

SUICIDE PREVENTION IN THE NEW ZEALAND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



Suicide is preventable and workplace focused programmes have been found to be effective interventions.



SUICIDE IN NEW ZEALAND

LAST YEAR OVER 685 NEW ZEALANDERS DIED BY SUICIDE

These statistics released by the Coroner's office in August 2019 have confirmed yet again, that URGENT action is needed as suicide numbers have climbed to the highest since records began over 10 years ago.



Almost three out of four suicides are done by men



45% of deaths were from people that were employed



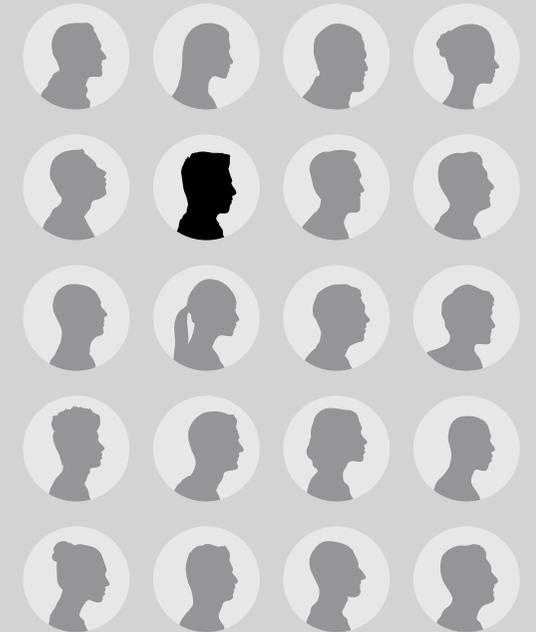
Suicide is a leading cause of death in younger populations



World Health Organisation estimates that for every death by suicide 3 suicide survivors will suffer permanent full incapacity and 12 will require time off work



Our Māori and Pasifika population contributing to suicide numbers has dramatically increased



“1 in 20 people have a thought of suicide in any two week period”

– PROFESSOR GOLDNEY



MATES IN CONSTRUCTION

NEW ZEALAND LAUNCH

Ngā Rāhui Hau Kura: Suicide Mortality Review Committee Feasibility Study 2014–15. Report to the Ministry of Health, 31 May 2016, found that 6.9 per cent of overall suicides were in the construction industry, and that “The construction industry has the highest proportion of suicides across all industries in New Zealand.”

The 2018 BRANZ Mental Health in the Construction Industry scoping study was commissioned to better understand the suicide risk for construction workers. The study looked into the coronial findings of over 300 suicides of construction workers, to see if there are any trends that can inform best practice in addressing the issue of suicide. The outcome of the findings has led industry to step forward and support the implementation of the MATES in Construction into the NZ market, whilst ensuring it is adapted to meet the NZ demographic. Coroners’ reports listed workplace pressures as a factor in nearly a third (32.3%) of all cases.

We all know that the NZ Construction sector is a heavily male-dominated industry. There are two age groups where suicide is more common for construction industry workers, the early 20’s and late 40’s. This is also consistent with the coroner’s office annual suicide findings for NZ 2018/19.

