



# Fourth case of black lung confirmed in a week

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A fourth case of black lung has been confirmed in less than a week, bringing the total number of coal miners diagnosed to 11.

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines announced the latest victim of the deadly coal workers' pneumoconiosis, a 56-year-old Bowen Basin underground coal miner, yesterday.

**Last Wednesday**, a 55-year-old underground coal mine worker was confirmed to have the deadly lung disease.

According to the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, he has worked at a number of Bowen Basin mines for twenty years.

"A respiratory physician who was assessing the worker for another chest condition diagnosed early stage coal workers' pneumoconiosis," a department statement said.

The next day, the department announced another confirmed case in a 62-year-old underground coal miner. He also worked in the Bowen Basin.

On Friday, the department announced the tenth case of black lung in its youngest victim yet.

A 39-year-old coal miner, who worked in a number of Bowen Basin mines over an 11-year period, was confirmed with the disease.

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“Queensland’s mining companies are offering for workers to have new x-rays taken and to have existing x-rays re-read,” the Department of Natural Resources and Mines said in a statement.

“It is expected, as stated earlier this year, that further cases will be identified from this extra activity and as miners respond to the focus on coal workers’ pneumoconiosis.”

The Queensland Government is progressing its **five-point action plan** to address the reemergence of the disease.

The plan includes: a review to improve the existing screening system; taking action on coal mines exceeding regulated limits on dust levels; improving how information is collected and used; investigating regulatory changes; and placing the issue on the agenda for the national council of mining ministers.

Earlier this year, the CFMEU predicted that **16 per cent of coal mine workers** will have the disease, as it was revealed that hundreds of thousands of x-rays have not been processed.

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