SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT (SWMS)

Business name

Document: SWMS-001 Rev 1
Prepared: 9 Nov 2026
Review by: 9 Dec 2026
Highest risk after controls: Medium

1. BUSINESS AND JOB DETAILS

Job	Retaining wall construction	**Start date**	9 Nov 2026
Working hours	7:00 am to 3:30 pm	**Trade**	Landscaping

2. HIGH RISK CONSTRUCTION WORK COVERED BY THIS SWMS

	Risk of a person falling more than 2 metres		Work on or near chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines
	Work on a telecommunication tower		Work on or near energised electrical installations or services
	Demolition of an element of a structure that is load-bearing or related to its physical integrity		Work in an area that may have a contaminated or flammable atmosphere
	Likely to involve disturbing asbestos		Work involving tilt-up or precast concrete elements
	Structural alterations or repairs that require temporary support to prevent collapse		Work on, in or next to a road, railway, shipping lane or other traffic corridor in use by traffic other than pedestrians
	Work in or near a confined space	**YES**	Work in an area with movement of powered mobile plant
	Work in or near a shaft or trench with an excavated depth greater than 1.5 metres		Work in an area with artificial extremes of temperature
	Work in or near a tunnel		Work in or near water or other liquid that involves a risk of drowning
	Use of explosives		Diving work
	Work on or near pressurised gas distribution mains or piping		