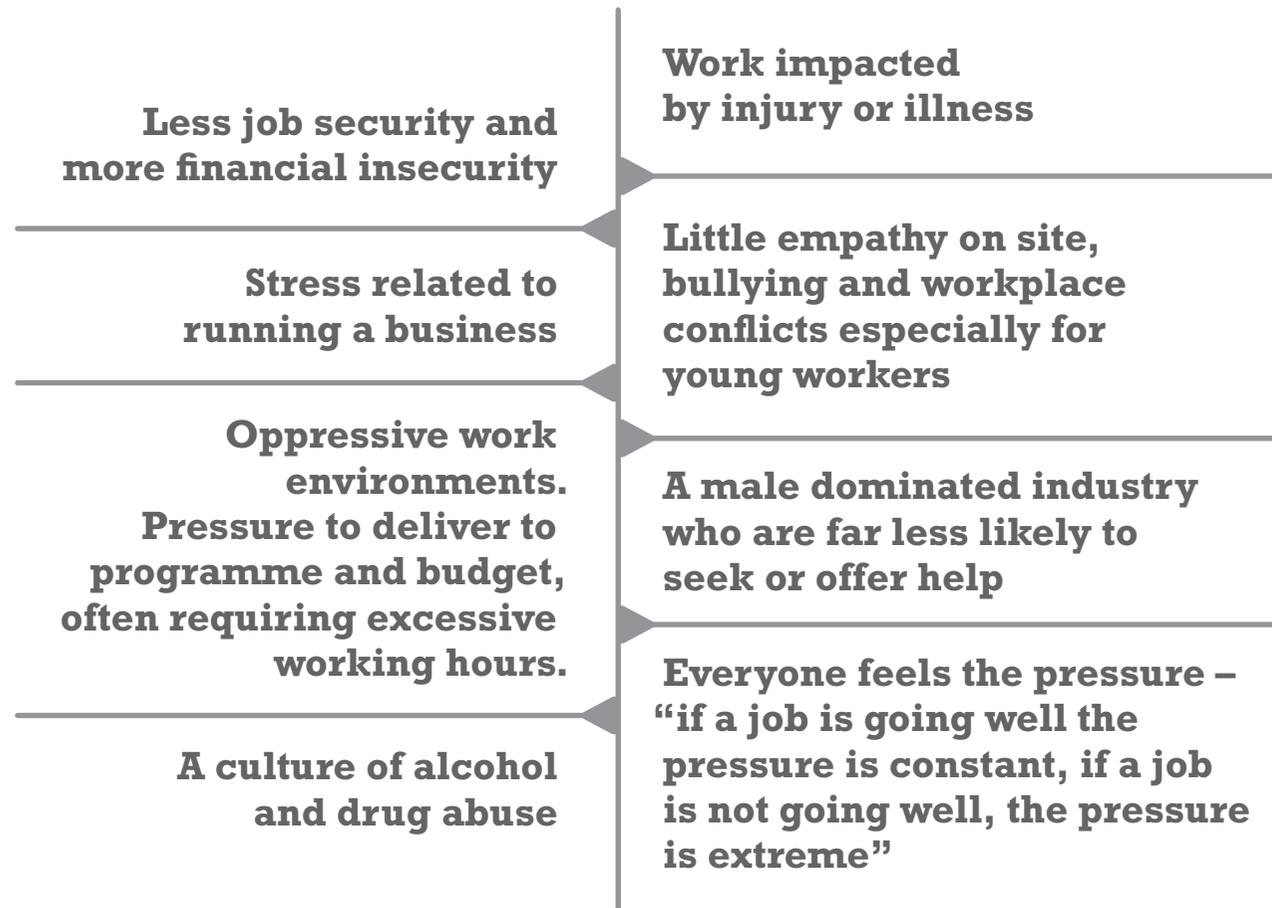
There has also been an increase in the Māori and Pasifika population contributing to our suicide numbers, a demographic heavily represented across the construction industry.

**MATES in Construction
New Zealand launches
October 2019.**

**The programme delivery
will follow the successful
model from Australia, but
will be adapted to meet the
needs of a New Zealand
demographic.**



WHY ARE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS MORE VULNERABLE?



Young construction workers are particularly vulnerable.

MATES in Construction Australia has seen an increase in young workers coming into its case management services, with the main themes in young client feedback being “feelings of Isolation”, “disconnection from family” and the “unsupportive nature of the industry workplace”.

Construction workers are five times more likely to die from suicide than an accident at work.



MATES is an evidence-based workplace suicide prevention model, developed to reduce high suicide rates in the construction industry. It is a core belief of MATES to evaluate, test and research the work done ensuring shared learning and efficacy. All programmes delivered by MATES are evaluated, with feedback and analysis being incorporated into content as appropriate.

