



## 100 years since NSW's highest mining death toll – Bellbird Mine Disaster

### Hunter Valley, NSW (Australia), August 2023 –

Friday, 1 September 2023 will mark 100 years since the 1923 Hetton Coal Company Ltd Bellbird Mine Disaster (Disaster) that resulted in the death of 21 miners.

This Disaster was the catalyst for the Bill to establish a mines rescue service which was tabled in the NSW Parliament in 1924 and the Mines Rescue Act 1925. The first NSW Mines Rescue station was established at Abermain in 1926.

Coal Services (Mines Rescue) and the Mining and Energy Union (MEU), together with the Coalfields Local Historical Association, will host an event to commemorate the centenary of the Disaster.

The ceremony will take place at 11am on Friday, 1 September 2023, at the Bellbird Miners Memorial Park (506 Wollombi Road, Bellbird NSW 2325). Those wishing attend are asked to please RSVP via <http://stks.be/bellbird-disaster-centenary> or alternatively by calling Jenny McPherson (MEU) on 1300 712 791 no later than Monday 28 August 2023.

“This catastrophic Disaster is a significant moment in the history of Mines Rescue as the catalyst for the *Mines Rescue Act 1925* and the opening of our first Mines Rescue Station in 1926. The event will pay tribute to the lives of the men who were tragically killed and reflect on the impact and influence that Mines Rescue has had on safety and emergency response in the mining industry since the disaster,” said Mines Rescue General Manager, Mr Alaster Wylie.

“Bellbird remains the worst mining disaster in our Northern NSW coalfields. We will gather to remember the enormous scar left on our community, to acknowledge the important changes that followed and recommit ourselves to continuous improvements in mine safety,” said MEU Northern Mining and NSW Energy District President Robin Williams.

“When the Bellbird Mine Disaster occurred in 1923 it had a huge impact on the future of mining across NSW and beyond. The devastation of this disaster was far reaching and is still felt to this very day by the mining community, and the families and friends of those 21 miners who lost their lives. Recognising the 100 years since this disaster occurred is an important step in ensuring our coalmining history is preserved and reflected upon by future generations,” said Coalfields Local Historical Association President, Lynette Hamer.

**Corporate Office**

T: +61 (2) 8270 3200  
F: +61 (2) 9262 6090  
Level 21, 44 Market Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
GPO Box 3842  
Sydney NSW 2001

**Lithgow**

T: +61 (2) 6350 1050  
F: +61 (2) 6351 2407  
3 Proto Avenue  
Lithgow NSW 2790  
PO Box 72  
Lithgow NSW 2790

**Mudgee**

T: +61 (2) 6370 6100  
F: +61 (2) 6372 2470  
4/64 Sydney Road  
Mudgee NSW 2850  
PO Box 1156  
Mudgee NSW 2850

**Newcastle**

T: +61 (2) 4948 3100  
F: +61 (2) 4953 0541  
143 Main Road  
Speers Point NSW 2284  
PO Box 219  
Boolaroo NSW 2284

**Singleton**

T: +61 (2) 6571 9900  
F: +61 (2) 6572 2667  
1 Civic Avenue  
Singleton NSW 2330  
PO Box 317  
Singleton NSW 2330

**Woonona**

T: +61 (2) 4286 5400  
F: +61 (2) 4285 4144  
558-580 Princes Highway  
Woonona NSW 2517  
PO Box 42  
Corrimal NSW 2518

Ends.

### **For more information please contact:**

**Belinda Ward** — Marketing Manager

Mobile: 0419 148 135

[belinda.ward@coalservices.com.au](mailto:belinda.ward@coalservices.com.au)

**Alexandria Carruthers** – Communications Specialist

Mobile: 0477 841 645

[alexandria.carruthers@coalservices.com.au](mailto:alexandria.carruthers@coalservices.com.au)

## **About Coal Services:**

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Coal Services is an industry owned organisation committed to providing critical service and expertise to the NSW coal mining industry.

Coal Services is dedicated to working in partnership with customers and stakeholders to provide a suite of health, safety, environment and insurance solutions. These critical services support NSW coal mine workers, employers and communities and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe workplace and a healthy workforce.

Coal Services has statutory functions, as outlined within the *Coal Industry Act 2001* (NSW). These functions include, but are not limited to, the provision of workers compensation; occupational health and rehabilitation services; the collection of statistics and the provision of mines rescue emergency services and training to the NSW coal industry.

Visit [www.coalservices.com.au](http://www.coalservices.com.au) for further information.

## **About MEU:**

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The Mining and Energy Union (MEU) is a union that represents workers in the coal mining and energy industry in Australia.

The Northern Mining and NSW Energy District covers coal mining north of Sydney including the Central Coast, Newcastle, Hunter Valley and Gunnedah Basin. We also cover workers in power generation all over NSW.

We provide our members with industrial and legal advice and assistance, as well as playing a vital role in developing and enforcing safety regulations and standards in our industries. We are active supporters of regional mining communities in our District.

Visit: [www.meunsw.org.au](http://www.meunsw.org.au) for more information.

## **About Coalfields Local Historical Society:**

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The Coalfields Local History Association is committed to preserving, protecting, recording and promoting the history and heritage of the Cessnock Local Government area. The Edgeworth David Memorial museum is central to this purpose. The museum not only houses artefacts but it is also a reference centre, holding newspapers, maps and photographs as well as many

other resources. The volunteers at the museum have been called upon on occasion to supply information used to protect or preserve heritage sites. The expertise within the group and our resources enables us to provide research information on almost any local issue.

Visit our website <http://coalfieldshistory.org> or our Facebook page.