

HALT PROGRAM REPORT NOV 2019 - JAN 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation assesses the effectiveness of the Hope Assistance Local Tradies (HALT) Program and makes recommendations regarding its future development. This annual report presents data collected from November 2019 to January 2021 inclusive.

The findings presented have been captured by HALT Community Workers to ensure consistent coverage across the two catchments – South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network (covering areas such as Frankston–Mornington Peninsula and Beaconsfield) and North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (covering areas including Melton, Brimbank, and Macedon Ranges).

BACKGROUND

In November 2019, Swinburne University's Social Innovation Research Institute (SIRI) was commissioned to conduct an independent evaluation of the HALT Program.

INTRODUCTION TO END OF YEAR REPORT 2020

Every year over 65,000 Australians make a suicide attempt. In 2019 there were 3,318 deaths by suicide in Australia and three quarters of these were men (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020a).

Tradies are one group that experience mental health issues, often without support. Tradies are predominantly men (83.8%; ABS, 2020b). Talking about depression, anxiety, suicide and life's difficulties are not part of the tradie culture (King et al., 2019). Indeed, many men do not have the information or confidence to access mental health services (Yousaf, Grunfeld, & Hunter, 2013; Yousaf, Popat, & Hunter, 2015).

HALT is in a unique position to be able to connect with tradies as a grass roots organisation that has been established by tradies, for tradies.

The HALT Program is designed to improve the mental health literacy and communication skills of tradies, encouraging them to speak up and ask for support from their friends, families and support workers if they are struggling with their mental health or thinking about suicide.

HALT provides tradies with education around mental health through the delivery of 'Save Your Bacon' events and other informal talks. The key topics covered include:

- An introduction to mental health, self-care and ways to cope with life's ups and downs
- How to recognise if a friend or family member is struggling with their mental health
- How to have a conversation about mental health

- Tools to support a friend or family member who is struggling with their mental health
- Local and national support services and how to access them

HALT forms partnerships with the following key stakeholders to co-host 'Save Your Bacon' events and other information sessions to tradies: trades businesses, hardware stores, TAFEs and learning institutions, farming and regional communities, industrial estates, and others.

HALT MISSION

The mission of HALT and the HALT Program is:

- To increase awareness of mental health and wellbeing in the tradie community
- To reduce stigma and discrimination associated with mental health issues
- To develop familiarity and connection for tradies to health services within their local community

EVALUATION OF THE HALT PROGRAM

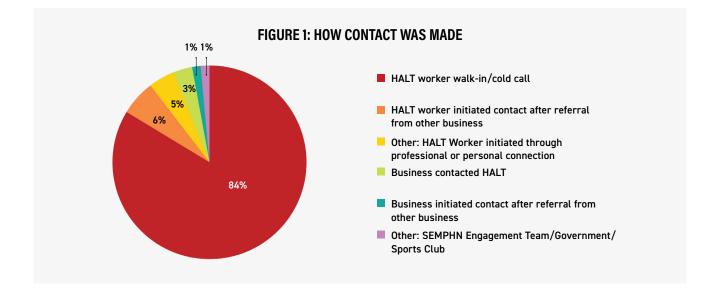
The Program is evaluated based on its capacity to influence and make an impact, for tradespeople, particularly by supporting communities to be:

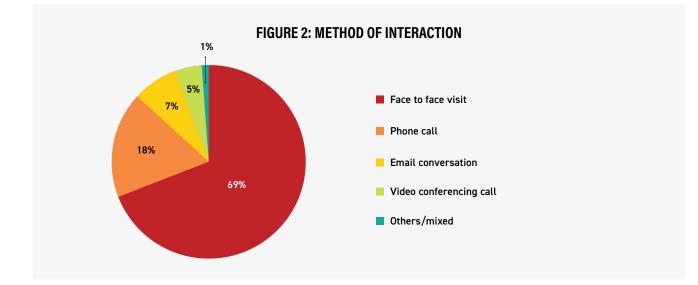
- better informed and to refer to and navigate mental health services,
- proactive around mental health issues, and
- collaborative around mental health issues.

FINDINGS

INITIAL CONTACT

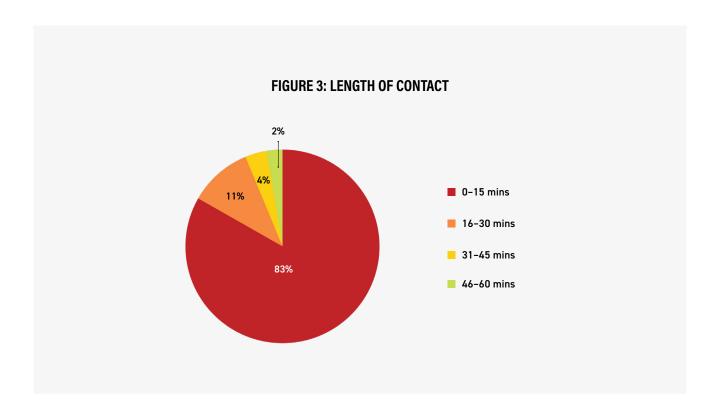
Initial contact forms were completed by HALT Project Workers following their first contact with potential partners or community contacts for HALT events. 515 initial contact forms were collected between November 2019 and January 2021 across the two regions.



