

Pricebook re-costing for an electrical contractor, after three supplier price rises

How I'd approach a Melbourne electrical contractor whose simPRO pricebook was last updated in January, while three supplier price rises since then have taken margin off fixed-price jobs that nobody noticed.

simPRO

Excel

Xero

AREA

Pricebook and margin

TOOLS

simPRO · Excel · Xero

TYPICAL SCOPE

US\$1,200–2,000

TIMELINE

About 4 weeks, 4 milestones

DATA FLOW

01

SUPPLIERS

3 price files

02

RULES

cost + margin

03

APPROVAL

large changes

04

IMPORT

into simPRO

05

CHECK

Xero bills

06

REPORT

margin impact

Work sample: realistic data, not a past client job. Amounts are in AUD and GST is 10%.

01 The problem

An electrical contractor sells switchboards, circuit protection, cable and lighting. Its three main suppliers raised prices in February, May and August 2026. The simPRO pricebook still holds the January cost and sell prices, so every quote and every fixed-price job is built on costs that are out of date.

Owners usually notice it like this:

- Jobs that looked fine at quote stage finish with a thinner margin than expected
- Nobody can say what a part costs today without ringing the supplier
- Supplier price files arrive by email and are never loaded
- The same part is sold at the same price whether it cost \$4 or \$5 to buy

In this sample, the pricebook has **1,400 lines** and was last updated in January. Against current supplier prices, **none** of the 1,383 active lines had a cost within 1% of the supplier's file, and **1,382** lines sat more than one percentage point below their group's target margin. The last six months of billing (April to September 2026) is **11,000 lines, \$1,835,368 ex GST**, billed at a margin of **30.9%**.

02 The outcome

This is what the setup does and delivers:

- Every pricebook line compared with the current supplier price, with a clear status: current, superseded or discontinued
- A short set of cost and margin rules by group, so a new sell price is calculated the same way every time
- A re-costed import file that updates existing simPRO items by part number only, with a backup of the catalogue exported first
- An approval list for the large changes, with the decision and the reason for each recorded
- A report showing what the last six months of billing would have earned at the new prices
- A repeatable quarterly routine, so the next price rise takes an hour rather than a project

03 Scope

EXHIBIT A Scope

DELIVERABLE	WHAT'S INCLUDED	NOTES
Pricebook and supplier file audit	Pricebook exported from simPRO; the three supplier price files matched line by line; superseded, discontinued and unmatched parts listed	US\$300 health check, and the findings are yours to keep. If the findings change the plan, I re-quote before M2
Cost and margin rules	Cost basis, target margin by group, competitive-item rule, rounding, approval thresholds	Agreed with the owner in M1

DELIVERABLE	WHAT'S INCLUDED	NOTES
Re-costed import file	Import file with current cost and new sell price for every active line	Built in Excel. Imported with Update Only, matched on part number
Margin impact on the last 6 months	Billed lines re-priced at the new sell prices, by group and by month	An estimate of what could have been earned. Fixed-price jobs already accepted do not change
Approval list for big changes	Lines with a large change listed with proposed price, decision and reason	The owner decides. Nothing large is imported without a recorded decision
Quarterly update SOP	One-page routine for the next price file, with the check steps	Includes the Xero bill price cross-check
Not included	Supplier negotiations, new supplier set-up, or rebuilding the catalogue structure	Quoted separately if wanted

Not included: payroll, STP or BAS lodgement.

EXHIBIT B Sample data

ITEM	VOLUME
Pricebook lines	1,400 in 9 groups
Supplier price files	3 (676 + 385 + 382 rows)
Lines superseded by the supplier	31
Lines discontinued by the supplier	17
Billed lines, April to September 2026	11,000 on 1,000 jobs (\$1,835,368 ex GST)
Xero bill lines cross-checked	60 on 13 bills

04 Walkthrough

4.1 THE THREE PRICE RISES

Each supplier's rises hit some groups harder than others. Cable moved the most. The table shows the rise in each round, the combined rise, the target margin for the group, and the average margin the old sell price now earns at today's cost:

GROUP	LINES	FEB	MAY	AUG	COMBINED	TARGET MARGIN	AVG MARGIN AT OLD SELL
Switchboards and enclosures	120	3.5%	3.0%	2.5%	9.3%	30%	21.6%
Circuit protection	300	2.5%	3.0%	2.0%	7.7%	33%	26.4%
Cable and conduit	240	5.5%	4.0%	6.0%	16.3%	30%	17.5%
Lighting, interior	240	1.0%	1.5%	0.5%	3.0%	40%	36.8%
Lighting, exterior and emergency	130	1.5%	1.5%	1.0%	4.1%	38%	34.4%
Switches and power points	130	2.0%	2.5%	2.0%	6.6%	42%	36.8%
Smoke alarms and safety	60	1.5%	1.5%	1.0%	4.1%	40%	36.3%
Data and comms	80	2.0%	2.5%	3.0%	7.7%	38%	32.7%
Fixings and consumables	100	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	9.3%	45%	38.7%

4.2 THE THREE SUPPLIER FILES

SUPPLIER	COVERS	ROWS IN FILE	NOTES
Electrical wholesaler A	Switchboards, circuit protection, cable and conduit	676	Cost price ex GST, one row per part
Lighting supplier B	Interior, exterior and emergency lighting	385	Cost price ex GST, one row per part
Accessories and data supplier C	Switches, smoke alarms, data, fixings	382	Cost price ex GST, one row per part

Each file is matched on part number to the pricebook:

RESULT	LINES
Matched on part number	1,352
Supplier has renumbered the part (matched on description, existing part number kept)	31
Not in the current file (discontinued)	17
Pricebook lines	1,400
Rows in the files that are not in the pricebook (left out of the import)	60

For renumbered parts the supplier's new number is recorded in a notes column, and the import uses the part number that simPRO already holds so that Update Only matches the existing item.

4.3 COST AND MARGIN RULES

RULE	SETTING
Cost basis	Supplier's current price file, ex GST
Target margin	Margin on sell price, set per group (table below)
Sell price	Cost divided by one minus the margin, rounded up to the next 5 cents
Competitive items	Items the owner has agreed to hold at a lower margin are flagged, and keep that margin with a reason on the line
Within rules	A sell price change of 10% or less, and no more than \$100 on one unit, is applied without a separate approval
Approval	A larger change goes on the approval list for the owner to approve, cap or hold
Discontinued parts	Not re-costed. Archived with the reason
GST	Prices are ex GST. GST is added at 10% on the invoice

GROUP	TARGET MARGIN	COMPETITIVE LINES	SUPPLIER
Switchboards and enclosures	30%	30	Electrical wholesaler A
Circuit protection	33%	69	Electrical wholesaler A
Cable and conduit	30%	39	Electrical wholesaler A
Lighting, interior	40%	45	Lighting supplier B
Lighting, exterior and emergency	38%	19	Lighting supplier B
Switches and power points	42%	26	Accessories and data supplier C
Smoke alarms and safety	40%	12	Accessories and data supplier C
Data and comms	38%	9	Accessories and data supplier C
Fixings and consumables	45%	21	Accessories and data supplier C

4.4 EXAMPLE LINES

PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	OLD COST	CURRENT COST	OLD SELL	MARGIN AT OLD SELL	NEW SELL	NEW MARGIN	NOTE
EWA-1014	Switchboard enclosure 48 pole, flush	296.80	324.08	\$424.00	23.6%	\$463.00	30.0%	On target
EWA-1429	Contactors 4P 63A, 240V coil, Range C	241.50	260.79	\$360.45	27.6%	\$389.25	33.0%	On target
EWA-2933	Single core cable 50mm², blue, 100m coil	1380.00	1596.87	\$1,971.45	19.0%	\$2,281.25	30.0%	On target
LSB-1179	Pendant fitting, linear, white, Range D	162.00	166.06	\$270.00	38.5%	\$276.80	40.0%	On target
SAC-1202	Dimmer 630W universal, white, Range C	59.80	64.18	\$103.15	37.8%	\$110.70	42.0%	On target

PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	OLD COST	CURRENT COST	OLD SELL	MARGIN AT OLD SELL	NEW SELL	NEW MARGIN	NOTE
SAC-2038	Brass cable gland M25, 10 pack, Range A	32.30	35.20	\$58.75	40.1%	\$64.00	45.0%	On target
EWA-1250	Neutral link 12 way, Range D	12.15	13.42	\$17.40	22.9%	\$19.15	29.9%	Owner cap this quarter, balance next quarter
EWA-1197	Busbar kit 3P 250A, Range D	226.80	246.58	\$298.45	17.4%	\$324.45	24.0%	Competitive item, agreed margin 24%
EWA-1020	Switchboard enclosure 36 pole, IP65 weatherproof	285.00	313.92	\$360.80	13.0%	\$360.80	13.0%	Fixed-price job held to 31 Dec 2026

4.5 THE APPROVAL LIST

279 lines changed by more than the rules allow, and went to the owner. 1,104 lines were within the rules and 17 are archived.

DECISION	LINES
Within rules (no separate approval)	1,104
Approved as proposed	215
Approved, capped at +10%	40
Held at old sell price	24
Archived (discontinued)	17
Total	1,400

Largest proposed changes (per unit):

PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	OLD SELL	PROPOSED	CHANGE	DECISION	FINAL SELL
EWA-2873	Single core cable 50mm ² , black, 100m coil	\$1,971.45	\$2,305.00	+16.9%	Approved, capped at +10%	\$2,168.60
EWA-2812	Single core cable 50mm ² , white, 100m coil	\$1,971.45	\$2,288.65	+16.1%	Approved as proposed	\$2,288.65
EWA-2846	Single core cable 50mm ² , red, 100m coil	\$1,840.00	\$2,153.65	+17.0%	Approved as proposed	\$2,153.65
EWA-2933	Single core cable 50mm ² , blue, 100m coil	\$1,971.45	\$2,281.25	+15.7%	Approved as proposed	\$2,281.25
EWA-2584	Single core cable 50mm ² , green/yellow, 100m coil	\$1,971.45	\$2,270.10	+15.1%	Approved as proposed	\$2,270.10
EWA-2644	Single core cable 35mm ² , white, 100m coil	\$1,442.90	\$1,688.40	+17.0%	Approved as proposed	\$1,688.40
EWA-2501	Single core cable 35mm ² , blue, 100m coil	\$1,442.90	\$1,687.40	+16.9%	Held at old sell	\$1,442.90
EWA-2957	Single core cable 35mm ² , red, 100m coil	\$1,442.90	\$1,686.85	+16.9%	Approved as proposed	\$1,686.85

A capped line is brought up to the full price at the next quarterly update. A held line is listed with a review date, so it does not stay low by accident.

4.6 THE IMPORT

- 1 Export the existing catalogue from simPRO (Export > Catalogue) and keep the file as the backup
- 2 Run a trial of 20 lines through Utilities > Import, with Update Only selected, and check the result in simPRO against the file
- 3 Import the rest. Update Only matches the part number and updates existing items. Rows that do not match are ignored, so nothing new is created
- 4 Compare the new catalogue export with the import file and record the numbers

The import file has the part number, description, cost price and sell price for each active line. If the business prefers simPRO to calculate sell from a markup, the file carries the markup instead, and the trial import confirms which columns the import accepts on that setup. In this sample the file has **1,383 rows**, one for every approved active line. The 17 archived lines are not in it.

4.7 MARGIN IMPACT ON THE LAST SIX MONTHS

The 11,000 billed lines from April to September were billed at the old sell prices. Each line's cost is the supplier price at the date of the job, so the cost rises step up in May and August. The "new" columns show the same lines at the re-costed sell prices:

GROUP	LINES	BILLED (EX GST)	COST	MARGIN BILLED	AT NEW PRICES	MARGIN AT NEW PRICES	DIFFERENCE
Switchboards and enclosures	913	\$97,863	\$74,757	23.6%	\$106,468	29.8%	\$8,605
Circuit protection	2,968	\$299,317	\$215,500	28.0%	\$322,526	33.2%	\$23,210
Cable and conduit	1,372	\$491,436	\$386,201	21.4%	\$563,646	31.5%	\$72,210
Lighting, interior	1,126	\$367,513	\$229,619	37.5%	\$378,336	39.3%	\$10,823
Lighting, exterior and emergency	416	\$105,273	\$68,326	35.1%	\$109,804	37.8%	\$4,531
Switches and power points	1,421	\$163,969	\$101,333	38.2%	\$174,780	42.0%	\$10,811
Smoke alarms and safety	903	\$153,191	\$96,775	36.8%	\$159,361	39.3%	\$6,170
Data and comms	313	\$44,128	\$28,804	34.7%	\$47,497	39.4%	\$3,369
Fixings and consumables	1,568	\$112,678	\$67,141	40.4%	\$122,832	45.3%	\$10,154
Total	11,000	\$1,835,368	\$1,268,457	30.9%	\$1,985,250	36.1%	\$149,882

By month:

MONTH	LINES	BILLED (EX GST)	MARGIN BILLED	AT NEW PRICES	MARGIN AT NEW PRICES
Apr 2026	1,958	\$319,975	32.9%	\$346,742	38.1%
May 2026	1,763	\$290,805	32.1%	\$312,744	36.9%
Jun 2026	1,606	\$261,155	30.6%	\$284,160	36.2%
Jul 2026	1,848	\$313,745	31.4%	\$339,630	36.6%
Aug 2026	1,996	\$354,177	29.1%	\$382,068	34.3%
Sep 2026	1,829	\$295,511	29.5%	\$319,906	34.8%

This is an estimate of what the re-costed prices would have earned. Jobs quoted at a fixed price before the rises cannot be re-priced, so the real recovery is spread over new quotes from here.

One job, before and after: **Switchboard upgrade, Moonee Ponds** (job EJ4049).

PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	QTY	OLD SELL	BILLED	NEW SELL	AT NEW PRICES	COST
EWA-1283	Weatherproof meter box IP56, 1 phase, Range B	1	\$59.50	\$59.50	\$64.60	\$64.60	\$45.25
SAC-1395	Smoke alarm standalone 10-year lithium, Range A	5	\$31.20	\$156.00	\$32.50	\$162.50	\$95.05
EWA-1479	MCB 1P 6A, B-curve 6kA, Range B	3	\$7.45	\$22.35	\$7.95	\$23.85	\$15.87
SAC-1561	Photoelectric smoke alarm 240V interconnectable, 2 pack, Range C	3	\$153.35	\$460.05	\$157.95	\$473.85	\$277.35
EWA-1164	Earth bar 6 way, Range B	3	\$8.60	\$25.80	\$9.40	\$28.20	\$18.60
EWA-1631	Motor protection circuit breaker 4A, Range B	1	\$98.55	\$98.55	\$106.85	\$106.85	\$68.14
EWA-2854	Cable ladder 150mm x 3m, galvanised, Range B	3	\$81.75	\$245.25	\$95.85	\$287.55	\$182.55
EWA-1030	Weatherproof meter box IP56, 1 phase, Range C	1	\$67.50	\$67.50	\$73.35	\$73.35	\$52.08
Total ex GST				\$1,135.00		\$1,220.75	\$754.89
GST 10%				\$113.50		\$122.08	
Total inc GST				\$1,248.50		\$1,342.83	

4.8 CROSS-CHECK AGAINST XERO BILLS

Prices in the pricebook are checked against what the suppliers actually charged. A Xero export of September's bill lines is matched by part number to the new pricebook cost, and any line more than 1% away is raised with the supplier:

