

Mastermyne fined for death of Gavin Feltwell at Moranbah North mine in 2022

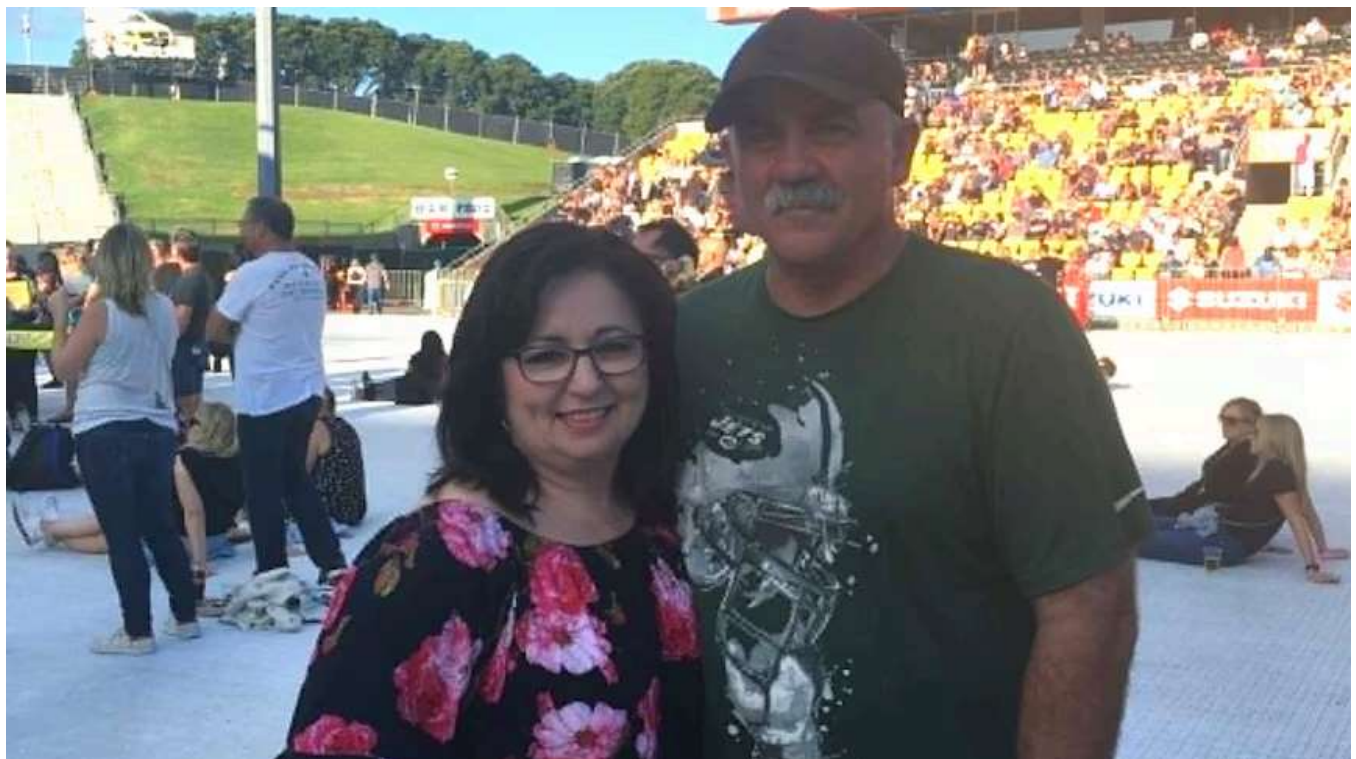


By Vanessa Jarrett

ABC Capricornia

Mining Accidents and Incidents

Tue 23 Jun 2026 at 5:41pm



Gavin Feltwell with his wife Michelle at a Bruce Springsteen concert in New Zealand. The couple were lifelong fans and went to many concerts. *(Supplied: Michelle Feltwell)*

In short:

Gavin Feltwell, 59, died at the Moranbah North mine on March 25, 2022, after equipment struck his head and left him with critical injuries.

