

Ted's News

May 2023

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[Is Oregon Durable?](#)

My love of our durable Australian Hardwoods, particularly spotted gum is no secret. You can understand my surprise when [Graeme Morris, the consultant running my website](#) told me that recently, the main searches that lead people to my website are, "Can Oregon timber be used outside", "Is Oregon timber good for outdoors", and "Does Oregon timber rot". I thought I would take the opportunity to give a clear unequivocal answer, and that is "Yes" and "No".



Oregon joists are pristine after 124 years except where there has been moisture entry

When any timber is protected from the weather, subsequent water ingress, and termites it has an indefinite lifespan as the historic buildings of the UK and Europe demonstrate. So. Oregon by default is durable. I have now graded three heritage-listed buildings for [BCRC, the durability specialists](#). However, longevity in weather-exposed applications is completely dependent on the natural durability of the timber which varies considerably between species. Under *AS5604-2005 Timber—Natural Durability Ratings*, Douglas fir is rated as Durability Class 4 for both in-ground and above-ground uses. This is the lowest durability on a scale of 1 to 4. This standard is also a secondary reference under the NCC.

AS5604 is unusual among durability standards. International standards frequently simply rate one species durability against another. The Australian Standard provides a list of expected life when weather-exposed both for in-ground and above-ground applications. For a durability 4 timber that is:

- In-ground life expectancy: 0-5 years
- Above-ground life expectancy: 0-7 years.

While many factors impact actual longevity, my experience has been Table 1 of the Standard is a useful guide for Australian conditions. This means that any Douglas fir (Oregon) that has an extended period of weather exposure must be considered compromised.



Then there are the caveats. I have seen Oregon used in ground contact in Jordan without issues but it was in a desert. Remove the moisture and you remove the opportunity for decay. Coastal Douglas fir, a variety of Oregon is more durable. If it is slow grown (20 or more growth rings per 50mm) it is more durable but then probably only a durability 3 which does not help much. Oregon is not considered an ideal candidate for water-based preservatives but incising can make it successful. The image above shows a [35-metre road bridge built from laminated coastal Douglas fir and it is rated at 100-year life.](#)



So the answer definitely is Yes and No. This is not a new question, and I have been as guilty as others for supplying Oregon fascias. Here are some trade information articles that were issued in the early 1990's when things really started to hit the proverbial fan.

[Builders Registration Board of Queensland April 91.](#)
[Queensland Forest Service Timber Note 38 March 92](#)

To be certain that your Oregon is fit for purpose for your next project, contact [Marius Du Preez](#) of BCRC for a quote for your grading requirements or call 0421 382 144.

Case History - All Hallows School Deck Brisbane



Credits

Architects: [Fulton Trotter Architects](#) Contact [Justine Ebzery](#)

Structural Engineers: [Bligh Tanner](#) Contact [Simon Kochanek](#)

Building Services Documentation: [Ashburner Francis](#)

Hydraulics: [MRP Hydraulic and Fire Consultants](#)

Construction: [Kane Constructions](#)

Deck Installation: [Parker Precision](#) Contact: [Simom Parker](#)

Every so often I come across a decking project that takes things to a different level. The major extension and refurbishment at All Hallows School in busy Anne St, Brisbane incorporated a LifePlus Deck. Both Fulton Trotter and Bligh Tanner have been long-time supporters of Deckwood and LifePlus and both have had in-house CPD training. It makes a difference. I have trained Parker Precision who has done a [number of Deckwood projects now](#). Work of this calibre only happens through very conscious planning.

o see why I was so impressed, [click here for a link to more images and project information](#).

[A Case History From my Guide to Timber Steps](#)

In case there is any doubt about why I need to write a book on timber steps, [here is a link to a case history](#) where the builder has confused strength with durability. The old warning from the [Queensland Builders Registration Board in 1991](#) addresses just this practice. It is not secret men's business.

When I was writing my other guides, e.g., [Timber Handrails](#) I had an embarrassment of riches when it came to images. Unfortunately, I am light on when it comes to steps. I really need a few more images. Can you help with images that show:

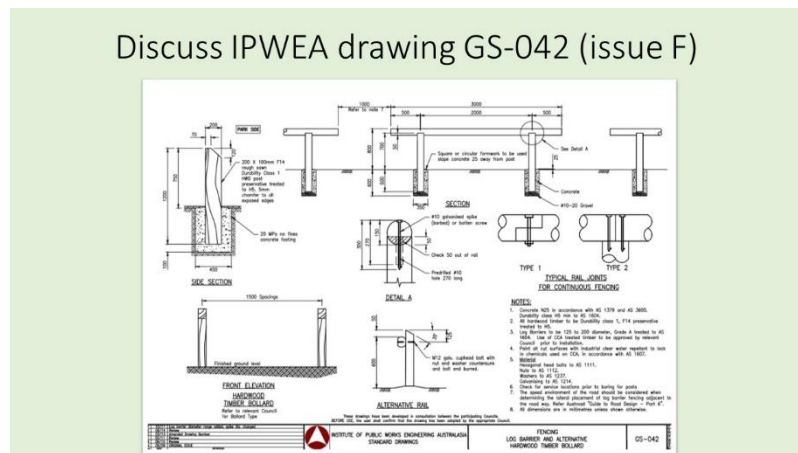


- Good and bad case histories,
- Building a traditional set of steps,
- Decay or deterioration in pine steps.

[Index To Past Issues](#)

If you are a new reader or just want to find details on a particular topic such as 150x150 mm posts, here is a link to an [index of articles back to 2015](#).

[New CPD Course - Timber Bollards](#)



I am putting the finishing touches to a new CPD course, *Timber Bollards*. The course will look at bollards in general and then look at issues with the Institute of Public Works drawing which does not follow industry guidelines such as Wood Solutions' excellent publication on bollards. Ring Stuart Madill for a booking on

0403 385 707. Outside of Queensland contact BCRC.

[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	eClassroom link
Topic 6	Timber Joints	eClassroom link
Topic 7	Architectural Timber Battens	eClassroom link
Topic 8	Timber 101	eClassroom link
Topic 9	Boardwalk Design (recommend delivered with Timber 101)	
Topic 10	Timber Handrail Design	
Topic 11	Timber Bollards	

[**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>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"> • Prepare an appropriate specification • Assess suitable product to purchase • Recognise where corners are cut • Ensure value in purchasing • Know quickly where to inspect • Recognise suitable timber for bridges <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 of understanding of the issues relating to designing, supplying and constructing fully weather exposed timber and timber and steel structures including bridges.</p> <div style="text-align: right; font-size: small;"> <p>Contact Details Mobile: 0414 770 261 Email: edgarstubbersfield@gmail.com</p> </div>	 <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"> • Prepare an appropriate specification • Assess suitable product to purchase • Recognise where corners are cut • Ensure value in purchasing • Know quickly where to inspect • Recognise suitable timber for decks <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 of understanding of the issues relating to designing, supplying and constructing fully weather exposed timber and timber and steel structures including decks.</p> <div style="text-align: right; font-size: small;"> <p>Contact Details Mobile: 0414 770 261 Email: edgarstubbersfield@gmail.com</p> </div>
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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](#).

<u>Contact Me</u>	
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