

ANTHONY, OUR SON, BUILDING HIS TREE HOUSE ON OUR LAND



The Beginnings in September 2016

Our 35 year old son Anthony has come to live with us again after ten years of being away. He acts as a tour manager for firms who engage him. These firms sign him up because they are bringing in international music bands into Australia. He has to work out all the tour details for each band. He is very detailed, practical and organising he loves it!! He takes after his mother Harriet.

We all went to Melbourne in July 2015 to attend the funeral of Harriet's mother Heather Kent. Heather was 97 years old and the funeral was packed out. There were even people there who Heather wouldn't have seen for 20 years. Heather was a real family/friendship woman. Anthony suddenly experienced the value of family. Anthony was also one of the pall bearers. That is why Anthony has come to live with us again after ten years of being away. He has become very family orientated and wants to look after us in our later years. He has come to love and appreciate our house built from recycled materials. He has come to help build '**The Aitken Legacy**' long-term.

He has become very focused on tree houses and has selected a large tree down the back of our bush block land. He has already built the initial platform 4.5 metres off the ground. The dome has now been built and covered with handmade shingles over half the dome as of early August 2017. In late August, we have agreed on two selected blood trees on our land to be cut down and sawn up into thin flitches to be made into handmade singles. See details and photos below of the man who cuts big field logs into thin flitches of any thickness.

He has formed a [Treehouse Club](#) on Facebook. He has about 347 members already. In November in 2015, he flew over to Oregon, USA to meet [Michael Garnier](#) who has a whole business in building tree houses. He came back with a whole suitcase of special [hinged bolts](#) that you can use on a tree without hacking into the tree. He getting really serious. See the section at the end of this post [OUR LAND OVERALL ANTHONY, OUR SON, BUILDING HIS TREE HOUSE ON OUR LAND](#) **September 2016 Initial stage.**

Delivery of the Timber:

Early one morning I heard a big truck coming down the exit of our acreage driveway. I went out and it was a large crane truck with a big load of new timber beams for my son Anthony. However, he couldn't fit around a slight bend which had a solid eucalypt tree right on the edge. I suggested he back up 150 metres right back to the entry road and come down our other front entry. He said he looked at that but saw there many eucalypt trees down the driveway and so decided to come down our straight forward exit driveway. I assured him that we often had trucks come down there. We are on tank water and needed a big water truck to come down periodically and top up our tank about five times a year in between low rainfall. That has all changed since September 2015 with our new bore supplying much drinkable bore water.

He backed the 150 metres up the driveway to our entry road and easily came down our front section of our driveway and unloaded all the heavy timbers to side of the big parking area. How was Anthony to build his tree house and get all these timbers 300 metres down to his site? The few photos below shows how he did it.



The tree house platform was assembled on concrete blocks to aid in the future disassembly of the platform. Then the pieces were systematically unscrewed and placed on Anthony's utility.

The next step was that the two main beams were taken down to the tree house location and lifted into position by a block and tackle 4.50 metres off the ground. Using a ladder, he used two of Michael Garnier's hinged bolts to fasten them to the tree. Each bolt had a movable flange you could bolt to the beam. Four sturdy cross braces were then installed using further bolts. See the photos below.



From Anthony:

To get the beams up in the tree we used an old fashioned block and tackle. There was a tree branch just above the bolt so we were able to strap over the branch and use that to hoist the beams. In an attempt to save time, I suggested we leave the cross beams (noggins) on one side of the beam. In hindsight this was a terrible idea. The extra weight on the end of it made the beam harder to maneuver into position. At one point there was [Pat Carmody](#), Sye M. and myself with shoulders under the beam to lift it onto the static bracket and struggling to move it less than an inch (2cm) So we learned that sometimes what seems like a time saving approach actually can take longer when you're building in the trees. [#treehouseclub](#) installed using further bolts.

See the photos above and below.





Four sturdy cross braces were then installed using further bolts. He has installed bearers and outside framework to support the floor of marine ply. The floor of marine ply has been installed and cut to fit the hexagonal floor shape. He has painted the floor a tan colour which blends into the surrounding landscape.





