

Two people dead after underground Endeavor Mine explosion at Cobar, western NSW

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The Endeavor mine at Cobar has closed after two workers were killed in an underground explosion. (ABC News)

In short:

A man and a woman are dead after an explosion at an underground mine in western New South Wales.

Authorities are yet to retrieve the body of a man in his 60s who died underground at Endeavor mine at Cobar, while a woman in her 20s died of her injuries on the surface.

What's next?

The NSW Resources Regulator has launched an investigation into the cause of the explosion and the mine has been closed.

Authorities are waiting for a mine to be made safe before they retrieve the body of a worker killed in a mine explosion.

The explosion occurred at the Endeavor Mine in Cobar, about 450 kilometres east of Broken Hill, at about 3:45am.

Three people were injured including a man in his 60s and two women in their 20s.

Police said the women were brought to the surface, where one died of her injuries.

The second woman has been flown to hospital suffering hearing damage and shock.

The man was killed in the explosion.



Authorities are investigating the cause of the explosion at the Endeavor mine. (ABC News)

Police Superintendent Gerard Lawson said emergency services were working to retrieve his body.

"Tragically, a man in his 60s has lost his life and he is still in the mine and we are going to go get him shortly," he said.

"This isn't something that happens often in NSW so we will be putting every resource that we have behind it to conduct a thorough investigation to work out exactly what happened."

Superintendent Lawson said the three workers were on the night shift and were a couple of hours away from finishing their shift when the blast occurred.

Operations at the mine, which is owned by Polymetals Resources, have been suspended.

"It is tragic for the families and our employees and the Cobar community and the wider Polymetals family," executive chairman Dave Sproule said.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims and the injured girl."

Mr Sproule said there were approximately 30 people working the night shift when the explosion occurred.

"This was standard mining operations, other than that I am not in a position to comment until the police have conducted their own investigations," he said.

"Suffice to say we had some very experienced people in the mine at the time."

Investigation underway

The NSW Resources Regulator confirmed it had launched an investigation into the cause of the explosion.



Emergency service crews were called to the mine on Endeavor Mine Road at Cobar. (ABC News)

In a statement, NSW Minister for Natural Resources Courtney Houssos said she was "deeply saddened to hear about the tragic news".

"This is a heartbreaking day for the Cobar community and will be felt across the entire mining industry," she said.

"The number-one priority in any mine must be safety. Everyone who goes to work has the right to come home.

"While safety protocols and procedures have greatly improved in mining, these deaths are a sobering reminder of why we need to always remain vigilant to protect workers."

Ms Houssos said work at the mine had ceased pending a full investigation.

"Inspectors and investigators from the resources regulator have been deployed to the site," she said.

"All mining activity has ceased and the miners have been sent home."



Mining plays a huge part in Cobar's economy and community. (ABC News: File photo)

Mining community shattered

Cobar Mayor Jarrod Marsden said it was an "absolutely tragic" situation.

"The most valuable thing to come out of a mine are the miners, and two families don't get to see their loved ones anymore," he said.

"Cobar is a small mining community. It's very tight-knit and I'm sure everyone's going to be thinking of their families today.

"That's absolutely tragic and it's going to smash our community."

Australian Workers' Union NSW branch assistant secretary and NSW Mine Workers' Alliance organiser Ron Cowdrey said it would likely "take some

time" to establish what caused the "devastating incident".

"An open and transparent investigation [will be held] to understand what's exactly occurred and put measures in place to prevent anything like this tragedy ... happening again," he said.

"It's a great community, Cobar, so anything like this really reverberates through the whole town.

"My thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of the workers, but the town as well."

NSW Minerals Council chief executive Stephen Galilee said in a statement that the industry was mourning the death of the two workers.

"This tragedy highlights the hazards faced by those working in our industry and is a sombre reminder of why the NSW mining industry must never deviate from our commitment to the safety of our workforce as our number one priority," he said.

"The thoughts of tens of thousands of miners across NSW will today be with the families and colleagues of the deceased and injured, and also with the residents of the mining community of Cobar at this extremely difficult time."

A spokesperson for NSW Resources said in a statement that it would be "inappropriate to make further comment while the investigation is ongoing".

Endeavor Mine explosion

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Endeavor is a major underground silver, zinc and lead mine.

It is located 40 kilometres north of Cobar.

According to the Polymetals Resources website, the mine has operated since the early 1980s but was placed in "care and maintenance" in 2020.

Polymetals bought the operation in 2023 and resumed mining in June this year.

The Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) has announced a pause in trading for Polymetal's Resources Limited.

In a statement issued this morning, it said "trading in the securities of the entity will be temporarily paused pending a further announcement".

Emergency services remain at the scene.

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