



Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Construction Industry, Suicide Prevention

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.00 am): In line with our election commitment, the Palaszczuk government is committed to doing everything possible to prevent suicide in the construction industry. Construction is a challenging trade. Our young tradies have a suicide rate of two to three times higher than the general community. The average age of suicide amongst construction workers in Queensland is just 36 years old.

In recognition of these challenges, a high-level delegation of industry stakeholders including employers, builders and unions together approached me as the responsible minister to request additional funding needed to tackle suicide in the construction industry. That is why recently the government announced \$1 million in funding over 18 months for suicide prevention organisation Mates in Construction to expand its already successful program to small businesses and to rural and remote areas. Mates in Construction, or Mates as they are generally known, is a fantastic organisation making a real difference in reducing the high incidence of suicide in the construction industry, particularly amongst young men.

Last month I was proud to welcome Broncos captain Darius Boyd as Mates's inaugural ambassador at a small ceremony at The Landscape Construction Company at Red Hill. Darius is a great model for Queenslanders and his association with Mates was a natural fit for him. I cannot think of a better Mates ambassador than Darius Boyd, captain of the Broncos, premiership winner and Clive Churchill medallist, Australian player and, of course, a proud Queenslanders. Darius has confronted his own mental health issues. He knows full well the importance of reaching out and acknowledging when he needs help. I know he sees himself making a real difference in this role and I thank him for taking on this challenge.

The impact of suicide is devastating, affecting families, work colleagues, communities, service providers and first responders. This funding will help Mates spread the message in rural and remote areas that suicide is a workplace issue that we all need to address together. I am very much looking forward to working with Mates and Darius in the future.

The Palaszczuk government believes in investing in services that matter to Queenslanders, unlike the member for Clayfield, who only wanted to cut, sack and sell.