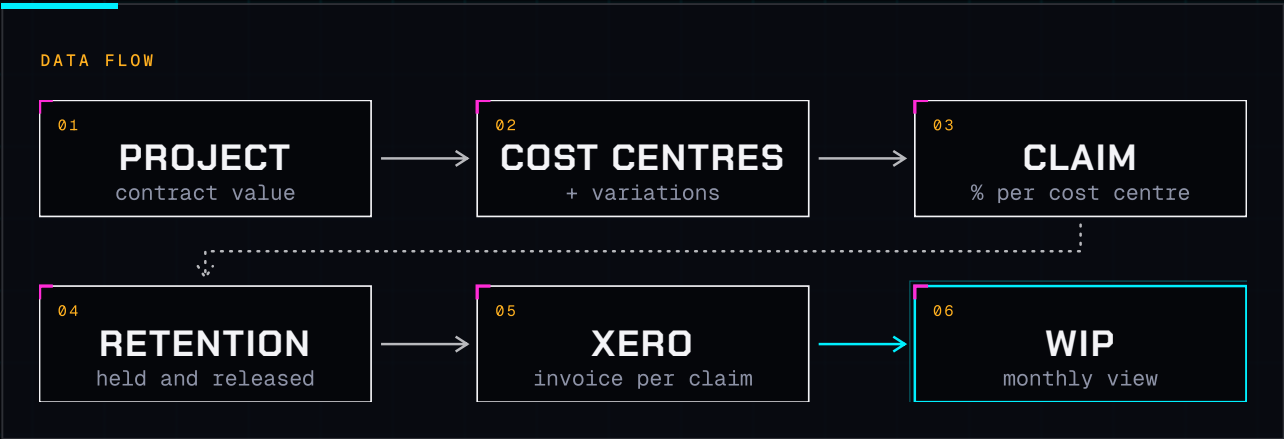


simPRO progress claims, variations and retention, tied to Xero

How I'd approach a Melbourne commercial electrical contractor that bills large projects from a spreadsheet, so that every progress claim includes its approved variations, retention is tracked to the dollar, and the owner can read a WIP view each month.

- simPRO
- Xero
- Excel

AREA Job costing and project billing	TOOLS simPRO · Xero · Excel
TYPICAL SCOPE US\$2,500–5,000	TIMELINE About 8 weeks, 4 milestones



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

01 The problem

A commercial electrical contractor runs 46 projects across a year: office and retail fit-outs, school and aged care work, warehouse lighting and EV charging. Quotes and jobs live in simPRO, but progress claims are worked out in an Excel workbook, typed into invoices, and then re-keyed into Xero.

Owners usually notice it in a handful of ways:

- A variation is approved by email, the work gets done, and the dollar value never reaches a claim
- Retention is deducted by the head contractor, then tracked by memory, so the second release is claimed late or not at all
- The claim in the workbook, the invoice in simPRO and the invoice in Xero are three different numbers
- Nobody can say what has been claimed against a project, or what is left, without opening five tabs
- The month-end picture of work done versus work billed is a guess

In this sample, the old workbook has **21 of 105 approved variations** missing from its claims, worth **\$291,000 ex GST** (\$320,100 including GST).

02 The outcome

This is what the setup does and delivers:

- Each project is set up in simPRO as **cost centres** with the contract value, so a progress claim is a percentage per cost centre, not a number typed into a workbook
- Approved variations become their own cost centres, ready to claim on the next itemised claim
- Retention is deducted on each claim at the contract rate, tracked per project, and listed with the date each release falls due
- An approved claim goes to Xero in one step, as an invoice with one line per cost centre, and the monthly tie-out shows simPRO and Xero agree
- A monthly **WIP report** shows, for every live project, cost to date, forecast cost to complete, earned revenue, billed to date and over or under billing
- A short SOP so the office raises claims the same way every month

03 Scope

EXHIBIT A Scope

DELIVERABLE	WHAT'S INCLUDED	NOTES
Health check of project billing	Review of the claims workbook, a sample of live projects in simPRO, and the Xero invoices and bills they produce. Findings, risk list and a fixed quote	US\$300, and the findings are yours to keep. If the findings change the plan, I re-quote before M2
Cost centre and labour rate design	A standard cost centre list for commercial electrical work, and cost and charge-out rates by labour type	Rates in this sample are illustrative; yours come from your own cost data

