



Hick joins Evolution after fleeing Fortescue

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Body

Former **Fortescue** chief executive Fiona Hick, who quit the Andrew Forrest camp last year after less than six months in the top job over "differences of opinion", has joined Evolution Mining's board.

Ms Hick, an executive with nearly three decades of experience, including roles at Woodside Energy and Rio Tinto, said she was thrilled to be joining Evolution, where she will also join its risk and sustainability committee.

"Having recently accompanied the Evolution board on a visit to the Cowal and Northparkes operations, it has reinforced my view of the quality of the people and assets within the company," Ms Hick said. "I'm thrilled to be joining the board and supporting Evolution's exciting future." Ms Hick quit **Fortescue** in August 2023 after less than six months in the job. **Fortescue** said on the day that Ms Hick had "made a joint decision with the **Fortescue** board" to depart and that her resignation had been both "friendly and -mutual".

Days later Andrew Forrest said she chose to step aside following differences of opinion over the company's green transition.

"What we have now is a literally galloping herd of people who want to see this company go green. So if you want to step outside that, you're given a choice. You're not fired, there's no disagreement, you're just given choice: step back in, or you call it," Dr Forrest said in August 2023.

"All I'm saying is that Fiona was given the choice and she made her own decision â€¦ We're not going to let a single person's disagreement with the direction of this company affect it.

"You either get on the bus or get off the bus, but you make the choice. No one was pushed." The **Fortescue** founder then told The Australian that an extraordinary wave of management departures had been sparked after he returned from an overseas trip to find the -company's strategy had been -hijacked by several of its -executive team.

The billionaire chairman of the \$67bn mining giant said executives who had left the iron ore major had struggled to cope with the -"boiler room" conditions of the company and were not following his green vision.

He said he was not to blame for the rapid hiring and firing of staff at the company.

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Ms Hick last worked in iron ore with Rio Tinto, as a rail superintendent in 2001. She was appointed Woodside's operations vice president in 2019, and also served as its strategy and planning boss, and before that as its crisis management leader.

Her role at **Fortescue** included keeping costs down at the iron ore operations in an increasingly inflationary environment and, overseeing the commissioning of the company's troubled Iron Bridge magnetite project, as well as the company's ambitious \$US6.2bn (\$9.2bn) plan to decarbonise its iron ore operations by the end of the decade.

Ms Hick was part of the executive leadership team at Woodside since 2019, with her most recent role overseeing the operational performance of the company's Australian assets - including both Woodside's original North West Shelf operations and the Bass Strait production hubs inherited from its merger with BHP's oil and gas division.

Her career at the oil and gas producer included a stint overseeing its health, safety, environment and quality performance. Dr Forrest said at the time the recruitment of the long-term Woodside executive would help **Fortescue** "step beyond fossil fuels".

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