

Springvale secures fourth straight win

Mudgee (Australia), 1 September 2026 –

Centennial Coal's Springvale mines rescue team will carry Western NSW hopes to the national stage after claiming victory at the 2026 Western Mines Rescue Competition.

Held on 28 August, the competition brought together seven teams from across the Lithgow and Mudgee coalfields to tackle a series of challenging emergency response scenarios designed to test the same skills relied upon in real-world incidents underground.

Across the day, teams were assessed on their ability to respond under pressure, adapt to changing conditions and work together to manage complex situations involving first aid, firefighting, search and rescue, and hazard management.

For the Springvale team, the result marks a fourth consecutive Western region title and secures their place at the Australian Mines Rescue underground competition in the Hunter Valley this October, where they will compete against leading rescue teams from NSW and Queensland.

The competition was held during a landmark year for Mines Rescue, which is commemorating 100 years of supporting the NSW coal industry through emergency response capability, specialist training and preparedness.

While mining methods and technology have transformed over the past century, the need for highly trained rescue teams remains as important as ever. Events such as the Mines Rescue competitions provide an opportunity for teams to sharpen critical skills, test their readiness and share knowledge in an environment that closely mirrors the pressures of a genuine emergency.

Western Mines Rescue Regional Manager Mark D'Elboux said the competition highlighted the skill and commitment displayed by Mines Rescue brigade members across the region.

"The primary role of Mines Rescue is to provide an emergency response capability for the NSW coal industry, and competitions like this are one of the ways we help teams maintain and strengthen those skills," he said.

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"What stands out every year is the dedication these volunteers bring to their training and preparedness. Their willingness to continually challenge themselves helps ensure the industry is ready to respond when it matters most."

"In our centenary year, it's particularly fitting to see that same commitment and sense of service continuing through the next generation of rescue personnel," he added.

Springvale team captain Luke Smith said the result reflected the team's preparation and commitment throughout the year.

"These competitions are designed to push teams outside their comfort zone, so to come away with the win against such strong competition is something we're incredibly proud of."

"Every member of the team puts in a significant amount of time training and developing their skills. This result belongs to the whole crew and reflects the effort they've invested over many months."

"We're honoured to represent the Western region at the national competition and look forward to testing ourselves against the best mine rescue teams in the country."

Mr D'Elboux also thanked Glencore for partnering with Western Mines Rescue to host the competition at Ulan West Underground Mine.

- ENDS

Mines competing at the 2026 Western Mines Rescue competition Centennial

- Airly
- Clarence
- Springvale

Glencore

- Ulan West
- Ulan Underground

Yancoal

- Moolarben



Springvale team

L-R: Luke Smith (C), Andrew Bellantonio, Mick Case (VC), Ben Smith, Aaron Kelso, Nick Mostyn, Gavin Monaghan.

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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 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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