



MEDIA RELEASE

MINERALS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA VICTORIAN DIVISION

NORTHPARKES MINE EMERGENCY RESCUE TEAM WINS 17TH ANNUAL UNDERGROUND MINE RESCUE COMPETITION

The Northparkes Mine Emergency Rescue Team (Parkes, NSW) narrowly defeated eight other teams from across the country to win the prestigious Annual Victorian Underground Mine Rescue Competition, held in Bendigo last weekend (7-9 August 2009).

Northparkes finished in the top three in six of the seven exercises, demonstrating consistently high emergency response skills. Second place was the Stawell Gold Mine Emergency Response Team (Victoria), finishing very closely behind, with third place going to MMG Rosebery Emergency Response Team (Tasmania).

The participating teams competed in exercises testing emergency response theory, rescue skills, first aid, breathing apparatus, fire fighting, search and rescue and rope rescue capabilities. Exercises were adjudicated by industry and emergency response professionals from many organisations in realistic potential emergency situations that could arise as in workplaces.

MCA Assistant Director for Safety and Health, Ms Megan Davison said: "The Underground Mine Rescue Competition provides practical training experience to members of mining operations, encouraging them to apply teamwork to build skills that are vital to these specialised emergency rescue teams".

"Every year this highly regarded national competition is oversubscribed with teams being placed on a waiting list in the event that another team has to pull out. The competition is designed to improve the safety and health of all people involved in the mining industry and to provide realistic and practical training to the mine site rescue teams".

The industry's continual commitment to the health and safety of its workforce and with the support of WorkSafe Victoria, the overall sponsor of the competition, has resulted in very few emergency incidents occurring on mine sites. To enable response teams to test their skills and identify areas of improvement, accentuates the critical role that these mine rescue competitions have. Three days of intensive, real life scenarios provides teams with invaluable training across a wide range of skills with the goal of continuously improving safety.

"The competition fosters strong team spirit, competitiveness and goodwill among the rescue teams as seen with 300 people attending the presentations on Sunday night. I congratulate all team members for their spirit of competitive goodwill and their commitment to emergency response."

This competition is an important part of the MCA's health and safety strategy. Our goal of zero fatalities and injuries remains the minerals industry's top value and commitment", concluded Ms. Davison.

In presenting the overall winner's prize, Mr Tim Gosling, the Manager Earth Resources, Hazard Management Division, WorkSafe Victoria said: "The lessons learnt here at this competition are vital in developing and stretching the skills of the Mine Rescue teams. Being prepared and practiced, and taking those skills back to their places of work, helps to keep everybody safe and that is why WorkSafe is honoured to sponsor this competition.

The teams that competed in the 17th Annual Victorian Underground Mine Rescue Competition were:

Bendigo Mining Mine Rescue Team	(Bendigo Gold)
CMPL-CSA Cobar Mine Rescue Team	(CMPL-CSA Cobar)
Fosterville Gold Mine Emergency Response Team	(Northgate Minerals)
Northparkes Emergency Response Team	(Rio Tinto)
Olympic Dam Emergency Response Team	(BHP Billiton)
Oscar 1 Emergency Response Team	(CFA)
Rosebery Emergency Response Team	(MMG)
Stawell Gold Mines Emergency Response Team	(Northgate Minerals)
Angas Emergency Response Team*	(Terramin Australia)

*participated in some exercises for training purposes

The Minerals Council of Australia congratulates all the competitors in this year's competition and acknowledges the very strong support from the sponsors and volunteers including the adjudicators and patients from across the industry.