

# MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE PREVENTION: **WHY YOU SHOULD ENGAGE** & WHO CAN HELP

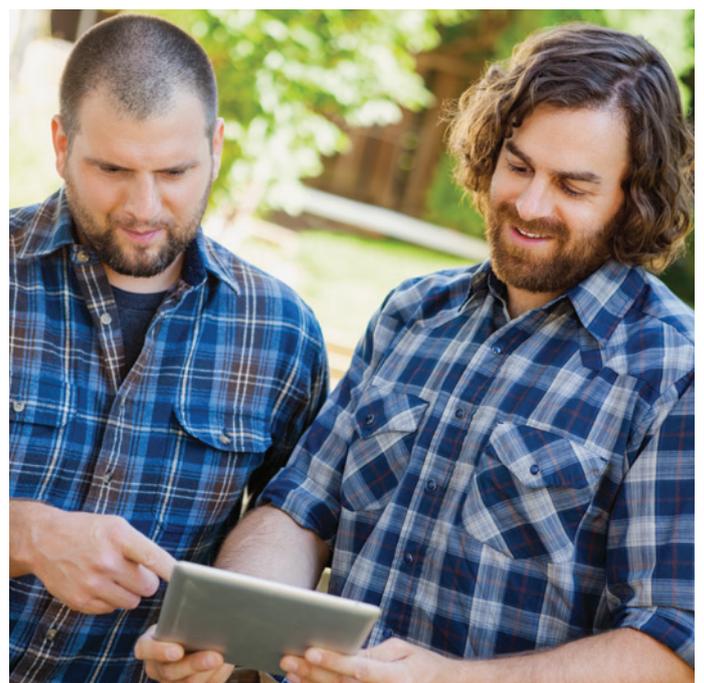
**There are good reasons for businesses to engage in mental health and suicide prevention.**

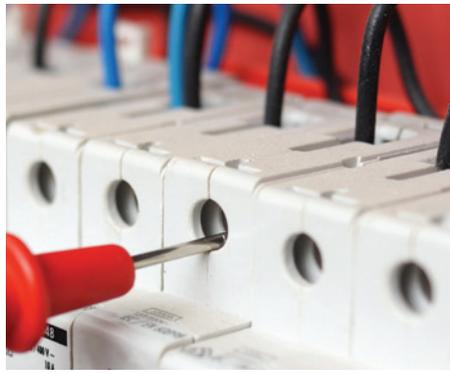
**THE WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT 2011 IMPOSES DUTIES ON EMPLOYERS AND PROJECT MANAGERS TO, AS FAR AS IS REASONABLY PRACTICABLE, ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE WORKERS IN THE WORKPLACES FOR WHICH YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE.**

**THIS LEGISLATION APPLIES AS EQUALLY TO MENTAL HEALTH AS IT DOES TO PHYSICAL HEALTH.**

It is also well established that mentally healthy workplaces are workplaces of choice, are more productive, and have less absenteeism. Therefore, establishing a mentally healthy workplace makes good business sense.

Throughout Australia, there are various government requirements to encourage mentally healthy workplaces. For example, the Queensland Government expects contractors working on government funded projects to focus on the mental health and wellbeing of their workforce. A focus on mental health is included in the government's pre-qualification program.





# MATES in Construction can help

MATES IN CONSTRUCTION (MATES) WAS CREATED IN 2008 AS A CROSS INDUSTRY RESPONSE TO THE HIGH SUICIDE RATES IN THE QUEENSLAND BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

As an independent charity, we only exist for the purpose of reducing suicide and improving mental health amongst workers in our industry across Australia.

## MATES' MISSION

### RAISE AWARENESS

01

about mental health and suicide risk in the workplace.

### BUILD RESILIENCE

02

on sites by creating peer networks to allow workers to support each other.

### CONNECT WORKERS

03

to help assisting them to find the best and most suitable support.

### INFORMING INDUSTRY

04

through partnerships with researchers about mental health and suicide.

## About mental health and suicide in the building and construction industry

**EACH YEAR MORE THAN 190 AUSTRALIAN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS DIE BY SUICIDE. SUICIDE IS THE MOST EXTREME AND SERIOUS RESULT OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH.**

For every worker our industry loses to a fatal accident at work, more than 6 workers will die by suicide. It is also estimated that for every death by suicide 2.5 workers will be seriously and permanently incapacitated following a suicide attempt.

Poor mental health and suicide risk is particularly high amongst the industry's youngest workers. Consistently, research has shown that young workers in the industry have suicide rates at least twice the rate of other young employed men in Australia. A 2020 report commissioned by MATES in Construction found that up to 30% of apprentices had considered suicide in a 12 month period, 30% experienced poor mental health and 13% were likely to have such poor mental health that it would qualify as a severe mental illness.

It is well documented that 1 in 5 Australian's will experience a diagnosable mental health condition in any 12-month period. However, men are much less likely than women to seek professional help or support when they are struggling. While most mental health conditions can be managed with appropriate support and treatment, poor mental health can impact workers' private and professional quality of life and can in extreme cases be fatal.

It is possible to make a major difference to mental health and suicide risk in the workplace by taking simple actions. Your business can help our industry to make a major difference to these statistics.

MATES in Construction helps workers and businesses in the Australian construction industry to improve their mental health. Find out more about why MATES was founded and how they help in the next column.

TO FIND OUT MORE, GET IN TOUCH TODAY



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