

Mines Rescue teams demonstrate skill under pressure

Newcastle (Australia), 18 June 2018 —

Brigadesmen from across the region descended upon Centennial Coal's Newstan Colliery on Friday, 15 June to compete in the annual Newcastle Mines Rescue competition. Team Orange, led by veteran brigadesman Bob Wilson, were declared overall winners of the event that was designed to test their skills under pressure.

The day's format included several underground and surface simulation exercises to demonstrate knowledge and the use of equipment in realistic scenarios, including exercises to test hazard awareness, underground search and rescue, first aid and fire-fighting.

'The Newcastle competition format is unique and as close to a real life scenario as these brigadesmen will experience. Brigadesmen receive a simulated call to duty early in the morning and are given instructions to attend a particular mine site. Teams are formed as they arrive,' explained Darren Parker, Acting Regional Manager Newcastle Mines Rescue.

'It not only tests their core skills, but also their ability to act and communicate effectively as a team,' he said.

Darren went on to explain that teams include seasoned brigadesmen with active duty under their belt, and new brigadesmen competing for the first time.

'The competition is an opportunity to join new trainees with more experienced brigadesmen to test what they have learnt in their intensive induction program but also to learn from the experience of others,' he said.

The primary purpose of Mines Rescue is to provide emergency response to the industry in the case of an emergency. Events like these allow the Brigadesmen to test and hone their skills in preparation for the unfortunate circumstance where they may be called upon.

General Manager Mines Rescue and Regulation and Compliance, Matt Fellowes said, 'Thankfully, major incidents requiring brigadesmen response are limited. As an industry we continually strive to create a safer work environment and these volunteer brigadesmen help to support a proactive safety culture onsite. They play a pivotal role in preventing significant incidents from occurring. They, and the mines they represent, can be proud of the skills they have demonstrated today.'

The competition is the first in a series of regional competitions hosted by NSW Mines Rescue. Competitions will also take place in Singleton in July, and Wollongong and Mudgee in August.

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

The winning teams from each region will be invited to compete in the Australian competition to be held in Queensland in October.

Team Orange team members (L-R):



Chris Stanford (Austar), Kameren See (Myuna), Mitch Wells (Mandalong), Jono Scully (Austar), Jordan Mearns (Mandalong), Bob Wilson - Captain (Coal Services).

Mines competing on the day:

- Ashton
- Austar
- Chain Valley
- Integra
- Mandalong
- Myuna
- Newstan
- North Wambo
- South Blakefield

Facts about NSW Mine Rescue Brigadesmen

- There are 423 voluntary brigadesmen across the NSW coal industry
- Minimum 5 per cent industry dedicated to emergency response (1 in 20 underground workers)
- Initial ten day induction training required for all new recruits
- Six training days required per year for all brigadesmen
- A large percentage of brigadesmen progress into more senior mining roles

- ENDS -

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 are 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.

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