

Media releases

CHALLENGER DOMINATES AT SENSATIONAL SA MINES RESCUE COMPETITION OVER THE WEEKEND

2 November 2016

The Challenger Gold Mine team has claimed victory in the seventh SA Mines Emergency Response Competition, held at Brukunga in the Adelaide Hills over an extended weekend of adrenaline fuelled action from Friday 28 through to Sunday 30 October.

The South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME) timed its annual SA Mines Emergency Response Competition with the end of SafeWork month, at the CFS State Training Centre and Brukunga Mine.

The competition provides friendly rivalry for mining emergency response teams, but more importantly an excellent opportunity to practice emergency response skills in a safe but realistic environment. This year's competition saw local teams from WPG Resources Challenger Gold Mine, BHP Billiton Olympic Dam and OZ Minerals Prominent Hill along with the team from Perilya at Broken Hill and welcomed newcomers to the competition Newcrest Mining's Cadia Valley Operations Team (based 20 kilometres south of the regional city of Orange, New South Wales).

Claiming the Theory, Industrial Rescue, Confined Space Search & Rescue and Best Team Captain categories, Challenger proved to be the best overall team, displaying an exceptional level of skill and expertise. They were kept on their toes by the OZ Minerals team who came in a mere 2% behind - closely followed by the BHP Billiton team, just a few points behind, making this year's competition intensely close.

SACOME's Acting Chief Executive, Nigel Long said "SACOME is proud of this event as a showcase of the skills and leadership of mine workers who maintain and build their expertise to ensure the highest safety standards and capabilities at our mine sites."

"The mining industry in Australia is one of its safest sectors, reporting amongst the lowest number of accidents, yet the risks and opportunities for injury are great," Dr Long said.

"The highest commitment to safety across the industry is responsible for its excellent safety record and events such as this help to promote risk awareness, safety training, and keeping workplace safety the number one priority."

Although the competition aims to provide practical experiences for mine workers, the skills learnt could also be applied to emergency situations in local mining communities. Events across the weekend included a road crash rescue and industrial rescue at the old Brukunga Mine as well as a live fire scenario, first aid, vertical/rope rescue, breathing apparatus, confined space search & rescue scenarios at the CFS State Training Centre at Brukunga. A virtual reality underground search and rescue exhibition event was provided by Coal Services from New South Wales.

Due to the close vicinity of Brukunga to Adelaide, a number of family members of the teams were able to attend, with many children enjoying the excitement across the weekend.

Competitors and officials were delighted that the Hon Peter Malinauskas MLC, Minister for the Legislative Council, Police, Correctional Services, Emergency Services and Road Safety, was able to spend some time at the competition on the Sunday. The Minister observed the Challenger Team undertaking the First Aid scenario and the OZ Minerals Team in the Industrial Rescue scenario.

The annual competition is hosted by SACOME and put together by a team of volunteers from a number of organisations.

Category winners:

Overall Winner (sponsored by SACOME) – Challenger Gold Mine (WPG Resources)

Best Captain (sponsored by Orica) – Daniel O'Reilly, Challenger Gold Mine (WPG Resources)

Theory (sponsored by SafeWork SA) - Challenger Gold Mine (WPG Resources)

First Aid (sponsored by MAQOHSC) - Olympic Dam (BHP Billiton)

Fire Fighting (sponsored by Department of State Development) - Olympic Dam (BHP Billiton)

Vertical/Rope Rescue (sponsored by Fire & Rescue Australia Training) - Prominent Hill (OZ Minerals)

Industrial Rescue (sponsored by RIS Safety) - Challenger Gold Mine (WPG Resources)

Team Skills (sponsored by PYBAR Mining Services) - Prominent Hill (OZ Minerals)

Breathing Apparatus (sponsored by Draeger) - Prominent Hill (OZ Minerals)

Confined Space Search & Rescue (sponsored by Strata Worldwide Australia) - Challenger Gold Mine (WPG Resources)

Road Crash Rescue (sponsored by Fire Rescue Safety Australia) - Olympic Dam (BHP Billiton)

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Images: A selection of images are provided below. For more images or high resolution: Bridget Fardon, SACOME, bfardon@sacome.org.au or 08 8202 9999

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The Challenger Gold Mine team during the Firefighting scenario.

2016 SA Mines Emergency Response Competition

(Photo: Bridget Fardon)