

Ted's News

April 2019

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[Deadly Sin No 2 on the Sunshine Coast](#)
[A Deck Where They Did Not Plan to Succeed.](#)



Last month, I had a section on [a deck built for what is now the Sunshine Coast Regional Council](#) where they planned to succeed and did succeed. Recently I revisited a deck at a commercial premises not too far from that successful boardwalk. I had not seen that deck since 2000 but had used it as one of my case histories in my lectures as it illustrated how not to do a deck. Now, I suppose it is a bit harsh to say that the designers did not plan to succeed but a lot of wishful thinking replaced some homework and common sense. The deck in this month's newsletter highlights that there definitely are deadly design sins and you must plan to avoid them. Fortunately, it is dead easy. The basics are in my book, [The Seven Deadly Sins of External Timber Design](#) and the details are in my book [Deck and Boardwalk Design Essentials](#). The checklist in the design essentials book means you do not miss anything.

I had tried to secure the design and replacement deck for this venue back about 2000 and sent my guides to the manager but they chose to go elsewhere. I visited the site as the deck was being finalised and the joists were already split 5 mm. The image above and to the left is after 12 months and as the heads are 16 mm the split is somewhere between 8-10 mm. I spoke to the company doing the work about the splits and they commented, "We are not worried about the split joists." But they should have been very worried. If the supervisor had been doing his job, he should have ensured that the deck was replaced. Nothing was saveable, neither joists nor decking.



Apart from a very expensive premature deck replacement, does it matter? Yes it does as the screws come loose. Some fasteners you could pull out with your fingers! If someone tripped over a protruding screw the cost of having done the job well could be peanuts compared to potential litigation. Not long after I did a hotel deck for the same company where the owners insisted on our decking system.. The foreman said, "This is just too much trouble." Another, "Dear Lord, Give me strength" moment. [Here is a link to some video](#)

[Did you see February's newsletter where I discussed Sin No. 7](#)

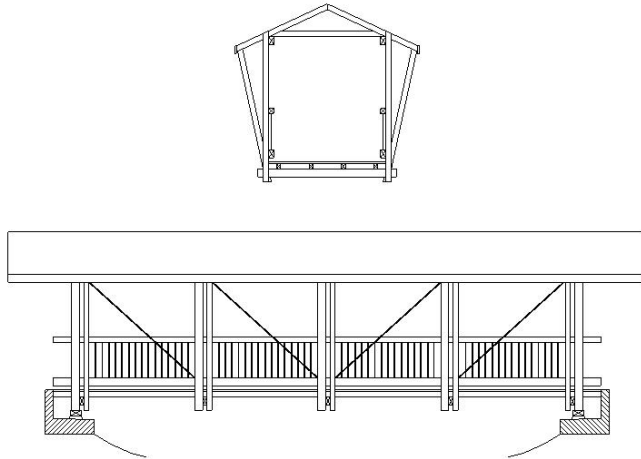
[Did you see March's newsletter where I discussed Sin No 6](#)

[Covered Bridges Really Work](#)



[For more images follow this link](#)

In the mists of time our consulting engineer designed a timber covered bridge for Brisbane City Council over Einbumpin lagoon at Sandgate. I called in recently and it is looking as good as the day it was built, partly because of my timber and Deckwood but mainly because it is not exposed to the weather. [Look at the video which is a walk through the bridge.](#) Note how the joins in the decking are done.



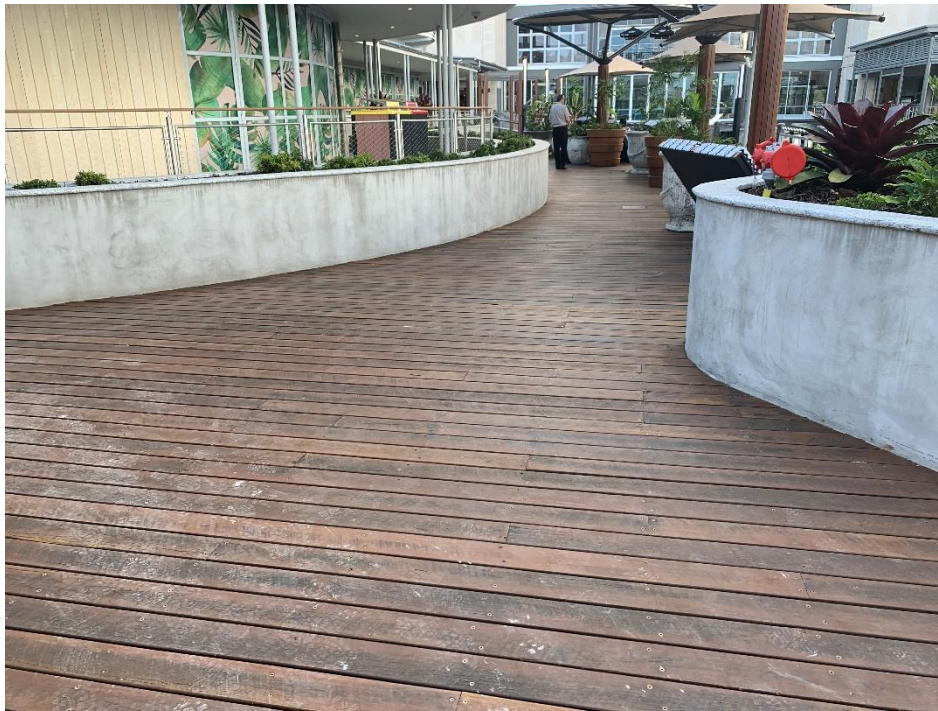
We did some preliminary work on a covered bridge as part of our range but could not interest anyone in it. Perhaps after our last summer it is time to re-think covered bridges. The Americans and Canadians worked out their advantages a long time ago.

