



# Injury Prevention in Construction

March 2021

**icare**<sup>™</sup>  
**foundation**

An icare Foundation investment, delivered collaboratively with the icare Prevention team, to support injury prevention in the construction industry

## What is Injury Prevention in Construction?

Injury Prevention in Construction (IPIC) is a \$3.16 million investment by the icare Foundation supporting innovations and research addressing the root causes of accidents and injury in construction.

IPIC includes three funded projects:

1.

A \$1m investment over three years for the Housing Industry Association (HIA) to deliver a social media and behaviour change strategy to empower and engage young workers in site safety. This initiative has a particular focus on small to medium residential sites where site safety has lower compliance than commercial and large residential building sites.

2.

A \$1.16m investment over three years for Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in partnership with Master Builders Association (MBA) to conduct research that will be put into practice. This will enable industry partners to develop healthy, safe and supportive workplaces for young construction workers who are identified as a high-risk subgroup of the workforce.

3.

A \$1m investment over two years for TAFE NSW to develop an interactive training program on Working Safely at Heights featuring online learning and fully immersive Virtual Reality (VR) for TAFE NSW apprentices.

IPIC is funded under the icare Workers Insurance scheme.

## Target outcomes

icare Foundation's goal is to support innovations that impact workers and the industry.

### For young workers and apprentices:

- Change their behaviour through improved self-management of workplace risks
- Seek out safety education tools, challenge unsafe workplace situations and accept appropriate safety messages from site supervisors
- Develop their careers to become leaders of culture change for safer workplaces and work in safe and healthy ways
- Participate in activities to improve workplace health and safety.

### For the construction industry:

- Develop an accessible evidence base of effective Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) training for young workers and supervisors
- Establish best practice virtual reality safety training experiences to reduce risk-taking behaviour, endorsed and supported by the industry.

## The problem

Physical injuries that occur in construction and manufacturing organisations results in \$384 million of annual claims in NSW. The focus on the construction industry with this investment reflects its status as high-risk, with significantly higher physical injury claims when compared to other industry sectors. This is particularly true for young workers who are more likely to be injured.

*“ According to icare 2017-18 claims data, 45% of injury claims in the construction industry came from young workers, aged 19 to 32. ”*

This may be due to their inexperience on site, and because they are more prone to risk-taking behaviours. icare data and internal stakeholder engagement further indicates that musculoskeletal injuries represent one of the most significant issues icare Foundation could have an impact on.

Figures from SafeWork NSW reveal that falls from heights have more than tripled in the last five years and more than 12,000 workers were injured from a fall between 2014 and 2017. Of these workers, 25 have died and more than 240 have been permanently disabled.

## Our focus

Prevention is one of icare Foundation’s three target outcome areas. We invest in prevention initiatives that help to create safer and healthier workplaces and reduce physical and psychological injuries.

IPIC presents a significant opportunity for icare Foundation to invest in understanding the underlying problems that lead to these incidents and develop and test evidence-based solutions.

IPIC is focused on answering the following three challenges:

**1.** ..... 

How might we address individual factors that create unsafe behaviours and accidents in order to reduce injuries in young and inexperienced works on construction sites?

**2.** ..... 

How might we address site supervision and project management factors that create unsafe behaviours and accidents in order to reduce injuries on construction sites?

**3.** ..... 

How might we address organisational factors (including workplace cultures and systems) that contribute to accidents and injury in construction?

## IPIC journey

In 2019, the icare Foundation created the Injury Prevention Fund to address the increasing numbers of physical and psychological injuries and associated claims that are received by icare. IPIC represents the physical injury stream of this fund.

This initiative took an evidence-based approach, informed by quantitative research from icare physical injury data within the construction industry, a literature review, qualitative research with those in the construction industry, and advice and consultation with industry experts.

An open investment call for applications commenced on 22 July 2019 and closed on 23 August 2019. Through a competitive application process, the three partnering organisations were selected. Co-design workshops took place to further refine the problem and initiatives with partners. All three projects commenced implementation in July 2020.

## Who is involved?

IPIC is working with three partners, each delivering different initiatives to the challenges. They are Housing Industry Association (HIA) in partnership with The Shannon Company (a specialist behaviour change communications company), Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in partnership with Master Builders Association (MBA), and TAFE NSW.

Together these three initiatives are addressing the identified challenges from an individual, organisational and systems level to achieve improved customer outcomes.

## About icare Foundation

The icare Foundation was established in 2016 to provide an integrated and strategic focus for icare’s social investment activities, partnering with organisations and innovations that extend the reach and support provided to our injured customers, their carers and families and to prevent or reduce injuries in the workplace.

The icare Foundation is generating lasting impact for our customers in insurance and care through our innovative and collaborative funding model.

Our aim is to improve customer outcomes in three target areas – Prevention, Recovery, and Quality of Life – and to solve problems facing NSW communities as part of icare’s role as a social insurer.

**For more information**

visit [icare.nsw.gov.au/icare-foundation](http://icare.nsw.gov.au/icare-foundation)

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