

WE CAN ALL HELP TO PREVENT SUICIDE

World Suicide Prevention Day occurs on Sunday September 10. Master Builders director Michael McLean explains the significance to the building industry.

AUSTRALIAN construction workers are 71 per cent more likely to die from suicide than other employed persons and six times more likely to die from suicide than from a work-related incident.

Suicide is the leading cause of death for Australian males aged 25-44 and females aged 25-34. Suicide rates for construction apprentices are also unacceptably high.

Males account for approximately 75 per cent of all suicides. One of the major causes of suicide is from life events such as relationship breakdowns, bullying, financial issues and loss of a job.

Every year nearly 200 construction workers around Australia take their own lives. That's more than one worker every second day. Deakin University research found 469 construction workers in WA died by suicide between 2001 and 2015. That's 33 per year on average.

The cost of suicidal behaviour amongst WA construction workers has been assessed to be \$461 million per year (in 2012 health dollars). In 2012, a total of 42 suicide deaths were recorded and an estimate of 107 workers were fully incapacitated by a suicide attempt and 523 having time off work from a suicide attempt.

Incredibly, suicide causes twice as many deaths than traffic accidents.

World Suicide Prevention Day encourages the building industry to:

- Speak up to reduce the stigma around talking about suicide.
- Work together to make a positive impact on our mental health and wellbeing.
- Be informed of the help available to all those touched by suicide.
- Build a more resilient community to prevent suicide.

Mates in Construction is an organisation that has been established to raise awareness

about and reduce the incidence of suicide in the building industry. Mates in Construction has launched a 'Fly the Flag for Suicide Prevention' campaign on RU OK Day on Thursday September 14.

On this day, builders are being encouraged to 'fly the flag' on their building sites and at their workplaces to promote suicide prevention in our industry.

This is a great opportunity for the building industry across all its sectors to come together to raise awareness about suicides among our workforce.

Mates in Construction has a range of flags available free of charge for use on cranes, flagpoles, in lunch rooms, scaffolding and offices. Staff from Mates in Construction are available to conduct onsite awareness training for builders and their teams.

Builders are encouraged to register their interest in flying the flag for suicide prevention via the website www.matesinconstruction.org.au or calling Mates in Construction on 9463 6664.

When confronted by thoughts of suicide, one of the hardest things for someone to do is to ask for help. Master Builders is keen to change the culture in our male-dominated industry so that asking for help is seen as a strength, not a weakness. People who have sought help say it was much easier than imagined and they felt a great relief.

If you or anyone you know is depressed or doing it tough, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Mates in Construction on 1300 642 111.

Storing these important suicide prevention phone numbers in your mobile phone could possibly save someone's life.

With today being Father's Day, it's a great opportunity to let your father know how special he is to you and your family.

From time to time, you might like to ask him, "Dad, RU OK?" – he'll be glad you cared enough about him to ask.

