

Darren Flanagan

"The Gun" behind the Beaconsfield mine rescue

Darren Flanagan was crucial to the rescue of Todd Russell and Brant Webb from the infamous Beaconsfield mine disaster.

Nicknamed "The Gun" by Todd and Brant, he was the man who charged and fired 65 shots of explosives that eventually released them from their tomb 925m underground.

Flanagan's electrifying, emotional and detailed story about one of Australia's most dramatic mine rescues inspires and impresses. His story has captivated corporate audiences and viewers of programs including *Sunrise at Seven*, *The Today Show*, *A Current Affair* and *60 Minutes*.



About Darren Flanagan:

Darren's quiet life changed the night he was picked up in a private Lear Jet and taken to the Beaconsfield mine in Tasmania where he was to play an essential role in one of Australia's most dramatic rescue operations.

For a full week after his arrival, Darren was underground test blasting on the 630m level to simulate something he'd hoped he would never do - something that had never been done before in the world.

Using specialist explosives Darren began blasting his way toward the two trapped men. He worked in a 16 metre long cracked and broken tunnel, just one metre in diameter and almost 1km beneath the earth's surface for 29 hours straight, soaked to the bone from ice cold water.

Firing that very first shot was the hardest thing Darren ever did in his life. He was petrified and so were Todd and Brant. The problem was that every other method to reach the boys had already been tried and failed. The blasting was their last chance.

Darren crawled over razor sharp rocks, letting off 65 explosions - all the time in contact with Todd and Brant by phone. The tension in the air as Darren prepared the final shot was unbelievable. Amazingly, Darren was able to bring the rescuers to within less than 30 centimeters of Todd and Brant. His extraordinary courage and incredible achievements when faced with natural disaster



demonstrate the capacity of ordinary people to perform under extreme pressure.

Darren has received hundreds of letters from all over the world recognising him as the man who blasted the miners to freedom. Some people have even called him the new Red Adair. The most treasured letter though is from Todd, which simply says 'thanks for saving my life'.

In an emotional and truly memorable session, Darren will share his story and in doing so, demonstrate the capacity of ordinary people to show unrelenting spirit and perform under extreme pressure when faced with a set of extraordinary circumstances.

Darren's presentations are always passionate and thrilling however Darren includes a mix of humour as well to ensure audiences are taken on a roller coaster ride. He draws guests into a real life drama. His presentation and stories are truly memorable. Darren is considered by the industry to be one of the very best motivational and inspirational speakers in Australia.

Darren Flanagan talks about:

- Risk Management
- Achieving against all odds
- Persistence
- Think outside the square
- Working under pressure
- Teamwork
- OHS
- Mental Health

Client testimonials

“ Darren's story is amazing - everyone in the room felt like they were there. Darren made our audience laugh, cry, but most of all realise how amazing we all can be. His story is truly memorable.

- ING Australia Limited

“ To say it was an interesting, absorbing and dramatic presentation would not be doing it justice. His talk was electrifying, emotional and detailed...His description of the rescue operation and conditions the miners survived in, made us all understand, not only the enormity of the operation and the delicacy of the final preparations... the extreme conditions that rescuers and rescued were sharing but how the Aussie spirit shone through

- Shoalhaven Heads Combined Probus

“ In a nutshell, he blew everyone away. Several of our guys who have been with us for 10 years



or more said he was the best speaker we have ever had. It was nice to have someone who wasn't overly professional (that's not a criticism) and didn't look like he was 'just going through the motions'. He is an ordinary, genuine man who was caught up in an extraordinary set of circumstances....everyone in the room was moved by his experience ... a lot of our delegates are men in the construction industry - they're not known for being easily affected.

- Hooker Cockram Projects Limited

“ Darren was well received from our audience. We sent out a survey and Darren received either a good or excellent. Darren has a very real story to tell which certainly feels like you are living through the moments he felt, which is not only heart breaking but inspirations. The opening video sets the scene as everyone will remember the Beaconsfield Mine disaster.

- Mortgage Choice

“ Wow, what an amazing guy! Darren's presentation was so moving and inspirational. He really puts things into perspective. He was just so generous with his time, emotions and advice. Words cannot describe our thanks for not only his group presentation but also the words he had for our staff afterwards. Thank you Darren for taking us on a small part of your journey.

- Domain Principal Group

“ Darren's presentation has been the best we have ever ran. I have never received such an overwhelming response from so many people at this site. Importantly the safety messages that Darren is able to convey in his presentation really hit the mark for what we were wanting to achieve.

- Thales

“ Darren was amazing. Darren's story was so raw and emotional and moved every single person in that room. Our audience consisted of 30 - 50 year old tradesman who normally wouldn't be seen shedding a tear, let alone from a speaker, but there was not a dry eye to be seen. Darren had strong messages weaved into his presentation that individually resonated with people, dependant on their personal situations. I heard comments saying that 'I haven't cried for 15 years, but he really moved me'. Darren's presentation was truly a gift. Darren was by far the stand-out speaker of our Conference. His was an inspiration, and to add to that, he was genuinely a lovely, compassionate and personable man. We would definitely recommend Darren to any organisation.

- Master Electricians Australia

“ I have never seen a presenter invite an audience in to experience the real emotions of his own real life experience. The way Darren presented made us all feel as we were actually there with him. At times we cried, at times we laughed, he was the best presenter I have seen in twenty-



five years. That night Darren also joined us for dinner and he was swamped by both members and suppliers alike who merely wanted to speak with this guy and thank him for sharing his story.

- *Leading Edge Electronics & Digital*

“ An insider’s version of events of one of the most publicised mining accidents in Australia’s history. Darren Flanagan’s speech about his involvement with the rescue of the Beaconsfield miners is gripping from start to finish. His raw emotion takes the audience to the scene of the accident, the efforts of the team involved in the rescue and the toll that it took on the mining community. His speech is a real eye opener and a great motivational tool for anyone involved with the industry.

- *Rio Tinto*

“ Darren Flanagan is a passionate, enthralling and inspiring speaker. The manner in which he is able to communicate the human side of the Beaconsfield rescue – the effect on families, on rescuers, and on the survivors themselves – made us realise why safety in the workplace cannot be taken for granted. Darren was the closing speaker of the conference and even after two days of presentations, Darren managed to hold the attention of everyone in the room - and I mean all 300 delegates - for over an hour.

- *The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia*

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