

INQUIRY INTO THE 2022 REVIEW OF THE WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

HEARING – Thursday 8 September 2022

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Mr Brad Parker, Chief Executive Officer, MATES in Construction NSW

1. Does MATES have a relationship with SafeWork NSW? If so, what is it?

Answer: On Tuesday 12th March 2019 MATES in Construction MATES delivered a MATES General Awareness Training (GAT) to the SafeWork NSW Directorate. . MATES have participated in many SafeWork NSW Initiatives including At Risk Workers Safety in Action Group Meetings and Mentally Healthy Workplaces meetings (including Mentally Healthy Construction Sites).

2. In your opinion, does SafeWork NSW as the regulator fulfill any role in preventing workplace psychological claims in the construction industry?

- a. If so, how?

Answer: SafeWork NSW provides leadership for industry and helps drive awareness of mental health challenges in workplaces. Initiatives such as Mentally Healthy Workplaces and At Risk Workers Safety in Action Group regarding liaising with industry and receiving feedback helps develop strategies and gains support from stakeholders and industry.

- b. If not, why not?

Answer: If we are to reduce potential psychological claims we should establish independent, evidence based, peer reviewed programs with workplace grounding and delivery for consideration and properly fund these programs to meet industry demands. The MATES program has demonstrated delivery of mental health training and suicide prevention F2F to workers reduces suicides and mental health challenges.

3. Are learnings from MATES used to impact on public policy, practices, procedures and guidelines in any way?

Answer: The MATES programs and research has not been used to impact NSW public policy, practices, procedures and guidelines. We would like to share the research and outcomes derived from the delivery of our training programs. For example one of our initiatives is the Australian Building and Construction Industry Blueprint for Better Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. The Blueprint draws on a robust body of evidence to effectively engender mentally healthy workplaces. The Blueprint offers an integrated, multi-pronged approach to create healthier workplaces that support employee wellbeing.

You can find more info on The Blueprint here <https://mates.org.au/construction/blueprint>

4. How can construction workers be incentivised to seek help with mental health issues?

Answer: Normalising discussions around mental health and suicide and encouraging a collective response that 'Suicide is everyone's business' as well as breaking down the stigma encourages help seeking and help offering. MATES in Construction currently and in the past acknowledge 'MATES Champions' (i.e. those individuals, champions within the industry who have sought to play an active role in creating a mentally healthier workplace). This Award may be given for their life

saving interventions and/or promoting wellbeing as a priority but also drawing upon those volunteers or MATES Connectors who are easily identified in the workplace.