



Every year over 2500 die by suicide in Australia. Three out of four suicides are done by men. Suicide is the leading cause of death for males aged 25-44 years and females aged 25-34 years. World Health Organisation estimates that for every death by suicide three suicide survivors will suffer permanent full incapacity and 12 will require time off work.

Research has shown that particularly men in semi-skilled occupations are at high risk of suicide, for example suicide rates amongst male operators and labourers in the Australian construction industry is very high. In Australia, suicide data for the mining industry is not readily available, however, our workforce is predominantly male, aged 25-44 years - many employed as operators and manual labour occupations.

Suicide is preventable and focused workplace programs have been found to be effective in a number of circumstances.

Background

MATES in Construction was developed for the Queensland construction industry to address what appeared to be very high suicide rates within the industry. The program has since been expanded into the construction industry in NSW, South Australia and Western Australia.

The program currently covers over 85,000 workers in the industry with a network of close to 7,000 volunteer “Connectors” and “ASIST Workers”. MATES in Construction establish a peer based support program in the workplace encouraging workers to offer help “when a mate is doing it tough”. The program also operates a 24/7 crisis line and provides case management services to workers in acute crisis.

The program is widely recognised as best practice in suicide prevention in male dominated industries. Research into the MATES in Construction program has demonstrated effectiveness in communicating with workers, reducing suicide rates and returning \$4.60 in community benefit per dollar invested

Next Steps for Mining

A Mates in Mining program, modelled off Mates in Construction has been initiated as an industry project. A working group has been formed to develop the framework and to coordinate and conduct a site implementation trial.

The trial will enable any industry specific requirements to be included in the Mates in Mining program, recognising that there may be differences between the two industries that need to be catered for. It will identify barriers to, and support for, the most effective and efficient implementation in the Mining industry and will seek to implement the program in a manner directly relevant to the industry.

The trial is being conducted at Clermont Coal and will commence in December 2015. Further information will be provided as the trial proceeds.

Information Update 1

October 2015



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Contacts

Should you require any further information, the following people are involved in the working group and will be able to assist.

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