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	Tree removal and pruning with a chainsaw	**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

YES	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	Assess the tree for lean, decay and dead wood, check for power lines and buildings, and plan escape routes; keep 2 tree lengths clear when felling	Contact with overhead power lines Falling tools and materials Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 3.2 (falling objects)	**High** **Possible / Major**	1.1 Ask the network operator to turn off, move or insulate the lines before work starts. [Eliminate] 1.2 Use non-conductive (fibreglass) ladders near any power lines. [Substitute] 1.3 Mark the safe distance with flags, tape or goal posts and keep all plant and people outside it. [Isolate] 1.4 Keep out of the No Go Zone set by your state and the network operator, or get written approval and a safety observer. In NSW and Qld, untrained people and plant stay at least 3 m from lines on poles up to 132	**Medium** **Unlikely / Major**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
				kV, 6 m up to 330 kV and 8 m above 330 kV. In Victoria the limits differ, and work within 8 m of tower lines needs a spotter and the network operator's permission. [Administrative] 1.5 Use a dedicated spotter whenever plant moves or raises anything near lines. [Administrative] 1.6 Treat all lines as live. If plant touches a line, stay in the cab and keep everyone well away. [Administrative] 1.7 Barricade and sign the drop zone under overhead work so nobody walks beneath. [Isolate] 1.8 Fit toe boards, kick plates and mesh screens on scaffolds and edges. [Engineering] 1.9 Falling tools and materials: see step 7 for the full controls [Administrative]		
2	Set up the drop zone with barriers and traffic or pedestrian control	Public entering the work area Road traffic	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	2.1 Fence off the site with secure temporary fencing and lock the gates when you leave. [Isolate] 2.2 Give pedestrians a safe, marked path around the work, with ramps for prams and wheelchairs. [Isolate] 2.3 Use hoarding, covered walkways or catch fans where work is above public areas. [Engineering] 2.4 Put signs at each entry: site name, contact number and "No unauthorised entry". [Administrative] 2.5 Make the site safe at the end of each day: cover holes, lower plant, remove ladders and lock tools away. [Administrative] 2.6 Use a spotter when moving plant or materials across public paths. [Administrative] 2.7 Do the work at low-traffic times, or close the road or lane with approval. [Eliminate] 2.8 Put solid barriers between the work and traffic where speeds are high, not just cones. [Isolate] 2.9 Use a truck-mounted attenuator or buffer vehicle on high speed roads. [Engineering] 2.10 Have a Traffic Management Plan. Signs and cones are set out by accredited traffic controllers to your state's rules. [Administrative] 2.11 Get a road occupancy or street works permit from the road authority before you start. [Administrative] 2.12 Park work vehicles to shield the work zone, with beacons on. [Administrative] 2.13 Wear day and night hi-vis clothing (AS/NZS 4602.1). [PPE]	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor
3	Check the chainsaw, chain brake and PPE before starting	Chainsaw injuries Loud noise Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.1 Noise	**High Possible / Major**	3.1 Use a different tool where you can, such as a pole saw or hand saw for small branches. [Substitute] 3.2 Use a saw with a working chain brake, chain catcher and low-kickback chain, kept sharp and tensioned. [Engineering] 3.3 Only trained operators use chainsaws. [Administrative] 3.4 Never cut above shoulder height or from a ladder. [Administrative] 3.5 When felling, keep everyone at least two tree lengths away. [Administrative]	**Medium Unlikely / Moderate**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
				3.6 Do not cut any tree or branch that could fall onto or into the No Go Zone of power lines. That work is only done by line clearance workers authorised by the network operator. [Administrative] 3.7 Wear chainsaw chaps, chainsaw boots, gloves, a helmet with face screen and hearing protection. [PPE] 3.8 Use quieter tools and methods, such as cut-to-size materials, low-noise machines and battery tools. [Substitute] 3.9 Keep noisy plant away from work areas, and use screens or distance between the noise and people. [Isolate] 3.10 Loud noise: see step 10 for the full controls [Administrative]		
