

Dendrobium Blue claims top honours at Southern Mines Rescue competition

Wollongong (Australia), 10 August 2026 —

Dendrobium Blue has taken out the top accolade at the 67th Southern Mines Rescue competition, held at Peabody's Metropolitan Colliery, Australia's oldest continuously operating coal mine on Friday, 7 August 2026. Tahmoor Red were runners up.

Six teams from Metropolitan, Dendrobium, Tahmoor and Appin mines went head-to-head throughout the day, testing their capabilities in firefighting, compressed air breathing apparatus (CABA), underground search and rescue, first aid and technical rescue scenarios.

The Southern Mines Rescue competition is the oldest regional competition in NSW. This year's event was particularly significant as NSW Mines Rescue marks 100 years of service supporting the state's coal industry.

Mines Rescue Regional Manager Chris Strohfeldt said hosting the competition at Metropolitan Colliery was a fitting way to honour both milestones.

"To hold the 67th Southern Mines Rescue competition at Australia's oldest operating coal mine while celebrating 100 years of Mines Rescue in NSW is incredibly meaningful," Chris said.

"The Southern region has a long and proud mining history. While we remember the tragic events that shaped our industry, today's competition demonstrates how far emergency preparedness, training and mine safety have come."

The southern coalfields are home to some of the state's most significant mining events, including the Bulli, Mount Kembla and Appin mine disasters. While major mine emergencies are rare today, Mines Rescue brigades continue to train extensively to ensure they are ready to respond when needed.

"Competitions like this allow our brigade members to put their training into practice under pressure, testing the skills, knowledge and teamwork that are critical during an emergency," Chris added.

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Dendrobium Blue was named overall winner, securing its second consecutive Southern Mines Rescue title and third win in four years. Team captain Rob Monkley also received the Best Captain award.

In accepting the awards, Rob praised his teammates and fellow competitors.

"The standard of competition in the Southern district is incredibly high," he said.

"There's a reason this district is so tough. To get through to the inter-district [Australian] competition, you first have to compete against some of the best teams in the country."

"The underground search and rescue event was challenging, and the CABA stretcher carry really tested everyone's endurance. I'm incredibly proud of the effort our team put in."

Rob also acknowledged the volunteers, organisers and partners whose support made the event possible.

"I'd also like to thank Simon Thomas, General Manager at Dendrobium, for his support of Mines Rescue, and Peabody's Metropolitan Colliery for hosting the competition."

NSW Mines Rescue currently services four mining operations across the Southern region. Annual competitions play an important role in maintaining brigade readiness and ensuring rescue teams remain prepared to protect miners and respond to emergencies.

Dendrobium Blue will now progress to the Australian Mines Rescue Competition to be held in October.

"With Mines Rescue celebrating 100 years of service in NSW, it is both a privilege and an honour to represent the Southern district at the national competition," Rob concluded said.

- ENDS -



Winning team: Dendrobium Blue

Back row (L-R): Aaron Donnelly, Bradley Davidson, Pokaia Matthews, Brian Walker

Front row (L-R): James Sproates (VC), Rob Monkley (C), Benjamin Oxenbridge

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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 the health and safety of the NSW coal industry'.

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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