

Landscape Construction and Hardscaping

Business Name:		ABN:	
Business Address:			
Contact Person:	Phone:	Email:	

THIS RISK ASSESSMENT IS APPROVED BY THE PCBU ON THIS PROJECT

Under the Work Health and Safety Regulation (WHS Regulation), a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) is required to ensure that a RISK ASSESSMENT is prepared before the proposed work starts.

Full Name:		
Signature:	Title:	Date:

CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

Client:	SCOPE OF WORKS
Project Name:	
Project Address:	
Project Manager:	
Contact Phone:	
Date Risk Assessment supplied to Project Manager:	



RISK MATRIX																																	
LIKELIHOOD	INSIGNIFICANT	MINOR	MODERATE	MAJOR	CATASTROPHIC	SCORE	ACTION	HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS																									
ALMOST CERTAIN	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE			<b>Elimination</b> Remove the hazard.																									
LIKELY	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4A ACUTE	DO NOT PROCEED	<b>Substitution</b> Replace the hazard.																									
POSSIBLE	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	3H HIGH	Review before work starts.	Isolation Isolate People from the hazard																									
UNLIKELY	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	2M MODERATE	Ensure control measures in place.	<b>Engineering</b> Isolate the hazard																									
RARE	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	1L LOW	Monitor and keep records.	Administrative Change																									
<b>Risk Rating &amp; Required Action:</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>4A</b></td> <td>Stop work. The risk is intolerable. Eliminate the hazard or redesign the activity before proceeding. A Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) or higher-level authorisation is required.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>3H</b></td> <td>Review and approve additional controls before task starts. Senior supervisor sign-off needed.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>2M</b></td> <td>Ensure all nominated controls are in place and effective. Proceed with caution; monitor conditions.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>1L</b></td> <td>Proceed, following standard operating procedures. Monitor and keep records.</td> </tr> </table>										<b>4A</b>	Stop work. The risk is intolerable. Eliminate the hazard or redesign the activity before proceeding. A Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) or higher-level authorisation is required.	<b>3H</b>	Review and approve additional controls before task starts. Senior supervisor sign-off needed.	<b>2M</b>	Ensure all nominated controls are in place and effective. Proceed with caution; monitor conditions.	<b>1L</b>	Proceed, following standard operating procedures. Monitor and keep records.																
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<b>Notes on Hierarchy of Controls:</b> Remember to apply controls in the preferred order shown by the coloured pyramid: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eliminate</li> <li>2. Substitute</li> <li>3. Isolate</li> <li>4. Engineering</li> <li>5. Administrative</li> <li>6. PPE</li> </ol> Always document <b>why</b> a lower-order control is accepted if elimination or substitution is not reasonably practicable.  <i>aligned with Safe Work Australia's Managing the risk of fatigue at work (2023) and ISO 45001:2018 clauses 6–8.</i>																																	
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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
1. WHS Governance, PCBU Duties and Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of clear WHS roles, responsibilities and delegations for landscape construction and hardscaping activities</li> <li>Inadequate consultation with workers and health and safety representatives about new projects, methods and equipment (e.g. synthetic turf systems, stone cutting tools, shade sail rigging)</li> <li>Failure to integrate WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulation requirements into contracts, tenders and project planning for structural landscaping and drainage works</li> <li>Inadequate WHS policies or outdated procedures for high-risk landscaping tasks (e.g. demolition of garden structures, structural landscaping, work near excavations and water features)</li> <li>Poor change management when introducing new materials or methods (geotextiles, geofabrics, synthetic surfacing, artificial turf systems, modular water features)</li> <li>Insufficient monitoring, review and auditing of WHS systems across multiple sites and subcontractors</li> <li>Inadequate incident reporting and investigation system leading to repeat hazards (e.g. recurring trips on uneven paving, recurring manual handling strains when moving large rocks)</li> <li>Failure to allocate sufficient resources (time, budget, competent persons) to implement risk controls for complex landscape projects</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and maintain a documented WHS management system aligned with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulation and relevant Code of Practice for construction and landscaping activities</li> <li>Define and communicate WHS responsibilities for CEOs, managers, supervisors, leading hands and workers in position descriptions and project start-up documentation</li> <li>Implement structured WHS consultation processes (toolbox talks, pre-start meetings, safety committees) to involve workers in planning for new landscape features, drainage works, and synthetic surfacing installations</li> <li>Embed WHS requirements into all contracts, tenders and procurement documents, including compliance with site specific rules, permits, and principal contractor WHS plans</li> <li>Establish a formal change management procedure for introducing new materials, plant