

Before You Dig Australia

ANNUAL REPORT

2025-26

Zero damage - Zero harm - Zero disruption

Our Mission

To achieve zero damage to member utility infrastructure resulting from construction and ground-breaking activities, preventing community disruption, and protecting people and property from harm.

Zero Damage.
Zero Harm.
Zero Disruption.



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A YEAR OF IMPACT

BYDA Membership

913 Current Members

63 New Members

310 Current Automate Members

668 New Safety Partners

Who are BYDA members?

5% Telco

7% Electricity

6% Oil and Gas

8% Water

33% Council

22% Other Asset Owners

19% Non-Asset Owners

Utility Plan Requests

868,413 Total registered service users

148,530 New service users

3m Total requests

8,268 Avg daily requests

18.4m Total responses

13.6% Increase in requests

Requests per State

NSW/ ACT	30%	908,262
VIC/ TAS	26%	793,995
QLD	23%	687,181
WA	14%	430,561
SA/NT	7%	198,653

A YEAR OF IMPACT

BYDA Education & Outreach Program

1088

Education presentations delivered

32,985

Industry attendees

87

Trade events and field days

BYDA Outreach & Engagement

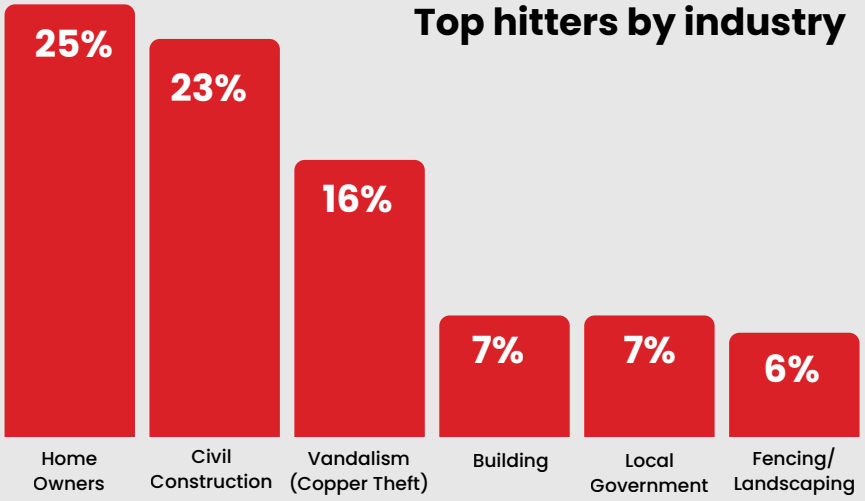


What we know about utility damages

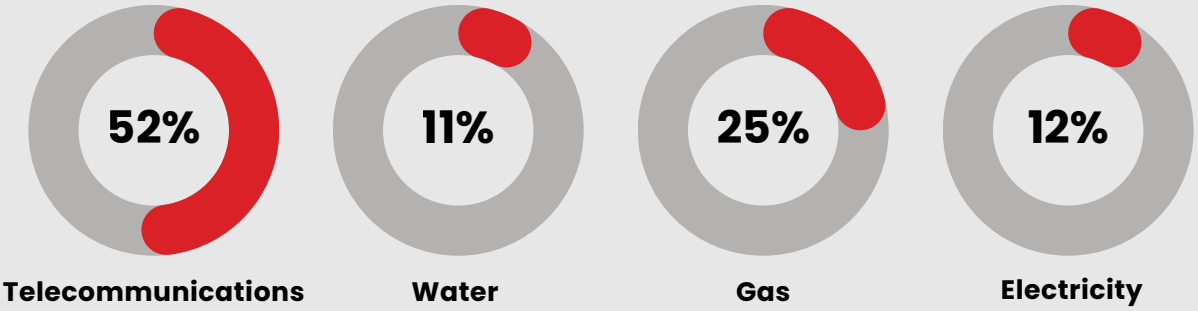
Number of Utility Strikes

10,327

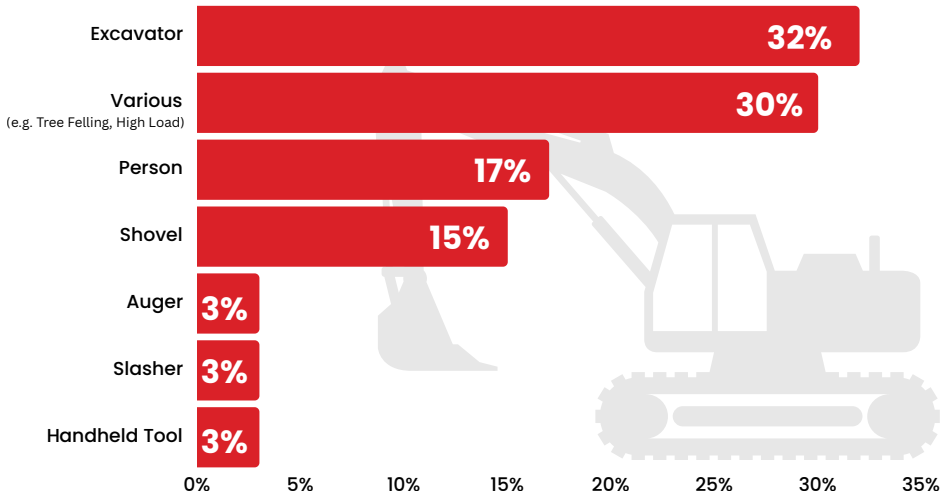
Top hitters by industry



Damage by Utility Type



Damage by Equipment



Underground

9,707

Overhead

620



CHAIR REPORT

Stuart Smith

Leading utility asset protection and worker safety

It is a privilege to be the Chair of Before You Dig Australia as it continues to grow and strengthens its role in Australia as a leader for utility asset protection and worker safety. As a Board, we remain steadfast in commitment to our purpose: Zero Damage, Zero Harm, Zero Disruption.

It's this purpose that unites our members. Through your membership you share BYDA's purpose and help shape the future. The last 12 months has shown increased member engagement, genuine interest in strategic initiatives and excitement about the potential for fundamental change to industry ways of working.

Membership participation is essential in achieving the BYDA purpose. On behalf of the Board, sincere thanks.

Increasing burden on infrastructure

The challenges of our industry continue to increase. Last year I reflected on the challenges of population growth, housing demand, and public service requirements, all of which place increased burden on existing infrastructure and drive requirements for new infrastructure.

Within our industry, restructuring brings new companies and new workers. Accelerating technology changes, such as AI and robotics, are having profound impact on roles and how work is performed. Public service expectations are high, with little tolerance for service disruption. All of these remain, with the increasing economic pressures, cost of living and the national productivity challenge.

