



MATES in Construction NZ

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0800 111 315 or free text 5353

Media Release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 5am WEDNESDAY 1 APRIL

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Free online Lunch Room set up to help construction workers beat isolation during lockdown

Peer support platform to run daily from

Wednesday 1 April at 10:30am

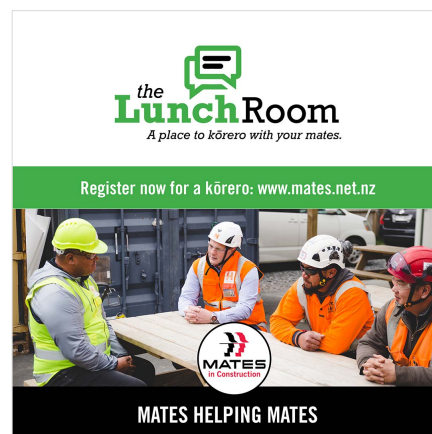
Being isolated for four weeks is not an easy feat for anyone. This is why MATES In Construction NZ, the charity set up to aid mental wellness and prevent suicides, is setting up a free online Lunch Room to help people in the building and construction industry come together for a chat and help them cope with anxiety, stress and worries amid the uncertainty of the Covid-19 lockdown.

Set to go online via the [Zoom](https://zoom.us) online meetings platform from 10:30am on Wednesday 1 April, and then run daily for one hour each day Monday-Friday, the Lunch Room will be open for anyone in the industry looking for support through talking to each other.

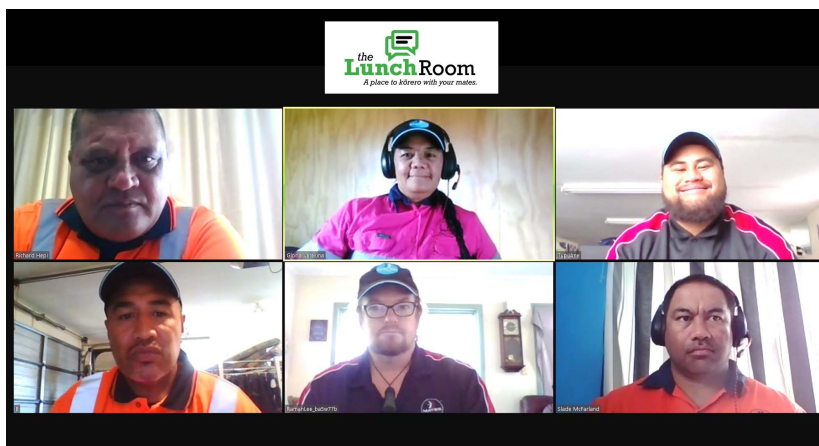
Each session will enable five people to enter, with the ability to set up more than one Lunch room per day if needed.

To sign up, all people need to do is:

1. Visit the MATES In Construction NZ website www.mates.net.nz and register online. They will be asked to fill in four details – name, email, phone, occupation – and then press 'Send'.



2. They will then receive a phone call from one of the MATES Field Officers to confirm their registration, check in on their wellness and offer a one-on-one session if necessary.
3. Then they will get sent a link to [join the Zoom meeting](#), so the only thing they will need is internet on their phones or computer.



Victoria McArthur, CEO of MATES In Construction NZ, says: “We are aware of how men and women in our industry may be feeling right now, and we are keen to help them. We know that guys who work on construction sites six days a week are working with their mates, but all of a sudden they have been thrown into a situation at home with no mates around them; a very different environment with its own pressures.

“We don’t want the guys to be doing it tough on their own, so we are creating the Lunch Room to bring anyone in our industry – from building sites, commercial and civil site workers to senior professionals - into a safe environment where they can chat about what’s going on and get peer support. In the Lunch Room they will be talking to people who understand their work and their lives.”

McArthur adds that the Lunch Room will be a very structured and safe place, but the participants will find the atmosphere relaxing. “We will always have two facilitators in the ‘room’, which will allow five other participants. If anything occurs in the room, MATES people can contact the person direct, and are able to pass on information to the emergency services if needed.”



This is part of a wider suite of resources MATES is rolling out to help people doing it tough, including multiple resources on the website (including Step-by-step guides to getting financial or government help). Other key resources and avenues of communication available to anyone in the industry right across New Zealand include:

- **Phone:** Call MATES on our helpline **0800 111 315** – with the MATES team ready to pick up calls every day 24/7, thanks to increasing the number of available lines
- **Text:** Text MATES for free on 5353 and we will message you straight back.
- Our [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) pages
- Regular updates through our direct online communications.

Gloria Vetekina, MATES in Construction's Case Manager, says all these services are available to everyone in the building and construction sector across NZ, regardless of whether they have met MATES on site or their company is a supporter.

"Being isolated for four weeks is not an easy feat for anyone, let alone for guys and girls who might be struggling anyway. In these times we know humans do better with community around them.

"The Lunch Room is free for everyone. It will give people an opportunity to keep in touch with what's going on, to find out what's happening with everyone in the industry and to know that it's ok if you're struggling. Being able to talk about what we can do about it is the most important thing."

MATES Field Officer B (Berhampore) Peleti adds: "Establishing relationships online will potentially save lives. It's only going to get tougher out there, and men tend to shut down when we're stressed. That's not good, so MATES is giving men an opportunity to talk.

"We know men communicate better with each other in a group setting, so we're providing men with a safe place to talk and engage, so they are more likely to open up. Our kaupapa is to provide a pathway to support, and engagement comes first. Once we get out there and invite them along the Lunch Room will pick up momentum, particularly as people struggle as the weeks go by."

- ENDS -



How to download and install Zoom:

1. Click on www.Zoom.us
2. Click 'Sign up for free'
3. Put in the email address you will most easily receive an email into
4. Click 'Sign Up'
5. Zoom will then send you an email – open it and click to confirm
6. You're up and running...

Then, MATES will send you a Zoom link via email for your session. All you need to do is click on the link to open up the meeting. Follow any prompts that come up. Select if you would like to connect audio and/or video and click 'Join'.

ABOUT MATES IN CONSTRUCTION

MATES In Construction was launched on the 30th October 2019 to improve mental health, wellbeing and raise the significance of suicide prevention in the industry. Research that shown that the construction industry, contributes to the highest proportion of suicides across all industries in NZ, MATES In Construction focuses on opening up communication channels, changing on-site culture and improving knowledge of what can be done to prevent suicide in New Zealand's construction industry. It's all about mates helping mates.

MATES IN CONSTRUCTION PARTNERS

(see next page ➞)



STRONGER TOGETHER – SUICIDE PREVENTION

MATES in Construction NZ / www.mates.net.nz

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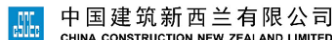
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