3. JOB STEPS, HAZARDS AND CONTROLS

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
1	Get BYDA plans and check the wall has an engineer's design where needed, such as most walls over 1 m or any wall holding up a building, driveway or slope	Hitting underground services	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	1.1 Keep machine buckets well clear of marked services and use a spotter. [Isolate] 1.2 Scan the area with a cable locator before digging and mark services on the ground. [Engineering] 1.3 Hand dig or vacuum excavate to expose services before using a machine near them. [Engineering] 1.4 Lodge a free BYDA (Before You Dig Australia) request and get the plans before any digging. [Administrative] 1.5 Keep plans or locate tickets on site and check them again if the work	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
				area grows. [Administrative] 1.6 If you hit a service, stop, get everyone clear, and call the owner and emergency services. [Administrative] 1.7 Wear safety boots, gloves and hi-vis when digging. [PPE]		
2	Check neighbouring footings, fences and structures near the cut, and get engineer advice before digging close enough to undermine them	Trench or excavation collapse Public entering the work area Rules: WHS Regulations, Part 6.3 Division 3 (Excavation work, r.304 to 306)	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	2.1 Use methods that keep people out of the trench, such as directional boring or working from the surface. [Eliminate] 2.2 Barricade or cover the excavation so people and plant cannot fall in. [Isolate] 2.3 Trench or excavation collapse: see step 4 for the full controls [Administrative] 2.4 Fence off the site with secure temporary fencing and lock the gates when you leave. [Isolate] 2.5 Give pedestrians a safe, marked path around the work, with ramps for prams and wheelchairs. [Isolate] 2.6 Public entering the work area: see step 10 for the full controls [Administrative]	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor
3	Set up an exclusion zone around the machines	Being hit by mobile plant Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 5.1 Plant	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	3.1 Separate people and plant with barriers, exclusion zones and marked walkways. [Isolate] 3.2 Use plant with working reversing alarms, cameras and lights. [Engineering] 3.3 Being hit by mobile plant: see step 7 for the full controls [Administrative]	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor
4	Excavate the cut in short sections, battered or benched to the engineer's or geotechnical advice, and never let anyone work between an unsupported cut face and the wall	Trench or excavation collapse Being hit by mobile plant Rules: WHS Regulations, Part 6.3 Division 3 (Excavation work, r.304 to 306); WHS Regulation 2011, Part 5.1 Plant	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	4.1 Use methods that keep people out of the trench, such as directional boring or working from the surface. [Eliminate] 4.2 Barricade or cover the excavation so people and plant cannot fall in. [Isolate] 4.3 Shore, bench or batter the walls of any trench 1.5 metres deep or more before anyone goes in, unless a geotechnical engineer advises in writing that the sides are safe. [Engineering] 4.4 Keep spoil, materials and plant at least 1 metre back from the edge. [Engineering] 4.5 Provide a safe way in and out, such as a ladder near where people work. [Engineering] 4.6 Inspect the excavation at the start of each shift and after rain or anything that could weaken it. Record it. [Administrative] 4.7 Never work alone in a trench. Watch for water, cracks and bulging walls, and get out if you see them. [Administrative] 4.8 Wear a hard hat, hi-vis and safety boots. [PPE] 4.9 Have a traffic management plan showing plant routes, loading areas and pedestrian paths. [Administrative] 4.10 Use a spotter when reversing or working near people. [Administrative] 4.11 Being hit by mobile plant: see step 7 for the full controls [Administrative]	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor
5	Pour the footing or lay the	Wet concrete and cement burns	**High**	5.1 Use long-handled tools and pumps to cut down contact. [Engineering]	**Low**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
	base, capping any reo bars	Impalement on reo bars	**Possible / Major**	5.2 Wash concrete off skin straight away with clean water. [Administrative] 5.3 Have clean water and eye wash at the pour. [Administrative] 5.4 Wear waterproof gloves, long sleeves and gumboots with trousers worn over the top. [PPE] 5.5 Wear safety glasses or goggles to stop splashes. [PPE] 5.6 Cover or cap all exposed bar ends with approved caps or covers. [Engineering] 5.7 Bend bars over where the design allows. [Engineering] 5.8 Use edge protection near starter bars so nobody can fall onto them. [Engineering] 5.9 Keep walkways clear of exposed bars and mark the hazard. [Administrative] 5.10 Wear gloves, safety glasses and safety boots when handling bar. [PPE]	**Rare / Major**	
6	Lay drainage and the first course	Lifting and carrying heavy loads Repetitive work and awkward postures Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.2 Hazardous manual tasks	**High Likely / Moderate**	6.1 Plan to avoid carrying: have materials delivered, and old items picked up, as close as possible to where they are used. [Eliminate] 6.2 Use lighter or smaller loads: order smaller bags and shorter lengths, and drain or break down old items before moving them. [Substitute] 6.3 Lifting and carrying heavy loads: see step 7 for the full controls [Administrative] 6.4 Use tools that cut the effort: powered screwdrivers, long-handled tools and extension poles for overhead work. [Substitute] 6.5 Set work up at waist height on benches or trestles where you can. [Engineering] 6.6 Use light tools with good grips, and keep blades and bits sharp. [Engineering] 6.7 Rotate tasks and take short breaks every hour on repetitive work. [Administrative] 6.8 Warm up before heavy physical work and report aches and pains early. [Administrative] 6.9 Wear knee pads for kneeling work and gloves for grip. [PPE]	**Medium Unlikely / Moderate**	Site supervisor
