steel structures including decks.</p> <p><b>Contact Details</b>  Mobile: 0414 770 261  Email: edgerstubbersfield@gmail.com</p>
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Don't embark on any major footbridge or coastal deck project before you do my full-day courses. These are serious courses run through [BCRC](#), the durability experts, 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 the footbridge course brochure](#)

[Click here for the 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. Call 0414 770 261 or [email me](#).

[Contact Me](#)



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