

Mines rescue teams demonstrate skills under pressure

Singleton (Australia), 12 September 2022 –

Ten emergency response teams from across the region competed at the annual Hunter Valley Open Cut Mines Rescue competition on Friday, 9 September 2022. It was the first time the district event has been held since 2019 due to COVID restrictions.

The day's format included several simulation exercises to demonstrate knowledge and the use of equipment in realistic scenarios, including exercises to test hazard awareness, vertical rescue, first aid and firefighting. The teams worked through a series of scenarios to test their emergency preparedness capabilities, teamwork and communication skills in a high-pressure environment. The events were designed to simulate situations teams would most likely face should they be called to respond to a real-life incident.

The Thiess Mt Owen team were named overall winners at a presentation dinner following the event. Team captain, Matthew Sowter, praised the efforts of the team who had just four training days together prior to the competition.

'Hat's off to the team for a fantastic day. We had wealth of knowledge and experience to draw on in our team which included a few well-seasoned competitors, but we also had two ladies who were new to mines rescue. This was their first competition and they both really applied themselves, studied their hearts out and went above and beyond. I am immensely proud of the team's efforts as everyone's individual contribution was the difference on the day that helped us to walk away winners.'

'Congratulations also to all the teams today; it was a great competition and I think we all did great and learnt something too. Thank you to Mines Rescue for coordinating the day. Competitions are always an awesome training day; you're always waiting for a curve ball and need to think on your feet.'

'Lastly, I would like to thank Amanda Myers our Training Coordinator for her efforts in organising and managing the team; and to Tom Carroll our Mine Manager. Without the support of Thiess Mt Owen, and all the management team, none of this would be possible.'

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 emergency responders to test and hone their skills under pressure so they are ready to respond in the event of an incident on site.

Dave McLean, Regional Manager Hunter Valley Mines Rescue, said that it was great to be able to host competitions again.

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'These events are a great opportunity to apply what the teams learn in training and work as a team. Even more importantly, competitions enable emergency response teams to refine and hone their skills under pressure. We truly hope that the men and women who volunteer to be part of the emergency response community never need to use their skills but in the event that they do, industry should be reassured by the capabilities demonstrated by these teams today and continue to train and develop these skills across all the NSW open cut mines. These people make a difference every day to their workplace and no doubt to their communities and loved ones.'

Teams competing on the day included:

- Bengalla
- Bulga
- Glendell
- Hunter Valley Operations
- Liddell
- Mt Arthur
- Mt Owen
- Mt Thorley Warkworth
- Ravensworth
- Stratford



Back L-R: Steven Marjoribanks, Toby George, Jon Deaves and Kirsty Edwards
Front L-R: Matthew Sowter, Ara-Jane Reading and Wayne Kearney

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About Coal Services:

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

Coal Services is dedicated to working in partnership with customers and stakeholders to provide a suite of health, safety, environment and insurance solutions. These critical services support NSW coal mine workers, employers and communities and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe workplace and a healthy workforce.

Coal Services has statutory functions, as outlined within the *Coal Industry Act 2001* (NSW). These functions include, but are not limited to, the provision of workers compensation; occupational health and rehabilitation services; the collection of statistics and the provision of mines rescue emergency services and training to the NSW coal industry.

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