

**ORVX.AI**

THE PLUMBER'S GUIDE TO AI

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**The burst pipe  
at 6am rang you  
first. You were  
under a house.  
They rang the  
next bloke.**

Where a plumber's week actually goes, the calls you're losing without knowing it, and how to be the plumber Google shows first.

Written by ORVX AI, the AI specialists for Australian tradies. September 2026.

WHERE YOUR WEEK GOES

# You're a plumber for 30 hours a week. The other 15 are unpaid.

Plumbing is the trade with the most inbound urgency and the worst phone coverage. Add up your week honestly.

| THE JOB THAT ISN'T THE JOB | WHAT IT ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE                                               | HOURS A WEEK |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Missed and returned calls  | Under a house, on a roof, hands in a drain. Six calls a day go unanswered | 3.5 hrs      |
| Quoting                    | Site visit, write it up that night, send it, never chase it               | 3 hrs        |
| Invoicing and chasing      | Invoice sent two days after the job, chased twice, paid in six weeks      | 2.5 hrs      |
| Scheduling and reshuffling | Emergency job blows up the day. Ring four customers to move them          | 2 hrs        |
| Customer updates           | 'Are you still coming', 'what time', 'is it fixed'                        | 1.5 hrs      |
| Compliance paperwork       | Certificates of compliance, gas notices, backflow test reports            | 1.5 hrs      |
| Marketing you meant to do  | Reviews you didn't ask for, posts you didn't make                         | 1 hr         |
| Total                      | Time you are not billing                                                  | 15 hrs       |

15 hrs

a week off the tools, before you've fixed a single thing on site

720 hrs

a year. That's 18 full working weeks of admin

\$46,800

a year at \$130/hr, if only half of those hours became billable time

These are estimates for a typical 1 to 8 person plumber business, not a measurement of yours. Put your own numbers in. Most owners who do this find they were guessing low.

A plumber charging \$130 an hour who misses six calls a day isn't losing six calls. He's losing the two jobs a day that would have booked if someone had answered.

## PLAIN ENGLISH

# What AI actually is, and what it isn't

For a plumber, AI is a fast, patient office worker who never sleeps, never gets sick of the same question, and can read, write and talk in plain English. That's the whole definition.

## What it does well

- Answers the phone and texts when you can't, and takes the job details properly
- Writes the follow-up you keep meaning to send
- Turns a voice note into a quote, a job note or a site diary entry
- Sorts enquiries so the tyre kickers don't cost you a site visit
- Sends the customer updates you'd send if you had the time
- Drafts your Google posts, reviews replies and job photos captions

## What it can't do

- Fix cashflow. It can chase invoices, it can't make a builder pay retention
- Find you a good apprentice
- Do the work. Nobody's software is picking up a shovel
- Replace your judgement on a price, a variation or a dodgy client
- Work without a system. If your jobs live in your head, start there
- Sign off on a certificate of compliance or a gas notice. That stays with you and your licence

## Three myths that cost plumbers money

- 01** "It's too expensive for a business my size." The tools you already pay for (job management, Xero, your phone plan) mostly have AI features switched off. Most of the wins in this guide cost nothing or under \$100 a month.
- 02** "My customers want to talk to a person." They want an answer. A text back in 30 seconds beats a callback at 6pm every time. You still ring them. You just ring them before your competitor does.
- 03** "I'm not technical." If you can send a voice note and read a text, you can run every system in this guide. The setup is the only hard bit, and it's a one-off.

**AI doesn't replace the tradie. It replaces the two hours of admin the tradie does after dinner.**

## FIX THESE FIRST

# Five leaks to plug before you buy anything else

In order. Number one is worth more than the other four combined for most plumbers.

## 01 Missed-call text-back, today

Someone with water coming through the ceiling doesn't leave a voicemail. Within 20 seconds of the missed call they get a text: 'Sorry I missed you, I'm on a job. Is it urgent? Reply with your suburb and the problem and I'll call you back within 15 minutes.' Most reply. Most book.

