

## One man killed, two taken to hospital after collapse at Gregory coal mine in central Queensland

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Sojitz Blue CEO Cameron Vorias (left) on site at the Gregory Mine near Emerald last year.

*(ABC News: Rachel McGhee)*

One man is dead and two others have been taken to hospital after an underground coal mine collapse overnight north of Emerald in central Queensland.

Queensland police said they were called to an industrial incident involving a section of a mine collapsing at Lilyvale about 11:00pm.

"A 60-year-old man suffered significant injuries and was pronounced deceased at the scene," police said in a statement.

"A 20-year-old man also sustained injuries and was airlifted to Rockhampton Base Hospital in a serious condition."

The Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) said the incident occurred at

### Key points:

- Police say a man, 60, sustained "significant injuries" and died at the scene
- A 20-year-old man was airlifted to Rockhampton Base Hospital with leg and pelvic injuries
- Sojitz Corporation bought the Gregory mine from BMA Australia in 2019

the Sojitz Gregory Crinum Mine, known as the Gregory coal mine.

Paramedics, including critical care and a rescue helicopter, responded to the collapse around midnight.

Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) said a man with pelvic and leg injuries was initially trapped before being freed and flown to Rockhampton Hospital in a serious condition.

A spokesperson for the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service said he remains in hospital in a stable condition.



A man was flown to Rockhampton Base Hospital in a serious condition after the collapse.  
(ABC News: Giulio Saggin)

A third person was taken to Emerald Hospital in a stable condition after suffering what QAS described as a "medical event" but he has since been released.

Sojitz Blue chief executive officer Cameron Vorias said there was "a roof fall in the conveyor drift".

He said he understood the families of those involved in the incident had been contacted.

"We've had the devastating news of an employee at the Crinum operation, which has suffered a roof fall in the conveyor drift, and at this moment we have two parties who were involved in that and unfortunately one of those parties is deceased," he said.

Mr Vorias said the drift runs from the surface down into the coal mine and allows the conveyor belt to come out of the mine onto the surface.

Mastermyne, the company with the mining services contract at the mine, said counselling services had been made available to all Mastermyne staff and others impacted by the incident.

Mining operations have been suspended until further notice.

## **Investigations into the cause of the mine collapse underway**

Stephen Smyth from the CFMEU said a union safety representative is at the mine with the regulator, Resources Safety and Health Queensland, but police had taken control of the site.

Mr Vorias said he had no further information into the cause of the collapse.

"Investigations are all continuing at this moment everything is about ensuring that the family and all of the colleagues at [site operator] Mastermyne and at Sojitz are fine," he said.

"Our thoughts are firstly out to the family and everybody on site at the moment, it's absolutely devastating news and a very difficult time.

"We will do what we need to do to ensure that we understand the circumstances around this and we will work with all the authorities and assist wherever we can to ensure we understand the nature of the incident."



Sojitz Blue said an investigation into the collapse was underway. (ABC News: Rachel McGhee )

Mastermyne said relevant authorities have been notified and an investigation into the cause of the incident has commenced.

Mastermyne managing director Tony Caruso said it was a "tragic event" and their thoughts are with the family, friends and workmates of their employee.

"Our employee's family has been notified of the incident and the company is providing them with our support and assistance."

"The safety and wellbeing of our staff is one of our core values. The cause of the incident will be thoroughly investigated, and we will continue to support the family and our work colleagues."

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk in Parliament paid her respects to the miner who died and extended her condolences to his family.

"I can assure Queenslanders that this matter will be the subject of a thorough investigation by Resources Health and Safety Queensland (sic)," she said.

## **Union says mine roof support work was being done**

Mr Smyth said while it would be "premature to make an assumption" on activity at the mine when the collapse occurred, the union had been told the crew were undertaking roof support work.

"They're doing remedial work throughout the mine to get it up and running for production purposes, so there's a lot of work going on in that mine of a maintenance nature," he said.

"Crinum exhausted its coal reserves and the mine was closed, it was sealed up for a period of time."

Mr Smyth said mine operations had only recommenced this year.

"Mastermyne are recovering that mine in preparation to go back into coal production," he said.

Mr Smyth urged all mining operators across the Bowen Basin to check in on their workforce and offer support.

"It has a ripple effect across the industry, it affects everybody ... while they may not have been at the Crinum mine, it certainly affects the industry as a whole — particularly the underground sector," he said.

Sojitz Corporation bought the Gregory mine from BMA Australia in March 2019.

The company then began ventilation works in the old underground mine pit as a first step towards reopening the site.