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Media Release:

Employee racing from open-cut pit to ironman course

During the day Ben Russell is a Mechanical Maintainer at Yancoal Australia's Mount Thorley Warkworth (MTW) mine operation, but in his downtime, he is a fierce ironman champion competitor.

Having competed in triathlons since he was 28, Ben has just returned from Utah State in the US where he competed in his first ever overseas triathlon. This was a good introduction and training experience for his next event - The World Ironman Championships on 27 November in Abu Dhabi.

Ben is pumped to compete in the championships this month with some added financial support from his employer.

"The triathlon in Abu Dhabi will be a tough course with a combination of a 1500m swim, 40km cycle and 10km run. My training schedule is intense. Generally, if I'm not on shift at MTW, I am doing some sort of low or high intensity run, bike or swim session.

"Triathlon racing can be quite addictive, and I love to keep challenging myself to do better each time. It is not a cheap sport to get into with all the gear, travel, and equipment. The financial assistance from MTW has helped cover flights and accommodation and I am thankful," said Ben.

Ben has had a long career with MTW, having worked for the company for 15 years. He started by completing his apprenticeship onsite and is now a permanent employee at MTW. He is looking forward to many more years with the organisation.

Ben's role allows him to operate different machinery, which brings a lot of variety to his day, and he enjoys learning new skills from many of his mates onsite.

MTW General Manager, David Bennett, was pleased to help Ben on his ironman journey.

"Ben is a well-respected and hardworking member of the MTW team. We all know sport has many benefits, including better physical and mental health; boosting your self-confidence; reducing stress; and strengthening your body. Supporting Ben was important to us.

"We are happy our financial assistance can help Ben travel and compete, and we look forward to hearing about his competition experience," said David.

The World Triathlon Championship Finals are in Abu Dhabi's Yas Island from 23 to 26 November 2022. The Championship Finals are the crown jewel of World Triathlon's annual calendar. For more information please visit: <https://abudhabi.triathlon.org/>

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