BILL	SUPPLIER	DATE	LINES	EX GST	GST	TOTAL	LINES TO QUERY
A-81000	Electrical wholesaler A	04 Sep 2026	5	\$822.30	\$82.23	\$904.53	0
A-81013	Electrical wholesaler A	14 Sep 2026	5	\$393.24	\$39.32	\$432.56	0
A-81026	Electrical wholesaler A	18 Sep 2026	5	\$196.05	\$19.61	\$215.66	1
A-81039	Electrical wholesaler A	23 Sep 2026	5	\$1,086.08	\$108.61	\$1,194.69	0
A-81052	Electrical wholesaler A	29 Sep 2026	5	\$608.35	\$60.84	\$669.19	0
A-81065	Electrical wholesaler A	30 Sep 2026	1	\$459.54	\$45.95	\$505.49	0
B-81000	Lighting supplier B	10 Sep 2026	5	\$1,057.63	\$105.76	\$1,163.39	1
B-81013	Lighting supplier B	28 Sep 2026	4	\$1,125.71	\$112.57	\$1,238.28	0
C-81000	Accessories and data supplier C	09 Sep 2026	5	\$333.75	\$33.38	\$367.13	0
C-81013	Accessories and data supplier C	18 Sep 2026	5	\$373.14	\$37.31	\$410.45	1
C-81026	Accessories and data supplier C	23 Sep 2026	5	\$304.47	\$30.45	\$334.92	0
C-81039	Accessories and data supplier C	25 Sep 2026	5	\$143.24	\$14.32	\$157.56	0
C-81052	Accessories and data supplier C	30 Sep 2026	5	\$282.88	\$28.29	\$311.17	0
Total			60	\$7,186.38	\$718.64	\$7,905.02	3

57 of 60 lines were within 1% of the new cost. 3 were above it, and went back to the supplier. The detail is in xero_bill_crosscheck.csv.

4.9 THE QUARTERLY ROUTINE

- 1 Ask each supplier for a current price file, or download it on the first Monday of the quarter
- 2 Export the simPRO catalogue as a backup
- 3 Paste the files into the workbook, which matches them on part number and applies the rules
- 4 Review the approval list and record each decision
- 5 Run a trial import of 20 lines, then the full import with Update Only
- 6 Cross-check a sample of recent Xero bill lines against the new cost
- 7 Save the workbook, the import file and the approval decisions together

05 Checks

EXHIBIT C Checks on the sample data

CHECK	BEFORE	AFTER	STATUS
Every line has a current cost	0 of 1,383 within 1% of the supplier file	1,383 of 1,383 active lines (17 archived with a reason)	PASS
Sell price meets target margin or has a reason	1,382 of 1,383 more than 1 point below target margin	1,066 at or above target, 317 below target with a recorded reason (255 competitive, 38 capped, 24 held), 0 without	PASS
Import count = approved count	Not tracked	1,383 rows in the import file, 1,383 lines approved	PASS
Xero bill prices agree with the new cost	Not compared	57 of 60 within 1%, 3 raised with the supplier	PASS

06 Milestones

EXHIBIT D Milestones

MILESTONE	WHAT HAPPENS	ROUGH DURATION	WHAT IS SIGNED OFF	SHARE
M1 · Rules agreed	Health check (US\$300), pricebook and files audited, margin rules, competitive items and approval thresholds agreed	About 1 week	Audit findings, rules and fixed quote	25%
M2 · Re-costed file	Supplier files matched, sell prices calculated, margin impact on the last six months, approval list built	About 1.5 weeks	The re-costed workbook and the approval list	40%
M3 · Approval and import	Owner decisions recorded, catalogue backed up, trial import, full import and count check	About 1 week	Import count equals approved count	25%
M4 · SOP	Quarterly routine written, one test run on a small price file, walkthrough recording	About 0.5 week	Office can run the next update	10%

The fixed quote follows the US\$300 health check, so the price is based on what is actually in your files. If the health check changes the plan, I re-quote before M2.

Typical scope for this kind of project: US\$1,200–2,000.

07 Handover

- The re-costing workbook (Excel) with the rules and the group margins
- The import file and the approved decision list
- A backup of the catalogue before the import
- The margin impact report
- A one-page quarterly SOP
- A recorded walkthrough
- Prepared by Manaz Afzal

08 Files

FILE	WHAT IT IS
pricebook_before_after.csv	1,400 pricebook lines with old and new cost, old and new sell, margin and reason
supplier_price_file_A.csv, _B.csv, _C.csv	The three supplier price files
simpro_catalogue_import.csv	1,383 rows for the Update Only import
approval_list.csv	279 lines that went to the owner, with the decision
billed_lines_apr_sep_2026.csv	11,000 billed lines with cost at date and the re-costed sell
xero_bill_crosscheck.csv	60 bill lines checked against the new cost