

## Workers at underground Grosvenor Coal Mine in central Queensland evacuated after fire

ABC Tropical North / By Danielle Jesser

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Anglo American says all workers are safe after the incident. *(Supplied)*

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- **In short:** Workers at the troubled underground Grosvenor Coal Mine in central Queensland have been evacuated after a fire on Saturday morning.
  - Resources Safety Health Queensland says it was notified of an ignition of methane at the mine near Moranbah earlier on Saturday.
  - **What's next?** There will be a full investigation into the incident.
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Work is underway to seal an underground coal mine in central Queensland where a fire is burning after an explosion on Saturday morning.

Workers at the troubled underground Grosvenor Coal Mine, about 190km south-west of Mackay, were evacuated after the fire started.

Resources Safety Health Queensland (RSHQ) said it was notified of an ignition of methane at the mine near Moranbah.

It's the same mine where five [workers suffered extensive burns after a methane explosion in May 2020](#).

An RSHQ spokesperson said mines inspectors were investigating the incident.

"We understand all workers have been removed from underground and accounted for, with no injuries reported," the spokesperson said.

## **Mine's future in doubt**

Mining and Energy Union industry safety and health representative Jason Hill said there were fears the mine may never reopen, with workers being sent home indefinitely.

Anglo American's Grosvenor Coal Mine produced its first longwall coal in May 2016 and opened with an anticipated life of more than 30 years.

Last year it produced 117 million tonnes of run-of-mine steel-making coal.

Since reopening, the mine has continued to report high gas levels detected through routine monitoring.

In late January, RSHQ confirmed it had been notified of a methane exceedence in work areas at the Grosvenor and Moranbah North coal mines.

Large amounts of nitrogen are being pumped into the coal mine.

Queensland Mines Rescue has travelled to the site with a large GAG unit — a truck-mounted modified jet engine that injects gas into a mine shaft.

The nitrogen reduces oxygen levels to below what is needed for combustion.

An Anglo American spokesperson said its response included the use of nitrogen and monitoring by the extensive real-time systems.

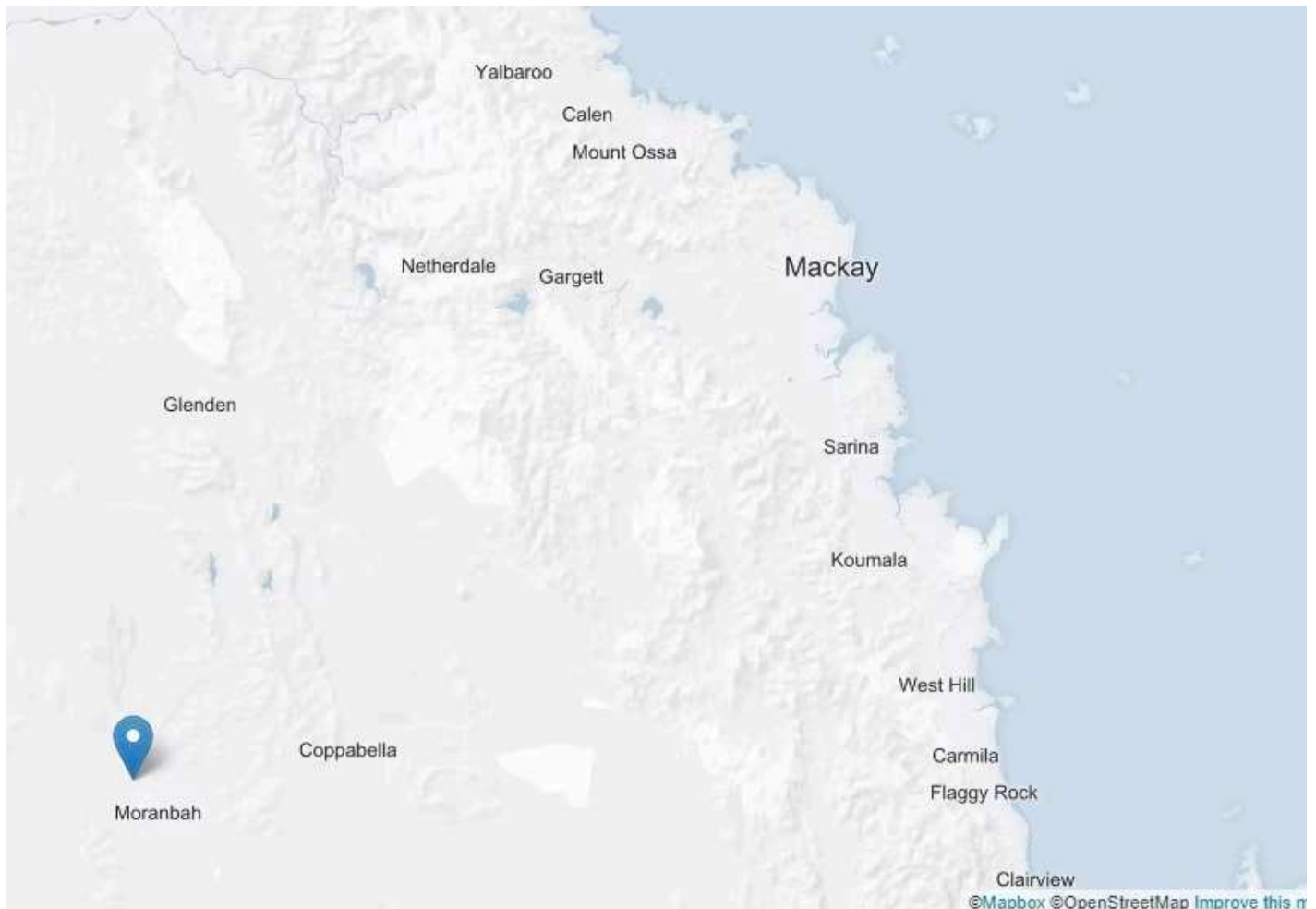
"A dedicated team has been established to respond to the incident," the spokesperson said.

## **Full investigation**

The fire comes just weeks after the Queensland parliament passed new legislation aimed at improving safety in the resources sector.

One of the key amendments was the implementation of critical controls – an important recommendation from the Coal Mining Board of Inquiry.

Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals Scott Stewart said there would be a full investigation into the Grosvenor incident.



The Grosvenor coal mine is about 5 kilometres outside of Moranbah in Queensland.

"Thankfully I'm told there has been no injuries but this is obviously concerning," he said.

"Queenslanders have a right to come home safely from their work and I expect a full and thorough investigation into this."

The Mining and Energy Union's Mr Hill said any incident that put the lives of miners at risk was a concern.

"It shouldn't happen, obviously there are some controls that have failed and that's something we need to get to the bottom of."



The Queensland Ambulance Service took the patients to the Royal Brisbane Hospital.

The incident comes after Anglo American announced the planned sale of all of its Australian coal mines after rejecting a takeover bid from rival BHP.

It owns five coking coal mines in Queensland's Bowen Basin — Moranbah North, Capcoal, Dawson, Aquila and Grosvenor.

Anglo American's five operations employ about 5,000 workers plus contractors, according to the mining union.

## **'Dedicated team'**

Following Saturday's fire, a spokesperson for the company said its "sole focus is our people's safety and ensuring a safe working environment for all who work at Anglo American".

"A complete and orderly withdrawal from all underground areas to the surface was completed on Saturday morning, according to our action response plan, after an incident occurred underground at Grosvenor Mine.

"While the extent of the incident is still evolving, the safety of all personnel is confirmed."