4	Look for nests, wasps and snakes before climbing or cutting	Bites and stings	**Medium Possible / Moderate**	4.1 Check work areas before starting, and get pest control to remove nests. [Eliminate] 4.2 Look before you reach into dark spaces. [Administrative] 4.3 Ask owners to keep pets away from the work area. [Administrative] 4.4 Know who has allergies and keep their medication, such as an adrenaline auto-injector, close by. [Administrative] 4.5 Know snake bite first aid: pressure immobilisation bandage, keep still and call 000. [Administrative] 4.6 Wear gloves, long sleeves and boots. Use insect repellent outdoors. [PPE]	**Medium Unlikely / Moderate**	Site supervisor
5	Set up the EWP on firm ground outside the drop zone	EWP tip-over or crush Contact with overhead power lines Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.5 High risk work	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	5.1 Check the ground before setting up. Use outriggers and spreader pads, and keep clear of trenches, pits and slopes. [Engineering] 5.2 Use a platform with tilt alarm and secondary guarding (anti-entrapment) where there is an overhead crush risk. [Engineering] 5.3 Hold a High Risk Work Licence (WP) for boom-type EWPs with a boom of 11 metres or more. Under 11 metres and scissor lifts: trained and assessed (for example EWPA Yellow Card). [Administrative] 5.4 Do a pre-start check each day. Keep a trained person on the ground who can lower the platform in an emergency. [Administrative] 5.5 Have a written emergency and rescue plan, tested before work starts, for a worker stuck in the platform or hanging in a harness (WHS Regulations r.80). [Administrative] 5.6 Never exceed the safe working load, climb on the rails or use a ladder in the basket. [Administrative] 5.7 In boom-type platforms, wear a harness clipped to the basket anchor point. [PPE] 5.8 Contact with overhead power lines: see step 1 for the full controls [Administrative]	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor
6	Cut from the ground or the EWP, never from a ladder	Falling from height Chainsaw injuries Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.4 Falls	**Extreme Likely / Catastrophic**	6.1 Do the work from the ground where you can, for example pre-assemble on the ground or use extension poles. [Eliminate] 6.2 Install guardrails or edge protection on all open edges before work starts. [Isolate] 6.3 Use a scaffold, mobile work platform or EWP instead of working off a ladder. [Engineering] 6.4 Where edge protection is not practical, use a fall restraint or fall arrest	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
				system on a rated anchor point. [Engineering] 6.5 Everyone working at height holds a White Card and has been briefed on this SWMS before going up. [Administrative] 6.6 Have a written emergency and rescue plan, tested before work starts, so a worker hanging in a harness can be brought down within minutes (WHS Regulations r.80). [Administrative] 6.7 Wear a full body harness with a shock-absorbing lanyard, clipped on at all times when using fall arrest. [PPE] 6.8 Chainsaw injuries: see step 3 for the full controls [Administrative]		
7	Drop limbs in sections into the clear drop zone. Before cutting bent or loaded wood, work out which side is under tension and stand clear of where it will spring	Falling tools and materials Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 3.2 (falling objects)	**High** **Possible / Major**	7.1 Barricade and sign the drop zone under overhead work so nobody walks beneath. [Isolate] 7.2 Fit toe boards, kick plates and mesh screens on scaffolds and edges. [Engineering] 7.3 Use catch fans, debris netting or covered walkways where people pass below. [Engineering] 7.4 Tether hand tools when working at height. [Engineering] 7.5 Keep platforms tidy. Do not stack materials near edges or above toe board height. [Administrative] 7.6 Lower materials with a hoist, chute or rope. Never throw or drop anything down. [Administrative] 7.7 Wear a hard hat anywhere objects could fall. [PPE]	**Medium** **Unlikely / Major**	Site supervisor
8	Fell the stem with a scarf cut on the felling side and a back cut that leaves a hinge, call a warning, then step back along the planned escape route	Falling tools and materials Chainsaw injuries Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 3.2 (falling objects)	**High** **Possible / Major**	8.1 Falling tools and materials: see step 7 for the full controls [Administrative] 8.2 Chainsaw injuries: see step 3 for the full controls [Administrative]	**Medium** **Unlikely / Major**	Site supervisor