and work methods (e.g. new synthetic turf infill, stone cutting systems, rock pickers, geotextiles) including risk assessment and trial phases</li> <li>Implement a WHS audit and inspection program covering governance, site conditions, subcontractor management and high-risk landscaping operations</li> <li>Maintain a system for reporting, recording, investigating and closing out incidents, near misses and hazards, with root cause analysis and actions shared across crews and projects</li> <li>Ensure adequate WHS resourcing in project budgets (supervision, training, plant, temporary works, PPE, traffic control) and review at project kick-off meetings</li> <li>Conduct annual management reviews of WHS performance, including landscape construction and hardscaping metrics such as manual handling injuries, silica exposures, and falls</li> <li>Provide officer-level WHS due diligence training to directors and senior managers overseeing structural landscaping and drainage programs</li> </ul>	3H
2. Project Planning, Design Review and Engineering Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of consideration of safety in landscape and structural design (e.g. steep garden steps, unstable retaining walls, poorly drained synthetic turf areas)</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate Safety in Design processes into all landscape construction projects, requiring designers to identify and minimise WHS risks over the life of the structure</li> <li>Engage qualified structural and geotechnical engineers for retaining walls, structural landscaping, shade structures, goal posts, and water features that fall within structural or high-risk categories</li> </ul>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient geotechnical or engineering input for structural landscaping, water features, ponds and shade structures</li> <li>• Water features and ponds designed without safe access for maintenance, cleaning and pump servicing</li> <li>• Poorly planned drainage works near trees leading to root undermining, ground instability and trip hazards</li> <li>• Inadequate allowance for edge protection, safe access and working platforms when installing patios, decks, outdoor kitchens and stairs</li> <li>• Absence of engineered anchorage design for shade sails, goal posts, and shade structures leading to structural failure in high winds</li> <li>• Synthetic turf and geotextile systems designed without consideration of drainage, heat, and trip hazards at edges and transitions</li> <li>• Late design changes onsite (e.g. extra garden levels, additional walls, larger water features) without revised engineering or WHS review</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require design documentation for ponds, fountains and water features to include safe access for cleaning, pump maintenance, isolation points and fall prevention measures</li> <li>• Incorporate drainage design that protects tree stability, controls erosion, and prevents ponding around paved surfaces and synthetic turf edges</li> <li>• Specify compliant stair and step dimensions, landings, handrails and surface finishes in accordance with relevant Australian Standards and NCC requirements</li> <li>• Ensure all shade sail, netting and goal post systems are engineered for wind and load conditions, with certified anchor points and foundations</li> <li>• Mandate design details for synthetic turf and geofabric installation (falls, edge restraints, transition strips) to prevent trips, water pooling and premature failure</li> <li>• Implement a formal design change control process requiring WHS and engineering review before field changes are approved</li> <li>• Mandate a design register documenting residual risks (e.g. need for ongoing maintenance access at heights) and communicate to PCBU and building owners</li> <li>• Include provisions for mechanical aids and plant access in design layouts (e.g. access for loaders, rock pickers, WPE on work areas)</li> </ul>	
3. Contractor, Subcontractor and Supplier Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of subcontractors for specialist work (stone masonry, shade sail rigging, structural landscaping, goal post installation) without verifying competency or licences</li> <li>• Inadequate WHS prequalification of contractors engaged for drainage, demolition, synthetic surfacing, water features and geotextiles</li> <li>• Poor coordination of multiple contractors working simultaneously (e.g. fencing contractors, landscapers, concreters, electricians) leading to interface risks</li> <li>• Failure to ensure contractors follow site WHS rules, safe systems of work and permit conditions</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a formal contractor prequalification process that assesses WHS systems, competency, licences and insurance for all landscape construction disciplines</li> <li>• Require contractors to submit project-specific WHS documentation (e.g. WHS plans, SWMS for high-risk construction work, plant risk assessments) before work commences</li> <li>• Use written agreements that clearly define WHS responsibilities, supervision arrangements and communication protocols between principal contractor, subcontractors and suppliers</li> <li>• Conduct contractor inductions that include site-specific hazards related to hardscaping, water features, synthetic turf, drainage, demolition and structural landscaping</li> <li>• Establish a coordination plan and schedule to manage interface risks between trades, including segregation of work zones and time-phasing of high-risk tasks</li> <li>• Implement verification processes (spot checks, inspections, audits) to confirm contractors are following agreed WHS procedures and using appropriate plant and controls</li> <li>• Require suppliers to provide evidence of product compliance (test reports, certification) for structural elements, geofabrics, synthetic surfacing systems and anchorage hardware</li> </ul>	2M