Anthony has started to build a rounded dome built out of triangles of wood in our car-park in April 2017. He calls it a Geodesic Dome.



Triangles of wood were screwed together for a portion of the roof the Geodesic Dome



Shingles going on the Geodesic Dome



A timber ladder and door has yet to built in October 2017

It took over a week where he and Jase cut and nailed handmade shingles over the whole dome so that the shingles hang down vertically covering the next layer.

The shingles were made from a big dead bloodwood tree on our land in early April. There is a story here: two days before we went to Japan for 16 days on the 4th of April, Anthony got Lance the tree lopper across the road to come and cut down this big dead bloodwood tree near our driveway. Then he hired in a man who cuts big field logs into thin flitches of any thickness. This man arrives with a four wheel drive vehicle and a big long trailer. The trailer has a small crane at the end to pick up logs and place them on the trailer for sawing into flitches.

The trailer has at the other of the trailer, an adjustable rotating band saw for sawing flitches. The saw could be adjusted for any thickness for cutting flitches. The rotating band saw is progressively moved by hydraulic action along the trailer and cuts a flitch of measured thickness off the log. A jet of sprayed water on the saw kept it from overheating. This was how Anthony obtained his 10 mm thick handmade shingles. Other shingles were up to 50 mm thick for seats he was going to make as a separate project. He saved many \$\$ by doing it this way instead of buying them commercially. See the photos below.







.... The log when sawn, shows beautiful red timber which is specially apparent with the water from the spraying

In contrast situations, when settlers came out in the late 1880's into the dry Australian bush, they wanted to clear the land of trees and create open space for their cattle. They split the trees with wedges to form timber slabs for a hut on their land. They also made post and rail fences: horizontal rails and bigger posts to go in the ground. Or they broadaxed the tree into big beams for use in barns or in the city buildings. See the beams used in our house in the photo below.



Anthony has yet to build steps up to the tree house with a very organic look. We have selected another tree for step stringers to be cut down and sawn in half. The rough bark of the tree will be exposed outwards and hand cut steps will be cut by the man who cuts big field logs into thin fitches of any thickness.

The Building of the Geodesic Dome

From Anthony: It was a pretty crazy idea to put shingles on a geodesic dome. But I'm liking where this is heading. I love working with Jason Mung. He likes my lil bits of crazy and makes it work in reality. He was on the scaffolding today, while I was on the cutting station. He would mark the shingles out, throw them to me, while I cut the pattern. I'd throw them back up to him. In the meantime Jase would pre-drill and hammer while I prepared future shingles and played DJ.



Shamgar balancing on one leg and polyurethane a crack like a ballerina

From Anthony: My mate Shamgar doesn't do things by halves. I was trying to convince him to WorkSafe but he just laughed at me. He can balance on one leg and polyurethane a crack like a ballerina.



Trimming the live edge of the shingles



Waterproofing done. / A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away... It is a period of civil war. Rebel spaceships, striking from a hidden base, have won their first victory against the evil Galactic Empire.