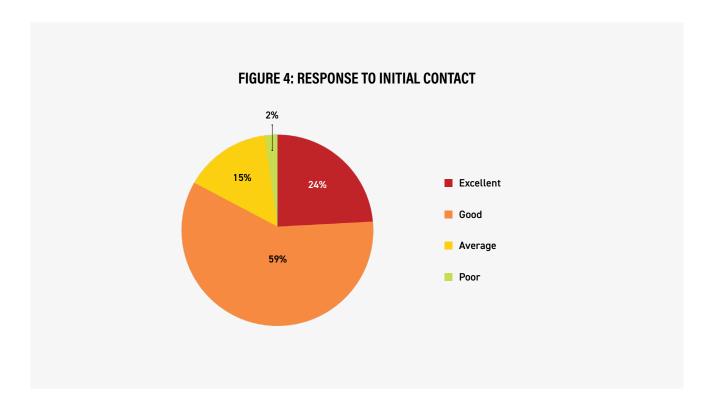


69% of interactions between HALT Project Workers and initial contacts were conducted face-to-face and 95% of these were initiated by HALT. It is predicted that this initiation figure will shift over time, with an increase in initial contacts made by the business or organisation as the profile of HALT is raised within the Greater Melbourne region.

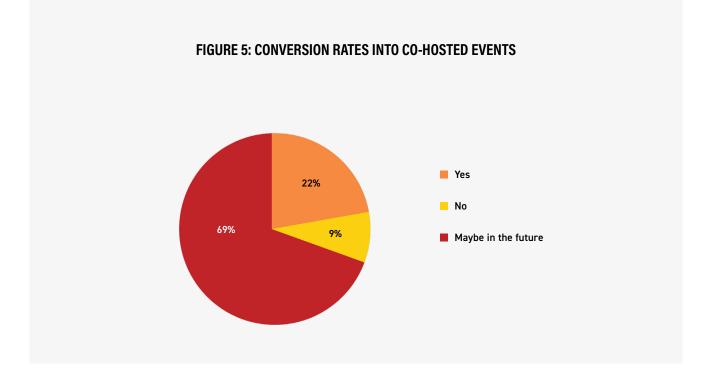
Other interactions were made by telephone (18%), video conference (5%), and email (7%). These other interactions have increased since the previous report as HALT responded flexibly to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. HALT prefer face to face interactions, forecasting that there would be a better rate of conversion into the delivery of co-hosted events/presentations through this method.



In 83% of cases the length of initial contact was 15 minutes or under, with 100% being within one hour. The proportion of 0–15 minute initial contacts has increased since the previous report due to a higher proportion of initial contacts taking place by phone, video conference or email conversations compared to a face-to-face visit.



The HALT workers reported that of the businesses contacted, 83% responded favourably to the HALT message. This indicates that HALT Project Workers are targeting businesses that are responsive to the HALT message.



The HALT workers reported that 22% of initial contacts lead to a co-hosted 'Save Your Bacon' event or other informal talk. Another 69% were recorded as possibly leading to a presentation opportunity in the future. There has been a 20% shift in the proportion of 'yes' responses to 'maybe in the future' since the previous report. This is likely related to difficulty committing to events during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Although HALT offered the option of online presentations, business may not have had the required infrastructure to facilitate this.

Only 9% had a 'no' response from their initial request for a co-hosted 'Save Your Bacon' event or other informal talk. This proportion is the same as the previous report. No information regarding why these organisations did not want a HALT presentation was obtained, but this would be useful to understand for future evaluation and reporting purposes. It may be the case that businesses that do not have a mental health approach in place may require some time to process the idea of integrating the HALT program into their workplace.

HALT EVENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

118 HALT events and presentations were delivered to tradies in the Greater Melbourne region between November 2019 and January 2021. This is an average of 8 events or presentations delivered per month. In the previous reporting period, an average of 11 presentations were delivered per month; this decrease is due to the impact of the lockdown restrictions in 2020.

Of the 118 events and presentations delivered, 66 were in the south east Melbourne region, 49 were in north west Melbourne, and 3 were in other areas. There has been a significant increase in community engagement in the north west Melbourne area compared to the previous reporting period.