Fundamental change is needed

BYDA's FY25 economic research starkly revealed the true direct and indirect costs of asset damage, a conservatively estimated $4.6billion annually. The economic impost for Australia remains. During FY26 BYDA commissioned a further research paper, "Australia's Underground Utility Safety Reckoning". This paper analysed the challenges associated with a 40-year-old paper-based asset information system. The report highlights that incremental improvement is not enough, decisions are required now to fundamentally improve the effectiveness, efficiency and safety of working around utility assets.

However, change is here. FY26 has been filled with excitement about what is possible. The industry has responded, government authorities are listening and BYDA has a louder voice.

BYDA inaugural national conference

This year we saw the industry convene for the first BYDA national conference. A fully subscribed event opened by the Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services, The Hon. Dr Daniel Mulino MP. The conference saw industry professionals engaged on industry challenges, shaping the future of utility safety. The subsequent feedback was overwhelming positive and with the support of industry, will now plan for a bi-annual event.

BYDA - Australian-first pilot

The BYDA Digital Utility Portal (BDUP) represents a strategic investment by BYDA on behalf of the industry to reshape and improve how we think about the sourcing, delivery and consumption of asset plans. In pilot at present, BYDA is collaborating with industry to build a secure and efficient industry solution that delivers better planning outcomes, resulting in fewer damages, less injuries and reduced service disruptions. This cannot be done without industry engagement, BYDA leadership makes it possible.



Delivery outcomes

While strategic initiatives are critical for reform, it is important not to forget the business-as-usual delivery. The BYDA team achieved important member delivery goals through 100% referral system availability and exceeding commitments for damage prevention education sessions across the country.

Through strong commitment and hard work, under the leadership of CEO Mell Greenall, the BYDA team are capably delivering both the business as usual and the strategic change programs.

Financial security

It is pleasing to report that BYDA remains on a secure financial footing. Our cash flow is positive, with strong reserves. Prudent financial management and a focus on revenue diversification have generated the necessary cash flow and reserves to support BYDA's operations and strategic investments. This has also enabled BYDA to keep member referral fees flat over the last four years despite CPI increases. The Board has endorsed the audited financials which are contained within the annual report.

> "No doubt change is a challenge; however, the momentum is gaining."

