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	Footing excavation	**Start date**	9 Nov 2026
Working hours	7:00 am to 3:30 pm	**Trade**	Excavation and earthworks

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 set out footings	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	Set up an exclusion zone around the machine	Being hit by mobile plant Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 5.1 Plant	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	2.1 Separate people and plant with barriers, exclusion zones and marked walkways. [Isolate] 2.2 Use plant with working reversing alarms, cameras and lights. [Engineering] 2.3 Have a traffic management plan showing plant routes, loading areas and pedestrian paths. [Administrative] 2.4 Use a spotter when reversing or working near people. [Administrative] 2.5 Make eye contact with the operator before going near. Stay out of the swing radius. [Administrative] 2.6 Operators hold a High Risk Work Licence where needed (for example forklift) and are trained and assessed on other plant. [Administrative] 2.7 Do a pre-start check on each machine every day and record it. [Administrative] 2.8 Wear hi-vis clothing and a hard hat. [PPE]	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor
3	Dig to the engineer depth, checking ground stability	Trench or excavation collapse Rules: WHS Regulations, Part 6.3 Division 3 (Excavation work, r.304 to 306)	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	3.1 Use methods that keep people out of the trench, such as directional boring or working from the surface. [Eliminate] 3.2 Barricade or cover the excavation so people and plant cannot fall in. [Isolate] 3.3 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] 3.4 Keep spoil, materials and plant at least 1 metre back from the edge. [Engineering] 3.5 Provide a safe way in and out, such as a ladder near where people work. [Engineering] 3.6 Inspect the excavation at the start of each shift and after rain or anything that could weaken it. Record it. [Administrative] 3.7 Never work alone in a trench. Watch for water, cracks and bulging walls, and get out if you see them. [Administrative] 3.8 Wear a hard hat, hi-vis and safety boots. [PPE]	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor
4	Cover or barricade open footings at the end of each day	Falling through a floor opening or void Public entering the work area Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.4 Falls	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	4.1 Cover every hole and penetration with a fixed, secured cover marked "HOLE" or "DANGER". [Isolate] 4.2 Put guardrails with toe boards around stairwells, lift shafts, voids and open edges. [Isolate] 4.3 Install stairs early and fit temporary handrails as soon as they go in. [Engineering] 4.4 Never remove a cover or guardrail without approval. Put it back straight away. [Administrative] 4.5 Inspect covers and barriers daily and after other trades have been through. [Administrative] 4.6 Keep lighting good enough to see openings, especially on lower floors	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
				and in the evening. [Administrative] 4.7 Use a harness clipped to a rated anchor when working right next to an open void. [PPE] 4.8 Fence off the site with secure temporary fencing and lock the gates when you leave. [Isolate] 4.9 Give pedestrians a safe, marked path around the work, with ramps for prams and wheelchairs. [Isolate] 4.10 Use hoarding, covered walkways or catch fans where work is above public areas. [Engineering] 4.11 Put signs at each entry: site name, contact number and "No unauthorised entry". [Administrative] 4.12 Make the site safe at the end of each day: cover holes, lower plant, remove ladders and lock tools away. [Administrative] 4.13 Use a spotter when moving plant or materials across public paths. [Administrative]		
5	Remove water and loose soil before inspection	Drowning Slips and trips	**High Unlikely / Catastrophic**	5.1 Work from the bank or a platform instead of in or over the water where you can. [Eliminate] 5.2 Put up barriers or guardrails along water edges. [Isolate] 5.3 Pump out flooded pits and excavations before work. [Engineering] 5.4 Never work near deep water alone. Keep a rescue person with a throw line or life ring ready. [Administrative] 5.5 Check water levels and the weather, and stop work in floods or fast-flowing water. [Administrative] 5.6 Wear a life jacket when working over or next to water deep enough to drown in. [PPE] 5.7 Plan walkways and keep them clear of materials, hoses and leads. [Eliminate] 5.8 Run leads and hoses overhead on hooks or stands, or along walls, not across walkways. [Engineering] 5.9 Fill or cover holes, and lay boards or mats on muddy access paths. [Engineering] 5.10 Clean up offcuts, packaging and spills as you go, not at the end of the day. [Administrative] 5.11 Keep work areas, stairs and access paths well lit. [Administrative] 5.12 Wear safety boots with good grip, laced up. [PPE]	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	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 Hi-vis shirt or vest Hard hat	Excavation / dig permit

Required PPE	Permits and plans
Hearing protection (earmuffs or plugs)	

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				
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