

POLICE & COURTS

Grosvenor mine reopens as State Government announces independent inquiry

The Grosvenor coal mine will reopen for essential work as the State Government launches an independent inquiry into the explosion that left four men fighting for their lives.

Patrick Billings, The Courier-Mail

Subscriber only | May 11, 2020 5:34pm

THE State Government has announced an independent inquiry into the underground explosion at Anglo-American's Grosvenor coal mine.

The blast severely burned five men when a suspected methane leak ignited hundreds of metres underground last week.

[Miners raise almost \\$100,000 for men injured in Moranbah mine blast](#)

[Grosvenor coal mine re-entered for first time since gas blast injured five men](#)

[Editorial: Still lessons to learn from previous Qld mining disasters](#)

Mines Minister Dr Anthony Lynham today ordered a mine safety Board of Inquiry to conduct hearings and make findings and recommendations regarding the incident.

"Last week's underground gas explosion is something the industry has not experienced for more than quarter of a century," Dr Lynham said.

"An underground gas explosion in a coal mine is simply unacceptable in the 21st century.

"As serious as it was, it could have been far worse, as every underground coal miner and their families know."



📷 Mines Minister Anthony Lynham. Photo: Daryl Wright

A former judge or Queens Counsel will head the inquiry however members of the board and its terms of reference are yet to be named.

"I expect to be able to announce the board membership and detailed terms of reference by the end of May, with the inquiry to commence immediately," he said.

"The board will conduct its inquiry so as not to prejudice any potential future prosecutions.

"It will provide an interim report before the election, which I will table in parliament, and a final report, also to be tabled."

The mine's operator Anglo American said it would "co-operate fully" with the inquiry.

“We want answers as to why an ignition of methane occurred at Grosvenor mine and we understand that everyone else does too,” Anglo American’ chief executive Tyler Mitchelson, said.

“We have already commenced our own technical review into the incident with industry experts, including in the areas of methane and ventilation management and forensic fire analysis.”

Essential work will recommence at the Grosvenor Coal Mine.

A staged re-entry into the underground mine was completed yesterday.

The company said some of the mine’s workforce would return tomorrow.

“As part of our staged re-entry, tomorrow some of our workforce will start work in other areas of the mine complex, where the work is essential for the ongoing safety and integrity of the mine while the investigations proceed,” chief executive of Anglo American’s metallurgical coal business, Tyler Mitchelson, said.

“We will not recommence mining until we know what happened and how we can prevent it happening again.

“Our priority remains the care of our five injured colleagues, their families and all of our workforce at this difficult time.”

Four of the men remain in a critical condition and one man is stable.

An online fundraiser for the men has now raised more than \$170,000.