[This Seat Suits All Age Groups](#)



I recently saw this seat in Caloundra and was impressed. In my book *External Timber Furniture*, I argue that there should be a range of seat heights in any grouping of seats. Children, able bodied adults and the elderly need different height seating. This unit does just that. Well done Sunshine Coast Regional Council and your consultant. [Here is a link to purchase a PDF of my furniture book.](#) Hardcopies can be purchased through Amazon. Fabricated items like this can be made at any height, not so when the frame is cast.

A Dreadful Deck Got Even Worse

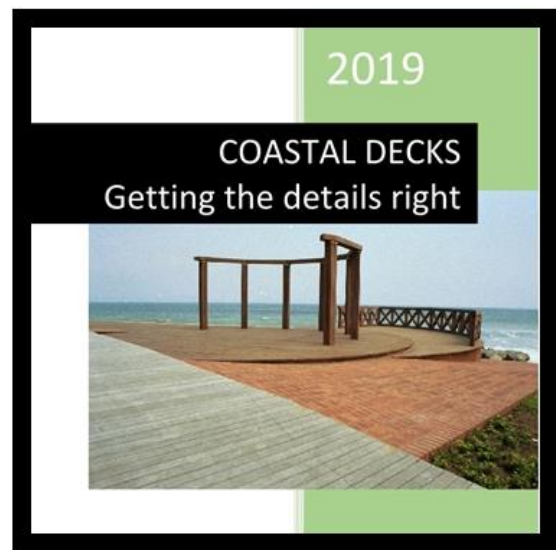


When I was writing my book on grading hardwood, I was very glad to find this deck which had virtually every timber defect known to man and in great abundance. It sped up the collection of images no end. This deck illustrates my point of having independent confirmation of grade and that is to an appropriate grade not a roof truss specification. But it did do one thing correctly, it had a rough sawn face so there was sufficient grip. The deck has now been sanded smooth which also removed some of the cupping from the deck boards (wrong width to thickness ratio). This now sanded deck will have more slip resistance than a dressed deck but only just. Function must come before form. For more information on slip resistance of timber decks, go to the [Wood Solutions website](#), log in and download technical datasheet 48. While there also download no 45 on bollards.

New Coastal Decks Course

I have now completed my coastal deck course. 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 and easy it is to do well. Contact me on 0414 770 261 or [email me](#)

[New CPD Course now available through eClassroom](#)



Andrew Marston of eClassroom was so impressed with a course I delivered that he asked me to prepare one for his online training site eClassroom.com.au is a web service specifically developed to provide high quality, multimedia online distance education services to building design professionals throughout Australia. The first, of hopefully a suite of courses, is *TS1912 Outdoor Timber: Design & Specification Basics*. It is not one of the courses that are delivered free courtesy of Outdoor Structures Australia in the Brisbane area. [Here are details of the course](#). The targeted learning outcomes of this new course are:

- To understand the importance of climate in the selection of timber for outdoor use
- To appreciate the extent to which the species plays in the performance of timber outside
- To appreciate the issues associated with determining suitable timber grades
- To gain an increased understanding of what the Australian Standards mean, or don't mean, with regard to timber suitability for specific outdoor requirements
- To increase awareness of how to design for timber performance; be aware of the Seven Deadly Sins of outdoor timber design
- Understand the importance of verifying, the timber, treatment and design of a job.

The one hour course is available as a stand alone segment for \$59.95 or as part of a 5 hour [bundled course with other timber subjects](#) for \$249.00.

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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