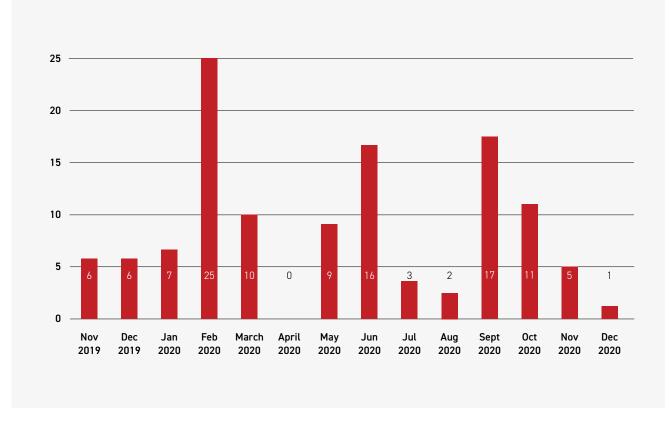


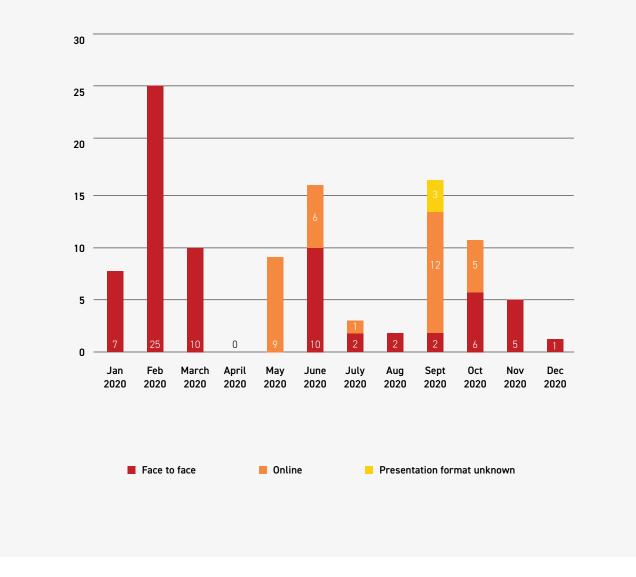
FIGURE 6: PRESENTATIONS PER MONTH

Note: On Monday 16 March 2020, nationwide restrictions in line with COVID-19 health advice came into effect. In metropolitan Melbourne, these restrictions were in place until October 2020. For some months they were only in place for part of the month while others they were in place for the full month. During this time, HALT, businesses and organisations were required to adjust to the implementation of restrictions on movement and gatherings.

TYPE OF PRESENTATION/EVENT

With COVID-19 restrictions coming into place across Victoria in March 2020, gatherings were limited in most circumstances. This meant that HALT and other organisations needed to adjust the way that they work to fit in with health guidelines. HALT developed an online module in order to deliver content to tradies during the lockdowns. Since the previous report, the proportion of face-to-face presentations and events decreased from 82% to 69%, and the proportion of online events and presentations increased from 18% to 28%.

FIGURE 7: TYPE OF PRESENTATION BY MONTH (2020)



The distribution of face-to-face versus online HALT presentations and events depicted in this graph is closely linked to the timeline of the COVID-19 pandemic response in Victoria. Here is a brief overview of the timeline:

In March 2020, COVID-19 lockdown restrictions were progressively implemented across Australia, gradually easing in mid-May. On June 20, restrictions were reinstated across Victoria in response to a 'second wave' of infection. On June 30, local lockdowns were imposed on ten Melbourne postcodes followed by a second lockdown period in metropolitan Melbourne beginning on July 7 (which later commenced in regional Victoria also). From October 19 2020, the restrictions associated with this second lockdown were significantly eased.

Please note, a small number of face-to-face presentations and events took place in July, August and September because they were held in the Macedon Ranges in regional Victoria where restrictions were lighter, compared with metropolitan Melbourne.

MULTIPLE PRESENTATIONS/EVENTS PER ORGANISATION

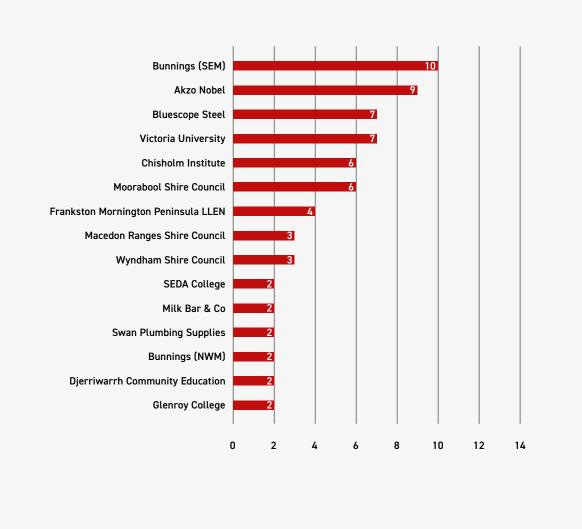
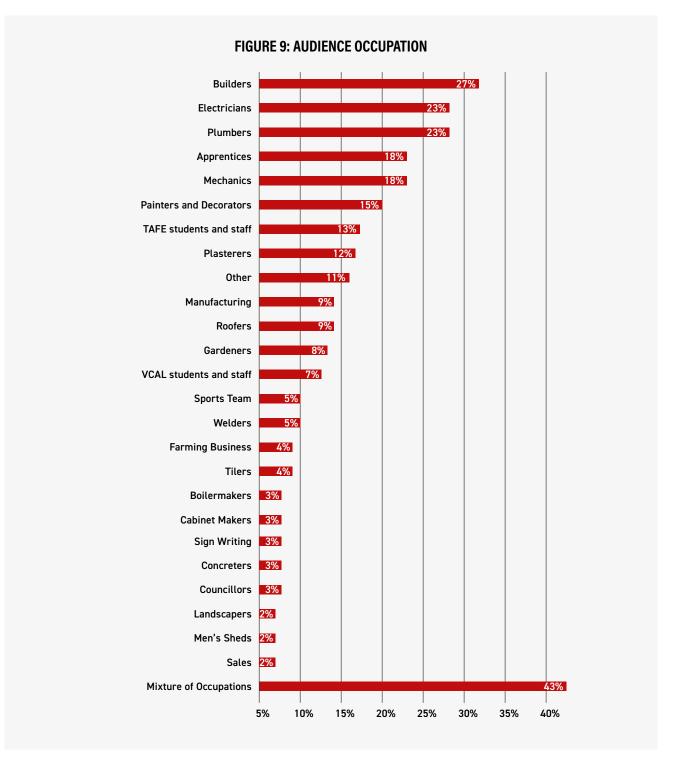


FIGURE 8: BUSINESS/ORGANISATION WITH MULTIPLE PRESENTATIONS

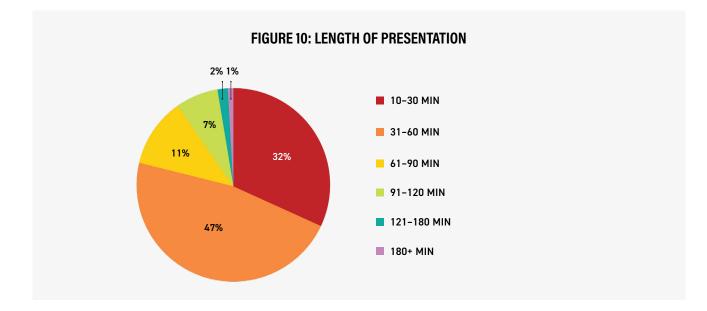
While there were 118 presentations and events delivered, there were only 66 unique partner businesses/organisations. This is because HALT delivered multiple presentations to larger businesses/organisations, or businesses/organisations with a range of outlets, or a variety of tradie groups e.g. electricians, builders, plumbers etc. 57% of presentations were delivered to businesses/organisations that received two or more presentations, while the remaining 43% of presentations were delivered to businesses/organisations that received the single presentation.

