

Ulan Surface Operations claim honours in tightly contested open cut competition

Mudgee (Australia), 19 October 2026 —

The region's leading emergency response teams demonstrated their skills and teamwork at the Northern and Western Mines Rescue Open Cut Competition, held near Mudgee on Friday, with just 10% separating the four competing teams and only 2% between first and second place.

Teams from across the Mudgee and Gunnedah regions were tested in high-pressure exercises including a road crash rescue, vertical rescue, confined space and heavy lifting operations while wearing compressed air breathing apparatus, and firefighting.

Glencore's Ulan Surface Operations team emerged as overall winners after delivering consistently strong performances across the day's events.

Team captain Stuart Marr said the result reflected the team's commitment to training and their ability to remain calm under pressure.

"We knew our processes worked, so it was really about fine-tuning those skills and putting them into practice. Competitions like this give you the opportunity to test yourself in realistic scenarios. It helps build confidence and capability so that if the call ever comes, we're ready," he said.

Mr Marr, who was competing in his first competition as team captain after more than a decade involved in Mines Rescue, said the day had also provided valuable leadership experience.

"I'm naturally a hands-on person, so stepping back into the captain's role took me out of my comfort zone. But that's where you learn," he said.

The winning team also included newer emergency response members, with several competitors taking part in their first competition.

"For some of our team members it was their first time competing, but everyone came together really well. That's one of the strengths of Mines Rescue - experienced people working alongside newer members and learning from each other."

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This year's event marked the first dedicated competition for open cut emergency response teams in the region. Previously incorporated into the underground competition program, the standalone event recognises the unique operating environments and emergency response challenges of open cut mining.

The event also marked an important milestone for Mines Rescue, becoming the first event to be held at the organisation's new Mudjee facility following its relocation from Moolarben.

Western Mines Rescue Regional Manager Mark D'Elboux said the new station was established closer to Mudjee to improve access to training and emergency response resources for mines across the region.

"As a hub for emergency response training and preparedness, it strengthens our ability to support both the mining industry and local communities," Mr D'Elboux said.

Mr Marr also praised the new Mudjee facility, saying it would play an important role in developing future emergency response capability across the region.

"The facility is fantastic. It's only going to get better as it continues to develop, and it will be a great asset for emergency response training for many years to come."

Mr D'Elboux said the competition highlighted the commitment of emergency response personnel across the region.

"The professionalism, dedication and willingness of emergency response team members to answer the call whenever it comes is what makes our industry stronger and safer," he said. "The time they invest in training and maintaining their skills ensures we're prepared when it matters most."

- ENDS -



Back (L-R) Scott Burke, Kevin Healey
Front (L-R): Jason Meader, Stuart Marr (Captain), Luke Robinson
Absent: Jack Hart



(L-R): Scott Burke, Jason Meader, Luke Robinson, Stuart Marr (Captain), Jack Hart, Kevin Healey.

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