USE CASES // CONSTRUCTION AND TRADES

AI in Construction and Trades: what's already working, and what's next

Five practical uses of AI and automation for builders and tradies, sorted by how proven they are.

> **The short version:** construction is still a cautious adopter. About a third of small firms use AI, mostly for writing. The bigger prize is the paperwork around the job: quotes, calls missed on site, and compliance documents.

Where the sector sits

In NAB's SME survey (about 670 businesses, Nov–Dec 2025), **32% of construction businesses** said they use AI, against 42% across all SMEs. A Deloitte and Autodesk survey in 2024 found **30% of Australian construction companies** were trialling or using AI software, and **76%** reported a technical skills gap in digital technology. Government tracking also flags construction as having higher levels of unawareness about AI's value than many industries.

What's typically painful

Owner-operators and small builders are on the tools all day and do quoting, invoicing and compliance paperwork after hours. Calls go unanswered while on site, and quoting from plans is slow.

Established: businesses like yours are already doing this

Use case	The everyday problem	What the AI does	What the evidence says
Quotes, proposals and customer emails	Quotes, scopes and follow-ups get written at night after a day on site.	A general AI assistant, or a writing helper inside a job app, drafts the text from a few bullet points or past jobs. The owner edits and sends.	27% of AI-using small businesses use generative AI assistants (all industries, DISR 2025). No construction-specific figure.

Emerging: early adopters are starting, worth planning for

Use case	The everyday problem	What the AI does	What the evidence says
Quotes and invoices from job data	Turning job notes, materials and time into a quote or invoice is slow, and delays hurt cash flow.	Job software drafts the quote or invoice from the job card and past jobs. The owner reviews and sends.	Vendor claim: over 30% of drafted invoices are accepted as-is (ServiceM8).
Plan takeoff and estimating	Measuring plans and building estimates takes time, and missed items cost margin.	Reads plans to measure, suggests estimate line items from past jobs and checks for omissions.	Vendor claim: takeoffs "66% faster" (Buildxact). No method given.

Emerging, continued

Use case	The everyday problem	What the AI does	What the evidence says
After-hours calls and enquiries	Tradies miss calls while on the tools, and callers move on to a competitor.	An AI voice agent or chatbot answers, collects job details and books a time or creates the job.	No verified figure. Several Australian providers offer this, but no adoption survey or case study with results has been published that we could find.
Safety documents (SWMS)	Writing a Safe Work Method Statement for each task is repetitive and slow.	Drafts hazards, controls and PPE from the work activity, for a competent person to review and sign.	Company claim: one large contractor (ACCIONA) cut SWMS completion from up to three hours to minutes. No small-business evidence yet.

Before you start

Check every quote before it goes out. AI can get a price or scope wrong, and a quote can be a contract. **Safety paperwork needs a person.** Your duty of care stays with you, so a competent person must review and sign anything the AI drafts. **Protect customer details.** The Privacy Commissioner's guidance (OAIC, Nov 2024) advises against putting personal information into public AI tools, and recording customer calls raises state consent rules, so check before using an AI receptionist.

Sources: NAB SME Business Insights, April 2026 (news.nab.com.au); Deloitte and Autodesk, State of Digital Adoption in the Construction Industry 2024, via iTBrief; DISR AI adoption in Australian businesses, 2025 Q1; ServiceM8; Buildxact; Australian Government AI directory (Made 4 Tradies); ACCIONA. Outcome figures marked vendor claim or company claim are the supplier's own and have not been independently verified. Survey figures reflect the businesses surveyed and may not match every firm.

Want to talk this through for your business?

Book a free 15-minute call. We'll look at your situation and give you a straight answer, with no jargon and no sales pitch.

Let's Chat

Opens the request form on our website. Free, no obligation.