Board direction

With the strategic challenges front of mind, the BYDA board recognises its responsibility to ensure the Board is appropriately resourced for the governance requirements of today and tomorrow. The board is committed to the approach of a skill-based board, that balances member representation and independent diversity. A Board skills matrix is actively used as the baseline for director recruitment; this year we are externally recruiting an independent director in the open market.

The BYDA board has also committed to a regular program of internal and external board performance reviews. This year the Board is undergoing an external performance review.

The BYDA board has also reviewed the Constitution to ensure fit for purpose (originally drafted during BYDA transformation from states to single national entity). In summary, the Board has endorsed following changes for member approval with detail provided separately.

- Simplification to two director classes, member directors and independent directors.
- Update of AGM annual reporting requirements to align with ACNC status
- Removal of references to BYDA transformation phase.

As we enter the third year of the BYDA five-year strategy, we remain committed to the strategic direction, excited with the tangible progress and enthused with the industry engagement. No doubt change is a challenge; however, the momentum is gaining. BYDA will continue to advocate and with the support of members we can deliver industry improvements that make work around utility assets safer for workers and results in less damage and service disruptions.



Stuart Smith



CEO REPORT

Mell Greenall

Leading a safer, smarter and more connected industry

This year has been one of strong progress, growing confidence and clear momentum for Before You Dig Australia.

Across the organisation, BYDA has continued to strengthen its role as the national leader in utility damage prevention. We have delivered strong operational results, expanded our education and engagement programs, advanced our digital capability, and continued to bring industry together around a shared purpose: Zero Damage. Zero Harm. Zero Disruption.

That purpose remains at the centre of everything we do. It guides how we support our members, how we engage with the people who plan and undertake work near utilities, and how we advocate for safer, smarter and more consistent approaches across the sector.

The past year has demonstrated that BYDA is not only delivering on its core responsibilities, but also helping lead the industry through a period of significant change. Our role is increasingly about connecting the current needs of industry with the future of safer, more accessible and better-governed utility information.

A key part of that future is the BYDA Digital Utility Portal, known as BDUP. The BDUP pilot has become an important practical step in helping industry move beyond legacy processes and towards digital utility information that is easier to access, easier to interpret and better aligned with how work is planned and delivered.

A Strong Year of Delivery

BYDA entered the year with a clear focus on performance, service reliability, member engagement and industry impact. I am pleased to report that the organisation delivered strongly across these areas.

Our team achieved or exceeded the majority of our organisational goals, with no key performance areas behind target. This reflects a maturing national organisation with strong foundations, disciplined delivery and a team deeply committed to our mission.

Financially, BYDA performed well. Revenue finished above budget, expenditure was carefully managed, and our work to diversify revenue continued to progress. This is important for our long-term sustainability. As a not-for-profit, our financial strength allows us to keep reinvesting in education, technology, advocacy, data quality and the services that support safer work near Australia's essential infrastructure.

Our operational performance was also excellent. The referral service achieved 100% uptime, with zero unplanned outages. This reliability matters. Every day, users across the country rely on BYDA to access the information they need to plan work safely and protect underground and overhead utility assets.

Importantly, this year's performance was achieved while BYDA also continued to invest in the future. The progress of the BDUP pilot is a clear example of how BYDA is balancing the reliable delivery of today's services with the need to lead the next stage of industry change.



Keeping Safety at the Centre

As an organisation dedicated to preventing damage, harm and disruption, safety must start with us.

This year, BYDA maintained full health, safety and environment compliance and recorded zero lost time injuries. Just as importantly, our employee engagement result exceeded target, reflecting a positive and committed team culture.

These results are a credit to the BYDA team. The work we do can be complex and fast moving. We are supporting members, users, contractors, governments, regulators and technology partners while also preparing the organisation for the next stage of industry change. That requires focus, resilience and a strong belief in the importance of our purpose.

I am proud of the way our people continue to show up for each other, for our members and for the broader industry.

> Education remains one of BYDA's most powerful tools for reducing damage and improving safety outcomes.

Expanding education and awareness

Education remains one of BYDA's most powerful tools for reducing damage and improving safety outcomes.

This year, BYDA delivered more than 1,000 damage prevention education sessions across the country and exceeded our target for industry trade show engagement. These sessions reach the people who make practical decisions every day about how work is planned, designed and carried out near utility infrastructure.

Every education session is an opportunity to influence behaviour before damage occurs. Every conversation is a chance to reinforce the importance of safe planning, early engagement and using BYDA as a critical first step before work begins.