9	Refuel with the engine off and the saw cool, on bare ground away from ignition, using an approved fuel can, with an extinguisher at the vehicle	Fire and emergencies Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, regulation 43 (emergency plans)	**High** **Unlikely / Catastrophic**	9.1 Provide fire extinguishers suited to the site, checked and easy to reach. [Engineering] 9.2 Keep exits and escape routes clear and signed. [Engineering] 9.3 Have a site emergency plan: alarm, exits, assembly point and emergency contacts. [Administrative] 9.4 Keep a stocked first aid kit and at least one trained first aider on site. [Administrative] 9.5 Know the site address and how emergency services get in. Call 000. [Administrative] 9.6 Go through the emergency plan with every worker and visitor at induction. [Administrative] 9.7 Keep flammable materials and rubbish away from exits and escape routes. [Administrative]	**Medium** **Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor
10	Chip or stack wood: feed the chipper butt first from the side, never reach past the feed control bar or kick material in, and stop and isolate it before	Lifting and carrying heavy loads Hand-arm and whole-body vibration Loud noise Poor housekeeping and waste	**High** **Likely / Moderate**	10.1 Plan to avoid carrying: have materials delivered, and old items picked up, as close as possible to where they are used. [Eliminate] 10.2 Use lighter or smaller loads: order smaller bags and shorter lengths, and drain or break down old items before moving them. [Substitute] 10.3 Use trolleys, pallet jacks, hoists, vacuum lifters or plant instead of	**Medium** **Unlikely / Moderate**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
	clearing a jam; then clean up	Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.2 Hazardous manual tasks; WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.1 Noise		carrying by hand. [Engineering] 10.4 Use a two-person lift for anything heavy, long or awkward. Plan the route first and clear it. [Administrative] 10.5 Use low-vibration tools and methods, such as a breaker on an excavator instead of a hand jackhammer. [Substitute] 10.6 Keep tools sharp and well maintained, and use anti-vibration handles and seats. [Engineering] 10.7 Limit trigger time on high-vibration tools and rotate workers. [Administrative] 10.8 Keep hands warm and dry, and take regular breaks. [Administrative] 10.9 Use quieter tools and methods, such as cut-to-size materials, low-noise machines and battery tools. [Substitute] 10.10 Keep noisy plant away from work areas, and use screens or distance between the noise and people. [Isolate] 10.11 Keep tools maintained and use mufflers on compressors and generators. [Engineering] 10.12 Limit time on noisy tools and rotate workers. [Administrative] 10.13 Keep exposure below 85 dB(A) over 8 hours. Give hearing tests to workers who often need hearing protection. [Administrative] 10.14 Order materials to size and send packaging back where you can. [Eliminate] 10.15 Put skip bins and waste chutes close to the work. [Engineering] 10.16 Clean as you go, and do a full clean up at the end of each day. [Administrative] 10.17 Keep exits, stairs and walkways clear at all times. [Administrative]		

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
Chainsaw chaps Hard hat Face shield Hearing protection (earmuffs or plugs) Work gloves Steel cap boots Hi-vis shirt or vest Safety glasses Cut-resistant gloves Overalls Safety harness and lanyard	Working at heights permit

5. PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Plant / equipment	Licence or training needed	Inspection needed	Rego / ID	Last inspected	Certificate / report
Chainsaw	Chainsaw operation competency (nationally recognised unit)				
Boom lift (EWP)	HRWL WP for boom-type EWPs with a boom of 11 m or more. Under 11 m: trained and assessed (e.g. EWPA Yellow Card)	Operator pre-start check each shift; routine and annual inspections to the manufacturer and AS 2550.10, with a major inspection at 10 years			
Trailer					
Hand tools					

6. CREW COMPETENCY, TICKETS AND LICENCES

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

7. 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.		

8. 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.

9. REVIEW AND AMENDMENT RECORD

Rev	Date	By	What changed
1	9 Nov 2026		First issue

10. 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