



Hutchinson quits church group board; Leadership

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Body

The chief executive of **Fortescue**'s energy division, Mark Hutchinson, has quit the board of a religious group whose evangelical attitudes towards sex raised concerns among employees of the mining giant last month.

According to documents filed with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission on October 29, Mr Hutchinson is no longer a director of Alpha Australia National Office.

AANO is the local chapter of the global religious group Alpha International, which publishes videos that tell teenagers Jesus wants to "guide" their sexuality and promotes an exclusively heterosexual, post-marital and gender-binary version of sex.

Revelations that Mr Hutchinson held a leadership role at Alpha had raised concerns among some **Fortescue** staff, who believed Alpha's preachings on sex were at odds with **Fortescue**'s stated support for diversity.

In a written message to staff on October 25, Mr Hutchinson assured them that he loved diversity. He wrote another message to them on October 27 to concede that he had failed the employees by not explicitly declaring his support for LGBTQIA+ people.

"I wish to state clearly that I am supportive of everyone in a same-sex marriage and same-sex relationships and value the LGBTQIA+ community," he said in the second note.

The documents, which were submitted to ASIC this week, said Mr Hutchinson's exit from the AANO board was effective from July 18, 2023.

At the time of publishing this article, he remained a director of the UK-registered Alpha International.

Aside from its views on sex, Alpha's video sermons also tell viewers that prayer can heal physical illnesses such as cancer and crossed eyes.

Fortescue chairman Andrew Forrest wrote to staff on October 27 saying that he expected the company's leadership to be "resolutely" committed to equal rights.

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"If we are to stop the uncontrolled march of climate change, we need every mind at the table. Focused and free," he said. "That means working relentlessly to cultivate a culture where everyone feels comfortable to bring their full self to work."

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