



Gunner quits Fortescue citing toll from travel

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Former Northern Territory chief minister Michael Gunner has quit Andrew Forrest's **Fortescue**, the latest high-profile departure from the billionaire's mining and energy empire.

Fortescue's green energy division hired Mr Gunner in November 2022, three months after he resigned from parliament, one of several big name recruits at the time including Guy Debelle, the Reserve Bank's former deputy governor.

However, Mr Gunner has joined the procession of executives leaving **Fortescue**. A social media post blamed the amount of travel away from his base in Darwin following a promotion last year.

"After taking on the Australian director role in August it meant more travel away from Darwin and the family, which I found too difficult," Mr Gunner said in a LinkedIn post.

"I'm taking a bit of time before deciding with the family what I do next and am now reporting for lunchbox duty." Mr Gunner was initially hired to lead **Fortescue** Future Industries' northern Australian operations in November 2022. He was then promoted to a position as director of Australia and New Zealand in August last year.

"Working for Andrew and **Fortescue** was an incredible opportunity - a dynamic company with a bold green energy vision. I will always be a friend of the **Fortescue** family and an advocate for **Fortescue** and the path they are forging," Mr Gunner said.

A **Fortescue** spokesman said: "We respect Michael's decision and his personal reasons for making it, and wish him and his family well." Earlier this week the finance boss of **Fortescue**'s energy division, Deborah Caudle, left the company after a consolidation of **Fortescue**'s finance functions.

A revolving door of executives have jumped ship from the company in the last 12 months as pressure grows on **Fortescue** to execute a high-stakes pivot to green energy from its iron ore foundations which made its founder one of Australia's richest men.

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In August 2023, **Fortescue**'s CEO Fiona Hick and chief financial officer Christine Morris both quit, while Dr -Debelle resigned as a director of **Fortescue** Future Industries. The company's general manager of operations planning, Andrew O'Dowd, also left the company in September.

The departures have added to the picture of turmoil at the company over the past few years, with the exit of at least a dozen members of **Fortescue**'s executive leadership team - and substantially more senior operational managers.

Dr Forrest last year denied responsibility for the rapid turnover at the senior ranks of the company he founded, saying some new recruits had struggled in the "boiler room" environment at the company, but left with its best wishes if they were not a good fit. **Fortescue** received a first strike against its remuneration report at the company's annual shareholder meeting - with more than 52 per cent of shares voted against the motion - amid a backlash against the company's decision to give additional payouts to the company's former CEO and chief financial officer.

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