DELIVERABLE	WHAT'S INCLUDED	NOTES
Progress claim schedule per project	Each live project loaded with contract value by cost centre, claim basis and a claim date	Claims can be itemised by cost centre. Where a head contractor must approve first, a Request for Claim is used, which does not post to Xero
Variation and retention tracking	Variation register, variation cost centres, retention rate and release terms per project, retention register	Retention terms are taken from each contract. How retention appears on the Xero invoice is checked on a pilot claim and agreed with your accountant
Xero invoice and bill tie-out	Invoice stages, account codes, tax codes and an optional tracking category; a monthly tie-out of simPRO against Xero	Supplier bills post to Xero with each line at quantity 1, so the tie-out compares totals rather than quantities
Monthly WIP report and SOP	WIP workbook for live projects, a one-page monthly routine, and a recorded walkthrough	Cost-to-cost method, with the method written down so your accountant can review it
Not included	Replacing simPRO or Xero, estimating or tender work, and anything inside Xero that is accounting rather than set-up	Quoted separately if wanted

Not included: payroll, STP or BAS lodgement.

EXHIBIT B Sample data

ITEM	VOLUME
Projects in the 12 months to 30 September 2026	46 (17 live, 29 complete)
Claimable cost centres (contract and approved variation)	310
Progress claims raised in the period	520 (29 final claims)
Variations	140 (105 approved, 21 awaiting approval, 14 rejected)
Projects with 5% retention	22
Contract value	\$13,477,900 ex GST
Approved variations	\$1,777,600 ex GST
Months of WIP	12

04 Walkthrough

4.0 COST CENTRES AND LABOUR RATES

Before any project is loaded, the cost centre list is fixed so every project reports the same way and each cost centre points at one Xero revenue account. The codes and rates below are illustrative.

COST CENTRE	XERO REVENUE ACCOUNT (EXAMPLE)	TYPICAL CLAIM BASIS
Site establishment and temporary power	4010 Contract revenue: preliminaries	Claimed early, usually 100% by the second claim
Switchboards and metering	4020 Contract revenue: switchboards	Percentage as boards are built and installed
Containment and cabling	4030 Contract revenue: containment and cabling	Percentage by level or area
Lighting and emergency lighting	4040 Contract revenue: lighting	Percentage by level or area
Power and data outlets	4050 Contract revenue: power and data	Percentage by level or area
Mechanical services wiring	4060 Contract revenue: mechanical wiring	Percentage as equipment is connected
Fire detection interface	4070 Contract revenue: fire interface	Percentage, balance on sign-off
Testing and commissioning	4080 Contract revenue: testing	Held back to the end of the project
Variations	4090 Contract revenue: variations	Claimed once approved

LABOUR TYPE	COST RATE (PER HOUR)	CHARGE-OUT RATE (PER HOUR)
Licensed electrician	\$62.00	\$118.00
Leading hand	\$70.00	\$128.00

LABOUR TYPE	COST RATE (PER HOUR)	CHARGE-OUT RATE (PER HOUR)
Third-year apprentice	\$38.00	\$78.00
Cable and data technician	\$58.00	\$110.00

4.1 ONE PROJECT, AS SIMPRO HOLDS IT

Take **School science block, Essendon** (Head contractor 3, 5% retention). The contract is \$240,100 ex GST. Three variations were approved during the job. In simPRO each is a cost centre alongside the contract cost centres, so the total claimable value is the contract plus approved variations.

