

Ted's News

June 2019

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I have seen many handrail specifications where all that is asked for was simply F14 hardwood. This works for roof trusses but it is definitely not planning to succeed with handrail. Rather it is hoping that the lowest price tenderer quoting to a low-quality specification is going to provide very high quality and highly durable timber for the same price. Was that a pig I just saw fly past? You can learn all about handrail specification in my book [Grading Hardwood - Understanding AS2082](#). Recently I was able to advise Waterway Constructions and the Destination Brisbane Consortium with the specification as well as with some of the detailing on the handrail at the new Queens Wharf project in Brisbane. This is a project where everyone involved planned to succeed and, as a result, the results are outstanding. The timber supply was by [Outdoor Structures Australia/Wilson Timbers](#). Contact Stuart Madill 0403 385 707.

Knowing how to make a handrail succeed is not secret men's business but is taught as part of my full day course, *Costal Decks, Getting the Details Right*. Here are the basics.

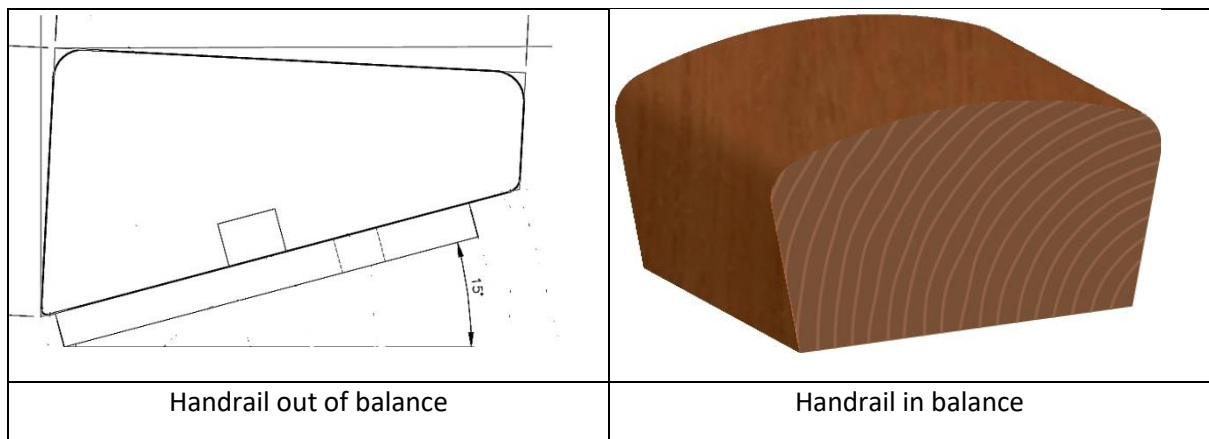




Butt joints hold moisture which readily enters the end grain and decay must eventually ensue. By placing a small gap between each piece you can ensure that this does not happen. Make sure the gap is not a finger entrapment. A suitable end grain sealer would be a clear varnish. It is protected from the sun so there should be no breakdown of the film and there are then no compatibility issues with the top coat. What is used here is Tanacoat with a cedar tint which was applied twice all round before installing. Tanacoat can also be purchased from OSA/Wilson Timbers.

For the cleanest cut use a very fine-toothed saw. It won't be easy cutting but the results are worth the extra effort. Round over the edges.

Notice the quality of the timber. This is not roof truss material but graded especially to be fit for purpose. Notice the absence of fixings on the top surface. There is a 3 degree slope across the handrail so it sheds moisture. All in all, very good attention to detail.



The profile was not ideal but dictated by the angle of the stainless steel support which in turn was dictated by the LED lighting. It meant that one side was much lower than the other. The profile is out of balance meaning the high side can pull the handrail out of straight and there is no practical way of straightening it. This was recognised at the design stage and the consequence of being out of balance was compensated for by processing and delivering the handrail in smaller batches that could be quickly installed. Once secured the rail will remain straight. When circumstances permit try to have your handrail in balance or with only a slight slope.

Maintenance will be a six monthly coat with Tanacoat and a quick check of the fastenings. Under no circumstance will a film forming finish be used. Remove the dust and scrub off any bird droppings. Do not use a pressure washer.

Ring me to discuss your training needs on 0414 770 261 or [email me](#).

Putting Form Before Function



During a recent time away I saw this sign is on a deck in Canberra which has dressed face decking. Normally, new signs like this only go up after someone has been hurt. I have witnessed enough pain in my years and it makes me very disappointed to think of someone enduring suffering unnecessarily, and it is unnecessary. I know of three design guides at the time that deck was built that said to use rough face decking to get the necessary grip. Our own Deckwood, lightly oiled, tested to R12 on an inclined ramp. I am the first to

admit that freshly dressed decking looks nicer than a rough sawn face but function must always come before form. The checklist at the back of my book [Deck and Boardwalk Design Essentials](#) guides you through this. The \$55 outlay is very small change indeed compared to the legal costs that could well be behind the story of this or similar sign. The sign would have cost more than the book.

The boardwalk itself was made from mixed species recycled hardwood much of which was past its use by date and as a consequence numerous pieces have already been replaced. A case of wanting the "warm and fuzzies" before ensuring the client received what actually works.

Simple but Stunning use of Battens



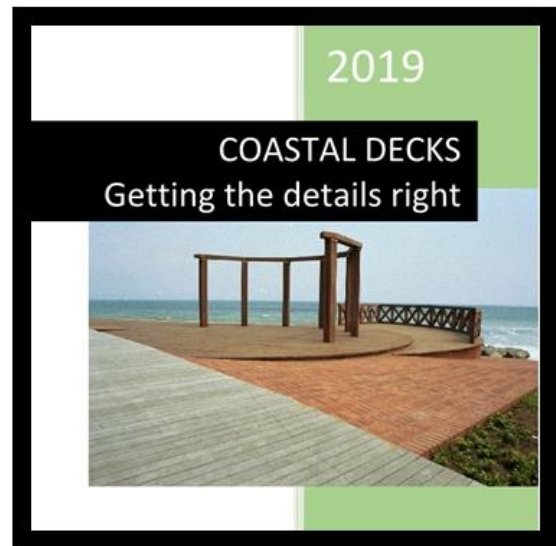
I don't know who to credit with this stunning use of architectural timber battens in the Queen Street Mall in Brisbane but it is very effective despite being simple and relatively inexpensive. Timber can hold its own against any material for beauty and functionality. Thinking of using [architectural timber battens](#) don't leave it to chance as I have a book and CPD course on it.

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 decks 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 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.

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:

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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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