**Do this:** Switch this on in your job management app or a \$30 a month tool. It is the single highest-return thing in this guide.

## 02 An AI receptionist for after hours

An AI voice assistant answers at 11pm, asks the address and the problem, tells them your call-out fee, and texts you a summary. Genuine emergencies wake you. Dripping taps don't.

**Do this:** Start with after-hours only. Once you trust it, extend it to when you're on the tools.

## 03 Quotes drafted from a voice note

Walk the job, voice-note what you saw and what it needs. AI writes the quote with your standard inclusions and exclusions. You add the price and send it from the ute. Same day beats next week.

**Do this:** Build a set of standard quote templates once: hot water swap, blocked drain, bathroom rough-in. AI fills them from your voice note.

## 04 Follow-up that runs itself

Quotes over \$1,000 get three automatic follow-ups. Under \$1,000 get one. You only ring the ones who reply.

**Do this:** Write the messages in your voice. Set and forget.

## 05 Same-day invoicing and reminder chasing

Job marked done on your phone, invoice sent before you've left the driveway, polite reminders at day 7, 14 and 21. Your average days-to-paid drops and you never chase by hand again.

**Do this:** Most job software does this. The reminders are the part plumbers switch off. Switch them on.

THE PLUMBER'S PROBLEM

Emergency work is where you make money and lose customers

Emergency and after-hours jobs pay the most and are the hardest to capture, because you can only answer one phone while you're fixing one problem. This is the exact gap AI closes.

**What the customer needs at 10pm**

- Someone to answer
- To know you can come tonight or first thing
- To know roughly what it'll cost
- To know what to do right now (turn the water off at the meter)

An AI receptionist does all four. A voicemail does none. They ring the next plumber on the map.

**What you need at 10pm**

- To know if it's a real emergency or a Tuesday job
- The address and the problem before you ring back
- Not to be woken for a slow drip
- To have the call-out fee agreed before you leave

Same assistant. It texts you the summary and only rings you for the real ones.

**The maths on emergency capture**

| YOUR NUMBERS                                     | EXAMPLE    | YOURS |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|-------|
| After-hours and on-tools calls you miss per week | 15         |       |
| How many would have booked if answered           | 1 in 3 = 5 |       |
| Average value of one of those jobs               | \$650      |       |
| Jobs you're losing a week                        | \$3,250    |       |
| Over 48 working weeks                            | \$156,000  |       |

These are example figures, not a promise. Put yours in. Even if you halve every number, it's the biggest lever in your business and it costs less than a tank of diesel a month.

**Compliance paperwork**

Certificates of compliance, gas notices and backflow reports are the admin plumbers hate most. AI can pre-fill them from the job record and the photos, and remind you what's outstanding. You still sign. You just don't type.

**Recurring revenue you're ignoring**

Hot water systems have a lifespan. Backflow devices need annual testing. Every job you've ever done has a date in the future when they'll need you again. AI sends the reminder on that date, in your name. That's a maintenance business without the marketing.

QUOTING AND BUDGETING

Quotes priced off today's material prices, not last year's list

Most plumbers quote from memory, a stale price list and a gut feel. Then materials cost more than the quote said and the margin disappears.

### How automated quoting works

1. You describe the job by voice note on site, with photos. "Replace a 250 litre electric hot water unit, same spot, valves and tempering valve, take the old one away."
2. AI builds the scope and material list from your own templates, with your standard inclusions and exclusions.
3. Prices come from live sources: your trade supplier price files (Reece, Tradelink, Samios, your Bunnings PowerPass) and current retail pricing for the odds and ends. Priced on the day.
4. Labour comes from your rate sheet. AI applies it, you adjust it.
5. You check it and send it, with a price validity date, so if copper or timber moves next month you're covered.