AUDIENCE MEMBER OCCUPATION

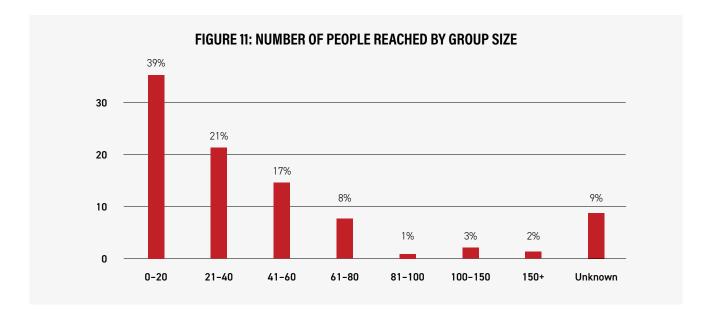


This graph shows the percentage of all audience types from the 118 HALT events delivered between November 2019 and January 2021. Often there were multiple audience types per presentation, so the reported percentages are across all presentations i.e. across all presentations, 27% of audience members were builders and 23% were electricians. The 'other' category (each reported in one instance) included ex prisoners, waste collectors, general practitioners, hairdressers, human resources workers, community health workers, panel beaters, fire and emergency workers, police, rotary club members, safety officers, shire council members, and youth services workers.

LENGTH OF EVENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

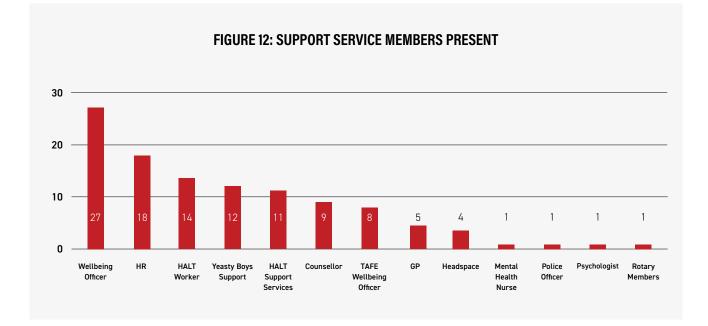


The majority of presentations (79%) were completed within one hour. This covered the time taken to set up the venue and any post presentation discussions that took place.



NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED

60% of events/presentations had up to 40 people present, while 25% had between 41–80. 5% of presentations were delivered to audiences of 100+ people.



SUPPORT SERVICE MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

A support service member(s) was in attendance at 71% of presentations. The range of support service members can be seen in the graph. There was a large increase in support service member attendance in the current reporting period (from 57% previously), which is largely attributable to the attendance of HR and Wellbeing staff members from the partnering businesses and organisations. The Yeasty Boys are an informal men's social group who provide practical support at the Save your Bacon events.

POST PRESENTATION FEEDBACK

At 52% of presentations there were post presentation discussions.

The post presentation topics of discussion have been entered into a word cloud infographic.

Some of the common subjects cited included: suicide, depression, working with HALT (including in schools), relationships, and help-seeking (including where and how to get help and the importance of help-seeking).

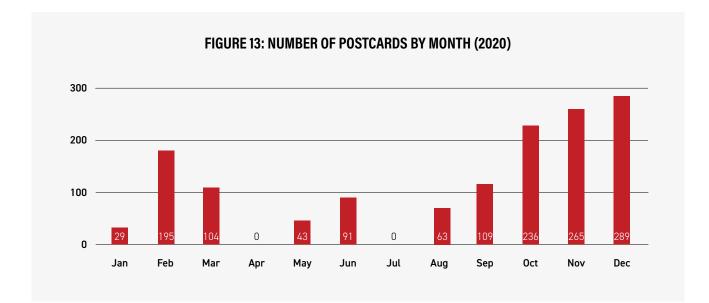


FOLLOW UP

Of the **118** events and presentations delivered, in **81%** of cases a follow up visit was scheduled. This indicates that the event/ presentation was valued by the partnering organisation or business, and they were keen to engage HALT for further events/presentations.

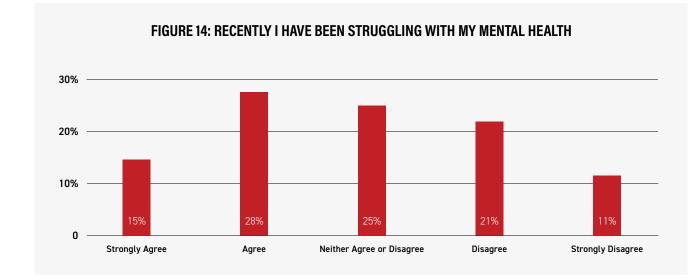
AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

Each participant in a HALT event or presentation is provided with a feedback postcard to complete at the conclusion of the information session. In the 14 month period **1432 feedback postcards** were completed.



