

HQ

HOST QUARTERLY

The workplace wellness issue

A MGROUP MAGAZINE
ISSUE 1 | AUG 2022

TOOLS DOWN AND TIME TO TALK

Banks and Chippie:
Forming alliances for
blue collar wellbeing



Have you
thought
about your
wellbeing
today?

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Cover story: TIACS Alliance Manager, Jason Banks, and with Chippie the therapy dog (cover)

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Pop a squat, take a load off, pull up a pew - welcome to HQ.

Host Quarterly is all about sharing news and stories from around the MIGAS Apprentices & Trainees national network. We drew inspiration for this magazine from you - host organisations who are training and developing Australia's next generation of skilled tradespeople in partnership with us.

In this issue we turn our attention to mental health to mark Tradie National Health Month which kicked off in August. For MIGAS, workplace wellness and psychological safety is all about developing a happier, high performing workforce that feels included and safe to be themselves. It's why we've invested in our field team to become Mental Health First Aid Officers to in turn provide in-situ support to your apprentices and trainees. Under our training division, MiTraining, we've launched a nationally accredited Mental Health and Organisational Disruption Skill Set to furnish managers and supervisors with practical skills and knowledge to support their employees.

Across our group of brands under the MiGROUP Australia banner - MIGAS Apprentices & Trainees, MiTraining, The Trainee Academy and HireOnsite - we see ourselves as leaders in workplace wellness. Watch this space.

HQ magazine marks the beginning of a new dialogue with you. We welcome your opinions and encourage you to contact us with stories from your own business and community.

**David Hoey, Chief Executive Officer
MiGROUP Australia**

Industry round-up

BUZZ >

TRADIES NATIONAL HEALTH MONTH

What prompted the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) to start Tradies National Health Month?

Tradies have more workplace injury statistically compared to other workers. As the peak body for physiotherapists in Australia, we wanted to get to the bottom of this to help tradies avoid injuries and needing to take time off work as a result. The average time off work due to serious workplace injury has increased to seven weeks, which is time many tradies simply cannot afford.

What are the biggest threats to tradie health at the moment?

Body stressing injuries remain the number one cause of serious workplace injury in Australia, though we know that mental health is essential for tradies to keep in check too. The biggest threat for tradies is putting their health and wellbeing last, whether physical or mental. Sixty-nine per cent of tradies believe that being sore is just normal for the work they do*, with the majority unlikely to take a day off or seek help for a minor issue before it becomes significant.

How can non-tradies support?

Non-tradies, including partners, girlfriends, boyfriends, wives, husbands, siblings, parents and friends, play a vital role in supporting tradies with their health. This Tradies National Health Month encourage tradies to put their health and wellbeing front and center. Sixty-eight per cent of tradies say they find it hard to do their job if they are not at their physical or mental best*.

*Tradies Health Survey 2019 – prepared by Empirica Research for the Australian Physiotherapy Association

TECH >

DIGITAL DIAGNOSTIC



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INDUSTRY >

National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) in Australia is an initiative of MIGAS Apprentices & Trainees.

It's an inclusive observance week designed to advance the role of Australian Apprenticeships which are the driving strength behind the country's skilled workforce.

It's all about celebrating the achievements of Australian apprentices and trainees, the employers that support their development and the array of industry stakeholders who advocate on their behalf.

**National Apprenticeship Week
6-12 February 2023
nationalapprenticeshipweek.com.au
Powered by MIGAS**

National Apprenticeship Week Objectives

- Advance the prominence and positioning of Australian Apprenticeships as an attractive and equal tertiary education pathway.
- Create greater awareness about apprenticeship and traineeship careers by busting myths, misconceptions and stereotypes.
- Keep Australian Apprenticeships on the national agenda to secure continued industry and government support.
- Promote the importance and value of diversity, equal access, and participation in apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Foster creative and critical thinking about how Australian Apprenticeships look now and into the future.
- Showcase the employers investing in, and benefitting from, apprenticeships in their workplace.

An alliance for good

The tragic and unexpected loss of a mate set two tradies on a path to get every Aussie blue collar worker talking about their mental health.

"His name was also Dan," Dan Allen, co-founder of social impact brand, TradeMutt and the TIACS Foundation shares.

"He was one of the first mates I made when I moved to Brisbane, and it was the first time in my life that I had been affected by suicide."

Not long after Dan, together with fellow tradie Ed Ross, set down the tools and turned their talents to threads of the colourful, conversation starting kind.

Enter TradeMutt, a social impact workwear brand that has taken Australian job sites by storm.

"It's our mission to change the face of mental health in Australia by using bright and funky workwear as a way to start conversations and make an invisible issue impossible to ignore," Ed said.

Four years on, the business and community have grown out of sight and the TIACS (This is a Conversation Starter) Foundation was born.

TIACS Alliance Manager, Jason Banks, said Ed and Dan couldn't sit back after discovering just how many people were reaching out to mental health services and not always getting the help they needed.

"This is a Conversation Starter is a direct mental health support service that removes barriers to accessing professional counselling by phone or by text," Jason said.

"The service is aimed at blue collar workers who are employed in industries with some of the highest rates of mental illness and suicide."