The scale and consistency of our education program remains a defining strength of BYDA. It allows us to connect with industry at a national level while still responding to local risks, local projects and local communities.

Strengthening industry connection

BYDA's role is not limited to operating a referral service. We are a national connector for the utility safety ecosystem.

This year, we welcomed new members and safety partners, strengthened engagement with existing members, and delivered a national program of member network events. These events brought together utilities, contractors, locators, designers, engineers, government representatives and other industry stakeholders to discuss shared challenges and practical solutions.

A defining milestone was BYDA hosting its first national conference in March 2026. The event attracted a sold-out audience of more than 250 industry professionals, demonstrating the sector's strong appetite for national leadership, practical collaboration and a more coordinated approach to damage prevention. It was an important moment for BYDA and for the industry, creating a platform to bring together the people and organisations who are shaping the future of utility safety in Australia.

The level of engagement across our events shows there is real momentum for collaboration. Industry understands that damage prevention is not the responsibility of one organisation or one part of the project lifecycle. It requires shared accountability, better information, stronger standards and a willingness to work together.

This same collaborative approach has been central to the BDUP pilot. The pilot is not just a technology project; it is an industry change project. It requires asset owners, contractors,



designers, engineers and technology partners to work together on how utility information can be shared, governed and used more effectively.

BYDA is well placed to convene those conversations. We have the national reach, the member base, the education capability and the operational experience to help align industry around better outcomes.

Advancing the BDUP Pilot

The way industry accesses and uses utility information is changing.

For many years, the referral process has played a critical role in helping people identify utility assets before undertaking work. That role remains essential. But the needs of industry are evolving. Users expect information to be easier to access, easier to interpret and better integrated into how projects are planned and delivered.

The BYDA Digital Utility Portal pilot is a practical response to that change.

BDUP is designed to help industry move from static, paper-based information towards more accessible, digital utility information. The pilot builds on earlier proof-of-concept work that demonstrated the potential of machine-readable data, GIS information, digital plan management and the digitisation of legacy PDF plans.

This matters because safer work depends on better information. When utility information is easier to understand and use, planners, designers, contractors and field teams are better equipped to identify risks earlier, make informed decisions and reduce the likelihood of damage.

The pilot is also helping BYDA and industry test the practical issues that matter most: data quality, usability, access controls, member confidence, user behaviour, risk alerts and how digital information can support existing safe work responsibilities. These are important steps in building a model that is not only technically possible, but trusted, useful and capable of scaling nationally.

Our focus is not technology for technology's sake. Our focus is safer decisions, better planning, fewer strikes, less disruption and stronger protection of essential infrastructure. Digital tools are part of that future, but trust, governance and industry collaboration are just as important.

The BDUP pilot demonstrates BYDA's leadership role clearly. We are helping the sector move forward in a way that is practical, safe, evidence-based and nationally consistent.

> Our focus is safer decisions, better planning, fewer strikes, less disruption and stronger protection of essential infrastructure.

Leading through change

The utility safety landscape is changing quickly. Infrastructure demand is growing, projects are becoming more complex, and the consequences of damage are increasingly significant. At the same time, expectations around productivity, digital information, data quality and public safety continue to rise.

This creates both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is that the industry cannot rely on legacy processes alone to meet future demands. The opportunity is that Australia has the capability to build a safer, smarter and more coordinated approach to utility information and damage prevention.

BDUP is one of the clearest examples of that opportunity. It gives BYDA and the broader sector a practical platform to test how better data, better systems and better collaboration can support safer work near utilities. It also reinforces the need for industry to participate in shaping the future, rather than waiting for change to happen around us.

BYDA has an important role to play in that transition. We are not here to replace the responsibility of asset owners, contractors, designers or regulators. We are here to help connect the system, improve visibility, lift standards and support safer outcomes across the full lifecycle of work near utilities.



That is what industry leadership looks like for BYDA: practical, collaborative, evidence-based and focused on outcomes.

Looking Ahead

As we look to the year ahead, BYDA will continue to build on the strong foundations established this year.

Our priorities remain clear. We will continue to invest in education and awareness. We will strengthen member engagement and industry partnerships. We will keep improving the reliability and usability of our services. We will continue to advocate for better data, stronger standards and more consistent approaches to damage prevention across Australia.

The BDUP pilot will remain a key focus. The next phase is about continuing to work with industry to test, refine and strengthen the model so it can support safer planning, better decision-making and a more modern approach to utility information. This will require continued collaboration with members, users, government and industry partners.

> We are here to help connect the system, improve visibility, lift standards and support safer outcomes across the full lifecycle of work near utilities.

