



## Metropolitan named Southern Mines Rescue Competition winners

Wollongong (Australia), 15 August 2022 –

Six teams from mine sites across the Illawarra region came together to compete at the 61<sup>st</sup> annual Southern Mines Rescue competition on Friday, 12 August. It was the first time the district event has been held since 2019 due to COVID restrictions. Peabody's Metropolitan team were named overall winners – the first time that a team from the 137-year-old mine has taken the title in the history of the competition. Dendrobium were named runners up.

The teams worked through a series of scenarios designed to test their emergency preparedness capabilities, teamwork and communication skills while they work under pressure. The tasks simulate incidents and situations that rescue brigades could face should they be called to action for example, underground search and rescue, monitoring mine conditions, managing confined space hazards, fire-fighting and first aid. There is also a theory exam.

Metropolitan team captain, Warren Kirk, commended all teams for their performances on the day, acknowledging the hard work and effort that goes into competing at a high level. Mr Kirk had previously captained Peabody's highly successful Wambo underground mines rescue team in the Hunter region for a number of years before moving to the company's Illawarra operation in 2018.

"The high standard of all the teams was the first thing I noticed when I came down here from the Hunter, so well done to everyone. To Southern Mines Rescue; thank you for the time and effort that goes into preparing the competition. I would also like to thank my employer Peabody for its genuine commitment to mine safety and for giving us the time to study and train this year; on top of the time we already put in ourselves. I was lucky enough to inherit a team that was already a polished unit. Teamwork makes the dream work and these boys always, always hook in. And I appreciate that, and that's one of the reasons we stand here today."

Mr Kirk dedicated the win to his grandfather, who encouraged him to join Mines Rescue at a young age.

"My Pop was a miner his whole life and when I started working in the mines, he wanted me to join mines rescue. He said that if something goes wrong, I would know what to do to help my

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mates, and that I would be surrounded by like-minded people who care about the people around them. On a personal note, I lost my Pop this year, so Pop, this win is for you.”

Wayne Green, General Manager NSW Mines Rescue, said that the people who volunteer their time to Mines Rescue have a special bond and a commitment to service that transcends the workplace.

“The primary purpose of Mines Rescue is to provide emergency response to the NSW coal mining industry in the case of an emergency. Fortunately, major incidents requiring brigade response are limited but events like these allow brigade members to practice and hone a range of skills that can be used at work as well as in the community.”

Mr Green also thanked Wollongong Resources for partnering with Southern Mines Rescue in hosting parts of the competition at Russell Vale mine.

‘Wollongong Resources is a tremendous supporter of Mines Rescue. Allowing us to use the Russell Vale mine facilities enabled us to take the competition to another level,’ he said.

Metropolitan will represent the Southern district at the Australian competition to be held in Wollongong later this year.

Mines Rescue brigade members across the district, not just those competing, were also recognised for their dedication and commitment at the presentation dinner.

Among them was veteran brigade member, Greg Saunders, who retired last year after an incredible 43 years of active mines rescue service. The longest-serving brigade member in NSW, he began training in 1978 at the age of 21 which was then the minimum age for rescue corpsmen. Mr Saunders has participated in around 35 local mines rescue competitions over the years and competed six times at a national level.

Wayne Cook, Andrew Bull and Steven Rutledge were also recognised for 25 years of service; while badges for 15 and 5 years of service were also presented.

**- ENDS**

### **Mines competing at the 2022 Southern Mines Rescue competition**

- Appin (Illawarra Coal South32) – one team, Appin Pink
- Dendrobium (Illawarra Coal South32)
- Metropolitan (Peabody)
- Russell Vale (Wollongong Coal)
- Tahmoor (Glencore) – two teams, Tahmoor Red and Tahmoor Black

### **Facts about mine rescue brigade members**

- Minimum 5% industry dedicated to emergency response (1 in 20 underground workers)
- Initial 10-day induction training required for all new recruits
- Brigade enrolment is voluntary
- Six training days required per year for all brigade members
- A large percentage of brigade members progress into more senior mining roles
- 133 brigade members in the Southern district



Back L-R: Warren Kirk (captain), Joshua Woods (vice captain), Kain Mason, Mitchell Roberts  
Front L-R: Dean Roberts, Adam Hampson, Christopher Samanc

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**About Coal Services:**

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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 Mining and Energy Union. Our purpose, vision and values are aligned to focus on the safety and health of our industry and its workers.

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