Jason joined TIACS after making his own career intervention to put his mental health first.

"On a Sunday afternoon in 2018, I decided to quit," he said. "I was on the edge of the bed, and my wife asked me, '...you're not the same person, what's going on?'"



The MIGAS leadership team attended recent NAIDOC Week celebrations sporting TradeMutt custom workwear

It's all about traffic stopping, conversation starting workwear that puts blue collar mental health on the agenda.

Scan the QR code to watch a special message to MIGAS apprentices from TIACS co-founder, Dan Allen





TradeMutt and TIACS founders Dan and Ed take a minute to reflect on their journey

"I'd spent the last 16 years in senior leadership roles with a national retailer in a rewarding fast-paced environment with heavy travel requirements – I just wasn't enjoying myself anymore," Jason shared.

His path led him toward health-focused jobs working as a personal trainer and running fitness classes for the disabled, and then to TIACS after hearing about the role through a mutual friend of Ed and Dan.

"Our primary focus is building a national Alliance of like-minded organisations who are fully funding the TIACS counselling service," he said.

"Over two years we've taken over 24,000 calls and text messages and provided more than 7000 hours of free mental health counselling support thanks to the Alliance."

"We're pumped and humbled to have MIGAS Apprentices & Trainees on board as TIACS Alliance Members to help expand access to free mental health support to apprentices working in traditional trades and blue collar industries," Jason said.

Organisations looking to join the TIACS Alliance can visit tiacs.org to get in touch with Jason.

It's always a very disarming moment when two people find that deeper level of respect for one another and you can talk about a serious topic like mental health.



The TIACS phone line is available Australia-wide, Monday to Friday from 8am-10pm AEST. If you need a yarn, whether about your mental health or simply how your day has been, call or text 0488 846 988 to speak with a counsellor.

Tradies doing the downward dog? That's a stretch...



Richard Toomey, the Healthy Tradie Project Yoga Instructor, limbers up on site with the crew from Jaybro, a MIGAS host employer

The construction industry is stressful with long working hours and constant pressure to provide quality outcomes on tight timelines. Phillipa (Pip) Seldon, Construction Operations Manager and Founder of the Healthy Tradie Project, knows that better than most.

"I woke to a midnight phone call," Pip recalls. "Nothing in this world can prepare you to hear those words."

"I was struck by the devastating effects of suicide when my eldest brother Dale tragically took his own life in 2009," she shared.

Pip channelled her grief and own experience in the construction industry into a creating a new approach to fostering physical, mental and emotional health for trades men and women at work.

"As an industry, the more we talk about mental health, the more we break down the stigma associated with it," Pip said.

"And as a tradie, your body is your best and most important asset."

The Healthy Tradie Project is based on the philosophy of movement, mindfulness and nutrition. The Project's mission is to work with tradespeople and construction industry leaders to prioritise workplace wellness.

Pip and team now deliver workshops on job sites Australia-wide to improve mental health, personal wellbeing and productivity. They recently ran a workshop with MIGAS host employer and certified Great Place to Work™, Jaybro.

"The workshops are based around our Lifestyle Wheel which starts a conversation with tradies about healthy eating, good quality sleep and practical ways to strengthen your body," she said.

Richard Toomey, Pip's colleague and fitness specialist, is a qualified yoga instructor and gets workshop participants moving in ways they didn't know they could.

"I have to say it's a fantastic sight to see a bunch of PPE wearing blokes doing a classic yoga pose at the work site...there's smiles all around and it helps break down the myth that it's not masculine to take care of yourself," Pip said.

If you'd like to know more about the Healthy Tradie Project or to book a workshop visit thehealthytradieproject.com.au.

Pip's Health & Mindfulness Tips



1. Create time in the day to allow workers to focus on exercise or connect with friends and family digitally.
2. Eat real whole food - good nutrition affects how you perform every day.
3. Get plenty of good quality sleep, some time in the sun, and make time for active play.



Phillipa Seldon (pictured top right), Founder of the Healthy Tradie Project, takes workshop participants through the Lifestyle Wheel

A brush with nature

This month a bright blue monument to mental health sprouted from the ground in the Western Downs, Queensland.

Introducing the 829th registered 'blue tree' taking pride of place at the entrance to the MIGAS Apprentices & Trainees office in Chinchilla and visible to all from the main drag into town.

The Blue Tree Project's mission is to 'spread the paint and spread the message' that it's ok not to be ok.

CEO, David Hoey, said it's the first MiGROUP tree to be part of the Blue Tree Project which encourages people, communities and companies to paint a tree or stump in a very special shade of blue to spark difficult conversations and prompt people to speak up.

"It's a pop of colour in an unexpected place as a symbol to remind us all that no one needs to battle mental illness alone," David said.

Hundreds of blue trees around Australia are helping to kick the stigma of mental illness and pay tribute to Jayden Whyte who took his own life in 2018.

Anyone can get involved and paint a tree (stump) blue. Visit bluetreeproject.com.au to learn more.