ABOUT US

HISTORY OF MATES IN CONSTRUCTION

The MATES initiative commenced in Queensland, Australia in 2008 responding to the over-representation of construction workers in Australia's suicide toll.

The programme currently covers over 160,000 workers in the industry with a network of close to 11,000 volunteer "Connectors" and "ASIST Workers". MATES in Construction establish a peer-based support programme in the workplace encouraging workers to offer help "when a mate is doing it tough". The programme also operates a 24/7 crisis line and provides case management services to workers in acute crisis.

The programme is widely recognised as best practice in suicide prevention in male dominated industries. Research into the MATES in Construction programme has demonstrated effectiveness in communicating with workers.

The MATES in Construction New Zealand programme was presented to industry through the close ties with the Australian model. The Trans-Tasman relationships that exist between our industries, meant that when the New Zealand industry looked at a programme that could be implemented into the sector the proven success

of the MATES Australia model made this the best possible solution. A key to the success of the MATES in Construction model to date has been a commitment to ensure broad engagement with all stakeholders, including industry, health professionals and educators.





WHAT WE DO

The key features that distinguish the MATES programme from other suicide prevention initiatives are:

- It is based on the internationally renowned “LivingWorks” suicide prevention model.
- It seeks to build workplace capacity to identify and appropriately respond to indicators that a co-worker may be at risk.
- It is interventionist— proactively engaging with workers through on-site training and providing those identified as materially at risk with active and engaging case management support that connects them to suitable professional support.
- Research is institutionalised in the programme’s governance, delivering ongoing evidence-based insights into progress and opportunities to improve the programme.
- MATES staff are trained in suicide intervention skills and have experience with the Building and Construction Industry. This aids in more effective upskilling of workers and providing appropriate support.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

THREE LEVELS OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY

The MATES programme is an integrated programme of awareness training and support – one without the other is insufficient. To only do training without pathways to support is potentially dangerous, and to only do support without raising awareness is to simply be another Employee Assistance Programme.

The MATES programme uses training as a tool to raise awareness that there is a problem with suicide and its contributing risk factors within our industry - and that we can all be part of the solution. Support is then provided through clear pathways to help: case management processes ensure that workers in need of support are connected to appropriate help; and on-site visits by field officers to support the site and its workers in an ongoing presence until the site closes.



GENERAL AWARENESS TRAINING

GAT Training is delivered to at least 80% of workers on-site, it is delivered en-masse and on-site at a time and place convenient to the contractors. This training helps to introduce workers to the nature of the problem and provides practical guidance as to how they can assist.



CONNECTOR

Connector Training is provided to those people on site who volunteer to become a Connector. A Connector is someone who is trained to help keep someone in crisis safe, while at the same time connecting them to professional help.

Although the optimum number of connectors is 1 in 20 (5%), it is about ensuring there is adequate coverage across the site and across crews.



ASIST

ASIST Training equips individuals to develop safe plans for workers at critical risk. These workers can be compared to the first aid officer on site. ASIST workers will talk to a person contemplating suicide with the object of making this person “safe”. Using simple skills an ASIST worker will listen to the persons’ concerns and respond to them appropriately with the object of reaching a “safe plan” for the worker.



