

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

12 February 2021

Hon. Sussan Ley MP
Minister for the Environment
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Minister Ley

RE: POWERING CHANGE: PRINCIPLES FOR BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENTS IN THE BATTERY VALUE CHAIN

Ensuring clean and green battery supply chains must be a priority for businesses and governments during the post-pandemic recovery.

Powering Change: principles for business and governments in the battery value chain is a new briefing that Amnesty International has developed to ensure that lithium-ion batteries, which power electric vehicles and many electronic devices, and which are essential for tackling climate change, are not linked to human rights abuses or environmental harm.

Globally, 51 organisations support the principles, including four Australian organisations: **Australian Lawyers for Human Rights**, **Deep Sea Mining Campaign**, **AID/WATCH**, and **RMIT Business and Human Rights Centre**.

Our previous research exposed how cobalt mined by children in the Democratic Republic of Congo could be entering the supply chains of some of the world's biggest electronic and electric vehicle brands, while in South America, evidence points to lithium extraction posing risks to Indigenous peoples' water resources and fragile ecosystems. Meanwhile, the growing demand for "green" battery technologies poses new risks to the environment, including pollution of mining areas, damage to the ocean floor, and mounting waste due to inefficient design.

While technologies like electric vehicles are essential for shifting away from fossil fuels, the battery revolution carries its own risks for human rights and the planet. This is a critical moment to rethink the way our economies and industries operate – amid the nightmare of the pandemic, there is a chance to build a fairer and more sustainable future.

Businesses hold a large portion of the responsibility to ensure that human rights must be at the core of their operations – this might mean making supply chains more transparent, providing remedy

where they have caused harm, or ensuring Indigenous communities are consulted on mining projects that affect them.

Governments also need to show leadership by supporting investments and energy solutions rooted in a just transition. Lack of respect for human rights should be a dealbreaker for any business involved in the battery industry – that means governments need to enforce environmental protection laws, investigate allegations of abuses, and make human rights due diligence a legal requirement.

I urge you to adopt the *Powering Change Principles*, and I encourage you to take particular note of recommendations regarding enforcing regulations to ensure respect for human rights, opposing deep-sea mining activities, supporting policies to reduce reliance on car travel, mandating repair, collection and recycling, and rapidly transitioning to a 100% renewable energy grid. I also urge you to discuss this issue with Foreign Minister Payne and encourage her to include the principles in Australia's bilateral and multilateral agreements with its partners.

For further information, or to discuss and organise a meeting, please contact Joel MacKay at joel.mackay@amnesty.org.au or 0424 242 112.

Yours sincerely,



Sam Klintworth
National Director
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