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	<p>ponds and water features creating health risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate storage and labelling of hazardous substances used in landscaping works</li> <li>• Heat exposure from synthetic turf and synthetic surfacing, especially during installation in hot conditions</li> <li>• Noise and vibration from rock pickers, compactors, cutting tools and other powered equipment</li> <li>• UV exposure for outdoor workers in prolonged landscaping tasks</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
7. Traffic, Mobile Plant and Public Interface Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interaction between mobile plant (excavators, loaders, trucks, rock pickers) and workers or public in residential streets, parks, schools and sports grounds</li> <li>• Poor traffic management around deliveries of large rock, turf, geotextiles and structural elements</li> <li>• Insufficient segregation between play areas/sports fields and landscaping works (goal post installation, synthetic turf laying, drainage works)</li> <li>• Reversing vehicles and poor visibility around landscaping work zones</li> <li>• Unauthorised public access to excavation zones, open ponds, water features and partially completed hardscape structures</li> <li>• Work near roads without appropriate traffic control measures in place</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Ground Conditions, Excavation and Drainage Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unidentified underground services impacted during drainage works, fence footing installation or structural landscaping excavations</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground collapse or instability around trenches for drainage lines near trees, retaining walls or structures</li> <li>• Poorly managed stormwater leading to erosion, undermining of garden features and instability of hardscape surfaces</li> <li>• Inadequate system for assessing ground bearing capacity where heavy rocks, structural elements or plant will be positioned</li> <li>• Tree root damage from drainage works leading to long-term tree failure or branch drop into landscaped public areas</li> <li>• Open excavations left unsecured at the end of shifts in residential or public spaces</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
9. Working at Heights, Access and Temporary Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falls from height while installing or maintaining shade structures, metal, goal posts, shade structures or elevated water features</li> <li>• Use of improvised methods (ladders on uneven ground, standing on rocks or unstable structures) during landscape construction</li> <li>• Inadequate design, erection or inspection of temporary platforms or scaffolds used for hardscaping works</li> <li>• Falls on uneven, sloped or stepped garden areas during installation of stairs, decks and retaining walls</li> <li>• Uncontrolled loads or dropped objects from work at height impacting workers or public below</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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			[REDACTED]	
10. Manual Handling, Ergonomics and Materials Handling Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitive or heavy manual handling of pavers, stones, sleepers, turf rolls, synthetic turf, geotextile rolls and structural blocks</li> <li>• Poor job design leading to awkward postures when installing garden steps, water features, drainage, and working in confined landscaping spaces</li> <li>• Inadequate planning for mechanical aids when moving large rocks, pre-cast steps or outdoor kitchen components</li> <li>• Manual handling of awkward loads at height when rigging shade sails, removing old shading or installing netting</li> <li>• Insufficient systems to rotate tasks and manage cumulative fatigue in physically demanding landscaping work</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Water Features, Ponds and Electrical Safety Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drowning or immersion risks associated with ponds, fountains and water features in public or residential settings</li> <li>• Electric shock from pumps, lighting and control systems associated with water features, fountains and ponds</li> <li>• Uncontrolled algae and bacterial growth presenting health hazards to workers performing maintenance and cleaning</li> <li>• Structural failure or leakage of ponds and water features undermining adjacent hardscaping and creating slip or collapse risks</li> <li>• Inadequate isolation and lock-out procedures during fountain and pump maintenance</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children or public accessing partially completed water features during construction or renovation</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
12. Demolition, Renovation and Legacy Structure Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uncontrolled demolition of old garden structures, retaining walls, steps, outdoor kitchens and decks during renovation activities</li> <li>Unknown condition of existing shade structures, sails, posts and netting leading to unexpected collapse during removal</li> <li>Hidden services, asbestos-containing materials or lead-based paints in older hardscape structures being modified or removed</li> <li>Flying debris and falling materials during demolition works impacting workers or public</li> <li>Inadequate planning for temporary support of adjacent structures or trees when removing or altering landscape features</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
13. Emergency Preparedness, First Aid and Incident Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delayed or ineffective response to serious injuries from falls, plant incidents, drowning, or injuries during landscape construction</li> <li>Lack of site-specific emergency plans for dispersed landscaping in parks, schools and residential areas</li> <li>Inadequate first aid coverage or equipment for remote or spread-out landscaping crews</li> <li>Poor communication systems for summoning assistance in large outdoor sites or during after-hours work</li> <li>Unclear procedures for spill response involving chemicals, fuels or contaminated water from ponds and features</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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14. Fatigue, Psychosocial Risks and Work Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long hours, high physical demands and environmental conditions (heat, cold, rain) contributing to worker fatigue in landscape construction</li> <li>• Work scheduling that does not allow adequate rest between shifts, particularly during peak landscaping periods</li> <li>• High workload, tight deadlines and client expectations leading to stress and shortcuts in WHS systems</li> <li>• Lone or isolated work during maintenance of fountains, shade structures or remote landscaping tasks without adequate communication systems</li> <li>• Poor supervision and lack of support for new or inexperienced workers exposed to complex hardscaping tasks</li> </ul>	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