The total number of postcards received per month is relative to the number and size of events held during that month. Although HALT transitioned to online delivery of events and presentations during the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, during months where lockdown restrictions were imposed for part of the month (March, May, June, October), or the entire month (April, July, August, September), there were lower numbers of feedback cards received.

KEY FINDINGS FROM AUDIENCE FEEDBACK



Audience members provided the following feedback after the presentation.

At the time of the HALT presentation/event, 43% of audience members agreed they had recently been struggling with their own mental health, whilst 57% either disagreed, or neither agreed nor disagreed. *



97% of participants found the HALT presentation to be useful.

*Note: This question was added to the postcard in August 2020. Therefore, data for this question is only available from August 2020 onwards and was not reported on in the previous report.

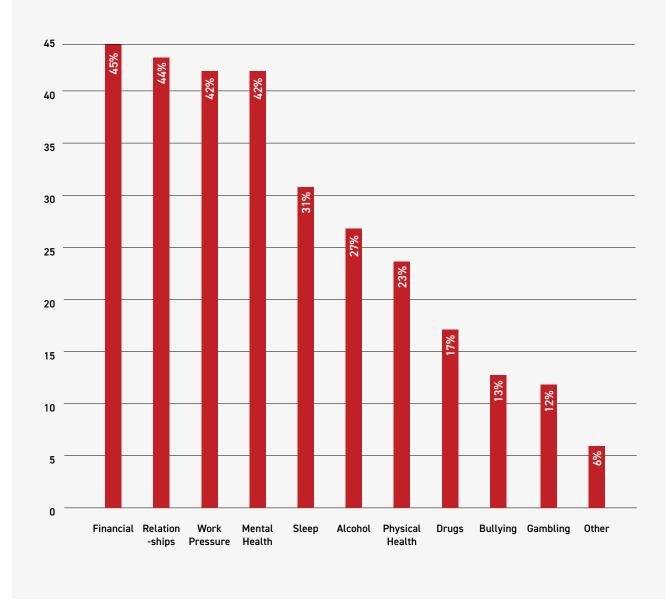
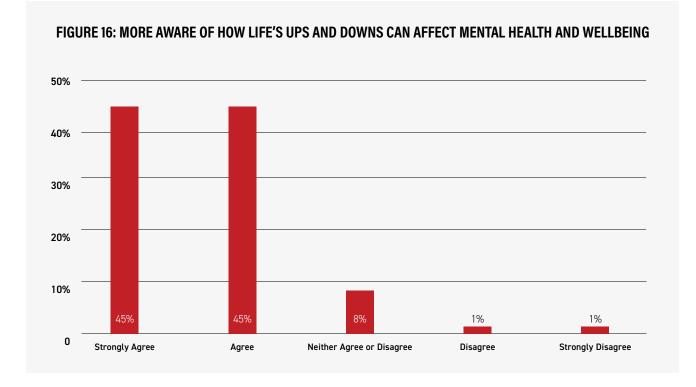


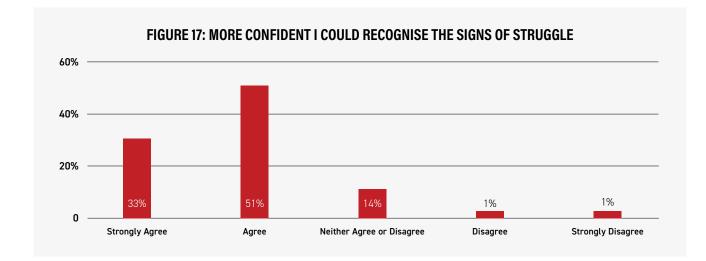
FIGURE 15: BIGGEST ISSUES FACING TRADIES

The above graph shows what proportion of respondents selected each topic as one of the biggest issues affecting them at the time of the event delivery. Participants were able to select all issues that were applicable to them. Since the previous report, the biggest shifts are seen for 'relationships', which increased from 36% to 44%, and 'work pressure', which increased from 31% to 42%. 'Financial', 'sleep' and 'physical health' all increased by 5%. In August 2020, the postcard format changed and the response item 'alcohol/drugs' was separated into two items. Alcohol emerged as the more common concern. Respondents also listed other issues. Other responses included family-related concerns, COVID-19 impacts, specific mental health issues, work issues, grief and loss, and employment concerns (job insecurity and job searching).

POST PRESENTATION OUTCOMES

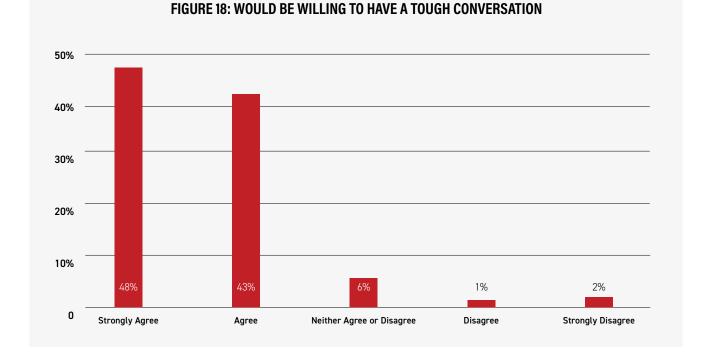


After seeing the presentation, 90% of participants agreed that they were more aware of how life's ups and downs can affect mental health and wellbeing.*

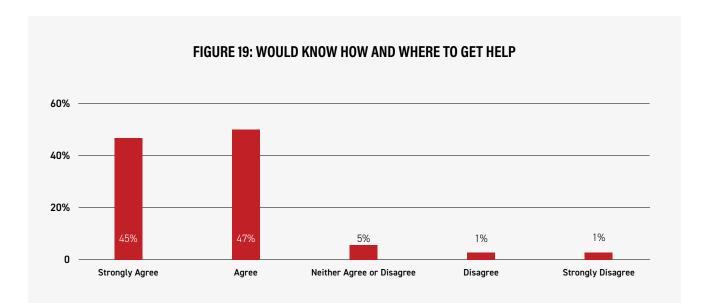


As a result of the information presented to tradies during HALT events, 84% of participants agreed they felt more confident they could recognise the signs if someone was struggling or thinking of suicide.

