

Media Release



Andrea Michaels MP
Minister for Small and Family Business

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Mental health support program for construction industry

The Malinauskas Labor Government is partnering with the Master Builders Association of SA (MBA) to deliver crucial mental health support to the state's construction workers.

The *Building & Construction Mental Health Support Program* aims to reduce the prevalence of mental illness and suicide in the Australian construction industry—an industry where, sadly, we lose a worker to suicide every second day.

In fact, Australian construction workers are six times more likely to die from suicide than in a workplace accident.

A grant of \$150,000 will fund the MBA to appoint wellness ambassadors to help business owners and workers navigate common pressures associated with working in construction. The program will target business owners, subcontractors and workers including tailored support for female and First Nations members of the industry.

The MBA have identified several passionate wellness ambassadors based on their industry and mentoring experience, mental health advocacy, and/or a personal journey overcoming stress, burnout, and mental illness.

Each ambassador will undergo Mental Health First Aid Training to ensure they're well-prepared to help others in providing early intervention and increasing awareness of support available.

In cases where specific or critical mental health help is required, participants will be referred to specialist organisations or services like Mates in Construction and the Healthy Workplaces Service.

Participation in the *Building & Construction Mental Health Support Program* will be free for all members of the South Australian building and construction industry, regardless of whether their business or employer is a Master Builders' member.

Sessions will be available both in-person and online, so that location is not a barrier to participation.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Small and Family Business Andrea Michaels MP

This Master Builders program is an incredibly important step towards ensuring a safe and supportive workplace for our construction workers.

Mental health is consistently raised with me as a major challenge by our small business owners - whether that's owners managing their own wellbeing, or that of colleagues and employees.

This concern is only exacerbated in the construction industry, dominated by small businesses and subcontractors, where people report issues like poor work-life balance, financial stress, and pressure to get the job done.

This program allows those who may be struggling to access free and confidential support, guidance and resources to help them through tough times.

Quotes attributable to Master Builders Association SA CEO, Will Frogley

Building and construction is generally a highly paid industry, but hard work and long hours are the norm. There is often intense pressure to complete work as soon as possible and to the highest quality.

A 'one size fits all' approach to mental health will not be as effective as a program that connects South Australians with someone who will be best for their personality and circumstances.

Master Builders SA and the State Government have brought together a diverse range of quality ambassadors with the expertise to address key 'trigger points' for those in the construction industry.

As well as our moral obligation to assist, Master Builders SA believes we must ensure our industry attracts and retains people to do the building work required in the future.