Most importantly, we will continue to lead with purpose.

The results achieved this year demonstrate what is possible when BYDA is focused, aligned and ambitious. We have delivered strongly for our members, expanded our industry impact, progressed a significant digital pilot and continued to position the organisation as a national leader in utility safety.

I want to thank the BYDA team for their outstanding commitment throughout the year. I also thank our members, safety partners, Board and industry stakeholders for their continued support and trust.

The work ahead is significant, but so is the opportunity.

Together, we can continue building a safer, smarter and more connected industry — one that protects essential infrastructure, supports better project delivery and keeps people and communities safe.

Zero Damage. Zero Harm. Zero Disruption.



Mell Greenall



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2024 - 2029

Zero Damage. Zero Harm. Zero Disruption.

OUR VISION

To achieve zero damage to member/utility infrastructure resulting from construction and ground-breaking activities, preventing community disruption, and protecting people and property from harm.

OUR MISSION

- Develop and promote education and awareness to increase skills within the industry. Develop the standards that create an uplift in industry capability.
- Facilitate industry collaboration to identify improvement opportunities and increase efficient standardisation.
- Report on damage and its impacts, using data as a catalyst for education, awareness and change.
- Advocate with government and regulatory bodies for nationally consistent best practices.
- Develop technologies that increase the ease and efficiency of using utility location information, adapt to suit user groups.
- Focused promotion of BYDA services to maximise impact.



Five Pillars of Activity

1 Asset Information

- Provide useable and relevant plan information to users.
- Support asset owners to improve the quality of plans and supporting safety information.
- Be an industry leader on GIS, asset information - the digital evolution of the referral.

2 Advocacy and Regulation

- Advocate for damage prevention with government, regulators and peer bodies.
- Drive for consistent and effective regulation across the community and all states.
- Seek to balance asset owners and the ground breaker community needs as well as social expectations for long term and sustainable outcomes.

3 Damage Impact and Investigation

- Be the source of damage data reports and cost/disruption impacts (macro/micro model).
- Play a leading role in sharing learnings from damage investigation – seek learnings and be vehicle to share across industry to improve work practices.
- Advance position as industry leader.

4 Establishing Standards

- Set the standards for asset location and protection.
- Provide targeted awareness, engagement and continuing professional development (CPD) to higher risk users.
- Set standards for VET Sector (TAFE and RTO) training with industry supported learning requirements and content.
- Set the learning requirements and content.

5 Industry Leadership

- Engage all industry members to drive outcomes.
- Deliver a bi-annual national damage prevention conference.
- Continue sector specific forums.
- Establish project specific committees as needed to support projects.
- Develop a membership model to engage the construction/trade sector.



BYDA MEMBERSHIP

Partners in Safety

A Growing Network, A Shared Commitment

With 913 members and still growing, Before You Dig Australia is proud to represent a national community united by a common goal: preventing damage, protecting lives, and minimising disruption to the essential services that keep our nation running.

Being a BYDA member means being part of something bigger. It's a commitment to safety, accountability, and the safeguarding of Australia's vast and complex underground infrastructure. Our members are not just participants; they are partners in prevention.

The Power of Connection

At the heart of BYDA is our centralised referral service, which connects those planning excavation works with asset-owning members across the country. Every time a referral is lodged, our system facilitates a critical exchange of information, ensuring that the right people have access to the right plans, at the right time. In 2025/2026, our members issued a combined effort of 50,410 plans per day.

This two-way exchange helps:

- The public and industry avoid utility strikes
- Utilities know who is working near their assets
- Everyone contribute to a safer, more efficient infrastructure environment

The More Members, the Stronger the System

The value of BYDA's service grows with every new member. The broader our membership base, the more complete and accurate the data we provide to users across Australia. That's why growing our network is not just a milestone - it's a mission.

A Diverse and Inclusive Membership

Our members include asset owners from across telecommunications, electricity, water, gas, oil, and local government, as well as state and federal agencies, education providers, healthcare networks, mining companies, and major infrastructure stakeholders. We also proudly welcome non-asset members; including excavators, utility locators, engineers, and architects, who play a vital role in promoting safe digging practices and supporting our national service.

Together, our members form the backbone of Australia's utility safety ecosystem. Welcome to our new members.