Operator Mastermyne Contracting Services was charged in 2023 with failure to discharge health and safety obligations causing death or grievous bodily harm.

What's next?

The company pleaded guilty in the Emerald Magistrates Court on June 23 and was fined \$310,000.

Australian mining company Mastermyne has been fined \$310,000 for the death of a worker at a central Queensland mine in 2022.

Gavin William Feltwell, 59, was working a night shift on March 25 at the Moranbah North mine in the Bowen Basin and was in a crew of six workers who were assigned to do conveyor work underground.

A torque arm was suspended in a sling of fabric and chains and was being lugged to the ground when it rolled and struck Mr Feltwell.

Emergency services attended, but his injuries were too severe, and he died shortly after.

Mine operator Mastermyne Contracting Services, a subsidiary of the ASX-listed Mastermyne group of companies, was charged 18 months later, in November 2023, with failure to discharge health and safety obligations causing death or grievous bodily harm.

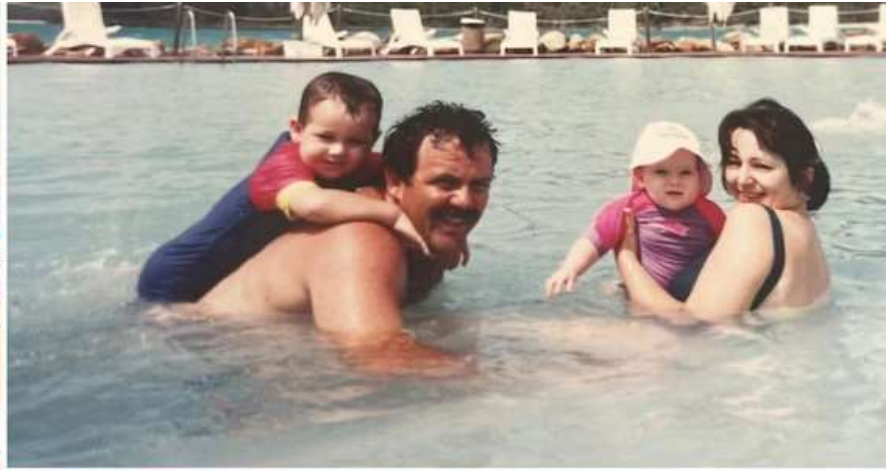
The mine is owned by Anglo American.

A devoted family man

Mr Feltwell died on the eve of his 34th wedding anniversary.

He and his wife Michelle grew up in Albury in New South Wales and moved to Mackay in 1989.

They had two children, Daniel, who was in Vancouver at the time of his father's death, and Rachael, who lives in Brisbane.



Gavin Feltwell and his wife Michelle had two children, Daniel and Rachael. He loved family holidays. (Supplied: Michelle Feltwell)

"The anguish in their voices is something I will never forget," Michelle Feltwell said in her victim impact statement.

"As a mother, there is nothing more painful than not being able to protect your children from that kind of heartbreak."

The widow described her late husband as her best friend, safe place and anchor.

He loved going on family holidays and was a big fan of Bruce Springsteen, having been to many of his concerts.

"We had built a life together," Ms Feltwell said.

"We had plans for the future.

"We were entering a new phase of life where we would finally have time for ourselves, to travel, to enjoy the family we had created, and to grow older together.

"That future was taken from us."

Since his death, Ms Feltwell said she experienced grief every day.

"Waking up alone," she said.

"Going to bed alone.

"Sitting in a house that was once full of shared routines, conversation and comfort, now filled with silence.

"The anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas, Easter; these are no longer celebrations. They are reminders of what is missing.

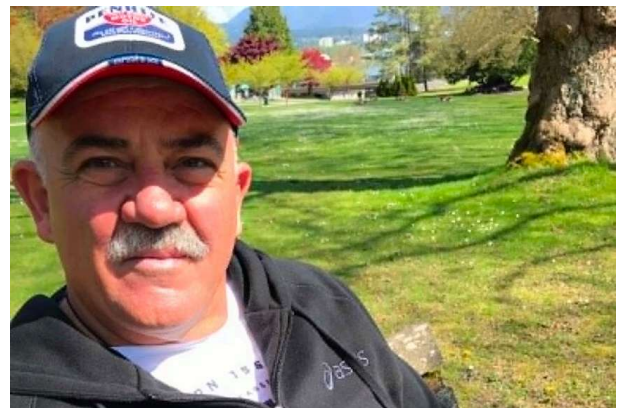
"I now live with a constant broken heart. I'm alone and I'm navigating a life that feels unfamiliar and uncertain."