COST CENTRE	TYPE	VALUE (EX GST)	CLAIMED TO DATE	CLAIMED (EX GST)	REMAINING (EX GST)
Switchboards and metering	Contract	\$111,932.00	95%	\$106,335.40	\$5,596.60
Lighting and emergency lighting	Contract	\$118,564.00	95%	\$112,635.80	\$5,928.20
Testing and commissioning	Contract	\$9,604.00	15%	\$1,440.60	\$8,163.40
Variation V053	Approved variation	\$9,950.00	100%	\$9,950.00	\$0.00
Variation V067	Approved variation	\$13,500.00	100%	\$13,500.00	\$0.00
Variation V074	Approved variation	\$7,550.00	100%	\$7,550.00	\$0.00
Total		\$271,100.00		\$251,411.80	\$19,688.20

Contract \$240,100.00 + approved variations \$31,000.00 = **\$271,100.00**. Claimed \$251,411.80 + remaining \$19,688.20 = **\$271,100.00**.

4.2 VARIATIONS

Each variation moves through the same steps: raised from the site, priced, approved by the client in writing, then added in simPRO as a variation cost centre. Until it is approved it sits as "Awaiting approval" and is not claimable. Once approved, it appears on the next itemised claim. Where a variation should count towards retention, it is flagged when it is created.

Variation register for this project:

VARIATION	DESCRIPTION	APPROVED	VALUE (EX GST)	STATUS	ON OLD WORKBOOK
V053	Extra data points, tenancy 4	01 Jan 2026	\$9,950.00	Approved	No
V067	Additional circuits, level 2 fit-out	01 Feb 2026	\$13,500.00	Approved	No
V074	Luminaire change to client-selected type	08 Feb 2026	\$7,550.00	Approved	Yes

Across the full sample, 21 variations worth \$438,700 ex GST are awaiting approval. They show on a "chase approval" list rather than disappearing into email.

4.3 RETENTION

Terms in this sample are common ones: **5% of each claim is held back**, half is released at practical completion with the final claim, and the second half is claimed after a 12-month defects period. In simPRO, the retention rate is set on the project, deducted on each progress claim and tracked, and a release is raised when it falls due.

The last five claims on School science block, Essendon, with retention and GST:

CLAIM	DATE	TYPE	CLAIMED (EX GST)	RETENTION HELD BACK	RETENTION RELEASED	NET (EX GST)	GST	INVOICE TOTAL	RETENTION HELD AFTER
INV-30773	25 May 2026	Progress	\$92,198.40	\$4,609.92	\$0.00	\$87,588.48	\$8,758.85	\$96,347.33	\$9,238.05
INV-30793	10 Jun 2026	Progress	\$29,641.00	\$1,482.05	\$0.00	\$28,158.95	\$2,815.90	\$30,974.85	\$10,720.10
INV-30821	25 Jun 2026	Progress	\$29,641.00	\$1,482.05	\$0.00	\$28,158.95	\$2,815.90	\$30,974.85	\$12,202.15
INV-30861	25 Jul 2026	Progress	\$5,928.20	\$296.41	\$0.00	\$5,631.79	\$563.18	\$6,194.97	\$12,498.56
INV-30915	25 Sep 2026	Progress	\$1,440.60	\$72.03	\$0.00	\$1,368.57	\$136.86	\$1,505.43	\$12,570.59

Net = claimed – retention held back + retention released. GST is 10% of the net amount in this sample. GST treatment of retention depends on the contract, so it is agreed with your accountant before go-live.

Retention register, four projects from the sample:

PROJECT	NAME	DEDUCTED	RELEASED	STILL HELD	STATUS	SECOND RELEASE DUE
P2548	School science block, Essendon	\$12,570.59	\$0.00	\$12,570.59	Live	At practical completion
P2541	Apartment common areas, Clayton	\$15,550.04	\$0.00	\$15,550.04	Live	At practical completion
P2511	Office fit-out, Heidelberg	\$20,060.02	\$10,030.02	\$10,030.00	Complete	25 Apr 2027
P2515	Showroom refurbishment, Preston West	\$28,757.51	\$14,378.76	\$14,378.75	Complete	25 Dec 2026

Across all 22 retention projects, \$268,094.22 is currently held. 17 are complete with a second release date on the register, and 5 are still live.