Welcome to Our New Members

Growing the commitment to preventing damage, harm and disruption:

Acciona Geotech Group Services Pty Ltd
Adelaide Power Design Services Pty Ltd
All Spec Approvals Pty Ltd
Amwealth Developments Pty Ltd
Ardent Consulting Engineers
Atmos Renewables
Banyule City Council
Bay Group Victoria Pty Ltd
Bennett's Petroleum Supplies Pty Ltd
BHK Architects Pty Ltd
Blyth Battery Pty Ltd
BP Australia Pty Ltd
BUDLOC8 - Before U Dig Locating Services
Cable Search Pty Ltd
City of Melville
Civillo
Collie Battery Pty Ltd
CSA Specialised Services
Dott & Crossit Conveyancing Solicitors
DWB Service Locating
Figgis & Jefferson Tepa Pty Ltd
Fire Front Solutions Pty Ltd
Frontier Networks Pty Ltd
Hazelwood Power Station
Home Developer Pty Ltd
Hornsby Shire Council
HR Surveyors
ICFX Services Pty Ltd
JOLT Charge Pty Ltd
Katana Foundations Pty Ltd
Lal Lal Wind Farms No Co Pty Ltd
Linfinity Engineering Pty Ltd
LMS Energy Pty Ltd
MTS Mobile Tiefbau Saugsysteme Australia Pty Ltd
National Capital Authority
Newmont
NextGen Granny Flats
OGT Energy Pty Ltd
One Hive Property Group
Orro Pty Ltd
Park Pty Ltd
Raidar Innovation Pty Ltd
Rural Fibre Co Pty Ltd
SA Cable and Pipe Locating
SearchX Pty Ltd
South Metropolitan Health Service
Southwood Corp Trust
Square Kilometre Array Observatory
STA Consulting Engineers
Summit Rural (WA) Pty Ltd
Talbot Enterprises Pty Ltd (Talen)
Terra Verde JV
Tilt Renewables Australia Pty Ltd
Transport Heritage NSW
Underground Services Detection P/L
Vanta Advisory Pty Ltd
Vinarchy Australia Limited
VT Consulting Engineers Pty Ltd
WA Utilities Pty Ltd
Wagga Wagga City Council
Water Brothers Group Pty Ltd
Western Sydney Software Solutions Pty Ltd
WSP

BYDA Members – Champions of Prevention and Progress

Being a member of Before You Dig Australia means more than joining an organisation; it means stepping up as a leader in utility damage prevention and safety. BYDA members are united by a shared commitment to safeguarding people, infrastructure, and communities. Together, we:

- **Promote** a national culture of safety to prevent damage, harm, and costly disruptions.
- **Contribute** to the development of Australia's most comprehensive access service for utility plans and safety information.
- **Enable** timely and accessible information sharing, empowering safer digging decisions across the country.
- **Stay informed** about planned works that may impact critical infrastructure.
- **Support** nationwide education and awareness campaigns for safe excavation practices.
- **Represent** a diverse network spanning utilities, government, and industry.
- **Lead** by example, advocating for best practice and continuous improvement in utility safety.

BYDA members are not just participants, they're prevention partners. Helping shape a safer, smarter, and more resilient future.



AUSTRALIA'S UNDERGROUND UTILITY SAFETY RECKONING

Challenging the status quo of underground utility safety

During the year, BYDA published Australia's Underground Utility Safety Reckoning, a major research report challenging the status quo of underground utility safety in Australia and calling for coordinated national reform.

The report combined a literature review, international benchmarking, stakeholder interviews and industry surveys to examine why service strikes continue to occur despite widespread use of the existing "before you dig" system. The research drew on **20 stakeholder interviews, 78 asset owner survey responses and 135 end-user responses**, as well as an international review of legal and regulatory frameworks.

One of the report's central findings was that Australia's current approach has not kept pace with the scale, complexity and digitalisation of modern infrastructure. It identified ongoing issues with fragmented and inconsistent information, static PDF-based processes, variable data quality, weak feedback loops and inconsistent regulatory requirements between jurisdictions.

The research also challenged the tendency to view service strikes primarily as a frontline worker issue. Instead, it found that risk is created across the entire system — from government and regulators through to asset owners, contractors, project management and workers — reinforcing the need for **a whole-of-system approach to prevention**.

International benchmarking further highlighted that Australia is falling behind comparable jurisdictions. While countries including France, Canada and the United States have introduced stronger legal requirements, data-sharing obligations and enforcement mechanisms, Australia continues to operate with fragmented laws and limited national mandates.