### What the materials line looks like

| ITEM                                  | PRICED FROM            | EXAMPLE |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| 250L electric hot water unit          | Reece trade price file | \$1,380 |
| Tempering valve, PTR valve, duo valve | Reece                  | \$215   |
| Copper, fittings, flex hoses, lagging | Tradelink              | \$140   |
| Pressure limiting valve               | Retail, current        | \$85    |
| Disposal of old unit                  | Your rule              | \$60    |
| Labour: 3 hours                       | Your rate sheet        | \$390   |
| Certificate of compliance             | Your rule              | \$0     |

Example items and figures, not a price list.

### Budgeting and job costing

Once the quote is built from real line items, the budget exists automatically. As invoices and timesheets come in, AI matches them to the quote and tells you mid-job whether you're on margin or bleeding. For a plumber the win is speed as much as accuracy: the hot water quote goes out from the driveway at a price you know is right today.

### Where it breaks

It prices materials accurately. It doesn't price what's behind the wall, so keep your contingency. Retail and trade prices differ, so use your trade accounts. Prices move, so the validity date isn't optional. And your labour estimate is still yours: AI applies your rates, it doesn't know how slow that client's driveway is.

The customer isn't comparing your price to the other plumber's. They're comparing who sent a proper quote first.

## MORE LEADS

# Where your next 20 jobs are already sitting

You don't need more traffic. You need to stop losing the enquiries you already get. Then you need Google to trust you. In that order.

## 1. The leads you're already losing

Missed calls, web forms answered the next day, quotes never chased. Pages 4 and 5 cover them. The short version: reply in under five minutes, follow up three times, and you're usually the only one who did.

The one most plumbers forget: old customers. Hot water systems fail on a schedule. Backflow needs annual testing. Every customer from the last ten years has a date they'll need you again, and AI can send the reminder on that date.

## 2. The leads you're not getting yet

- **Google Business Profile.** Most plumber searches end in the map, not the website. Your profile needs 50+ reviews, weekly photos and a post a week. AI drafts the posts and the review replies.
- **Review requests on autopilot.** A text two hours after job completion, with the direct review link. No asking, no forgetting.
- **Referral partners.** Real estate property managers, strata managers, builders and sparkies send plumbing work every week. To whoever they remember. A monthly check-in message to each of them, drafted for you, keeps you top of mind.
- **Directories with a purpose.** hipages and Airtasker are pay-to-play and everyone's on them. Use them to fill gaps, not as the plan.

## What "lead qualification" means for you

Before you drive to a site visit, you want to know four things: where they are, what's happening, whether it's urgent, and whether they own the place or rent it. An AI assistant on your phone or web form asks those four questions the moment someone enquires and puts the answers in your job system. You only ring back the ones worth ringing.

Being the best plumber in town is worth nothing if you're the third one to ring back.

## RANKING ON GOOGLE

# How a plumber actually gets to the top of Google

Nobody is searching "best plumber in Australia". They search "emergency plumber near me" at 7:40am, ring the first one that answers, and never look at page two. Local SEO for a plumber is a map problem first and a website problem second.

## The map pack (do this first)

- ☐ Claim and fully complete your Google Business Profile: every service listed, every suburb you cover, hours, licence number
- ☐ Get to 50 reviews, then 100. Ask every single customer, by text, same day
- ☐ Reply to every review within 48 hours. AI drafts it, you approve it
- ☐ Upload 3 to 5 real job photos a week. Phone photos, not stock
- ☐ Post once a week: a job, a tip, a before and after
- ☐ Same business name, phone and address everywhere online. Any mismatch costs you

## The website (do this second)

- ☐ One page per service you want to be found for, not one page listing everything
- ☐ One page per main suburb or area you work in, with real jobs from that area on it
- ☐ Phone number tappable at the top of every page on mobile
- ☐ Loads in under 3 seconds on a phone. Test it on your own
- ☐ Answers the questions customers ask you on the phone. AI can turn your voice notes into those pages

## What people actually type

| SEARCH                              | WHAT THEY WANT                                    |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| emergency plumber near me           | Water on the floor, ringing the first result      |
| plumber [suburb]                    | Standard job, comparing two or three              |
| blocked drain [suburb]              | Same-day job, price and speed                     |
| hot water system replacement [city] | High-value, wants a price range now               |
| gas plumber [suburb]                | Licence-driven, wants proof                       |
| 24 hour plumber [city]              | After hours. Only worth ranking for if you answer |

Build a page or a Google post around each of these. Use the words your customers use, not the words your supplier uses.

