

HELPING TO PREVENT SUICIDE



World Suicide Prevention Day occurs on Monday September 10 and R U OK? Day occurs on Thursday September 13. Master Builders director Michael McLean explains the significance of both dates to the building industry.

PEOPLE who work in the building and construction industry 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 deaths 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. Some of the major causes of suicide are 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 life. 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.

Incredibly, suicide causes twice as many deaths as 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 and supportive 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. Brad Geatches was recently appointed CEO of MATES in Construction WA.

MATES in Construction recently launched its Fly the Flag for Suicide

Prevention campaign on R U OK? Day on Thursday September 13.

On this day builders are encouraged to 'fly the flag' at their building sites and workplaces to show solidarity in promoting suicide prevention in our industry.

This is a great opportunity for the building industry across all its sectors to show the wider community we are working together to reduce suicide among our workforce.

MATES in Construction has a range of flags available for use on cranes, flagpoles and scaffolding, as well as in lunch rooms and offices.

Builders across the state are encouraged to register their interest in flying the flag for suicide prevention via the MATES in Construction website – www.matesinconstruction.org.au/mates-events/fly-the-flag-2018 – or by calling 9463 6664.

When confronted with thoughts of suicide, one of the hardest things for someone to do is ask for help. Master Builders is keen to change the culture in our male-dominated industry so asking for help is seen as normal and part of your work life. People who have sought help say they felt a great relief and should have sought help sooner.

If you or anyone you know is doing it tough or feels confused and alone, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or MATES in Construction on 1300 642 111.

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

This is also a great opportunity to let your loved ones know how special they are to you and your family. From time to time, you might like to ask them 'R U OK?'

They'll be glad you cared enough about them to ask.