

Meet Tom

From as far back as he can remember, Tom, 33, has been surrounded by cars and trucks. His parents owned a panel shop when he was a kid. His love for motorcycles, boats and fixing things, led to him pursuing a career as a mechanic. He started out as a truck washer and worked his way to Workshop Leading Hand for Truck Tech Group. Today, Tom manages a team of seven people, ranging from eighteen through to 65 years old. The challenges he has faced personally and professionally have made him passionate about creating a work environment that encourages supportive conversations.



Tom: Stepping into the truck and trailer industry as a mechanic took everything I learnt about cars in my parents' panel shop to a new scale. Being a truck mechanic requires a level of physical strength that many underestimate. The machinery is large and the lifting is heavy. We work on trucks that can carry up to 1,600 tonnes of waste. **It takes a toll on your body and if your body isn't working well, the job can become dangerous.** When I first started out, I was a small bloke, so I had to work harder, and I also copped a lot of crap about my size. I could have bailed at that point, but I wanted to prove them wrong. Now I'm a manager, I make sure my team know each other well, don't push the jokes too far and can spot the signs if someone is struggling.

I know when the boys are having an off day because they're not performing, or they're distracted. It's my job to make sure they're safe and comfortable, so I usually get them off the tools and encourage them to go for a walk and obviously chat to me if they're up to it. **It isn't easy telling someone you're struggling, so after I have asked if they're OK once, I don't push it. I just make sure they know I won't judge and if they need time, the rest of the team can step in.** We have each other's backs.



I just make sure they know I won't judge and if they need time, the rest of the team can step in.

Ask

RU OK?TM
inTrucks&Sheds

No qualifications needed



Our relationships extend beyond just our team. Truckies drop their vehicles off to get fixed or we respond to a breakdown, and they might have been on the road alone for hours on end, it's common for them to share their day with you. The more you get to know them, they'll also share some of their challenges. **Having that yarn can help them get out of their head and builds a level of trust that's important in our industry.**



You never know what a workmate is battling with outside of work. I've had some serious family struggles over the past few years, and while it's separate from work, my brain doesn't magically switch off when I clock on.

Having mates at work who know my situation and give me the space to talk about it makes me feel less alone.

I'm no longer afraid to say 'I'm not OK'. I think me being so open has helped the boys be more open too.

Even though there are still blokes in the industry who have a 'toughen up' attitude, it's becoming less tolerated, because they realise the day will come when they might need support too. **No matter your job, role or age, having a listening ear can be a life changer.**

“

No matter your job, role or age, having a listening ear can be a life changer.



Scan the QR code or go to
healthyheads.org.au/ruok

Ask

RUOK?TM
inTrucks&Sheds

No qualifications needed