

ACT Building and Construction Industry Survey

Mental Health,
Wellbeing and
Suicide Prevention

In November 2020, the OzHelp Foundation undertook a survey to understand the needs of the ACT building and construction industry with respect to mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention support for their businesses.

Who participated

172 responses

Company size:

36 %

51-250 employees

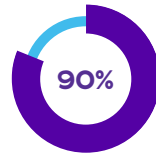
24%

21-50 employees

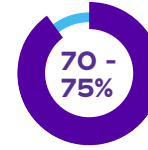
40%

1-20 employees

What the industry told us



Over 90% of respondents see the mental health and wellbeing of their employees as Highly Important or Important.



70 - 75% of respondents see suicide prevention programs as Highly Important or Important. Larger businesses (over 50 employees) are more aware of its importance and understand overall health and wellbeing is a preventative factor for suicide.



Comments indicated there is a growing awareness that focusing on mental health and wellbeing helps to reduce the incidence of suicide.

Respondents told us their needs included:

- ✓ Training for workforce in mental health and suicide prevention
- ✓ Counselling and support services
- ✓ Critical incident response

Larger businesses also indicated that they are seeking expert advice and support in planning and implementing workplace wellbeing programs.

“[We would value] Counsellors available to visit the site/ office for the **support of staff** who might be struggling.”
Project Manager ACT

“We have an existing wellbeing approach and would like a **longer-term solution** to partner to improve our approach and the wellbeing our staff.”
ACT Construction Company

“We need to bring more focus to **supporting vulnerable apprentices**, we would like to co-design a wellbeing plan for 2021 that targets that.”
Leading National Engineering Company

Respondents were asked for their top 3 reasons for implementing a health and wellbeing programs?

1. Greater support for workforce wellbeing
2. Psychological safety for the workforce
3. Productivity / employee retention

Comments were geared towards workforce wellbeing, less towards organisational success. This was more prominent for organisations with fewer than 50 people.

For larger businesses, staff recruitment/employee retention and long-term employee wellbeing were deemed more important than productivity benefits as the reason for investing in mental health.

The biggest issues identified in implementing a mental health and wellbeing program were:

1. Getting the workforce to engage
2. For smaller businesses the upfront cost, for larger businesses the opportunity cost.
3. Disruptions to job site operations / taking workers off a job

“The cost of the program isn’t an issue, but the opportunity cost is – to train all of our staff, it would cost us an additional \$60,000 to down tools.”

Leading Construction Company in ACT