7	Lift blocks or sleepers with machines or two people	Lifting and carrying heavy loads Being hit by mobile plant Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.2 Hazardous manual tasks; WHS Regulation 2011, Part 5.1 Plant	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	7.1 Plan to avoid carrying: have materials delivered, and old items picked up, as close as possible to where they are used. [Eliminate] 7.2 Use lighter or smaller loads: order smaller bags and shorter lengths, and drain or break down old items before moving them. [Substitute] 7.3 Use trolleys, pallet jacks, hoists, vacuum lifters or plant instead of carrying by hand. [Engineering] 7.4 Use a two-person lift for anything heavy, long or awkward. Plan the route first and clear it. [Administrative] 7.5 Keep the load close, back straight and no twisting. Turn with your feet. [Administrative] 7.6 Rotate tasks and take breaks on long lifting jobs. [Administrative] 7.7 Wear gloves for grip and safety boots to protect your feet. [PPE] 7.8 Separate people and plant with barriers, exclusion zones and marked walkways. [Isolate] 7.9 Use plant with working reversing alarms, cameras and lights.	**Medium Unlikely / Moderate**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
				[Engineering] 7.10 Have a traffic management plan showing plant routes, loading areas and pedestrian paths. [Administrative] 7.11 Use a spotter when reversing or working near people. [Administrative] 7.12 Make eye contact with the operator before going near. Stay out of the swing radius. [Administrative] 7.13 Operators hold a High Risk Work Licence where needed (for example forklift) and are trained and assessed on other plant. [Administrative] 7.14 Do a pre-start check on each machine every day and record it. [Administrative] 7.15 Wear hi-vis clothing and a hard hat. [PPE]		
8	Cut blocks wet, never dry	Silica dust from concrete, brick, stone and tiles Saw cuts and kickback Loud noise Rules: WHS Regulations, Chapter 8A (Crystalline silica substances and engineered stone); WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.1 Noise	**Extreme Likely / Catastrophic**	8.1 If the job involves engineered stone: do not supply, fabricate or install engineered stone benchtops, panels or slabs (banned since 1 July 2024). Removing, repairing or making minor changes to existing engineered stone is only allowed with water suppression or on-tool extraction, a fitted respirator, and written notice to the regulator before the work starts. [Eliminate] 8.2 Order materials cut to size, or use low-dust methods such as score and snap or a block splitter. [Substitute] 8.3 Cut outdoors or in a separate area, with other people well away and upwind. [Isolate] 8.4 Use water on the blade or on-tool dust extraction connected to an H-class vacuum. [Engineering] 8.5 Clean up with a vacuum or wet methods. Never dry sweep or use compressed air. [Administrative] 8.6 If the cutting, grinding or drilling is high risk, prepare a silica risk control plan (or include the r.529CA assessment in this SWMS), train workers in silica risks and give them the plan before work starts. [Administrative] 8.7 Wear a fit-tested P2 (or better) respirator. [PPE] 8.8 Keep blade guards fitted and working, and use the riving knife on table saws. [Engineering] 8.9 Use push sticks and clamps, and support long pieces so they do not pinch the blade. [Engineering] 8.10 Use a sharp, undamaged blade made for the material. [Administrative] 8.11 Stand to one side of the blade line, out of the kickback path. [Administrative] 8.12 Let the blade stop fully before reaching in or putting the saw down. [Administrative] 8.13 Use quieter tools and methods, such as cut-to-size materials, low-noise machines and battery tools. [Substitute] 8.14 Keep noisy plant away from work areas, and use screens or distance between the noise and people. [Isolate] 8.15 Keep tools maintained and use mufflers on compressors and generators. [Engineering] 8.16 Limit time on noisy tools and rotate workers. [Administrative] 8.17 If you have to shout to be heard 1 metre away, wear hearing	**Medium Unlikely / Major**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
				protection. [Administrative] 8.18 Keep exposure below 85 dB(A) over 8 hours. Give hearing tests to workers who often need hearing protection. [Administrative]		
9	Backfill and compact behind the wall in layers as it goes up	Hand-arm and whole-body vibration Being hit by mobile plant Trench or excavation collapse Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 5.1 Plant; WHS Regulations, Part 6.3 Division 3 (Excavation work, r.304 to 306)	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	9.1 Use low-vibration tools and methods, such as a breaker on an excavator instead of a hand jackhammer. [Substitute] 9.2 Keep tools sharp and well maintained, and use anti-vibration handles and seats. [Engineering] 9.3 Limit trigger time on high-vibration tools and rotate workers. [Administrative] 9.4 Keep hands warm and dry, and take regular breaks. [Administrative] 9.5 Report tingling, numbness or white fingers early. [Administrative] 9.6 Being hit by mobile plant: see step 7 for the full controls [Administrative] 9.7 Trench or excavation collapse: see step 4 for the full controls [Administrative]	**Medium Unlikely / Moderate**	Site supervisor
10	Barricade the top of the wall until the permanent fence or balustrade is in, then clean up	Public entering the work area Poor housekeeping and waste	**High Possible / Major**	10.1 Fence off the site with secure temporary fencing and lock the gates when you leave. [Isolate] 10.2 Give pedestrians a safe, marked path around the work, with ramps for prams and wheelchairs. [Isolate] 10.3 Use hoarding, covered walkways or catch fans where work is above public areas. [Engineering] 10.4 Put signs at each entry: site name, contact number and "No unauthorised entry". [Administrative] 10.5 Make the site safe at the end of each day: cover holes, lower plant, remove ladders and lock tools away. [Administrative] 10.6 Use a spotter when moving plant or materials across public paths. [Administrative] 10.7 Order materials to size and send packaging back where you can. [Eliminate] 10.8 Put skip bins and waste chutes close to the work. [Engineering] 10.9 Clean as you go, and do a full clean up at the end of each day. [Administrative] 10.10 Keep exits, stairs and walkways clear at all times. [Administrative] 10.11 Stack materials neatly on level ground, away from edges. [Administrative] 10.12 Wear gloves when handling waste. [PPE]	**Low Rare / Major**	Site supervisor