### Where AI fits in SEO

It won't rank you. It removes the reason you never did the work: it drafts the suburb pages from your job notes, writes the weekly post from your photos, answers reviews, and keeps the whole thing running when you're flat out. The photos and the reviews still have to be real.

For 'emergency plumber near me', Google shows whoever's closest, best reviewed and answering. Two of those three you can fix this month.

## MARKETING

# Marketing that takes 20 minutes a week, not your Friday

You already make the best content in your industry every day. It's called your work. The only reason it never gets posted is that posting takes time you don't have. That's the exact job AI is for.

## The 20-minute system

- 01** Monday to Thursday, on site: take one photo or a 10-second video per job. Before and after if you can. Send it to a WhatsApp group or folder with a one-line voice note.
- 02** Friday, 20 minutes: AI turns the week's photos and voice notes into a Google post, a Facebook post, an Instagram post and a review reply or two. You read them, fix anything that doesn't sound like you, hit approve.
- 03** Once a month: one longer piece. A common problem you fixed, explained the way you'd explain it to the customer. That becomes a website page and gets you found.

## Posts that work for plumbers

- 'What we pulled out of the drain' photos. People love them, they get shared
- Hot water system before and after with the age of the old one
- One-minute video: how to turn off your water at the meter
- The job that could have been \$200 if they'd called a week earlier
- Suburb shout-outs: 'three jobs in Weston Creek this week'
- A review screenshot with a thank-you to the customer by first name

## Rules that stop you sounding like every other tradie page

- Show the mess before the finish. Customers trust the before photo more than the after
- Name the suburb. "Bathroom reno in Belconnen" gets found. "Another great job" doesn't
- Explain one thing. What went wrong, why, what you did. That's the whole post
- Never post a stock photo. One real photo of your ute beats ten of someone else's
- Read every AI draft out loud once. If it doesn't sound like you at the counter, change three words

**Your job photos are the marketing. AI is just the bloke who finally posts them.**

START THIS WEEK

Your first 30 days

Most of this uses tools you already have. Don't buy anything new until week three.

**Week 1: stop the bleeding**

- ☐ Switch on missed-call text-back. Your job management software or a \$30/month tool does this
- ☐ Write your three quote follow-up messages once. Set them to send automatically at day 2, 5 and 10
- ☐ Set a review request text to send after every completed job

**Week 2: get found**

- ☐ Complete every field on your Google Business Profile
- ☐ Upload 10 real job photos. Reply to every existing review
- ☐ List every suburb you work in as a service area

**Week 3: give your evenings back**

- ☐ Start sending voice notes instead of typing job notes. Use AI to turn them into text in your job system
- ☐ Use AI to draft your quotes from a voice description of the job. Connect your supplier price lists so the materials line is priced on the day
- ☐ Set a reminder to send every hot water customer a check-in message 8 years after install

**Week 4: make it run without you**

- ☐ Set up the 20-minute Friday content routine
- ☐ Put an AI assistant on your web form or WhatsApp to ask the four qualifying questions
- ☐ Measure: missed calls, quotes sent, quotes won, reviews. Four numbers, once a week

