



Wambo named Australian champions

Narrabri (Australia), 13 October 2017 —

Peabody Energy's Wambo Mine have taken out the highly contested 55th Australian Underground Mines Rescue competition in sensational form yesterday in Narrabri.

Wambo were closely followed by Queensland's Moranbah North and Broadmeadow teams who claimed second and third place respectively.

The Australian Mines Rescue Competition is run by a committee of joint representatives from NSW Mines Rescue and Queensland Mines Rescue. It is hosted on a rotational basis each year and held in different mining regions.

Four New South Wales (NSW) teams who won their respective regional competitions, and four Queensland mining teams (also decided by a series of competitions), vied for the 2017 title. Tahmoor (Wollongong), Newcastle, Springvale (Lithgow), Hunter Valley (Wambo) represented NSW while teams from Kestrel, Moranbah North, Broadmeadow and Grosvenor mines represented Queensland.

These elite brigadesmen were put through their paces, responding to a number of scenarios in different environments. Surface and underground exercises included fire fighting, first aid and a series of search and rescue, emergency response and risk management challenges.

For the first time in the competition's history the event was held in the north-western NSW coalfields, onsite at the Whitehaven Coal Narrabri mine.

'Whitehaven Coal welcomed the opportunity to host the 2017 competition and extend a warm welcome to our Narrabri operation, one of six operating mines within the Whitehaven Coal group,' said Steve Bow, General Manager Narrabri.

'With an overall workforce of more than 1,400 people, 75 per cent of whom live in the communities where our operations are based, our goal is for zero workplace injuries or illness and for every person to go home safe and healthy after each work day. Whitehaven Coal's people are committed to continually improve performance and provide a safe and healthy workplace for fellow employees, business partners and contractors,' he explained. 'Hosting this competition reinforces that commitment and acknowledges the importance of this region to the coal industry.'

NSW Mines Rescue's General Manager Matthew Fellowes applauded the expertise and camaraderie displayed by competitors, organisers and assessors, saying 'It was a highly contested competition and all eight teams performed exceptionally well. These volunteer

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brigadesmen provide invaluable safety leadership every day in their workplaces, and are the ones who are ready, willing and able to respond should the unfortunate need arise, something that should provide some peace of mind to all of our fellow coal miners.'

Mr Fellowes also thanked Whitehaven Coal's Narrabri mine for their commitment to the Australian mining industry.

'Hosting an event like this is a significant investment in time and resources but critically important to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our mineworkers. Narrabri's mine management and site support team, were instrumental in ensuring the success of the event yesterday and should be commended on this effort,' he added.

When Peabody Energy's team captain Warren Kirk was asked about the win he said, 'I want to thank Peabody for supporting the team. I want to thank the team for giving up hours of their personal time to ensure we are equipped to deal with any scenario we are presented with. I also want to thank our families for their support over the years we have all been involved in mines rescue. I have no doubt my team is the best mines rescue team in the world.'

The team are eligible to represent Australia at the International Mines Rescue Competition to be held in Russia next year.

Despite not taking out the top prize, Moranbah North and Broadmeadow are thrilled with a podium finish. Moranbah North captain Scott Ryan said 'The teams we were competing against were the best of the best, but I don't think any of us were better than anyone else. It all comes down to who makes less mistakes on the day, but every competitor has proven themselves worthy just by getting to this point.

'Being able to compete in the Australian Mines Rescue competition gives you a deeper insight into how other states run their competitions, and this will give us an edge in our local competition next year. We wouldn't have been able to do as well as we did without the support of our mine. A week off to train before the competition was exactly what we needed to do our best.'

Broadmeadow captain Dwayne Crothers is no stranger to the Australian competition, having competed at the top level four times in the past. 'I'm so proud of the boys for placing, they're all so young but their commitment to being brigadesmen is on another level. BHP allowed us five days off to train before the competition and we used those days to knuckle down and focus on the basics. No matter whether it's a local or Australian competition the scenarios all come down to how well you can master the basics.'

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About Coal Services:

Coal Services Pty Limited is an industry-owned, workplace focused, specialist organisation leading best practice occupational health, safety, worker's compensation insurance, mines rescue services and innovative training solutions throughout Australian coal mining and heavy industries.

Coal Services Pty Limited has statutory functions as outlined within the NSW Coal Industry Act 2001. These functions include, but are not limited to the provision of workers compensation, occupational health and rehabilitation services for workers engaged in the coal industry; collection, collation and dissemination of statistics relating to the health and safety of workers engaged the coal industry; and the provision of mines rescue services and training to the NSW coal industry.

Coal Services Pty Limited has developed the most advanced real world simulator of its kind, preparing staff to respond to dangerous situations that may be encountered in a hazardous environment. The Virtual Reality Training System is accurate and realistic, allowing staff to experience and respond to real hazards in a safe and controlled environment, before actually encountering them in the workplace. Please visit: www.virtualrealitytrainingsystem.com