



Wambo team reigns supreme as brigadesmen put to test

Hunter Valley (Australia), 22 July 2016 —

Peabody's Wambo underground mine team has again dominated the Hunter Valley Mines Rescue Competition, securing an incredible eighth straight win in Singleton last week.

Now in its 33rd year, the annual event tests the incident response and rescue skills of active mines rescue brigadesmen. This year, a mine roof collapse and serious motor vehicle accident were among the emergency scenarios faced by competitors.

Wambo team captain, Warren Kirk, said the team's dedication was just one of its secrets to success.

'It comes down to many things, I can't put my finger on one. However, the high level of commitment from all members of the team both past and present is definitely key,' Mr Kirk said.

The Hunter Valley event also gave the reigning champions an opportunity to further hone their skills, ahead of Wambo's upcoming appearance at the International Mines Rescue Competition in Canada next month.

'We can't wait to represent both Peabody and the Hunter Valley on the world stage,' Mr Kirk said.

Mines Rescue Regional Manager, David Connell, said the Hunter Valley Mines Rescue Competition was an ideal opportunity for brigadesmen to come together and demonstrate their safety expertise.

'Fortunately, today's mining operations are centred on safe work practices, and so the number of major incidents requiring the assistance of our brigadesmen is limited,' Mr Connell said.

'Mines Rescue and the brigadesmen continue to provide vital emergency response services. However, prevention is the cornerstone of our role, as the industry continues to recognise the importance of emergency response safety management systems and high-risk activity workplace education and training.

'This competition allows us to simulate the conditions and pressure of real-life emergencies and put the unique skills of our brigadesmen to the test. As Mines Rescue is committed to continuous improvement, it also gives us an opportunity to identify any training areas that may

Corporate Office

T: +61 (2) 8270 3200
F: +61 (2) 9262 6090
Level 21, 44 Market Street
Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 3842
Sydney NSW 2001

Lithgow

T: +61 (2) 6350 1050
F: +61 (2) 6351 2407
3 Proto Avenue
Lithgow NSW 2790
PO Box 72
Lithgow NSW 2790

Mudgee

T: +61 (2) 6370 6100
F: +61 (2) 6372 2470
18 Sydney Road
Mudgee NSW 2850
PO Box 1156
Mudgee NSW 2850

Newcastle

T: +61 (2) 4948 3100
F: +61 (2) 4953 0541
143 Main Road
Speers Point NSW 2284
PO Box 219
Boolaroo NSW 2284

Singleton

T: +61 (2) 6571 9900
F: +61 (2) 6572 2667
1 Civic Avenue
Singleton NSW 2330
PO Box 317
Singleton NSW 2330

Woonona

T: +61 (2) 4286 5400
F: +61 (2) 4285 4144
558-580 Princes Highway
Woonona NSW 2517
PO Box 42
Corrimal NSW 2518

require additional focus to ensure we maintain the highest possible standard of competency.'

The competition also gave new brigadesmen the chance to engage with their more experienced counterparts, such as Darren McKenzie. This year marks an incredible 25 years of service for Mr McKenzie, whose outstanding efforts were recognised with one of the mines rescue community's most highly regarded accolades, the gold medallion.

'I really enjoy being a brigadesman. It's a lot of fun, I've made some really great friends over the years and learned invaluable life skills that have helped me handle incidents at work and beyond,' Mr McKenzie said.

'The best thing about the competition is you can test your skills and gauge yourself against the rest of the brigadesmen. We're all competitive and want to be the best at what we do, and it's all about learning from each other. At every competition someone shows me something new.'

New recruit and member of Glencore's Bulga competition team, Matt Sharpe, recently completed the 10-day brigadesman induction. The enthusiastic trainee said he relished the chance to learn from Mr McKenzie and other long-serving brigadesmen.

'You learn off the people who have done this for a lot longer, and it's good to be alongside people who have got more experience and can show you the little things,' Mr Sharpe said.

'Overall, it's a really good training day. You can sit in a room and look at the board, watch a video or read a book as many times as you want, but nothing compares to when you actually whack the suit on and go down there and do it.'

Fellow recruit and Bulga team member Matt Butler agreed.

'In the environment that we work, I'd rather be somebody that's a bit more active and not take that step back when you want to help someone. The more experience you can have down there, the better,' Mr Butler said.

- ENDS

Facts about mine rescue brigadesmen

- 2016 competition teams included: Wambo, Ashton, Bulga, Narrabri and two composite teams
- Minimum 5% industry dedicated to emergency response (1 in 20 underground workers)
- Initial 10-day induction training required for all new recruits
- Brigadesmen enrolment is voluntary
- Six training days required per year for all brigadesmen
- A large percentage of brigadesmen progress into more senior mining roles
- 107 brigadesmen in the Hunter Valley

Available for interview

- David Connell – Regional Manager Mines Rescue
- Steve Tonegato – State Manager Mines Rescue

For more information please contact:

Belinda Ward—Marketing Manager Coal Services

Mobile: 0419 148 135

belinda.ward@coalservices.com.au

About Coal Services:

Coal Services is an industry-owned organisation committed to providing critical services and expertise to the NSW coal mining industry.

We operate a Specialised Health and Safety Scheme that provides an integrated suite of services aimed at preventing injury and illness in the workplace. These services help employers to identify, assess, monitor and control many risks inherent in the NSW coal mining industry.

Our preventative and responsive services in the areas of occupational health and safety, workers compensation, mines rescue and training help to deliver on our purpose 'to protect'.

We are jointly owned by two shareholders, the NSW Minerals Council and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU). Our purpose, vision and values are aligned to focus on the safety and health of our industry and its workers.

Please visit: www.coalservices.com.au.