



**D**ecks provide practical, economical, outdoor living or recreational areas on level or sloping ground around the house or swimming pool. This project guide outlines some of the points that need to be considered when building a simple timber deck.

## Planning

Before making your final decisions, you should seriously consider what you want from the new deck. Do you seek a place in the sun or protection from the sun. Will the new deck be part of your interior-exterior entertainment area, around the pool, or at the front or back door.

Often a deck and attached covered pergola are designed together. You will need to decide if the deck roof or cover should give protection from rain or be an open pergola, perhaps covered by deciduous plantings to allow for winter sun to reach the deck.

Also examine the style of your house because a few simple details could fit your new deck into this same style. Don't forget that stains and paints can also be chosen to blend the new construction into the old.

## Pool Decks

In the particular case of decks around pools you must ensure that the construction will provide the safety features demanded by Local Government regulations particularly those related to isolation safety fences and gates around domestic swimming pools.

## Decks Railing

To satisfy concerns about safety of above-ground decks, it may be essential that your deck design does include balustrade/railing complying with Local Government regulations. (see later)

## Local Government Approvals

Construction of outdoor works such as a deck, a pergola, garden sheds, fences etc., will probably need approval by your local authority and we recommend that your Local Councils be consulted early, before detailed planning is commenced. Obtain from Council Officers any information about relevant regulations, the number of and detail required on plans, scale of drawings and what permits (e.g. owner-builders permit?) are required before work commences.

## Timber Selection

Timber decks are usually exposed to the weather but in some designs the supporting timber posts may also be embedded in, or in contact with, the ground. Generally, timber species should be selected so that acceptable performance under those hazardous conditions could be expected.

For the high hazard of in-ground contact or exposure, highly durable timber such as some selected species of native hardwoods (tallowwood, turpentine, ironbark, etc.) sapwood free cypress pine, or preservative treated timbers (which have been treated for hazard level 4 or 5 (H4 or H5)) should be preferred.

For the timber above ground but exposed to weather, durable hardwoods (above named species plus blackbutt, spotted gum, messmate/stringybarks etc.) plus timber which has been preservative treated (at least) for hazard level 3 (H3) could be specified.