

NEWS RELEASE

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MINING AT PERSEVERANCE UNDERGROUND TO CEASE DUE TO SAFETY CONCERNS

On 31 October 2013, production at Nickel West Leinster Perseverance Underground mine was suspended following a significant seismic event.

Since the event, Nickel West technical and operational teams, supported by independent experts, have been assessing the technical data and risks on the sub-level cave operations and all the options available. Following this analysis BHP Billiton has decided it is unable to safely resume operations in the sub-level cave at Perseverance mine.

Nickel West will continue to operate its processing facilities at Leinster, along with its other operations in Western Australia, and will continue to maintain the underground infrastructure in Perseverance mine.

In addition, mining will resume at Rocky's Reward open cut mine, near Leinster, to provide an alternative ore supply to our integrated business.

The decision to cease operations in the sub-level cave at Perseverance mine will lead to a reduction in the operational workforce at Leinster and impact valued stakeholders.

Nickel West Asset President Paul Harvey said the company would continue to work closely with employees affected by the decision and help find redeployment opportunities within Nickel West and the broader BHP Billiton Group where possible.

"The health, safety and wellbeing of our people is paramount; it is the first of *Our Charter* values. As this change is implemented, we will continue to treat our people and stakeholders with the utmost care and respect and maintain our strong focus on safety," he said.

Work to understand the broader implications of this decision on the Nickel West business has commenced and the impact on production will be reported in the BHP Billiton December 2013 quarter Operational Review.

Further information on BHP Billiton can be found at: www.bhpbilliton.com.

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