

ROADS REVIEW

This month, we asked the industry's decision-makers, 'What are some alternative road construction or maintenance methods that have caught your eye in 2026?'



TANIA CONNERS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER – AUSTSTAB

In 2026, the methods that have really caught my eye are those that extend pavement life while reducing cost, disruption and waste. In-situ stabilisation and pavement recycling continue to stand out, particularly where existing materials can be reused rather than removed and replaced. I'm also interested in low-carbon binders, improved moisture management, smarter asset maintenance planning and better use of field testing to support performance-based decisions.

Image: AustStab



CADELL TAYE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER – NATIONAL PRECAST CONCRETE ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA

One of the biggest shifts has been towards accelerated construction methods that minimise disruption to road users. Greater use of factory manufactured precast concrete bridge components, modular drainage systems and precast retaining walls is reducing construction time while improving quality and safety. We're also seeing increased adoption of lower carbon concrete mixes and digital carbon measurement, allowing asset owners to make more informed procurement decisions. Together, these approaches are helping deliver infrastructure faster, with less disruption and a lower environmental footprint.

Image: National Precast



JOHN WILLIAMS, NATIONAL SALES MANAGER – AUSROAD

There is a genuine shift occurring in how road agencies approach asset management. The focus is increasingly on preserving pavements earlier in their lifecycle. To maximise the benefits of these innovative maintenance techniques, the industry needs continued support to build a strong network of skilled contractors and suppliers capable of delivering cost-effective, long-term outcomes for road owners and their communities.

Image: AUSROAD



RITCHIE TAYLOR, HEAD OF TRANSPORT – ASSET VISION

One innovation that has caught my eye in 2026 is the use of network-scale ride quality data, through tools such as AutoPilot's Ride Quality Index. It shifts the conversation from simply identifying defects to understanding the road user experience and selecting the most appropriate treatment. Some visibly cracked roads may still provide a good ride, meaning a lower-cost surface treatment could be more appropriate than full rehabilitation. With budgets under pressure, combining ride quality with asset condition helps road authorities better balance customer outcomes, asset life and investment, while applying the right treatment at the right time.

Image: Asset Vision



MELISSA LYONS - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TECHNOLOGY – AFPA

Compaction is the invisible half of pavement quality – get it wrong and no binder, mix design, or sealing schedule saves the road. What's caught my eye in 2026 is intelligent compaction moving from pilot to standard practice – real-time data that means fewer under-compacted sections quietly shortening pavement life before a single vehicle drives on it. In the long run, this means fewer potholes. Once you have a quality pavement, a consistent preventive maintenance regime is far easier to follow, which is exactly what sits behind AFPA's seven per cent resurfacing benchmark.

Image: AFPA

If you or someone at your organisation is an industry leader and would like to be a part of this monthly column in 2026, please get in touch with Editor, Tom O'Keane: tom.okeane@primecreative.com.au