*Note: This question was added to the postcard in August 2020. Therefore, data for this question is only available from August 2020 onwards and was not reported on in the previous report.



After seeing the presentation, 91% of participants agreed that they would be willing to have a "tough conversation" with someone who may be struggling or thinking of suicide.* HALT encourages tradies to have tough or difficult conversations about their mental health.

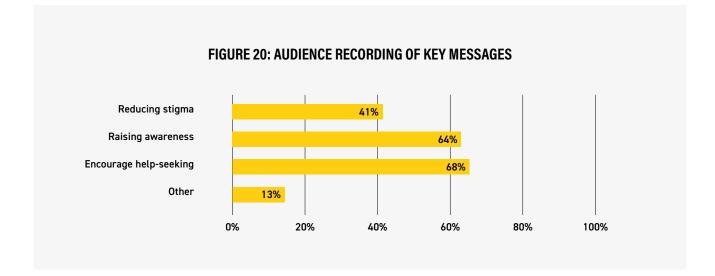


92% of participants agreed that as a result of attending the HALT event or presentation, they would know how and where to get help if they, or someone they know, was struggling or talking of suicide. This shows that HALT is educating tradies on how and where to get help.

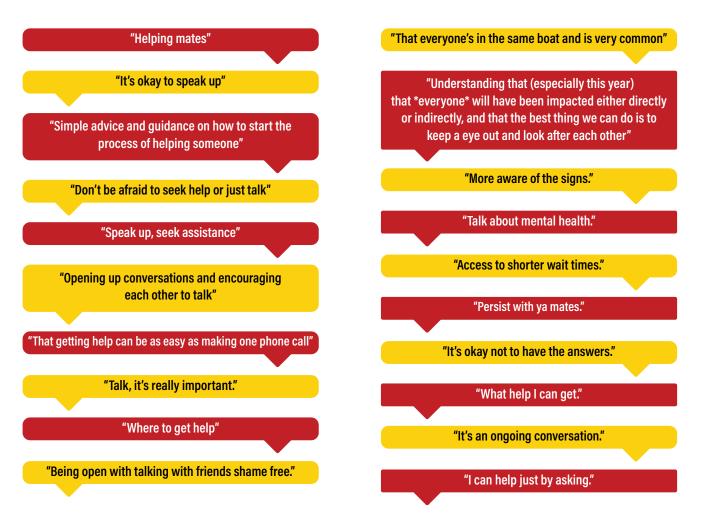
*Note: This question was added to the postcard in August 2020. Therefore, data for this question is only available from August 2020 onwards and was not reported on in the previous report.

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KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES



Respondents could select all options that were applicable and add any other key message(s) they received from the presentation. Out of the three key objectives of the HALT Program, more respondents perceived 'Encourage help-seeking' and 'Raising awareness' as the key messages they will take away from the presentation, compared with 'Reducing stigma'.



OTHER KEY MESSAGES

AUDIENCE MEMBER TESTIMONIALS

94% of audience members agreed they would recommend a HALT presentation to someone else.*

369 audience members made additional comments at the end of the postcard. They appreciated that HALT is raising awareness. They commended the speaker's presentation skills and suitability for the topic, and described the presentation as helpful, informative and insightful. On the following page are some individual responses to the HALT presentation.

AUDIENCE MEMBER TESTIMONIALS

"Thank you so much. You've inspired me. My life been up, down. You lift my day up. So I can move forward."

"(HALT worker) was very helpful and made me realise I need to get help for my mental health. I've had problems with it before but I thought I could do it myself this time but I can't I'm struggling so much"

"HALT helped a friend whom was struggling to seek help. He is doing much better and has a long way to go but he is still with us!!!!"

"Really appreciate what you do. It's very important for people to hear this message, especially young tradies"

"It was good to hear from people with personal experience and passion"

"I really appreciate what HALT is doing. We all needed to hear that."

"Thank you HALT, it was wonderful, informative and insightful to be a part of this. Love, love, loved it!"

"Very informative and it was great to have a serious discussion about mental health, especially at this time. Thank you guys very much"

"This is great. Men need help, we aren't bulletproof"

"Appreciate what the guys are doing for the industry. We need it."

"Very insightful. We need more of us blokes to take charge of the situation."

"Good to see this sort of thing on site well done and keep up the great work."

"As someone suffering, this has shed some light on what I need to do to help myself."

*Note: This question was added to the postcard in August 2020. Therefore, data for this question is only available from August 2020 onwards and was not reported on in the previous report. "Really awesome talk. Need more of it, especially in the construction industry."

"There should be more of these talks in the building industry!!"

"Good presentation that will definitely give me a guide when I struggle. Thanks mate."

"Loved the talk, was direct and simple message for all to understand."

"Great speaker and easy to understand. Love hearing his personal life and how he overcame with it. Thanks [HALT worker] for sharing."

"Great presentation. Right from the heart - to the heart."

