

Dendrobium Blue sets sights on Australian Mines Rescue title

Wollongong (Australia), 11 August 2025 —

Six Mines Rescue teams from across the region competed at the 66th Annual Southern Mines Rescue competition on Friday, 8 August 2025.

Held at the GM³ Appin North mine, teams faced intense challenges designed to simulate real-life mine rescue scenarios, including hazard identification, casualty extraction, first aid, and firefighting. Teams demonstrated exceptional proficiency, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities throughout the competition.

In a tight competition, the Metropolitan Pit Ponies were named runners-up, while Dendrobium Blue were declared overall winners at the presentation dinner following the event.

Dendrobium Blue were also awarded Best First Aid Team, Best Underground Team, and team captain, Rob Monkley, was named Best Captain.

“This was a tough and physical competition that pushed us to our absolute limits”, explained Rob. “In my 10 years of competing, this was by far the hardest event I’ve faced.”

“I’d also like to thank Simon Thomas, our GM Manager of GM³ Dendrobium Mine for his ongoing support of me and the team. A big thank you to Southern Mines Rescue for organising such a demanding event that really tested us today. To the captains and teams we competed against, you always set the bar incredibly high. And finally, to my team—your effort and teamwork were outstanding. It’s a real privilege to represent the district at the Australian competition in October.”

Mines Rescue competitions play a crucial role in promoting a culture of safety and preparedness, ensuring that mining communities remain protected in the event of emergencies.

“Competitions like these are vital in maintaining and improving the emergency response capabilities of mining professionals,” said Chris Strohfeldt, Regional Manager, Southern Mines Rescue.

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“We congratulate all the teams for their hard work and commitment to safety. Their dedication to mine safety and rescue readiness exemplifies the highest standards of the industry. Special thanks to GM³ for allowing us to host the competition at their Appin North mine.”

Fast Facts

- There are 461 voluntary brigade members 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 brigade members
- A large percentage of brigade members progress into more senior mining roles

Teams competing at the Southern Mines Rescue Competition:

- Appin Green
- Appin Pit Bulls
- Dendrobium Blue
- Metropolitan Pit Ponies
- Metropolitan Green
- Tahmoor Red

- ENDS -



Winning team: Dendrobium Blue

Back row (L-R): Benjamin Oxenbridge, Aaron Donnelly, Bradley Davidson, Pokaia Matthews
Front row (L-R): James Sproates (VC), Rob Monkley (C), Rodney Powell

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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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