Risk key: risk = likelihood x consequence on a 5 x 5 matrix. Low, Medium, High, Extreme. Work must not start while the risk after controls is high or above. Controls are listed in order of the hierarchy of control: Eliminate, Substitute, Isolate, Engineering, Administrative, PPE.

4. PPE AND PERMITS

Required PPE	Permits and plans
Steel cap boots	None required

Required PPE	Permits and plans
Hi-vis shirt or vest Work gloves Safety glasses Hearing protection (earmuffs or plugs) P2 dust mask Hard hat Chemical-resistant gloves (nitrile) Safety goggles Knee pads Half-face respirator (P2 or P3 filters)	

5. PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Plant / equipment	Licence or training needed	Inspection needed	Rego / ID	Last inspected	Certificate / report
Excavator	Verification of competency (VOC) for the machine	Operator pre-start check each shift; servicing and inspection to the manufacturer			
Skid steer (Bobcat)	Verification of competency (VOC) for the machine				
Wacker plate					
Concrete saw					
Hand tools					

6. TRAINING REQUIRED FOR THIS WORK

- Silica risk training before work starts (WHS Regulations r.529CD)

7. CREW COMPETENCY, TICKETS AND LICENCES

Crew listed at sign-on below, with ticket and licence numbers.

8. EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

Emergency number	000	**First aid kit**	In the work vehicle
Fire extinguisher	In the work vehicle	**Alarm and evacuation**	Shout for help and stop work. Make the area safe and go to the assembly point. Call the emergency number and send someone to meet the ambulance.
Reporting incidents	Notify the regulator immediately of any notifiable incident and preserve the site.		

9. IMPLEMENTING, MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE CONTROLS

How they are put in place	Controls are set up before the work starts. The person responsible explains this SWMS to every worker before they start, and workers sign to confirm they understand it.	**How they are monitored**	The person responsible checks the controls are in place before work starts each day and during the work, and talks to the workers about any problems. Stop work and review this SWMS if the work changes, the controls are not working, after any incident, or if a worker raises a concern.
When it is reviewed	Reviewed when the work or site changes, after any incident, if a control is not working, or if a worker or health and safety representative asks.		

Legal basis: Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011, Part 6.3 (Victoria: OHS Regulations 2017). A SWMS must be prepared before any high risk construction work starts. It must list the high risk work, the hazards and risks, the control measures, and how those controls will be put in place, monitored and reviewed. It must be easy for the workers to read and understand.

Keep this SWMS, and every revised version, until the high risk construction work is finished, where workers and inspectors can see it on site. If a notifiable incident happens during the work, keep it for at least 2 years after the incident.

10. REVIEW AND AMENDMENT RECORD

Rev	Date	By	What changed
1	9 Nov 2026		First issue

11. SIGN-OFF

	Name	Signature	Date	
Prepared by				
Person responsible (supervisor)				
Principal contractor review				Accepted for use: Yes / No

By signing below, each worker confirms they were consulted on and have read and understood this SWMS, and will follow it. If the work cannot be done as this SWMS says, stop as soon as it is safe and do not restart until the SWMS is reviewed.

Name	Role / company	Tickets / licences	Inducted	Signature	Date

Name	Role / company	Tickets / licences	Inducted	Signature	Date