SUPPORT FROM OUR TEAM

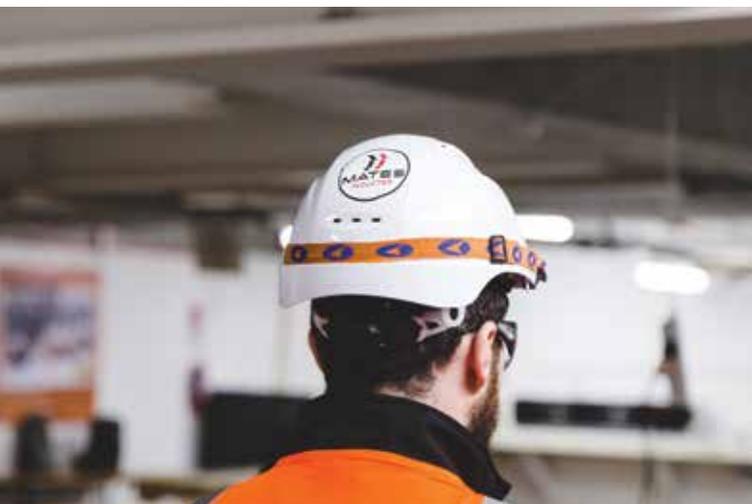
FIELD OFFICER

The Field Officers go onto site to establish the programme. Once the programme commences on the site, the Field Officer will have contact with that site until the site comes to closure. That presence includes both training and support. It could include toolbox talks, presence at site events, regular visits to the site office and to be available to talk with any workers who may want to talk with MATES.

MATES in Construction field staff will provide ongoing support for Connectors and ASIST workers on participating sites. Connectors and ASIST workers are encouraged

to have “Connector Meetings” on site ensuring that the programme remains active and appropriate follow up is provided. Connector meetings will also allow workers to talk about their experiences as Connectors and ASIST workers with the MATES in Construction programme.

Where there is a critical incident, the Field Officer will contact the Connectors in view of providing support. The Field Officer will attend site by invitation.



CASE MANAGEMENT

Once the call to the helpline is made the first priority is safety and the ASIST model is used to reach an appropriate agreement about safety, all MATES staff have ASIST training and it will also be offered to onsite volunteers. Part of the ASIST model is that the person at risk must be linked to resources and Case Management is one of the resources offered by the MATES in Construction programme. Case Managers are qualified, and their role is to meet with workers in distress seeking to agree on a plan for them to address the particular situation the worker may find him or herself in. MATES in Construction does not provide any clinical or other support services apart from case management and can be seen as a referral services only.

The role of the Case Manager is to support the worker while they implement their plan. The Case Manager can help the client to prepare for the interaction with health and other agencies and will support the client in accessing the services over time and minimising the risk of the client disengaging prematurely.



MATES POSTVENTION

Critical incidents and accidents are reasonably regular on construction sites. Sometimes these incidents can trigger emotions and reactions in workers that compromise both their safety and their mental health. When invited by the site, MATES will attend the site to support its workers after a critical incident. Part of this process is to recharge the onsite MATES network (Connectors and ASIST workers) to be vigilant in keeping an eye on their mates in case this incident has had an adverse effect on any workers.

Postvention refers to the support a site may need after a worker or a worker's family member has committed suicide. The MATES programme is a suicide prevention programme that encourages workers to seek help, often with the help of their mates, before an issue gets so big that they consider suicide an option. The MATES programme is not an inoculation against suicide. Because suicide is a personal decision, in some cases people will choose suicide even when much help and assistance has been offered. The grief that follows a suicide can be complex, often with many unanswered questions and "what ifs". Postvention is designed to help those grieving after a suicide and to ensure they get the appropriate help and support.



PROGRAMME VALIDATION

The MATES organisations in Australia invest in ongoing research assessment of their programme to identify areas of need and to inform future developments and improvements; much of this research is undertaken by the Australian Institute for Suicide Research & Prevention— Griffith University.

The programme has been extensively evaluated and has proven social validity in the industry. It has solid process outcomes in terms of improving mental health literacy, reducing stigma and improving help seeking and help offering within the construction industry. The latest research into the effectiveness of the MATES programme was conducted by the Australian Institute of Suicide Research and Prevention in 2018, providing further validation of the programme.

MATES in Construction NZ will adopt a similar research model. All delivery is documented, and a collation of information and follow-ups occurs after each visit. MATES NZ will also engage an external academic evaluation of its delivery. We are presently in the process of identifying the provider, that we will work with MATES NZ to carry out this research.