"Simple well presented message with easy to follow strategies. Well done."

"Good to clarify how to help and what to look for. Especially for bloke's mental health."

"Was great input on how to deal with mates struggling and how to be a good listener"

> "Essential program in this Covid time and its consequences"

"Great service, we have a guy in this room who lost a mate a few days ago, it's important to highlight the avenues for help."

"Powerful, simple insights from [HALT worker] that really got the conversation going."

"Well pitched to tradie type groups - very valuable"

"Lost a couple mates to suicide over a 20 year period and it's difficult to deal with. Hopefully this helps stop any future incidents."

"Thank you for doing what you do. You are all saving lives."

"We need more people and programs like this."

"Glad to see someone talking about these issues."

"Thank you for an informative presentation, such an important topic and love that you are spreading the awareness."

"Wish I had this 18 years ago."

"Our group has not had a mental health awareness meeting since I started, very important breaks down barriers between us blokes – great."

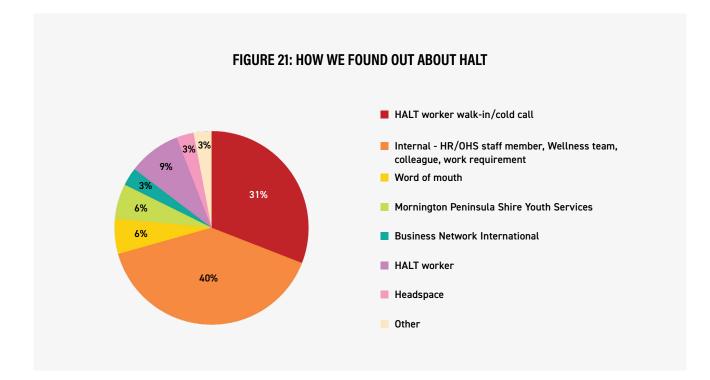
COMMUNITY SATISFACTION



Community Satisfaction Evaluation forms were provided to co-hosts and event partners. In the 14 month period, **38 forms** were received.

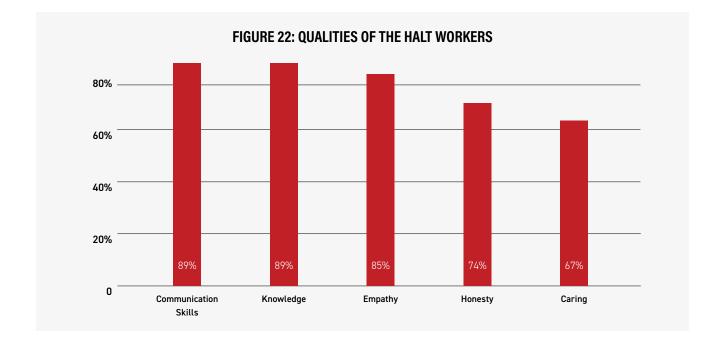
In **100%** of cases the co-host or event partner was satisfied with the HALT event delivered. Additionally, 100% of co-hosts or event partners were satisfied with the overall program.*

40% of initial contacts became aware of HALT via a staff member within their organisation (HR/OHS, wellness team, colleague). This is because in many instances, HALT delivered multiple presentations or events to single businesses or partnering organisations.



*Note: This question was added to the evaluation form in June 2020. Therefore, data for this question is only available from June 2020 onwards and was not reported on in the previous report.

HALT WORKER QUALITIES



This graph shows the proportion of co-hosts or event partners that indicated HALT workers had these qualities (they could select all that were applicable). Importantly, 89% of co-hosts or event partners felt the HALT worker had good communication skills and was knowledgeable, while 85% felt they were empathetic.

REFERRAL OF SERVICES

The HALT Worker listed or named local, trusted support services in their presentation **97%** of the time. 81% of co-hosts/ event partners reported that they found these referrals to be useful, while 14% didn't know if they were useful and 3% indicated they were not useful. 3% answered N/A because the HALT worker did not list local services during the presentation.

When asked if they thought their workers will use the referred services, 64% of co-hosts/event partners said yes and 36% indicated they didn't know. When asked why or why not, some responses included:*

"I did have students ask me about the services spoken about so I believe they will use these services."

"Easily accessible services were mentioned (e.g. option for phone, personal visit etc)"

"Because they believed [HALT worker] when he [said he] would use them and that that was brave and tough to do."

"Because they now know it's ok to seek help or have conversations around mental health or anxiety."

*Note: This question was added to the evaluation form in June 2020. Therefore, data for this question is only available from June 2020 onwards and was not reported on in the previous report.

COMMUNITY MEMBER TESTIMONIALS

100% of co-hosts or event partners indicated they would refer HALT to others.*

"A fantastic initiative that is perfectly pitched towards tradies and outdoor workers. [HALT worker] spoke openly regarding his difficult upbringing and battles with anxiety, depression, drug and alcohol use, which I felt gained respect and trust from the staff that this session was presented to, which I also think meant that the messaging sunk in."

"[HALT worker] relates well to the students given his background. It is great for them to hear a different voice, and from someone with experience in speaking to young tradies."

"Was very enlightening and well received by all staff who attended. Well worth the small amount of time invested."

"The feedback from those who participated has been great. There is obviously a thirst for more of this type of intervention. We want to do more and work closer with HALT to continue to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues."

"[HALT worker] is a great storyteller. He was engaging and relatable with the students which ensured comments and feedback in return."

"The guys were great. I feel that just talking about mental health/suicide in any way can only help. The more people know the more empowered people will become."