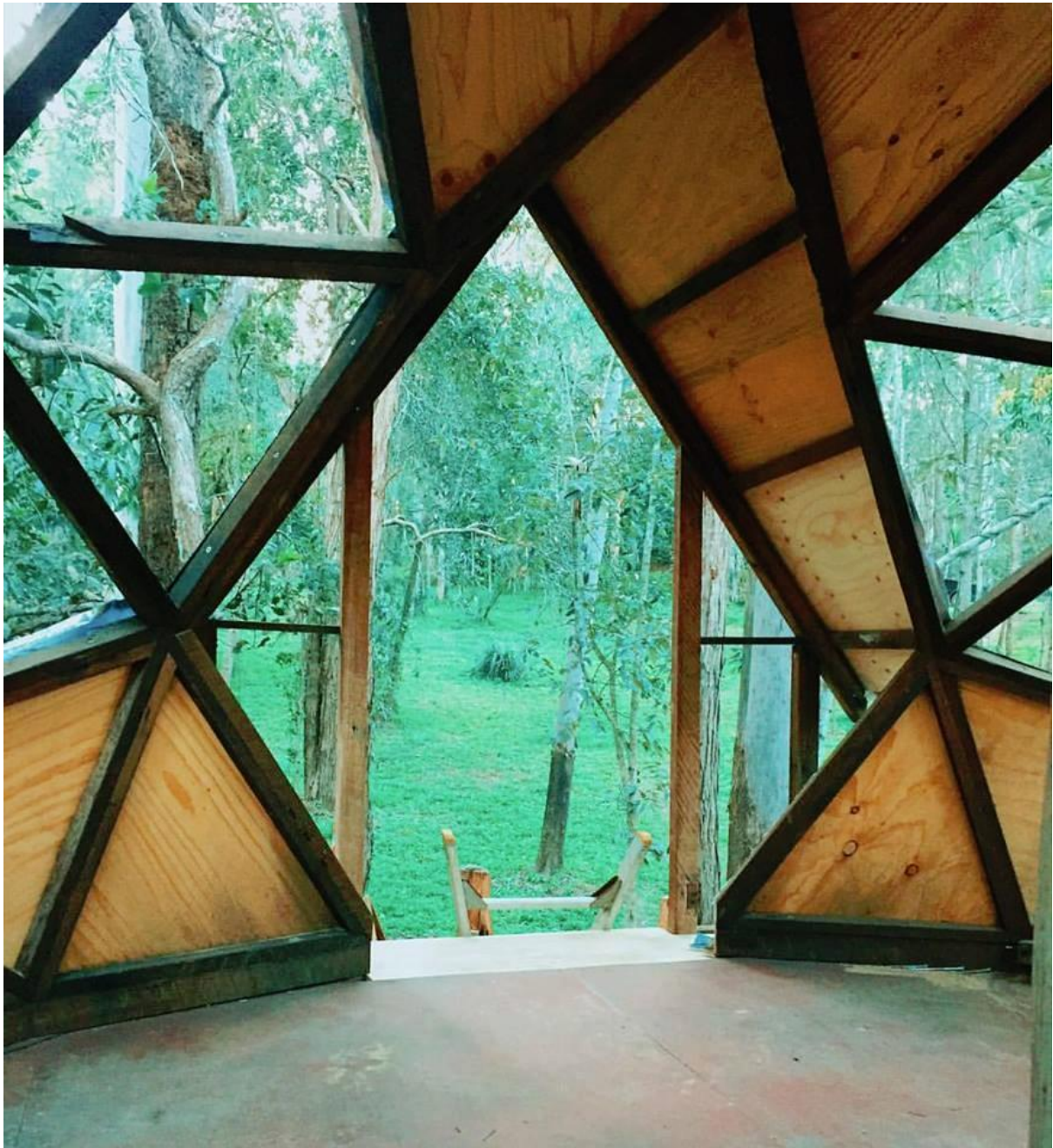


A Geodesic Dome to 2.5 metres high built out of triangles of wood over the top octagonal floor base. He and Jase cut and nailed up triangles of thick ply over all the triangles of wood initially.



12 triangles down. 48 to go

New A-Frame doorway for the treehouse. Couldn't have done it without Json Mung



Summary to August 2017

- He built the platform as a supported octagonal floor base ... a 4.00 metre wide platform which is 4.50 metres up the big gum tree featured in the photos above
 - A Geodesic Dome to 2.5 metres high built out of triangles of wood over the top octagonal floor base
 - He and Jason cut and nailed up triangles of thick ply over all the triangles of wood
 - He has waterproofed the whole dome with a durable waterproof compound
 - It took over a week where he and Jason cut and nailed handmade shingles over half the whole dome so that the shingles hang down vertically covering the next layer
 - Anthony says he is not a carpenter but he has certainly done his apprenticeship in carpentry
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