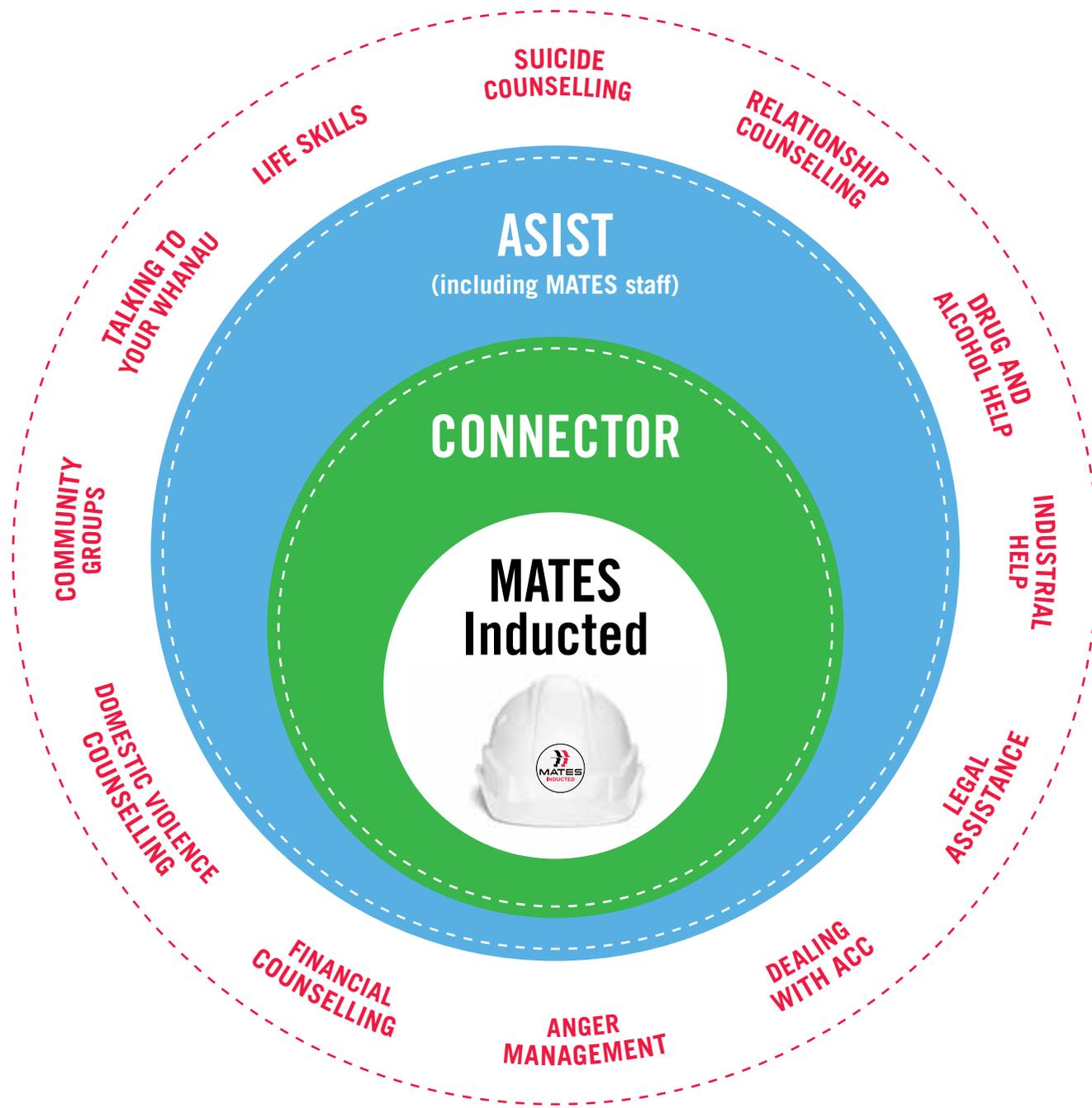
“There are so many factors that contribute to suicide risk in the industry, including work-related stress, long working hours, job insecurity and things outside work like relationship breakdowns. But one of the biggest factors is our men being stoic, and not seeking help. It’s OK to talk to your mates about it.”

