

# Todd Russell

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## *Beaconsfield Mine disaster survivor*

Todd Russell is one of the two survivors of the 2006 Beaconsfield Mine collapse which trapped three miners under hundreds of tonnes of rock. Incredibly, he and fellow miner Brant Webb survived for 14 days almost 1km under ground in a 2 x 4m pocket of air. Sadly, Larry Knight did not survive the disaster.

Todd's story is one of the greatest tales of Australian mateship, courage and survival ever told.

He speaks with passion and detail about how he and Brant supported each other through 14 days of sheer hell, what went through his mind, how he and Brant maintained hope and how he has adjusted to a more public life post the now-infamous Beaconsfield experience. Over time, the end of the mine collapse ordeal would lead to other, more private battles that would test their personal resolve and, ultimately, their relationship with each other.

Todd Russell is an engaging, down-to earth-speaker with a unique and moving tale to tell.

## **About the Beaconsfield mine rescue operation:**

On Tuesday 25 April 2006 the world looked on in horror when a minor earthquake rocked the small town of Beaconsfield, Tasmania, collapsing one of the tunnels in a local gold mine and possibly killing three miners - Larry Knight, Brant Webb and Todd Russell. On Thursday 27 April the body of Larry Knight was discovered and little hope was held out for Brant and Todd.

Miraculously, on Sunday 30 April, five days after the mine collapse, Brant Webb and Todd Russell were discovered alive and huddled together in a tiny bubble of air, without food or water and surviving only on hope and courage.

The world watched on in anticipation for the next nine days as rescue teams worked around the clock to free the men, mindful that the slightest mistake could bring their roof collapsing in on them.

On 9 May rescue workers finally reached the two men and brought them safely to the surface where they walked unassisted back into the outside world, arms held high in triumph.

What unfolded after their escape was nothing less than a media frenzy while television networks, newspapers, magazines and radio stations fought to be the first to bring their incredible story of



survival to the world.

That frenzy led to Brant and Todd signing the biggest exclusive television deal in Australian television history, a worldwide exclusive book deal, a documentary deal and flying to New York to do a live and exclusive interview with Diane Sawyer on the Good Morning America show.

Brant and Todd's survival together in the most extraordinary of circumstances is nothing short of miraculous and defies all reason and realms of possibility. Their story of mateship and never giving up is one of the greatest ever told and will be passed down for generations to come.

What is just as incredible is that throughout the entire ordeal Brant and Todd have used their circumstances to help their community and give back to the people who helped them survive.

These days both men are getting back to normal life in Beaconsfield and taking advantage of the time they have with their families. Understandably, both have sworn never to work underground again.

### ***Todd Russell talks about:***

- Inspiration
- Occupational health and safety
- Mateship and survival

### **Client testimonials**

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“ Todd delivered a very personal and powerful message to our work teams while pointing out that safety is everyone's business and working together is the first step in keeping people safe. Todd spoke candidly with work teams and in relating his own experiences delivered a powerful message which made being safe a personal thing and our work teams think about the safety impacts for their own lives, family and friends. There were a few tears after the slide show.

**- AGL Energy Limited**

“ Feedback was excellent. An emotional story that reminded people why they work in the Safety Industry.

**- Australian Exhibitions & Conference**

“ Todd was an authentic speaker with a genuine safety story and struck a chord with our audience.



**- QMCA**

“ Todd was very well received. He spoke well and the team were engaged from start to finish, first time I have seen everyone silent for an hour straight!

**- Fonterra**

“ Todd was received really well by our group, everyone got quite emotional during Todd's story but at the same time he lightened the mood well with a bit of humour. We really appreciated Todd sharing his amazing story with the group and it was extremely inspiring to everyone who attended. We would definitely recommend Todd to speak at any event where they need some motivation.

**- Ray White Corporate SA/NT**

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