*Note: This question was added to the evaluation form in June 2020. Therefore, data for this question is only available from June 2020 onwards and was not reported on in the previous report.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

57% of all presentations or events were delivered to organisations or businesses that had multiple presentations.

Post presentation, in 81% of cases a follow up visit was scheduled.

SUPPORT SERVICE MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS AND PRESENTATION

There was a large increase in support service member attendance at presentations or events. This increased from 57 to 71%, compared with the previous report (Nov 2019 – June 2020).

AUDIENCE MEMBER MENTAL HEALTH

43% of audience members agreed that they had been struggling with their own mental health recently.

POST PRESENTATION OUTCOMES

Post presentation:

90% of participants were more aware of how life's ups and downs can affect mental health and wellbeing.

84% of audience members felt more confident they could recognise the signs if someone was struggling or thinking of suicide.

91% felt more willing to have a tough conversation with someone who may be struggling or thinking of suicide.

92% indicated they would know how and where to get help if they, or someone they know, was struggling or talking of suicide.

IMPACT OF COVID-19

In the period cited in this report the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the work of HALT, event partners and co-hosts. Trades businesses, sporting clubs, Men's sheds and other key stakeholders had to adjust their activities to allow for social distancing and other health and safety recommendations and restrictions.

HALT workers responded flexibly by relying on other methods of interaction for initial contacts (such as phone calls) and delivering presentations and events online.

The impact of COVID-19 on community members may have been reflected in the increase in relationship issues and work pressure as their biggest issues, compared with the previous report (Nov 2019 – June 2020).

Some tradies have also been negatively impacted as a result of closures or a reduction in customers as a result of the restrictions. While the economic and social impact of the pandemic is being tracked, we are yet to see the full picture.

APPROACH

The evaluation tools were codesigned by Swinburne Researchers and the HALT Program staff and include data collection focusing on:

1) Initial consultations with community partners or co-hosts

- 2) HALT health promotion presentations
- 3) Audience member feedback
- 4) Co-host or community partner satisfaction.

THE HALT INITIAL CONTACT FORM

The HALT Initial Contact Form is completed by the HALT Project Workers after an initial consultation with a potential community partner or event co-host. This form includes information about who referred the community partner, their location, the length and time of the initial consultation, nature of issues experienced within the workplace or organisation, their response regarding co-hosting a HALT event and any other information considered important by the HALT Project Workers.

This data is entered directly into an online application designed specifically for the HALT evaluation process by each of the HALT Project Workers.

THE HALT HEALTH PROMOTION PRESENTATION FORM

The HALT Health Promotion Presentation Form is completed by the HALT Project Workers, following the completion of a community event or presentation.

This form includes the attendee's occupations, location of the event, length of the event, the type of information presented, what support service members were present (if any), the nature of issues faced by attendees, the nature of any post presentation discussions, and any comments or additional notes made by the HALT Project Workers.

This data is entered directly into an online application designed specifically for the HALT evaluation process by the evaluation team with input from the HALT Project Workers.

THE AUDIENCE MEMBER FEEDBACK POSTCARDS

Tradies and other audience members are asked to complete an anonymous brief feedback form in the shape of a postcard. The postcard data is manually entered into a spreadsheet for analysis. Where presentations are delivered virtually, audience members are asked to complete an online form. Response to the online form is typically lower than the cardboard postcards collected after face to face presentations.

The postcard asks audience members to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements relating to the usefulness of the presentation, if they would recommend it to others, if they have recently been struggling with their own mental health and a range of post presentation outcomes. It also asks audience members to select the biggest issues for them and the key messages they will take away from the presentation.

THE COMMUNITY SATISFACTION FORM

The Community Satisfaction Form was created by researchers in collaboration with the HALT Program Team. These forms are distributed by the HALT Project Workers to event co-hosts or community partners after a HALT presentation has been completed.

The form asks about the general levels of satisfaction with the service, including HALT Worker qualities. The form records service referrals, whether or not the community partner found this helpful for their staff or members and if they think their staff or members will use the referral services. Finally, it documents suggested improvements to the service and whether they would recommend it to others. Satisfaction form responses may be anonymous.

DEMOGRAPHICS

NORTH WESTERN MELBOURNE PHN REGION

In 2016, the total population of the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network region was 1,707,375, with an indigenous population of 9,933.

According to the 2016 Census, 50.30% of people (858,823 people) were female and 49.70% (848,552 people) were male.

The North Western Melbourne PHN area covers 3,212 square kilometres.

This region contains some of Victoria's most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, where many indicators that are related to poorer mental health, such as high unemployment, high levels of social isolation and psychological distress, are elevated. The burden of disease from mental disorders within this catchment, particularly Brimbank and Hume, is greater than the Victorian average.

NORTH WESTERN MELBOURNE PHN EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

68,124 people of the total population of 1,707,375, were unemployed in 2016.

Of those employed in this region, 34.3% described their occupation as technician or trades operators, labourers or machinery operators (ABS, 2011).



SOUTH EASTERN MELBOURNE PHN REGION

In 2016, the total population of the South Eastern Melbourne PHN region was 1,511,585, with an indigenous population of 7,281.

According to the 2016 Census, 50.64% of people (765,530 people) were female and 49.36% (746,055 people) were male.

The South Eastern Melbourne PHN area covers 2,935 square kilometres.

SOUTH EASTERN MELBOURNE PHN EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

47,615 people of the total population of 1,511,585 were unemployed in 2016.

Of those employed in the South Eastern Melbourne region, 35.7% described their occupation as technician or trades operators, labourers or machinery operators (ABS, 2011).



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