– VICTORIA MCARTHUR
GENERAL MANAGER
MATES IN CONSTRUCTION NZ



WHAT TO TAKE AWAY FROM TODAY

- Suicide is a problem in co
- We as an industry can do about it
- I will offer help to my ma



Research has shown us that workers find it difficult to discuss feelings and emotions with colleagues at work, and the nature of the work has made social support more difficult.

‘Pride’ is identified as an issue: male workers have a problem with not being viewed as ‘manly’. Participants of the research held a strong belief that suicide was an impulsive act and that someone intending to take their own life would show no signs and not discuss it.



HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

PARTNERING WITH MATES IN CONSTRUCTION

The goal is now to reach the 300,000 people that work within New Zealand's construction industry. The MATES NZ team is now focused on increasing on-site capabilities and ensure that people who in need of support are connected to have access to the best possible help. To do this, we need to establish an ongoing sustainable funding base of industry partners and other contributors.

Partnering with MATES in Construction enables you to be part of a programme tasked with reducing the amount of people dying by suicide within our industry.

It also gives you the following opportunities:



Make a difference in your company and industry as a collective



Build wellbeing in your teams



Engage and train your people so they can watch out for their mates



Promote your business as a responsible and engaged partner in your people's lives.



Show that you care about your people - actively prioritising health, safety and mental wellbeing



Become part of a growing family of like-minded organisations

Research conducted in the industry recommended that a campaign designed to raise awareness about mental health and wellbeing combined with good gatekeeper training, should be implemented in combination with an industry specific programme for workers with suicidal thoughts.

The MATES in Construction programme has been developed to meet this need.

BECOME A MATES IN CONSTRUCTION PARTNER

The Industry Partner Programme is designed to provide a means for organisations to give financial support to MATES and receive industry recognition for their support of MATES.

By committing to partnering with MATES you are assisting to make a positive impact on the reduction in suicide across our NZ construction industry.

INCLUSIONS OF PARTNERSHIP



Partner status and logos will be included at all training sessions



Brand awareness via website and electronic communications including a statement about your support of MATES in Construction NZ and links to your own website



Use of MATES in Construction logo on your promotional material to demonstrate your commitment to suicide prevention in the construction industry



A MATES in Construction plaque to be displayed in your workplace



The opportunity to take part in “Fly the Flag Day” to show you support to MATES and suicide prevention in the industry



Invites to MATES in Construction national and regional events



Access to MATES collateral for your workplace

The key differentiating factors of the MATES programme are the extent of person-to-person contact between MATES Field Officers, Case Managers and workers and the programme’s objective of promoting peer support in workplaces.



PARTNERSHIPS

FOUNDATION PARTNER

INVESTMENT: \$100,000+

PREMIUM PARTNER

INVESTMENT: \$30,000+ PER ANNUM

PARTNER

INVESTMENT: \$10-30,000 PER ANNUM

ASSOCIATE PARTNER

INVESTMENT: UNDER \$10,000 PER ANNUM

INVITED PRO-BONO ORGANISATIONS

Donations, Major Gifts and Bequests can make a real difference and provide the vital support to our and long-term vision. MATES in Construction can work with you to ensure your gift is achieving impact. By learning what is important to you, we can suggest ways your gift will help us achieve your objectives.

NZ BOARD



CHRIS ALDERSON

CEO CHASNZ

“As the CEO of Construction Health and Safety NZ (CHASNZ), the mental health of our 250,000 workers is a top priority.

We currently don't have enough information about why people in the sector suffer from poor mental health, however we do know that the MATES in Construction programme will provide workers with much needed help in the short and long term.

The focus on general awareness of mental health and suicide, the peer to peer network and the fast-tracking of help for those who need it, all work regardless of the cause of mental health issues.

Using an established, quality programme and adjusting for unique New Zealand cultural aspects is the basis for my personal and organisational support for MATES in Construction New Zealand.”



