



# MATES in Construction New Zealand

## **MATES in Construction programme profiled in World Health Organisation guidance**

New Zealand and Australia based programme MATES in Construction has received international acclaim for its work in suicide prevention in the construction industry.

MATES in Construction featured as an example of world's best practice in suicide prevention in a new World Health Organisation (WHO) publication. The WHO's primary role is to advise and support Governments internationally to implement health strategies.

The international acclaim comes in "Live Life, An Implementation Guide for Suicide Prevention", a guide for policy makers around the world.

MATES is the only programme active in Aotearoa profiled in the guide, which is an incredible accolade.

The MATES in Construction programme is an onsite suicide prevention programme led by industry that's about encouraging construction workers to look after each other seek, offer and accept help when its needed.

Mates in Construction CEO Victoria McArthur welcomed the international spotlight.

"It's really great to see our work profiled by such an influential international organisation. It shows that the approach MATES is taking is being held up globally as best practice.

"Here in New Zealand, our construction industry faces enormous challenges with mental health. We are losing around one worker to suicide every week – the highest of any industry.

"Our MATES in Construction programme works by reaching workers directly on the job site, led by people who have worked in the industry or have real lived experience in the industry. With a predominantly male workforce who may find it hard to reach out for help, our approach breaks down those barriers."

Since its inception, MATES in New Zealand has:

- Inducted more than 17,185 workers into the General Awareness Training programme.
- Delivered the programme onto 257 sites.
- Had 1,868 call-backs requested after attending a MATES training session.
- Trained 772 people as Connectors.
- Gained the support of 102 industry organisations.

The programme's efficacy has been recognised by Kāinga Ora, which has partnered with MATES to roll out its suicide prevention programme on its build sites.

"We're continuing to expand our programme to more sites. With record levels of construction sector activity in the years ahead, it is more important than ever than we have good programmes in place to support our workers and their mental health," says Victoria McArthur.

The World Health Organization's LIVE LIFE: An Implementation Guide for Suicide Prevention in Countries can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/3xs1yac>

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