



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

### **Tradies National Health Month**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.46 am): August is Tradies National Health Month, a time when we ask the trades and construction industry to look out for their health and wellbeing. We know that construction can be a challenging and difficult industry to work in and, tragically, even when health and safety is in focus, a worker in his 40s fell to his death on a worksite in Cairns this week. I send my condolences to his family and friends.

One of the biggest health issues facing young workers in the industry is depression and other mental illness. Our young tradies have an unacceptably high rate of suicide, up to three times higher than the general community. That is why the Palaszczuk government is continuing its support of Mates in Construction, an organisation working to reduce the rate of suicide in the construction industry. In March 2017 we announced funding of \$1 million over 12 months to expand Mates' suicide prevention services into rural and remote areas of Queensland with a focus on young construction workers and small business. The funding has enabled Mates in Construction to deliver training and help to construction workers from a wide range of regional and rural communities across Queensland, including Biloela, St George, Emerald, Charleville and Goondiwindi. They have also established an ongoing presence in many rural communities through important relationships with local community organisations, including local councils, Lions and Rotary clubs, primary health networks and Indigenous communities.

While the focus of Mates in Construction services is on construction workers, there are obvious flow-on benefits as learnings are shared across the wider rural community. Mates in Construction has expanded beyond large construction sites into smaller construction projects and housing and since March 2018 has delivered training to 736 participants across 63 work sites. This year marks the 10th year anniversary of Mates in Construction supporting the Queensland construction industry. They do a tremendous job but we know there is still more work to be done.

I am very pleased today to announce that the Palaszczuk government is continuing its support for Mates in Construction by providing further funding of \$1 million over the next 12 months. This funding will allow Mates in Construction to continue delivering services in rural and remote areas, to small businesses and helping apprentices. In the meantime, the Palaszczuk government is exploring options to provide long-term funding certainty for this incredibly important initiative.