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**JULIAN LEESER MP**  
**MEMBER FOR BEROWRA**  
**MEDIA RELEASE**

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23 February 2017

**SUICIDE PREVENTION ON CONSTRUCTION SITES**

Julian Leeser MP, Federal Member for Berowra, today took part in a General Awareness Training course with Mates in Construction, in partnership with NorthConnex.

Mates In Construction was established in 2008 to reduce the high level of suicide among Australian construction workers. The organisation raises awareness of mental health issues in the construction industry, training workers in recognising the signs of suicide and providing support including case management and on-site visits by field officers.

Mr Leeser said the partnership between NorthConnex and Mates In Construction was essential for providing workers with a support network to talk about mental wellbeing.

“We know that suicide is approximately three times higher among men than women. In particular, the rate of suicide in the construction industry is alarmingly high. This national crisis must be addressed.”

“I am very pleased to see Mates in Construction and NorthConnex leading the way in combatting the stigma surrounding suicide and mental health on Australia’s construction sites.”

“Major projects such as NorthConnex are generating thousands of new jobs in construction and it is important these workers can speak about life issues and seek help in tough times.”

More than 400 NorthConnex staff have been trained by Mates In Construction to raise awareness of mental health issues and high suicide rates within the construction industry.

Peter McClelland, CEO of Mates In Construction NSW said projects such as NorthConnex are helping change the culture of silence surrounding mental health and suicide in the industry.

“Construction industry suicide rates are 71 per cent higher than that of other employed men and between 2001 and 2013, there was an average of 182 deaths per year, or one suicide every second day in our industry.”

“To reach more lives, and help our blokes get help – we need the continued support of the industry.”

“We hope that the workers who have received training at NorthConnex will take these skills and apply them at future worksites.”

Tim Orpen, Project Director NorthConnex for Lendlease Bouygues Joint Venture, said the health and wellbeing of project staff is the highest priority.

“With an average of 1500 workers on site per day and 15,000 people expected to be inducted during the life of the project, we are committed to ensuring everyone has someone who they can talk to if they are dealing with personal issues,” Mr Orpen said.

“About 40 Mates In Construction sessions have been held at our NorthConnex Hub to date, specifically designed to deliver training to our workforce.

“We are committed to breaking the stereotype that construction is an industry where workers are expected to ‘harden up’ instead of seeking help and advice.”

For more information about Mates In Construction visit [www.matesinconstruction.org.au](http://www.matesinconstruction.org.au).

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