



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF

# Construction industry suicides: numbers, Characteristics, and rates: report prepared for MATES in Construction NZ

Funded by **BRANZ** Building Research Levy




Gabrielle Jenkin, June Atkinson. Health Research Group, Department of Psychological Medicine. Te Rōpū Rangahau i te Mate Whakamomori me te Hauora Hinengaro. University of Otago

While construction workers make up about 9.5% of all workers, the study found that between 17.3% (2010/11) and 29.7% (2018/2019) of those who died by suicide in New Zealand were employed in the sector.

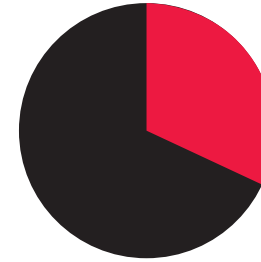
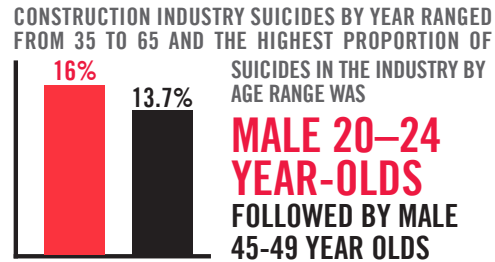
This definition comprises of 112 occupations at the 6-digit level of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupation (ANZSCO).

Drawing on data from closed cases of suicide (coded intentional self-harm) in the National Coronal Information System (NCIS) database between 01 July 2007 and 30 June 2019 we found the following main findings.



**OF THE 5,814 SUICIDES IN THE 12 YEARS 2542 SUICIDE CASES WERE WORKING AT THE TIME OF DEATH**  
**583 WORKED IN THE INDUSTRY**  
 AND THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ARE AT

**MORE THAN 2x**  
RISK OF DYING BY SUICIDE COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE WORKFORCE\*



**21.3% OF THOSE THAT WE LOST WERE MAORI.**  
THIS COMPARES TO 16% THAT WERE LOST FROM OUR MAORI POPULATION OUTSIDE OF CONSTRUCTION



THERE ARE HIGHER NUMBERS OF SUICIDES IN **LOWER SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY OCCUPATIONS**

## OCCUPATIONS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF SUICIDES WERE



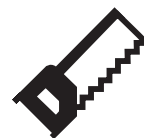
LABOURER



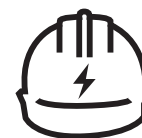
TECHNICIANS & TRADES



PAINTING TRADES



CARPENTERS & JOINERS



ELECTRICIANS



PLUMBERS

THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF SUICIDES WERE IN **AUCKLAND** FOLLOWED BY **CHRISTCHURCH**

\*MEN AGED 20-24 HAD THE HIGHEST RATE OF SUICIDE IN CONSTRUCTION AT 32.94 PER 100,000 COMPARED TO 18.72 PER 100,000 FOR MEN WORKING OUTSIDE OF CONSTRUCTION.

“These research findings show it’s more important than ever that we increase our focus on mental health in the workplace. We know that for the predominantly male construction workforce, this isn’t a group that is likely to proactively seek help or reach out to offer it”

- MATES CEO VICTORIA MCARTHUR

“This important piece of New Zealand research gives us a better idea of who is most vulnerable, experiencing situational distress and in need of more support. There needs to be greater funding set aside for data-driven targeted workplace-based suicide prevention initiatives that are industry-led”

- ACADEMIC DIRECTOR OF MATES, DR CHRIS BOWDEN