

BUYER'S GUIDE · ENGINEERED TIMBER FLOORING

The Australian Guide to Engineered Timber.

Everything you need to choose a timber floor with confidence – construction, grades, colour, heating, wet areas and what quality really looks like.

WHY THIS GUIDE

Choose once. Choose well.

A timber floor is the largest single surface in your home and one of the few finishes you will live with for decades. It deserves an informed decision.

If you want the warmth and character of real wood, you'll quickly meet two options: solid timber and engineered timber. Engineered construction — a real oak wear layer over a stabilising core — delivers the same authentic surface with far greater stability across Australian humidity swings.

This guide walks through the decisions that matter: construction and quality markers, oak grades, colour, underfloor heating, kitchens and wet areas, and the questions to ask any supplier.

It is written by HARO Flooring Australia, drawing on 150 years of German flooring manufacture — but the principles hold for any floor you consider.



Engineered vs solid timber.

01 REAL WOOD, REAL SURFACE

An engineered board is genuine oak where it counts — the wear layer you see and touch. Beneath it, cross-laminated layers do what solid timber can't: stay flat.

02 STABILITY IN AUSTRALIAN CONDITIONS

Solid boards move with every humidity swing — cupping, gapping and squeaking. A spruce fingerstrip core resists that movement, from Brisbane humidity to Melbourne winters.

03 SANDABLE, LIKE SOLID

A 3.5 mm wear layer can be sanded and refinished several times — a lifespan measured in generations, not years.

04 PRE-FINISHED IN THE FACTORY

Factory-applied finishes cure harder and cleaner than site-applied coats — no fumes, no waiting, walk on it the day it's laid.

05 FASTER, CLEANER INSTALLATION

Click systems like Top Connect® install floating or fully bonded, over concrete slabs and underfloor heating.

06 WHERE SOLID STILL WINS

Sentiment and tradition. If a floor must be 19 mm of single-species hardwood throughout, solid is that answer — accept the movement that comes with it.



ENGINEERED OAK — THE STABLE WAY TO OWN A REAL TIMBER FLOOR

Grades, explained.

01 GRADE IS CHARACTER, NOT QUALITY

As oak grows it develops knots, sapwood and grain movement. Grading sorts boards by how much of that character shows — every grade meets the same structural standard.

02 UNIVERSAL

Balanced and lively — moderate knots and colour play. The most versatile grade, at home in almost any interior.

03 MARKANT

The honest face of oak: pronounced knots, mineral streaks, visible life. Warm and natural without tipping into rustic.

04 SAUVAGE

The most expressive grade — knots, cracks and wild grain celebrated rather than concealed. A floor with a story.

05 ALABAMA & SELECTIVE

Alabama relaxes the grain for casual warmth; Selective calms it for refined, even surfaces and formal rooms.

06 CHOOSING YOURS

Calm grades suit minimal interiors and small rooms; characterful grades hide life's wear and anchor large, open spaces.



Colour, light and space.

01 START WITH YOUR LIGHT

Natural light changes a floor more than anything else. North-facing Australian rooms warm every tone; south-facing rooms cool them. Always judge samples in your own light.

02 LIGHT FLOORS

Light whites and naturals lift small or low-light rooms, suit coastal and Scandinavian styles, and are forgiving of dust.

03 MID NATURALS

Balanced oak tones are the safest long-term choice — they flatter both warm and cool palettes and survive restyles.

04 GREYS & GREIGES

Sand grey, shell grey and tobacco tones read contemporary and pair with stone, steel and linen.

05 DARK & DRAMATIC

Smoked, fumed and carbon tones bring depth and formality — best with generous light and scale.

06 BOARD SIZE MATTERS

Wide boards (Plaza 240 mm) calm big rooms; classic 180 mm planks and 3-strip longstrip suit finer-scaled spaces; herringbone adds movement and tradition.

Heating, kitchens & wet areas.

