

Mines Rescue teams demonstrate skill under pressure

Newcastle (Australia), 29 May 2024 —

Mines Rescue brigades were called to the Abel Mine near Newcastle on Friday, 24 May 2024 to test their emergency response skills in a series of simulated incidents. Competing in both underground and surface environments, teams applied their specialist training towards search and rescue, first aid and fire-fighting.

The Red team, captained by Jordan Mearns, narrowly defeated the White team to be named overall winners of the event. Jordan thanked Mines Rescue and the mine sites for allowing the teams to train and compete.

“Everyone I’ve spoken to said today was one of the most challenging competitions we’ve had. It really tested the core skills we learn at brigades training,” said Jordan.

“I’ve been part of Mines Rescue for 13 years and I’m so very proud of the team’s efforts today. We had three first-time competitors, two of who only completed their inductions in March. The team dug deep and it will be a day they’ll never forget,” he added.

A formal presentation dinner was held to announce the winners and acknowledge the achievements of brigade members.

Shaun McDonnell and Malcolm Yule, who have 75 years’ Mines Rescue experience between them, were awarded the perpetual ‘Champions Award’ which recognises individuals who demonstrate Mines Rescue’s core values of ‘we care, we work together and we make a difference’.

The primary purpose of Mines Rescue is to provide emergency response to the NSW coal mining industry in the case of an emergency. Thankfully, major incidents requiring brigade response are limited. Events like these allow brigade members to practise and hone their skills in preparation for the unfortunate circumstance where they may be called upon.

“Competitions are a great opportunity to put teams under pressure in simulated environments,” explained Darren Parker, Regional Manager Mines Rescue.

“In addition to the various tasks we put them through, there is the added complexity where teams are put together on the day, so they may not know each other or may not have worked together before. It really tests their emergency response skills and how they work together as a team.”

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These competitions are the first in a series of regional competitions hosted by NSW Mines Rescue. The winning teams from each region are invited to compete at the Australian competition to be held in later in the year.



Above: Red Team were named overall winners of the Newcastle Mines Rescue Competition. L-R: Ben Sheehan, Ben Porch, Jason Reid (vice captain), Jordan Mearns (captain), Ben McGlinn, Tony Hunt.

Fast Facts

- There are 461 voluntary brigade members across the NSW coal industry; around 150 in the Northern region.
- 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 brigade members
- A large percentage of brigade members progress into more senior mining roles

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

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