Tools worth knowing (we don't sell any of these)

| JOB                                                | OPTIONS PLUMBERS USE                                                                      | COST             |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Job management, quotes, invoices                   | ServiceM8, Tradify, Fergus, simPRO, AroFlo                                                | \$30 to \$150/mo |
| Missed call text-back, review requests, follow-ups | Your job software if it has it, otherwise a CRM like GoHighLevel or Podium                | \$0 to \$100/mo  |
| Voice notes to quotes, posts, replies              | Claude, ChatGPT, or the AI inside your job software                                       | \$0 to \$30/mo   |
| Phone answering when you can't                     | AI receptionist (many options), or a human answering service                              | \$50 to \$300/mo |
| Connecting it all so it runs itself                | Your job software's built-in automations first. Then Zapier, Make or n8n if you need more | \$0 to \$50/mo   |

Switching everything on yourself works if you've got a spare weekend and patience. Most owners get to week two and stall. That's normal. Pick the one fix worth the most to you, finish it, and only then start the next.

## STEAL THESE

# The messages. Copy them, change the name, send them.

Every system in this guide runs on a handful of texts. Here they are, written for a plumber. Put them in your job software as templates and they send themselves.

## Missed-call text-back (sends 20 seconds after a missed call)

Hi, it's [your name] from [business]. Sorry I missed you, I'm on a job. If it's urgent reply URGENT and I'll ring you within 15 minutes. Otherwise reply with your suburb and what you need and I'll call you back before 5.

## Review request (2 hours after job done)

Thanks for having us today [first name]. If you were happy with the hot water system, a quick Google review helps us more than you'd think. Takes 30 seconds: [review link]. And if anything's not right, reply here first and I'll sort it.

## Quote follow-up 1 (day 2)

Hi [first name], [your name] here. Just checking the quote for the hot water system came through OK. Any questions on it, ring me or reply here.

## On the way

Hi [first name], [your name] from [business] here, I'm about 20 minutes away. See you soon.

## Quote follow-up 2 (day 5)

Hi [first name], happy to run through the quote if anything's unclear, or I can price a couple of other unit options if the budget's tight. No pressure, just want to make sure you've got what you need to decide.

## Weather or delay reshuffle

Hi [first name], an emergency job's blown out and I can't make it today. I've moved you to [new date], [time]. If that doesn't work reply here and we'll find another slot. Sorry for the stuff-around.

## Quote follow-up 3 (day 10)

Hi [first name], last one from me. We've got a spot open [week] if you'd like to lock it in, after that it's about three weeks out. If you've gone another way, no worries at all, thanks for the chance to quote.

## Past customer re-engagement

Hi [first name], [your name] from [business]. We did the hot water system for you a while back. It's coming up on the age where they start to go. A quick check now beats a cold shower in July. Reply if you'd like me to book it in.

## Web form auto-reply (instant)

Thanks [first name], got your enquiry. So I can give you a straight answer fast: where they are, what's happening, whether it's urgent, and whether they own the place or rent it? Reply here and I'll call you today.

## BEFORE YOU GO

## The short version, if you read nothing else

- 01** You're losing more jobs to a missed call than to a competitor. Switch on missed-call text-back today. It's the cheapest thing in this guide and the biggest.
- 02** The quote you never chased was the job you already paid for. Three follow-ups, written once, sent automatically. Page 11 has them.
- 03** Price the materials off today's prices, put a validity date on the quote, and stop paying for the difference yourself.
- 04** Your job photos are your marketing. One a day, posted on Friday in 20 minutes. Suburb in the caption.
- 05** Your past customers are your quiet months. A message on the right date, in your name, sent for you.
- 06** AI does the admin. It doesn't do the trade, the judgement or the cashflow. Anyone telling you otherwise is selling something.

Written by ORVX AI, the AI specialists for tradies.

### If you'd rather not set it up yourself

Thirty minutes on the phone. You tell us where your week goes, we tell you which two things would move the needle for your business, roughly what they'd cost to wire up, and whether you should just do it yourself. If the answer is do it yourself, we'll say that.

**Book a 30-minute call at [orvxai.com](https://orvxai.com)**

Or ring +61 2 5300 4038, or email [hello@orvxai.com](mailto:hello@orvxai.com). We answer it.

## Nobody chooses a plumber. They choose whoever answered.