



**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW MINE RESCUE CHALLENGE GETS UNDERWAY

The 2006 NSW Mine Rescue Challenge takes off in Cobar in the State's Far West this weekend with nine teams competing in the three-day event.

Minister for Mineral Resources Ian Macdonald said the event is designed to provide rescue teams with an opportunity showcase their skills and share ideas and experiences with counterparts from other mining operations.

"This exercise is designed to help ensure our mine rescue teams continue to be the best at what they do," Mr Macdonald said.

"The recent Beaconsfield accident demonstrated just how important mine rescue teams are – and the high level of skill and training necessary to perform complex and time-sensitive operations.

"Each team involved in this weekend's challenge will carry-out simulation rescue activities including fire-fighting, vertical rescue, road accident rescue, endurance and confined space search and rescue, and a time-critical injury situation.

"Simulations for underground and open cut mines will be represented at the exercise, to help everyone involved enhance their skill levels and refine procedures.

"Teams represented in the challenge will come from mines located in the Hunter Valley, Orange, Parkes, Nyngan, Broken Hill and Cobar.

NSW Department of Primary Industry's Director Mine Safety Operations Rob Regan will open the Challenge on Friday 7 July, and Peter Hatswell from the Hunter Valley's Mine Rescue Unit, who worked as an emergency coordinator at the Beaconsfield mine rescue, will be a keynote speaker.

Mr Regan said the three-day Challenge builds on the dedication of individual mines and their mines rescue team members to share knowledge and experience.

"The willingness to be involved clearly demonstrates the common purpose of helping workmates, learning from others, recognising strengths, and identifying areas which can be improved," he said.

The Challenge is being jointly organised by local Cobar mines CSA, Endeavor and Peak Gold, with support from the NSW Department of Primary Industries. This is the second NSW Mine Rescue Challenge. The first one took place in 2004.

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