4.4 FROM SIMPRO CLAIM TO XERO INVOICE

Only **approved** claims go to Xero. A claim can start as Pending so a second person checks it, and a Request for Claim lets the head contractor approve the numbers before anything posts. When the claim is approved and transferred, Xero receives an invoice built like this:

SIMPRO	XERO	NOTES
Invoice number	Invoice number	Same number in both systems
Job number	Reference	Job numbers carry a J prefix
Date issued, due date	Date, due date	Terms set per project
Each cost centre	One invoice line	Quantity is always 1
Cost centre amount	Unit amount	Always the tax-inclusive amount
Cost centre account code	Line account	Mapped once, in M1
Tax	Tax type	Xero applies its tax type from the simPRO tax-code mapping
Link to the simPRO invoice	URL on the invoice	Lets the office jump back to the claim

Example: claim INV-30762 on **Warehouse lighting upgrade, Preston** (no retention), dated 25 May 2026:

XERO LINE (COST CENTRE)	QTY	UNIT AMOUNT (INC GST)	EX GST	GST
Switchboards and metering	1	\$9,923.27	\$9,021.15	\$902.12
Power and data outlets	1	\$11,091.30	\$10,083.00	\$1,008.30
Mechanical services wiring	1	\$17,190.80	\$15,628.00	\$1,562.80
Invoice total		\$38,205.37	\$34,732.15	\$3,473.22

Monthly tie-out. Each month the approved claims in simPRO are compared with the invoices in Xero that came from simPRO. In the sample data:

MONTH	APPROVED CLAIMS	NET (EX GST)	GST	SIMPRO TOTAL	XERO TOTAL	DIFFERENCE	RETENTION HELD AT MONTH END
Oct 2025	24	\$1,059,340.73	\$105,934.09	\$1,165,274.82	\$1,165,274.82	\$0.00	\$187,996.11
Nov 2025	45	\$1,386,077.48	\$138,607.81	\$1,524,685.29	\$1,524,685.29	\$0.00	\$232,360.63
Dec 2025	43	\$1,353,846.21	\$135,384.67	\$1,489,230.88	\$1,489,230.88	\$0.00	\$261,928.42
Jan 2026	50	\$1,019,244.79	\$101,924.51	\$1,121,169.30	\$1,121,169.30	\$0.00	\$284,383.28
Feb 2026	60	\$954,021.76	\$95,402.25	\$1,049,424.01	\$1,049,424.01	\$0.00	\$291,349.87
Mar 2026	59	\$895,424.52	\$89,542.56	\$984,967.08	\$984,967.08	\$0.00	\$273,232.75
Apr 2026	46	\$799,793.68	\$79,979.43	\$879,773.11	\$879,773.11	\$0.00	\$276,167.02
May 2026	54	\$1,006,003.66	\$100,600.44	\$1,106,604.10	\$1,106,604.10	\$0.00	\$278,194.91
Jun 2026	48	\$1,102,417.55	\$110,241.85	\$1,212,659.40	\$1,212,659.40	\$0.00	\$257,399.61
Jul 2026	40	\$971,610.84	\$97,161.11	\$1,068,771.95	\$1,068,771.95	\$0.00	\$260,005.72

MONTH	APPROVED CLAIMS	NET (EX GST)	GST	SIMPRO TOTAL	XERO TOTAL	DIFFERENCE	RETENTION HELD AT MONTH END
Aug 2026	32	\$644,962.48	\$64,496.27	\$709,458.75	\$709,458.75	\$0.00	\$269,363.59
Sep 2026	19	\$274,261.47	\$27,426.16	\$301,687.63	\$301,687.63	\$0.00	\$268,094.22
12 months	520	\$11,467,005.17	\$1,146,701.15	\$12,613,706.32	\$12,613,706.32	\$0.00	

4.5 MONTHLY WIP VIEW

WIP uses the cost-to-cost method: percent complete = cost to date ÷ (cost to date + forecast cost to complete), earned revenue = percent complete × contract plus approved variations, and over or under billing = billed to date – earned revenue. A positive number means billed ahead of the work, and a negative number means work done that has not yet been claimed.