Daniel Feltwell had video-called his father earlier that day and, when he was woken by his mother's phone call in the middle of the night, he knew something was wrong.

"The time zone difference made things difficult but we always found a way to talk once a week," he said.

"We talked about planning our next family trip, since it had been a few years since we had done something like that.

"It had been years since I had been home and reconnecting was overdue."



Gavin Feltwell was described by his family as "a proud, loving father and a mentor to many".

(Supplied: Michelle Feltwell)

The trauma of the circumstances and the suddenness of his father's death led Daniel to live a life of "working, drinking, waking up and repeating", until he hit breaking point and had to be taken to the emergency room.

"The psychiatrist told me I was symptomatic for post-traumatic stress disorder, major depression and alcohol abuse syndrome," he said.

"I eventually had to step away from my work as the combined stress was too much to handle.

"In the years since, I have relapsed into extreme depressive periods where I have lacked the motivation to move forward."

Gavin had been at the mines since 2004, and his family described him as "incredibly safety conscious".

"My father was a diligent man, I worked with him myself underground for two years and safety was always his top priority," Daniel said.

"He was the man scolding others for not wearing a seatbelt."

"He checked everything twice. He took pride in doing things properly," Ms Feltwell added.



Gavin Feltwell died at Moranbah North mine in 2022.
(Supplied: Michelle Feltwell)

The toll of the court process has added to their trauma.

"For years now, my family has been waiting to find out what took him away from us, for years we have been told that it would be soon," Daniel said.

"Each delay, each hearing, forces me to revisit the circumstances of Gavin's death," Ms Feltwell said.

"There has been no opportunity to properly grieve or find closure.

"Instead, I remain caught in a cycle of reliving the worst moment of my life."

Company fined \$310,000



Jeffrey Whiteman (pictured right) leaving the courthouse after the sentencing. (*ABC Capricornia*: Vanessa Jarrett)

The company pleaded guilty to the charge today in the Emerald Magistrates Court.

The court heard mine and safety obligations had not been complied with on the day of the incident and no safe-work procedure existed for the task to be completed at the mine.

The maximum penalty for the offence is 15,000 penalty units for a corporation, equal to \$2,067,750.

Handing down his sentence in the Emerald Magistrates Court today, Magistrate Cameron McKenzie spoke directly to the family.

"I hope that today, the finalisation of this charge ... does bring you and your family some closure in the grieving process with the loss of Gavin," he said.

He ordered a fine of \$310,000, plus legal and court fees of \$54,973.44, and no conviction was recorded.

Mastermyne Chief executive officer Jeff Whiteman spoke outside the court and offered his condolences to the family and friends.

"We remain committed to continuous improvement and to ensuring the lessons from this tragedy continue to strengthen the way we operate," a company statement read.



Emily McGregor leaving the Emerald Magistrates Court on June 23. (ABC Capricornia: Vanessa Jarrett)

Michelle and Daniel Feltwell both shared their dissatisfaction after the court sentence.

"At what point does the profit of our mining industry outweigh the cost of our lives?" Daniel said.

"My family has been waiting for so long for any form of justice and feel so defeated, it has destroyed any confidence we have in the Australian justice system."

In a statement, the Mining and Energy Union (MEU) criticised the court outcome, labelling it "unacceptable" and "a slap on the wrist".

MEU Queensland president Mitch Hughes said today's decision failed to convince miners that the industry prioritised worker safety over company profits.

"Gavin Feltwell was a much-loved member of our union and of the Bowen Basin mining community," MEU general vice-president Stephen Smyth added.

"We felt the injustice of his death. Gavin's life was worth far, far more than \$300,000."

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