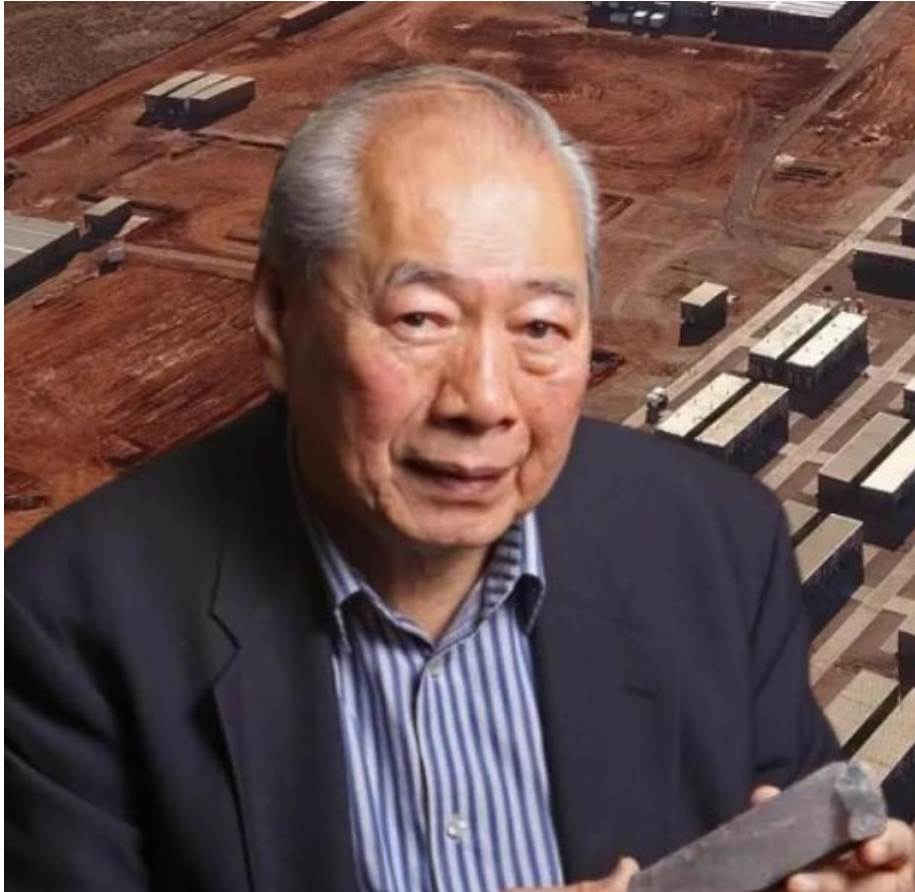


Rudy Gomez

SA copper pioneer behind one of the world's largest deposits

The man who found one of the largest copper deposits in South Australia has died. He is being remembered as a true innovator by one of the state's top business leaders.



Rudy Gomez has died, aged 89.

Rudy Gomez, the man who discovered the giant Carrapateena copper deposit being mined by global giant BHP in the state's Far North, has died, aged 89.

In a statement to *InDaily*, daughter Karen Gomez said: "Rudy Gomez passed away peacefully on the 15th of February, 2026, aged 89".

Gomez was the sole prospector who found the Carrapateena deposit in 2005, having held the exploration rights for the area since 1989.

After drilling two holes at the site in the mid-2000s, Gomez struck a lode of copper, having waited years to even get to the drilling stage of the project, which was backed by some state government funding and his own superannuation holdings.

The discovery was immense, and Gomez eventually sold his 58 per cent share in the asset to OZ Minerals for US\$250 million in 2011. Gomez was more than \$100 million richer as a result.

That company would go on to be sold for [\\$9.6 billion to mining giant BHP](#) in 2023. This gave BHP control over an immense copper precinct in the state's Far North, with OZ Minerals' Carrapateena and Prominent Hill mines joining the firm's gigantic Olympic Dam mine.

In a statement, BHP's Copper SA asset president Anna Wiley said the company's thoughts were with the family, friends and colleagues of Rudy Gomez.

"His vision and belief in South Australia's mineral potential led to the landmark 2005 Carrapateena discovery – a mine that continues to shape the region and Copper SA's future," Wiley said.

"He is remembered for backing ideas others wouldn't and combining innovation with courage, and his legacy in South Australia and in the resources sector lives on."

South Australia's Energy and Mining Minister Tom Koutsantonis said, "I am saddened to hear of the passing of Rudy Gomez, who was an architect of one of South Australia's mining success stories, the Carrapateena copper mine in the Gawler Craton".

"Backed by funding under the then-Rann Government's PACE initiative, Mr Gomez helped unearth a multi-million dollar resource that today sustains a workforce of around 1800 people and which last year mined 5.73 million tonnes of ore that in turn produced 226,100 tonnes of copper concentrate," he said.

"His story is one of fruitful collaboration between industry and government and he leaves a powerful legacy for the betterment of our state."

Gomez grew up in Baguio City, Philippines, and studied at the University of the Philippines.

He moved to Adelaide as a Colombo Plan scholar and studied extractive metallurgy at the University of Adelaide in 1957. Gomez went on to a masters degree, during which he designed a new process for lead smelting.

[David Simmons](#) Feb 24, 2026.

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