ROADS REVIEW

This month, we asked the industry's decision-makers, 'What advances in asset management technology or methods have excited you the most in 2026?'

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

The most encouraging development in 2026 has been the growing integration of digital asset information across the entire infrastructure lifecycle. Asset management is no longer just about maintaining infrastructure, it is increasingly informing better design, procurement and construction decisions from the outset. Combining accurate asset data with condition monitoring, predictive maintenance and embodied carbon information is helping owners make more informed, whole of life decisions. This shift creates opportunities for higher quality manufactured solutions, such as precast concrete, that deliver durability, consistency and long term value while supporting more sustainable infrastructure outcomes.

Image: National Precast

GEOFF ALLAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE – AUSTROADS

One of the developments that has excited me most in 2026 is the growing maturity of asset management practices, with greater integration of customer outcomes, risk, sustainability and data-driven decision-making into infrastructure planning and investment decisions. This is being reflected in Austroads' current review of the *Guide to Asset Management*, which is examining how emerging practices, technologies and changing operating environments are influencing the way road agencies manage infrastructure assets. As road networks become more complex and data-rich, there is growing opportunity to use better information to support investment decisions, improve resilience and maximise value across the asset lifecycle. The review will help ensure the guidance continues to support road agencies in applying contemporary asset management practices and responding to future challenges and opportunities.

Image: Austroads

TANJA CONNERS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER – AUSTSTAB

In 2026, the most exciting advances in asset management have been those turning better data into earlier, smarter intervention. Artificial intelligence, digital twins, mobile condition assessment and improved performance modelling are giving asset owners a clearer understanding of how pavements deteriorate and where investment will deliver greatest whole-of-life value. For the pavement recycling and stabilisation industry, this is particularly significant. Better forecasting supports a shift from reactive repair to planned rehabilitation, allowing existing materials to be strengthened and reused before failure occurs. The result is longer-lasting roads, lower emissions, reduced demand for virgin materials and better value for Australian communities.

Image: AustStab

CHRIS WIGNALL, HEAD OF EMERGING MARKETS – ASSET VISION

What excites me most is seeing technology make asset management safer and easier for the people doing the work. AI can capture and interpret road imagery, helping teams find issues earlier while spending less time inspecting assets beside live traffic. Natural language tools also make complex data easier to use. People can ask questions in everyday language and quickly find the information they need. This helps teams make practical decisions sooner, address risks before they become bigger problems and create safer roads for both field crews and the communities they serve.

Image: Asset Vision

CHRIS CLEATON, REGIONAL MANAGER – STABILISED PAVEMENTS OF AUSTRALIA

Australia has always faced the challenge of maintaining one of the world's largest road networks with a relatively small population and finite budgets. As labour, fuel and bitumen costs continue to rise, we're rehabilitating fewer kilometres of road for the same investment. The introduction and growing acceptance of Cold In-Place Asphalt Recycling (CIPAR) has been the most exciting development of 2026. Using the Wirtgen WR380 paver-laid process, we can recycle 100 per cent of the existing asphalt and pavement in situ, eliminating unnecessary haulage, reducing carbon emissions and heavy vehicle movements, and delivering a high-quality engineered pavement. It's a technology that allows us to renew existing assets rather than replace them, stretching infrastructure budgets further while improving sustainability and network resilience.

Image: SPA

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