

A Seven spokesperson,

In both “The dirty secret powering Australia’s green future” and “China’s EV shame”, has *Spotlight* and reporter Liam Bartlett sought to mislead audiences by exaggerating claims and omitting inconvenient facts and voices?

No.

Regarding “*The dirty secret powering Australia’s green future*”:

The program claims cobalt “has been the key element in practically every storage battery on the planet” and that “men, women, even children [are] forced to work in medieval conditions just so countries like Australia can have cobalt for our renewable energy.” Experts have told us that cobalt is no longer commonly used in large-scale battery storage. Has *Spotlight* misled its audience about the scope of cobalt use in Australian batteries?

No. While materials used in the production of batteries is evolving, as stated in the piece, cobalt has been the key element used in the renewable energy transition and remains present in many of the world’s large scale battery energy storage systems.

MMG Mining says it has no plans to advance the South Mariana tailings dam. Bob Brown advises us that he told the reporting team this during his interview on February 20, and it was publicly reported on February 22. This was an important detail. Why was it not acknowledged in the program?

Further to that, MMG has proposed—and is pursuing—plans to move the proposed tailings dam to an alternative site, a plan that has the support of the Bob Brown Foundation. Why was this important fact not included in the program?

Bob Brown told the Spotlight team he was aware of MMG’s latest proposal. He at no stage expressed support for the Exe Creek alternative site. In fact, he said he was highly sceptical of the new proposal, citing the fact MMG had not withdrawn its proposal to build the South Marionoak tailings dam. The proposal has still not been withdrawn.

In a [media release](#) from the Bob Brown Foundation released on February 22, 2026, BBF Campaigns Director Jenny Weber said: “Because it involves native forest

destruction, we will oppose the Exe Creek alternative but not blockade it because it is outside Takayna since our efforts will concentrate on defending Takayna from more logging and mining incursions.”

After the broadcast Bob Brown’s media officer texted the producer of the story, commending him on it. He did not mention any concerns about our reporting - or the portrayal of Bob Brown’s sentiments.

His office has today reinforced to us that Bob Brown “made it clear” to David from Mediawatch “that South Marionoak is under threat.”

Was there any misleading editing of Bartlett’s interaction with Minister Bowen included in the program, specifically the question that ends “...resign and hand over to someone who is more competent”?

No. It was a heated and tense exchange between Liam Bartlett and Minister Bowen. Our story reflected that.

Regarding “China’s EV shame”:

Spotlight/Bartlett published this claim: “The largest nickel plant in Indonesia pumps more than 50,000 tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere every day, creating its own toxic microclimate. All for those environmentally friendly electric vehicles.” In fact, the majority of nickel produced at this plant is not for electric vehicles but for other industrial uses, principally stainless steel. Its owner, Tsingshan Holding Group, states on its website that its “main products” are “stainless steel ingot, bar, rod, plate, wire, pipe and other products.” How do you respond?

Many human rights and environmental organisations have highlighted the Indonesian nickel industry’s importance to EV vehicles. Scrutiny of the impacts of this industry on the environment and human health is essential.

Likewise, Spotlight/Bartlett reported: “Remember, all this human misery and environmental devastation is directly caused by the electric vehicle industry.” Again, the plant does not principally produce materials for EV batteries and was not established to do so. How do you respond?

This ‘clean and green’ industry comes at a cost to the environment and human health. We make no apologies for reporting this fact.

Spotlight/Bartlett also reported on a union leader who is “documenting the growing number of young men losing their lives so that we can drive electric vehicles.” Bearing in mind that the plant’s largest output is not for EVs, how does Seven defend this statement?

A significant portion of the world’s battery-grade nickel used in EV batteries is sourced from unsafe smelters in Indonesia’s Morowali Industrial Park and the Weda Bay Industrial Park. Though there are no official figures, union leaders who try to document this loss of life say a growing number of young men are killed every year so we can drive EVs.

Spotlight/Bartlett says: “Dirty nickel has grown to 70% of the global supply, much of it destined for the EV market.” If Spotlight was concerned about the environmental and human impacts of the Morowali plant and others like it, why was the focus not on their principal customers rather than EVs?

Please refer to the previous two answers.

Why did the program fail to report that the majority of EV batteries entering Australia are not engineered with nickel but lithium iron phosphate? Wasn’t this a material fact to convey to the audience?

It is impossible to include every statistic in this complex story.

In its April 2025 story, the program reported: ‘Australia's second largest EV seller BYD claims it no longer uses nickel in their batteries. And what of the other major Chinese EV manufacturers? Well, we reached out to a number including MG, Great Wall Motors, and Cherry, but they remain tight lipped.’

I’m still waiting on responses from those other companies, but Chery has just come back to me and says it told the program:

‘All Chery vehicles sold in Australia fully comply with local regulations. The E5 is the only battery-electric vehicle offered in the Australian market by Chery. The E5 uses a lithium iron phosphate (LFP) battery, which does not contain nickel.’

Why wasn’t this included or reflected in the report?

On the night of our broadcast, we posted to our website their two-line response to the eight substantial questions we put to them.