SAMPLE

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE – CALL 000 FOR EMERGENCIES**

Ensure to have an Emergency Management Plan in place as well as adequate numbers of trained first aid staff with easy access to fully stocked first aid kits, rescue equipment, material safety data sheets, adequate access to emergency communication equipment and fire-fighting equipment suitable for all classes of fire and ignition sources.

**LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES**

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND CODES OF PRACTICE. DELETE THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES FOR ANY STATE THAT ARE NOT APPLICABLE

**Queensland & Australian Capital Territory**

Work Health and Safety Act 2011  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011  
 Legislation QLD: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/work-health-and-safety-laws>  
 Codes of Practice QLD: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>  
 Legislation ACT: <https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations>  
 Codes of Practice ACT: <https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

**Victoria**

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004  
 Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017  
 Legislation VIC: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-health-and-safety-act-and-regulations>  
 Codes of Practice VIC: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/compliance-codes-and-codes-practice>

**New South Wales**

Work Health and Safety Act 2011  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2025  
 Legislation NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/legal-obligations/legislation>  
 Codes of Practice NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/list-codes-of-practice>

**Western Australia**

Work Health and Safety Act 2020  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022  
 Legislation Western Australia: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/legislation>  
 Codes of Practice WA: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/codes-practice>

**Northern Territory**

Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011  
 Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulation 2011  
 Legislation NT: <https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/workplace-safety-laws>  
 Codes of Practice NT: <https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

**Safe Work Australia Links**

Law and Regulation (All States): <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/law-and-regulation>  
 Model Codes of Practice: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/resources-publications/model-codes-of-practice>

**South Australia**

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)  
 Legislation for SA: <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/resources/legislation>  
 Codes of Practice for SA: <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/workplaces/codes-of-practice#COPs>

**Model Codes of Practice**

- Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work
- Confined spaces
- Labelling of workplace hazardous chemicals
- Managing risks of hazardous chemicals in the workplace
- Welding processes
- First aid in the workplace
- Managing the risk of falls at workplaces
- Hazardous manual tasks
- Managing the risk of falls in housing construction
- Managing electrical risks in the workplace
- Demolition work
- Excavation work
- Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination
- Managing the work environment and facilities
- How to manage work health and safety risks
- Managing risks of plant in the workplace
- Construction work

**Tasmania**

Work Health and Safety Act 2012  
 Work Health and Safety (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 2012  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012  
 Work Health and Safety (Transitional) Regulations 2012  
 Legislation for TAS: <https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations>  
 Codes of Practice for TAS: <https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

Details of permits, licenses or access required by regulatory bodies (add or delete as required):

- Permits from local council
- Authorisation to commence work
- Any required documents.