WIP at 30 September 2026, the six largest live projects (ex GST, whole dollars):

PROJECT	NAME	CONTRACT + VARIATIONS	COST TO DATE	FORECAST TO COMPLETE	% COMPLETE	EARNED	BILLED OVER / (UNDER)	FORECAST MARGIN	
P2546	Showroom refurbishment, Malvern	\$1,246,800	\$951,616	\$91,970	91.2%	\$1,136,921	\$1,148,458	\$11,537	16.3%
P2553	School science block, Bayswater	\$597,600	\$475,964	\$47,911	90.9%	\$542,947	\$553,010	\$10,064	12.3%
P2545	Showroom refurbishment, Hawthorn	\$471,850	\$377,961	\$21,434	94.6%	\$446,527	\$429,398	(\$17,129)	15.4%
P2526	School science block, Clayton	\$428,000	\$325,217	\$11,368	96.6%	\$413,545	\$408,585	(\$4,960)	21.4%
P2547	School science block, Dandenong	\$399,950	\$325,603	\$7,423	97.8%	\$391,036	\$372,485	(\$18,551)	16.7%
P2549	Warehouse lighting upgrade, Box Hill	\$395,700	\$250,968	\$62,753	80.0%	\$316,549	\$304,817	(\$11,732)	20.7%

Across all 17 live projects at 30 September 2026: contract plus approved variations \$5,529,250, billed \$5,039,377 and earned \$5,083,985. Overall the book is \$44,608 under-billed: \$40,984 billed ahead of the work on some projects, and \$85,592 of work not yet claimed on others.

05 Before and after, on the sample data

The same sample is checked before and after, so each fix can be seen against the problem it removes.

EXHIBIT C Checks

CHECK	BEFORE (CLAIMS WORKBOOK)	AFTER (SIMPRO AND XERO)	STATUS
Approved variations that reach a claim	84 of 105	105 of 105 as cost centres	PASS
Claimed to date + remaining = contract + approved variations	Worked out by hand, not checked	46 of 46 projects	PASS
Retention deducted = retention released + still held	Tracked by memory	22 of 22 retention projects	PASS
Second release has a due date	0 of 17	17 of 17	PASS
Approved claims agree with Xero	Three separate numbers	12 of 12 months, difference \$0.00	PASS
Billed to date less retention held = net invoiced in Xero	Not available	17 of 17 live projects	PASS

06 Milestones

EXHIBIT D Milestones

MILESTONE	WHAT HAPPENS	ROUGH DURATION	WHAT IS SIGNED OFF	SHARE
M1 · Health check and design	Health check (US\$300), cost centre and labour rate design, claim and retention rules per project, Xero account and tax mapping	About 1.5 weeks	Findings, design and a fixed quote	25%
M2 · simPRO configured, 3 pilot projects	Cost centres, rates, claim schedule, variation and retention set-up; three projects claimed end to end into Xero	About 3 weeks	Three pilot claims agree in simPRO and Xero	40%
M3 · All live projects loaded, claims checked	The 17 live projects loaded, variations and retention entered, one claim cycle run and tied out	About 2.5 weeks	Tie-out at \$0.00 and the retention register approved	25%
M4 · WIP report and handover	Monthly WIP workbook, SOP, recorded walkthrough and a two-week watch	About 1 week	First WIP report reviewed with the owner	10%

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

Typical scope for this kind of project: US\$2,500–5,000.

07 Handover

- Each live project set up in simPRO with cost centres, variation cost centres and retention terms
- A variation register and a retention register with release dates
- A monthly tie-out sheet comparing simPRO and Xero
- A WIP workbook with the method written down
- A one-page monthly routine for the office
- A recorded walkthrough
- Prepared by Manaz Afzal

08 Files

FILE	WHAT IT IS
projects.csv	46 projects with contract, approved variations, claimed to date and remaining
cost_centres.csv	310 cost centres with value, % claimed and remaining
claims.csv	520 progress claims raised in the 12 months, with retention, GST and totals. Projects that started before October 2025 also have earlier claims, which are not in this file
claim_lines.csv	Claim lines by cost centre, summing to each claim
variations.csv	140 variations with status and whether they were on the old workbook
retention.csv	Retention register for the 22 retention projects
xero_tieout.csv	Monthly simPRO and Xero tie-out
wip_live_projects_30_sep_2026.csv	WIP for the 17 live projects
wip_by_month.csv	WIP summary for each of the 12 month-ends