DAVID JOHNSON

PROJECT DIRECTOR
COMMERCIAL BAY

“When Precinct heard about the statistic that construction workers have the highest rate of suicide by occupation in New Zealand, we were deeply moved and wanted to do something about it. Supporting the MATES in Construction programme is a simple and effective format that Precinct and our construction partners are fully behind. Both Commercial Bay and 10 Madden Street developments are being used as pilots for this scheme”



DAN ASHBY

GENERAL MANAGER / DIRECTOR
ICON NEW ZEALAND

Dan is the General Manager of Icon's New Zealand business, which was established in June 2017 and is currently building the 57 story Pacifica residential tower and Wakefield Street student accommodation projects.

Throughout his career Dan has been passionate about building and the people who are the foundation of our industry. Construction is an exciting, but very demanding industry and Dan sees MATES as a key initiative in enhancing the wellbeing of our people “on the ground”. He welcomes the opportunity to join the Board and is very much looking forward to the positive impact that MATES will have across the industry.



CHRIS LOCKWOOD

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CEO
MATES IN CONSTRUCTION

“Having seen firsthand the real impact of MATES which has delivered face to face programmes to over 180,000 workers in Australia, I am passionate about delivering a meaningful reduction in the impact of suicide in NZ communities, as MATES improves the mental health of all of us at work through trusted workplace programmes, individual case management and helpline services.”



BILL NEWSON

ETU NATIONAL SECRETARY

CTU REPRESENTATIVE

CHASNZ BOARD OF DIRECTORS

“It is a privilege to join other dedicated members of MATES in Construction to work for the well-being of working people in the construction industry. I have personally experienced the lifelong pain and disfigurement of an accident at work, and I have direct family experience of a construction worker suffering depression-related health issues. We know we have a comparatively high level of mental-health related harm among our construction workforce, I look forward to making a difference”.



MAURICE DAVIS

NATIONAL SECRETARY

THE AMALGAMATED WORKERS

UNION NEW ZEALAND

“MATES in Construction New Zealand is very relevant in the working environment we find ourselves in. With all the pressures faced by construction workers both on the job and home to meet deadlines and make ends meet. Having MATES in Construction there to support people when they are struggling is very important to the New Zealand Construction Industry.”

NZ TEAM



VICTORIA McARTHUR

CEO

MATES IN CONSTRUCTION NZ

“I feel privileged to have been given the opportunity to introduce MATES into our construction industry, here in New Zealand. Building strong communities within our industry is something I am passionate about, and I am also dedicated to promoting well-being and reducing the impact that suicide is having amongst our construction family. I am looking forward to working with all stakeholders positively impact a reduction in suicide across the construction sector.”

vmcarthur@mates.net.nz

CONTACT US

GLORIA VETEKINA

CASE MANAGER

gvetekina@mates.net.nz

FIELD OFFICERS

B (BERHAMPORE) PELETI

bpeleti@mates.net.nz

RICHIE HEPI

rhepi@mates.net.nz

SLADE McFARLAND

smcfarland@mates.net.nz

RAMAN LEE

rlee@mates.net.nz

TJ (TUPU) ANE

tane@mates.net.nz

SEE OUR WHOLE NZ TEAM
AT [MATES.NET.NZ](https://www.mates.net.nz)

Suicide is everyone's business.

MATES in Construction 0800 111 315

In an emergency dial 111 if you think they, you or someone else is at risk of harm.

- go with the person to the nearest hospital emergency department, or
- phone your local DHB Mental Health Crisis team, or visit www.mentalhealth.org.nz/get-help/in-crisis/, or
- free phone or text 1737 to communicate immediately with a counsellor

Tautoko Suicide Helpline **0508 828 865**

Lifeline **0800 543 354 (text 4357)**

Youthline **0800 376 633**

☎ : 09 302 0535 (business hours only)

🌐 : www.mates.net.nz

✉ : PO Box 106-946
Auckland City 1143 NZ