01 UNDERFLOOR HEATING – YES

Engineered timber and hydronic underfloor heating work beautifully together. Keep surface temperature to 29°C and choose low thermal resistance (HARO 4000: 0.113 m²K/W – well under the 0.15 limit).

02 BOND IT FOR BEST TRANSFER

Full-surface bonding gives the most even heat transfer and the quietest floor – specify it over heated slabs.

03 KITCHENS – ABSOLUTELY

Multi-layer construction handles the temperature and humidity changes of a working kitchen. Wipe spills promptly and use mats at wet zones.

04 LAUNDRIES & MOISTURE-PRONE ROOMS

Choose a water-resistant system: HARO Tritty 200 Aqua's AquaReject core swells ≤ 8% versus the 15% the standard allows.

05 BATHROOMS

Fully tanked wet rooms are the one place we'll talk you out of timber – and into a timber-look alternative.

06 CLIMATE CARE

Keep indoor humidity between about 40–60% year-round. Timber is a natural material; it appreciates a stable home.



What quality looks like.

01 WEAR LAYER THICKNESS

The single best quality marker. ≥ 2.5 mm is good; 3.5 mm is excellent and multi-sanding territory. Ask for the number in writing.

02 CONSTRUCTION STANDARD

Look for EN 13489 multilayer parquet and a solid-timber (not fibreboard) core that stays flat through Australian humidity swings.

03 EMISSIONS & HEALTH

Formaldehyde ≤ 0.05 ppm, A+ emissions class and the Blue Angel label protect indoor air — especially in new, well-sealed homes.

04 CERTIFIED SOURCING

PEFC or FSC chain-of-custody certification is the only guarantee the oak comes from sustainably managed forests.

05 A WARRANTY WITH STRUCTURE

Read the tiers: HARO's 4000 Series carries 30 years residential on layer structure and lamination. Vague 'lifetime' claims deserve questions.

06 THE SUPPLIER TEST

Ask for the technical data sheet, the Declaration of Performance and the warranty document. A serious supplier sends all three the same day — ours are already online.



TECHNICAL DATA

The buyer's checklist.

CONSTRUCTION	EN 13489 multilayer · solid spruce fingerstrip core · balanced backing veneer
WEAR LAYER	≥ 2.5 mm minimum · 3.5 mm for multiple re-sands (HARO 4000 Series)
SURFACE FINISH	Factory-applied · naturaDur natural matt, oiled or lacquered — ask for the care regime in writing
INSTALLATION	Floating (Top Connect®) or fully bonded · bonded recommended over underfloor heating
UNDERFLOOR HEATING	Thermal resistance ≤ 0.15 m ² K/W · surface limited to 29°C
WET AREAS	Kitchens: yes · laundries: water-resistant systems (AC6, swelling ≤ 8%) · tanked bathrooms: no
HEALTH & EMISSIONS	Formaldehyde ≤ 0.05 ppm (EN 717-1) · A+ · Blue Angel
SUSTAINABILITY	PEFC / FSC chain of custody · EPDs available for specifiers
WARRANTY	Written, tiered, transferable — HARO: 30-yr residential (4000) · 25-yr (Tritty 100) · 15-yr (2500)
FIRE & SLIP (IF SPECIFYING)	C _{fl} -s1 (EN 13501-1) · R9/R10 · Australian radiant-flux reports available
BEFORE YOU BUY	See physical samples in your own light · get supply and installation quoted separately · confirm stock and lead times

Figures reference HARO documentation as a quality benchmark. Article-specific data sheets, warranties and certificates: haroflooring.com.au/catalogues.

HARO

Naturally beautiful flooring,
chosen well.

ENQUIRIES

sales@haroflooring.com.au

PHONE

+61 473 011 887

ONLINE

haroflooring.com.au



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Samples, technical documentation and specification support available on request. Colours are indicative; confirm with physical samples. Issue
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