



Former North Goonyella mine officials' statutory certificates of competency cancelled

12 October 2021

On 11 October 2021, the Chief Executive Officer, Resources Safety and Health Queensland (RSHQ) cancelled the statutory certificates of competency of two former officials at North Goonyella coal mine, finalising an enforcement process relating to an underground fire that occurred at the mine in 2018.

This enforcement action follows the Queensland Mines Inspectorate's (QMI) investigation of the incident at the Peabody-operated mine and a statutory process under the *Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999*.

On 1 September 2018, all workers were withdrawn from the underground workings at the mine as a precautionary measure in response to rising carbon monoxide levels at the longwall. In the hours that followed, the mine's spontaneous combustion triggers were reached, escalating the risk of an underground explosion. This culminated in an underground fire.

QMI published its [preliminary observations](#)

(https://www.rshq.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1453361/north-goonyella-high-potential-incident.pdf) in relation to the incident in July 2019.

In deciding to cancel the individuals' certificates of competency, the CEO considered evidence of their actions in response to escalating risks at the mine which had the potential to cause serious harm to workers.

Effectively managing risks associated with spontaneous combustion and methane is critical to preventing serious harm to coal mine workers. Incidents such as the Moura No. 2 mine explosion in 1994 and the Moura No. 4 explosion in 1986, which together claimed 23 lives, in addition to other tragic incidents before them, are tragic reminders of this.

Upon cancellation of the individuals' certificates of competency, they may not be employed in the safety critical position of underground mine manager in any Queensland coal mine.

RSHQ's vision is zero serious harm in Queensland's resources sector. The decision to cancel the certificates is consistent with RSHQ's compliance and enforcement policy and reflects our expectation that obligation-holders apply the highest standards to ensure the safety and health of workers.

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