

Bardie Somerville

Carpenter & Advocate for Mental Wellbeing of Australians in Trades

We lose a construction worker to suicide every second day in Australia, and Bardie Somerville is dedicated to making sure that number improves.

As a qualified carpenter turned site manager, Bardie knows firsthand the value that women bring to trades – and her experiences on the job have given her a unique perspective to share across media stories and events. It has also ignited a fire in her to position herself as a pioneering force for other women who want to succeed in trades, and also as a mental health advocate for those in the industry.

If Bardie’s face looks familiar, that’s because her tenacity and authentic spirit lit up TV screens in Network Ten’s reality show *The Bridge*, where she was one of 12 Aussies tasked with building a bridge in the remote Tasmanian wilderness. Her carpentry skills and courage made her a key figure on the show, and her determination won her fans across the country – and saw her eventually crowned the winner.



WORKING IN A MALE DOMINATED INDUSTRY

Experiencing years of sexism and discrimination in the workforce, has made Bardie Somerville approach a job site differently and is part of why she is such an inspiring voice. Bardie is deeply committed to driving improved conditions for women in trades in Australia; by advocating for the establishment of a framework of support via industry organizations, government bodies, and trade employers, to ensure young women in trades are empowered and respected.

She believes that whilst there is work to be done, change is possible and in this presentation she explains what can be done to make real change – all with the same energy that she delivers to her worksites and with a strength and zest for life that motivates everyone around her.

GIVING TRADIES TOOLS FOR LIFE

Mental health is not a common subject talked about at a job site, on smoko or at knock off drinks. But looking after your mental health in conjunction with your emotional and physical health is key to doing your job well and enjoying life outside of work – something Bardie knows all too well.

At age 20, Bardie was in a dark place. Feeling a lack of support, connection and like she had no one to turn to, Bardie attempted to take her own life.

From there she has made it her purpose to change the industry and ensure mental health and wellbeing practices are just as integral to a job site as as the physical safety procedures. Bardie currently runs The Shift, a platform for tradies to connect, learn and grow - her vision - to give tradies tools for life.

Bardie's honesty and vulnerability allows others to in turn open up about their own mental health struggles. She provides all the tools and advice from her own experience, in the hope of helping others who are struggling, or at least make them feel less alone.

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