

**John De Costa** has written text books and lectured on the subject of termites and produced a controversial 120 page web site after his retirement, called " **A Guide to Termites and termite treatments.**" He says owners could do their own form of inspections by simply tapping on architraves and skirting boards as **90%** of homes infested by termites result in damage to these areas.

(An extract from his web page is shown below)

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### 4. Inspection:

The Australia Standard relating to termite management in existing buildings recommends at least annual inspection of buildings for signs of termite activity by competent pest controller.

This does not mean a competent pest controller will always find a current infestation when it is present.

This does not mean that even though there are no termites in you house today that they won't be in next week or next month.

This does not mean that even though there are no termites in you house today, you will not get termites in your house for twelve months.

Inspections do not change the date when your house will be attacked by termites.

Inspections are designed to find termites as early as possible and limit the amount of damage done.

Regular three monthly inspections by the householder are highly recommended. The householder (you) may not know as much about termite inspections as a professional but that fact that you can do four inspections per year and you are vigilant all year around means that most of the time it is you who finds the infestation.

There are a multitude of signs of termite infestations. But in my experience, about 90% of all infestations are evident and detected in the soft wood moulding around doors, windows, skirting boards or cover strips. That means if all you do is tap or feel around the mouldings in your home regularly, you will find 90% of all infestations. That is a huge payoff for just a few hours a year of vigilance.

To check the mouldings you will need a small screwdriver. Using the plastic handle of the screwdriver, tap or press along each of the mouldings. When you are tapping you are not listening for changes in sound, you are feeling for softness in the surface of the material. If you are right handed you should work your way methodically through the interior of the house in an anti-clockwise direction, because your right hand will be close to the wall. If you are left handed you will work though the house clockwise so your left hand is close to the wall.

Attaching the screwdriver to a piece of dowel or old golf club handle can save a lot of moving of furniture, bending and climbing up on ladders to reach all the mouldings. A professional tool can be purchased from businesses that supply the professional pest management industry. See section 7.0 Links to Reference

### **The significance of his statements in relation to termidetector in-house monitors**

When termites first gain access into a home they forage around searching for timber that they like most to eat, which they attack first. (Skirting boards and architraves) The Forestry Research Institute state that the species of timber used in the termidetector monitors would be more appetising to the termite than the moulded soft woods builders use for these items. In addition the monitoring devices are positioned in all the high risk damp areas around the house where termites like to sub nest and would be discovered by the home owner.