What's on



August 2022

- 1-31** Tradies National Health Month
- 22-28** National Skills Week



September 2022

- 7-8** World Business Forum (Sydney)
- 8** R U OK? Day
- 10** World Suicide Prevention Day



October 2022

- 14** AEN NSW & ACT Group Training Awards
- 17-19** International Mining & Resources Conference and Expo (Virtual)



November 2022

- 1-30** November
- 3-4** National VET Conference (VELG)
- 18** Australian Training Awards National Ceremony

Psychological safety: The new non-negotiable

From the employee's point of view, psychological safety is about knowing it's alright to be honest and not have it all together all of the time. From the organisation's standpoint, it's about building a culture where people feel safe to be their true self.

From either perspective, the psychological safety of Australian workplaces is firmly on the national agenda.

Disruptive events, such as financial crises or a global pandemic pull together a problematic mix of anxiety, job uncertainty, money worries, workplace dynamics and relationship conflict, at times converging all at once.

These forces can be a load people silently carry at work – and the impact to productivity, mental health and workplace culture can go deep.

According to recent Medibank data, many Australians still have trouble controlling their stress levels as they continue to recover from the pandemic, with 42% reporting barely any improvement since pre-lockdown.

The Australian Government reported that the number of prescriptions filled increased when COVID-19 limits were implemented in March 2020.

The effects can linger as a low hum of stress, masked just below the surface, even as we get on with life again. With these ongoing effects of stress, it's crucial to build a culture where people feel safe to be themselves.

"Anxiety and mental health can be silent but deadly," shared Australian Mind Trainer Julie Robinson.

Julie works with Olympic athletes and successful businesses, so she's more equipped than most to talk about how stress affects individuals when high performance is all that matters.

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as a state of wellbeing in which an individual realises their abilities, copes with the everyday stresses of life, works productively and can contribute to their community.

"We need to start on an individual level," Julie said.

"Like putting your oxygen mask on first, you have a duty of care to yourself and then others.

"The good news is that the more an organisation is reflective and respectful, the better your employees will cope at work and in their personal life, even when a distressing event occurs," she said.

Mental health is simply a way of talking about how our minds work. They operate well under certain circumstances and perform poorly under others.

"Communication is something we do every day countless times, but how can we optimise this daily task to build psychological safety with our colleagues?"

"Your communication needs to be 'clean'," Julie said.

"It is easy for us all to put our penny's worth in or impose our ideas and beliefs. Yet, clean communication is a less is more way of interacting with others."

An example of clean communication is asking a colleague. 'What needs to happen to assist you?' instead of saying, 'You just need to take a holiday like I did.'

After asking a question, take some time to notice the reply, and even though there might be silence before the answer comes, you are respecting the person's processing and thinking style. Silence after someone replies with 'I don't know' also works well.

Building a psychologically safe environment starts from a foundation of empathy. It's about leading with care, compassion and curiosity. And for those organisations prioritising psychological safety, the bottom-line has never looked better.

Learn more from Julie Robinson in MiTraining's latest online course, Supporting Employee Mental Health During Organisational Disruption at mitraining.edu.au.

Supporting Employee Mental Health During Organisational Disruption

Are you ready for the next workplace disruption?

The world of work and how staff show up mentally and physically to the workplace has changed forever.

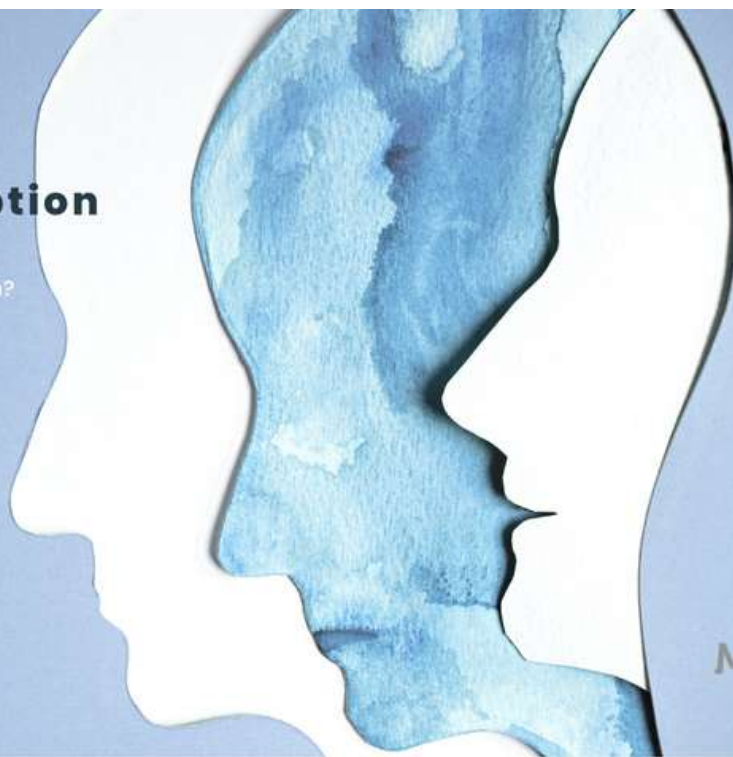
This course will furnish you with the practical tools and knowledge to support employee mental health in the face of organisational disruption.

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