The report sets out a practical reform agenda, including stronger and more consistent legislative requirements, mandatory BYDA enquiries before excavation, improved competency and training, minimum data standards, better utility location verification, stronger reporting and feedback mechanisms, and greater integration of digital GIS information. Industry respondents identified **integrating GIS data into the BYDA platform, improving locator capability, mandating BYDA use nationally** and **increasing industry awareness** among the initiatives most likely to reduce risk.

Importantly, the report also provides a clear strategic rationale for BYDA's continued investment in digital innovation. It argues that a modern safety system should move beyond static documents towards **digital mapping, standardised data, integrated information feeds and intelligent risk tools** — positioning technology such as the BYDA Digital Utility Portal as part of the broader solution to Australia's utility safety challenge.

For BYDA, publishing this research was about more than identifying the problem. It was about providing industry and government with an evidence base for reform and reinforcing our role as a national safety leader prepared to challenge established practices where better outcomes are possible.



BUILDING NATIONAL CAPABILITY IN UTILITY LOCATING

Strengthening professional standards

BYDA has continued to play an active role in strengthening professional standards across the utility locating sector, contributing to the development of the new Certificate III qualification for utility locating.

The qualification represents an important step towards greater consistency in the skills, knowledge and competency expected of people undertaking utility locating work across Australia. BYDA has worked alongside industry and training stakeholders throughout the drafting process to help ensure the qualification reflects the practical realities of working around underground infrastructure and supports stronger safety outcomes in the field.

The proposed Certificate III is now progressing through the final approval process and is awaiting sign-off by the Federal Education Minister.

For BYDA, this work is an important part of addressing one of the persistent challenges identified across our safety research: ensuring that people responsible for locating underground assets have consistent, nationally recognised capabilities.

Once approved, the qualification will provide a stronger national foundation for the locating profession and support a more competent, consistent and professional approach to utility risk management across Australia.



ADVANCING THE BYDA DIGITAL UTILITY PORTAL

Delivering greater productivity

This year marked a major step forward in the development of the BYDA Digital Utility Portal (BDUP), with the successful completion of the Proof of Concept and progression into an active multi-state pilot.

The Proof of Concept confirmed both the technical feasibility of BDUP and strong industry demand for a more efficient, digital way of accessing utility asset information. More than **1,000 industry stakeholders** engaged through testing, surveys, interviews, webinars and events, with 65 active testers lodging 280 requests during the trial period. Feedback from participants directly informed **65 platform improvements**, strengthening usability, navigation, export functionality and alignment with industry standards.

Importantly, the PoC also demonstrated the scale of the productivity opportunity. Testers reported an average saving of **9.6 engineering hours per planning and design request**, equivalent to around **$607 in engineering wages**. At national scale, the findings indicate BDUP could save up to **5.2 million engineering hours each year**, equivalent to around **2,750 full-time professionals** and approximately **$330 million in annual productivity gains**.

The strongest efficiencies came from reducing the manual work currently required to collate, convert and re-digitise multiple utility plans, as well as reducing rework and enabling design to start earlier. Significantly, users who had actually trialled BDUP identified greater time savings than those surveyed before seeing the platform, providing further confidence in its potential real-world value.

Industry appetite was equally encouraging. **91% of respondents surveyed prior to the PoC and 86% of active testers expected to use BDUP at least monthly**, while more than three-quarters of testers indicated they were willing or potentially willing to pay for the service. Major asset owners also participated or committed to supporting the initiative, demonstrating growing momentum across the utility sector.

A further milestone was confirmation through engagement with the Australian Government's Cyber and Infrastructure Security Centre that sharing asset location information for the purpose of BDUP can meet requirements under the **Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018**, addressing an important concern raised by asset owners.

Building on these findings, BDUP has now moved into its **2026 pilot phase**, where BYDA is working with utilities, contractors, engineers and major projects to validate the platform under real-world conditions. This phase will provide deeper evidence of safety and productivity outcomes, strengthen data quality and asset-owner participation, and continue refining the technology ahead of potential national rollout.

At its core, BDUP is about **safety by design** — giving people better, faster and more usable information earlier in the planning process. The Proof of Concept has provided clear evidence of the opportunity. The pilot is now focused on proving that opportunity at scale and establishing the foundation for a nationally connected approach to utility information.



INAUGURAL BYDA UTILITY SAFETY CONFERENCE

National conversation on utility safety

In March 2026, BYDA delivered its inaugural Utility Safety Conference, bringing together leaders from across Australia's utility, infrastructure, construction and safety sectors for a national conversation on damage prevention, innovation and the future of utility safety.

The event was a strong success, with **256 tickets sold**, a sell-out audience, an overall attendee rating of **4.59 out of 5,** and a **99% recommendation rate**.

The conference attracted a highly relevant audience, with strong representation from utility owners and operators across gas, electricity and telecommunications, as well as safety, risk, engineering and senior leadership roles. **Seventy-six per cent of respondents were BYDA members**, reinforcing the event's value as an important member engagement platform.

Attendees came to hear from industry experts, build connections, gain practical safety insights and explore new technology and innovation. Keynotes, case studies and technology-focused sessions were among the most highly valued elements of the program, highlighting the industry's appetite for practical and forward-looking content.

Most importantly, the conference delivered impact beyond the event itself. More than **90% of respondents agreed that it contributed positively to the national utility safety conversation,** while **98% said the event met or exceeded expectations.** A strong majority also indicated they intended to apply the insights gained within their own organisations and engage further with BYDA initiatives.

The event strengthened BYDA's position as a national industry body capable of convening the sector around shared safety challenges, emerging technology and reform. Feedback demonstrated continued appetite for BYDA-led discussion on issues including AS5488, subsurface utility engineering, asset-owner participation and broader industry reform.

Following the success of the inaugural event, the conference has established a strong foundation to become a recurring national forum for the utility safety sector, bringing industry together not simply to discuss change, but to help shape it.





MEET THE BOARD

Dedicated to our members and innovation

Stuart Smith, BYDA Chair



A career in IT&T taught me outages were an unwanted and often preventable feature of operations. Of many possible causes, one of the most disruptive and time-consuming was underground cable damage. This triggered my initial interest in Before You Dig Australia. My passion was reinvigorated through the Transformation Project, which redesigned existing organisations into a single streamlined, customer-focused, agile entity. BYDA is now in a great position to deliver increasing value to its stakeholders, and I am pleased to have a small part in the exciting future journey.

Eric Bardy



As a long-term participant in the energy industry, I have always held safety as a core value, particularly as a senior leader in an organisation that owns and operates high-pressure gas pipelines. Protecting public safety is part of our purpose. When the opportunity to become a director arose, I saw it as a way to assist with safety across the gas pipeline sector and beyond. It is with great pride that I played a part in the organisation's transformation, improving the service's quality and efficiency. I look forward to being part of the next chapter of BYDA.

Julian James



With more than 20 years' experience in power distribution, I focus on delivering safe, well-planned infrastructure that protects communities and creates long-term value.
At Energy Queensland, I lead network operating and capital investment portfolios across Energex, Ergon Energy and isolated communities, working with stakeholders to support safe, reliable and sustainable outcomes. I'm proud to contribute my extensive experience to the BYDA Board and support damage prevention, asset protection, and public safety across the industry.



Mick Cooper



With 28 years in telecommunications, focusing on construction and maintenance, damage prevention has become central to my career. I've witnessed firsthand the impact of infrastructure damage on communities and businesses, leading me to join the BYDA board. This role allows me to leverage my expertise in asset protection, promote resilient strategies, and collaborate with like-minded professionals. Together, we aim to support BYDA members, businesses, and the public in safeguarding assets and ensuring safety nationwide. I also prioritise safety across industries through clear and accessible presentations.

Tobi Lawrence-Ward



As CEO of Abaxa, a growing Subsurface Utility Engineering company in Western Australia, I bring over 20 years of experience in protecting people and assets through end-to-end project solutions. My leadership focuses on a shared vision, inspiring teams, and driving innovation with high standards of excellence. On the BYDA Board, I'm committed to advancing safety, diversity, collaboration, and industry leadership, pushing BYDA towards new heights of success.

Darryl Worthington



Ensuring the safety of our community and protecting the assets of Australia's most critical infrastructure has been a priority for me through more than 12 years of construction and operations in the telecommunications industry. Experiencing the impacts on asset owners, builders, and affected stakeholders creates a strong passion to be part of the solution. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to serve on the board of an organisation with such a unique value proposition to the industry and our communities.

Saizad Ali



With more than 35 years in the utility industry across Australia and New Zealand, my expertise revolves around asset management solutions, its use in field operations, and digital transformation. I have had the privilege to drive several initiatives in my career, enhancing systems, processes, and data quality through new technology solutions. I'm excited to contribute to BYDA's digital transformation. I aim to leverage digital visualisation technologies to simplify asset information, improve accessibility, industry safety, standardisation, and collaboration, supporting BYDA in shaping the future of utility damage prevention.



MEET THE BYDA TEAM

Advocating collaboration, education and reform

Our Corporate Leads and Damage Prevention Education Team

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